



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION



Parental Involvement in Schools:
Including the Community in
Improving Student Academic Achievement

Prepared for

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Executive Summary

This report is a review of the literature on the topic of parental involvement in K-12 schools. The literature review generated suggested recommendations for David Douglas School District. These recommendations help identify current practices that support opportunities for parental involvement, suggest ways to become aware of more and different opportunities for parental involvement, and generate ideas to increase opportunities for parental involvement. Many of the recommendations focus on a multi-cultural approach and target outreach to families with low socio-economic status. Current literature reviewed indicated initial activities, such as home visits, on-site interviews, and focus groups within the varied school district communities, may be productive first steps in providing information on the population that David Douglas School District serves.

Findings

The literature review reflects organization of data into five specific categories:

1. Limited versus broad concepts of parental involvement. Traditional views of parental involvement that are school-centered and non-culturally specific and which focus on “traditional American” values of competition and individuality in contrast to non-traditional views which are family-centered, culturally specific, and which focus on group dynamics and interdependency.
2. Key factors that influence general parental involvement: (1) what the parental role should be; (2) parental beliefs of self-efficacy; and (3) what opportunities and encouragement are provided by the school.
3. Effects of parental involvement on academic achievement, which include behavioral and attitudinal effects. Examples of behavioral effects of parental involvement

include: students spend more time on school tasks, are more attentive in class, pay increased attention to homework and related assignments, and do better in school.

Attitudinal effects of parental involvement include: students have more positive attitudes about learning, have a stronger sense of personal ability to learn, and are more likely to believe that learning outcomes are related to their effort and work.

4. Common obstacles to parental involvement, which can be split into three categories.
 - a. School level obstacles, which include: parents' perception of the school's limited level of receptivity and cordiality; lack of effective communication channels between parents and schools; a low level of support training and encouragement given by the school to enlist greater parent participation; and lack of professional development for school officials, especially in the areas of cultural competency and bi-lingual education.
 - b. Social, cultural, and economic barriers, including: low English proficiency of the parents; a lack of literacy in both the native language and English; lack of child care; economic and transportation issues; dramatic differences between what is expected of immigrant parents in the United States and what was expected of them in their home countries; and a lack of resources for life skills training.
 - c. Personal/familial obstacles, which include: parental aspirations for their children's success; reluctance on the part of parents to question authority or advocate for the rights of their children; and immigration status.

5. Strategies to promote parental involvement, which can include explicitly writing parental involvement into the school mission, especially when parent roles and opportunities are well defined. Also, schools can provide parents with concrete and actionable suggestions to help advance their efficacy. Additionally, schools can provide information about the importance of parental involvement. Providing this information in appropriate translations is also recommended and may need to include multiple formats to reach families with low-literacy.

Considerations and Recommendations

The strategies/recommendations were disaggregated into the following categories:

- **Welcoming parents:** This strategy includes establishing a rapport with parents and contacting parents before problems arise. Schools should also focus on creating a strong sense that “this is *our* school; *we* belong here.” This feeling can be developed by creating visual displays in school entry areas and hallways reflective of all families in the school (photos, artifacts, pictures, history). Also, schools should make an effort to develop strong, positive, office-staff skills with a consumer orientation and create habitual attitudes of respect toward parents, students, and visitors. Finally, schools can consider creating multiple comfortable spaces for parents in the school, supportive of parent-teacher conversations and parent networking.
- **Consideration of parents:** Schools can identify how parents who can be described as more marginalized are already involved in their children’s education and look for creative ways to incorporate these activities into the larger school culture. The school can also emphasize that all parents, regardless of education level, can support students’ school success. Other strategies include offering evening meetings with

childcare provided, so that parents can talk to teachers and counselors and providing before school and after-school care, as well as some supervision for older children.

Schools should be sensitive about cancelling school at the last minute due to weather conditions, thus leaving single and working parents with no resources for care of their children. Also, parents benefit when there is flexibility in regards to the timing of all-school events.

- **Involvement and empowerment:** Research shows that Latino families value social responsibility, the well-being of the group, and interdependency over individual gain and choice. Since some traditional American schools stress competition and individual achievement over cooperation, Latino parents may be reluctant to be involved if they perceive they lack the cultural and behavioral skills necessary to navigate the traditional culture of the school. Schools can also use parents as teaching partners. Allow parents to stimulate student discussions about topics that are important to daily learning goals. Parents can help their children apply what they are learning in school to everyday happenings. Also, encourage parents to serve as tutors in the classroom. Parents that do so can serve as mentors to one another and in turn may be able to help those parents who did not do well in their own schooling with basic skills.
- **Information distribution – Programmatic:** Offer socially themed events such as a Back to School barbeque, which research shows are far better attended by Latino and African-American families, rather than formal school events such as a Back to School Night. Research suggests that school officials go out into the community at times that are more conducive for these families to visit the families in their homes. School

- officials also are encouraged to reach out to community organizations and businesses to build opportunities for interaction away from the school campus.
- **Information distribution – Developmental:** Schools can seek support for parent workshops that offer training and practice on how to help children learn. Schools can also offer information about behavioral and attitudinal effects of parental involvement.
 - **Parent-led actions and parent networks:** Hire parents or seek parent volunteers who can provide other parents with information on how the school works, translations as needed, advocacy as needed, and a friendly presence. Use current parent groups (e.g., PTA/PTO) to invite *all* families' participation.
 - **Teacher practice, development, and support:** Offer personalized invitations from teachers to school events, especially to new families. Principals may also want to provide access to family involvement strategies for teachers in various professional development opportunities so that teachers can build their skills and share successes. Allocate regular faculty meeting time to discuss parental involvement.
 - **Student centered:** Interactive homework assignments help involve parents.
 - **Organizational strategies and suggestions:** Research suggests having a point person who leads the effort to increase family involvement, particularly someone who works as a counselor at the school and is bilingual. Schools and school districts should consider developing and disseminating clear, measurable goals and objectives for increasing parental involvement. Also, schools should frequently evaluate their parent involvement strategies; surveys and interviews can be used to understand parents' preferred involvement practices and how parents evaluate current activities.

- **Special cases:** Develop a case history of particular target families in an effort to determine what is hindering their involvement. Once a cause has been determined, incorporate a strategy to bridge the gap and make the parent(s) feel more comfortable in the school setting.

Suggestions for Further Research

From a review of the literature, there are initial steps to consider and opportunities for further research. For example, the school district could initiate and complete a self-assessment, if this has not already been done, of how the district understands the concept of parental involvement, how parents are currently involved in the district, and what the district expectations are for parental involvement. Also, an action team of administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and community members can be created that work together to form an annual plan for parent involvement.

Philosophical Assumptions

Every child can learn and deserves the best teachers and resources. Parents care deeply about their children's education. The primary educators of the student are the parents, and the school, as a partner, is an engaged resource to assist the parents in the education of their children. The research literature affirms that parental involvement with their children's education, both at home and at school, is positively correlated with student achievement. There are multiple types of parental involvement which are dependent upon culture, socio-economic status, language skills, literacy rates, and prior educational experiences and successes. The literature recommends that school officials practice cultural competence when interacting with parents, being aware of not judging parental involvement by traditional notions of volunteerism and attendance at school-sponsored events.

The literature suggests that given appropriate opportunities and engagement, parents will increase their involvement in the educational processes of their children. The increasingly diverse cultures of schools provide multiple and diverse opportunities for both curricular and co-curricular augmentation and activities for parents.

Literature Review

Parental involvement in K-12 schools is a topic that is reasonably well covered in published academic literature. Sources reflect a variety of inquiries into the topic as well as studies on methods for improvement of parental involvement, both generally and among specific groups. A key pivot point for both an understanding of what constitutes appropriate parental involvement and how to improve it is the effective confluence of a traditional or more limited concept of parental involvement, and a non-traditional or broader concept of parental involvement. Differences in traditional and non-traditional parental involvement influence how

stakeholders respond to the need for parental involvement in schools, what parental involvement might look like, how academic achievement can be affected through parental involvement, what are the common obstacles to parental involvement, and how to implement effective strategies for promoting parental involvement that cross a variety of demographic categories.

Limited versus Broad Concepts of Parental Involvement

A consistent theme throughout the literature is that while it is common for parents to want to be involved in and support their child's education, participation may look different for various stakeholders, not just parents. A traditional or more limited concept of parental involvement focuses primarily on parental involvement in school and district-sponsored curricular and co-curricular activities and regular attendance at parent meetings. Epstein (1992) offers six areas on which schools can focus to help families engage in these types of educational activities: (1) assist families with the basic obligations of parenting and childrearing skills and the creation of home conditions that support learning; (2) communicate clearly and consistently with families about school programs and student achievement; (3) recruit volunteers for school-focused activities; (4) involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and shared learning experiences; (5) include families in parent-teacher-student organizations, school advisory councils and organizations; and (6) collaborate with community services that support student learning.

While this traditional concept of parental involvement has served many schools and families well given the historical demographics in many communities, some literature is now suggesting that there are populations in school communities, particularly non-white, immigrant, and those eligible for free and reduced lunch, that may not be as well served by the more traditional type of parental involvement. Some literature is suggesting a non-traditional or

broader approach works to develop a more reciprocal relationship between schools and families and acknowledges and promotes the cultural strengths of family and community. This can be referred to as “funds of knowledge” (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) within the curriculum, co-curricular activities, and parental involvement activities and can be better suited to school communities that are unfamiliar with or unable to participate in traditional activities (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; De Gaetano, 2007; Moll et al., 1992; Quioco & Daoud, 2008).

Lopez (2001) suggests schools identify how parents who can be described as more marginalized are already involved in their children’s education and look for creative ways to incorporate these activities into the larger school culture. Hill and Craft (2003) suggest that the variations in parental participation may be driven by differing levels of knowledge of how to help or become involved. Lee and Bowen (2006) observed that while it is common for many white parents to be more physically present in the school, parents of all backgrounds regularly participate in some manner in their child’s education. Hill and Taylor (2004) and Ramirez (2003) note that at times some parent involvement in schools does not indicate a congenial relationship but rather may be driven by parent distrust of schools. They also find that parental involvement generally declines as children age and parents are less called on or less able to offer specific help given the advanced complexity in the topics students study. Involvement also declines as parental desire to respect or provide increased autonomy as their child develops. No authors read for this literature review suggested that a lack of physical presence at the school by parents should be interpreted as a sign of lack of interest in participation or actual lack of participation. The broad consensus in this literature review is that participation may be manifested differently by different individuals. Some groups participate more at schools while

others are more likely to be at home and support their children through culturally-based practices of familial obligations (Lopez, 2001; Moll et al., 1992; Panferov, 2010; Vazquez-Nuttall, Li, & Kaplan, 2006).

Factors that Influence General Parental Involvement

Parental involvement in schools may be ascribed to a variety of influences. The concepts of traditional and non-traditional activities and opportunities have to be considered in an increasingly diverse school community setting. Research has been done to provide a theoretical model for various levels of involvement, regardless of cultural, socio-economic, and linguistic differences (Blakely, 1983; Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Lopez, 2001; Quiocho & Daoud, 2006; Rah, Choi, & Nguyen, 2009; Vazquez-Nuttall et al., 2006). Generally, the research suggests that parental involvement in their children's education is a combination of three factors. The first factor is the parents' vision for their role in the child's education. This is essentially a classification of what the parent believes their role *should* be – anywhere from highly involved to very much uninvolved. In some cultures, there is either a lack of tradition of parents being involved in their children's education in a direct way or a fear of direct involvement due to previous negative experiences dealing with governmental institutions or public officials, particularly amongst Southeast Asian immigrant families (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Blakely, 1983; DeGaetano, 2007; Quiocho & Daoud, 2008; Rah et al., 2009). The next factor is how *effective* the parent believes they can be in that role. This self-determination of efficacy can range from parents who believe they should be involved and are involved to those who believe they should be involved but also believe they lack the skills necessary to remain involved. Culture can play a strong role in the parent's notion of self-efficacy. It was reported that Latino

families value social responsibility, the well-being of the group, and interdependency over individual gain and choice. Since some traditional American schools stress competition and individual achievement over cooperation, Latino parents may be reluctant to be involved if they perceive they lack the cultural and behavioral skills necessary to navigate the traditional culture of the school (Smith, Stern, & Shatrova, 2008).

The third factor is tied to the opportunities and encouragement the school provides. If parents believe part of their role as parents is to be involved, if the parents believe they have adequate capacity to be involved, and if the school encourages and provides opportunities for involvement, then they will likely be engaged in their child's education and even are more likely to be engaged at the school. Research indicates this level of involvement is the most desired type of participation for increasing academic achievement. Heightened feelings of efficacy are particularly linked to greater participation by Hispanic and African-American families (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Turner & Kao, 2009).

Effects of Parental Involvement on Academic Achievement

Advanced participation by parents in schools is hypothesized to impact student achievement in a number of ways (Walker, Shenker, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2010). Part of the advance in school performance among students with heightened parental involvement may be due to increases in students' self-perception, intrinsic motivation for learning, as well as their attitude towards schooling. Students may also experience growth in their relationships with teachers and school staff, suggesting that they are more likely to approach staff for help with assignments or concerns. Latino students, in particular, cite the importance of non-academic support (life skills) and strong support in the elementary grades, as key factors for their academic success (Zarate, 2007). Other authors also suggest that increasing parental involvement at school

facilitates the development of parent and family networks allowing for sharing of information and strategies about how to deal with common concerns or issues (Hill & Taylor, 2004). Turner and Kao (2009) emphasize that parental involvement in their children's education is a form of social capital and consists of a series of networks and connections that can promote academic achievement. Within these networks and connections, as noted by Moll et al. (1992) and Lopez (2001), children come to realize that education is important and that they can benefit from hard work. Further, parents are empowered as they interact with other parents and school officials. They can not only discuss their children's performances but also increase their own efficacy as advocates for their children, particularly in their ability to intervene on behalf of their children, whether the situation is negative or positive.

Although parental involvement is understood to benefit a student's academic achievement, certain types of involvement are more closely linked to advancements in achievement. A meta-analysis (Jeynes, 2003) found that minority students in particular benefited academically by increased parental involvement. Others (Lee & Bowen, 2006; LaRocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011; Turner & Kao, 2009) observed that involvement by parents *at school* was most linked with achievement increases for children of color. Participation by parents in the classroom (including providing supplies for the classroom) was linked to higher achievement than home participation (Hill & Craft, 2003). Beyond the link between increased involvement and heightened achievement, legal requirements associated with the No Child Left Behind Act also require schools to take action to engage all parents (Epstein, 2004; Ramirez, 2003).

Common Obstacles to Parental Involvement

Despite parents' interest in participation in their children's education, numerous obstacles exist for schools trying to advance parental involvement, in both traditional and non-traditional

formats. A number of articles cite the existence of the common misperception that a lack of at-school involvement by parents is a signifier of parental disinterest. This misperception is rooted in a deficit model that attributes a student's lack of educational success to characteristics rooted in the family or the cultural community (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; De Gaetano, 2007; Quiocho & Daoud, 2006; Rah et al., 2009; Ramirez, 2003; Smith et al., 2008). Some early work in the field suggests that the language used in discussing parental involvement, even when well meaning, can actually create barriers (Lightfoot, 1991). Examples of this element include programs with goals that attempt to cause the families of children of color to reflect the engagement patterns of white students. This can disrespect the abilities, skills, and knowledge of non-white families. This concern about language that may patronize or disrespect families lays the groundwork for later advocates of strengths-based approaches that engage students' families as partners in the educational endeavor (Walker et al., 2010).

Additionally, research suggests that in some instances, schools or teachers only initiate contact with families when students are performing poorly, which may not be the optimal time for introducing contact with the school in terms of its effect on the parent-school relationship and in terms of overall efficacy (Kohl, Lengua, & McMahon, 2000; Trotman, 2001). Such initial contacts also potentially impair the quality of the teacher-parent relationship, the depth of which was indicated to be of more importance to the student's success than the quantity of contact during the relationship. The practice of engaging families of students early and without preconceptions based on race or other status may be the sort of paradigm shift that can alleviate some of the perceptions of racism that limit parent involvement at school and may lead to increased home involvement as parents attempt to shield their children and themselves from racism (McKay, Atkins, Hawkins, Brown, & Lynn, 2003). Also, a disconnect often exists

between the fundamental values of families of immigrant students who value the well-being of the group and interdependent relationships, and traditional American schools that stress competition and individual achievement over cooperative success (Smith et al., 2008).

Common obstacles to parental involvement that are consistently referenced in both qualitative and quantitative studies and that include cross cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic designations are:

- parents' perception of the school's limited level of receptivity and cordiality;
- lack of effective communication channels between parents and schools;
- a low level of support training and encouragement given by the school to enlist greater parent participation;
- lack of professional development for school officials, especially in the areas of cultural competency and bi-lingual education;
- low English proficiency of the parents;
- lack of literacy in both the native language and English;
- lack of child care;
- economic and transportation issues;
- parental aspirations for their children's success;
- reluctance on the part of parents to question authority or advocate for the rights of their children;
- dramatic differences between what is expected of immigrant parents in the United States and what was expected of them in their home countries;
- immigration status;

- lack of resources for life skills training (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Blakely, 1983; De Gaetano, 2007; Rah et al., 2009; Ramirez, 2003; Smith et al., 2008).

Strategies to Promote Parental Involvement

Multiple authors and articles provide strategies for increasing parental participation at school as well as at home, using both traditional and non-traditional models. These efforts can be broken down into categories based on the scope and suggested participants for initiating the strategies. One suggestion is to begin by explicitly writing parental involvement into the school mission, especially when parent roles and opportunities are well defined (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Zarate, 2007). Providing parents with concrete and actionable suggestions helps to advance their efficacy, and providing information about the importance of parental involvement generally helps to advance their vision of their own role in their children's education. These strategies may prove valuable in increasing parental involvement (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Green et al., 2007; Rah et al., 2009; Vazquez-Nuttall et al., 2006; Zarate, 2007). Providing this information in appropriate translations is also recommended (Epstein, 2004; Ramirez, 2003) and may need to include multiple formats to reach families with low-literacy (Blakely, 1983; De Gaetano, 2007; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Regular provision of such information is particularly important for low-income parents who may not respond to broad appeals for involvement that has been effective for more affluent families (Hill & Taylor, 2004; Rah et al., 2009). While cultural barriers may exist that impede parent participation, once parents are involved in the school, those barriers are significantly diminished (Chen, Kyle, & McIntyre, 2008; Lee & Bowen, 2006). It is also important to provide a positive welcoming environment for parents and the surrounding community when they attend school

events and meetings on the school campus (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Green et al., 2007; Walker et al., 2010).

Much literature points to programs that try to increase parental involvement through strategies that emphasize functional and cultural needs and realities. Getting time off to attend school functions may be difficult for households with limited transportation, hourly wage jobs, single-parent families, or families where both parents work. Likewise, regular participation at traditional school curricular and co-curricular events can be a challenge (Ascher, 1988; Green et al., 2007; LaRocque et al., 2011). School officials are encouraged to go out into the community at times that are more conducive for these families to visit the families in their homes. School officials also are encouraged to reach out to community organizations and businesses to build opportunities for interaction away from the school campus (Blakely, 1983; De Gaetano, 2007; Quiocho & Daoud, 2006; Ramirez, 2003; Zarate, 2007). Similarly, encouraging parents with limited prior participation in more formal events like PTA/PTO meetings or parent trainings and workshops, may be less successful than inviting them to more socially themed events. A study of one inner-city school found that attendance by African-American and Latino families at socially themed events like Mother's Day breakfasts was generally six times greater than PTA and parent workshop events (McKay et al., 2003). A study of a Canadian school district suggests that making a formal event, such as Back-to-School Night, into an informal event, like a barbecue, would increase parental attendance (Peterson & Ladky, 2007). Studies also suggest that parents respond more to personalized invitations from teachers than from students or general invitations from the school (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Zarate, 2007). Such invitations are viewed as a way to build on families' visions of their own role and efficacy in helping advance their student's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997) as well as build trust (Hoover-

Dempsey et al. 2005). Such invitations are especially important for new families (Walker et al., 2010).

Certain curriculum efforts can also increase parental involvement. The creation of interactive homework assignments that require the student to interview or otherwise engage with adults in their families are one aspect of this type of involvement (Lopez, 2001; Peterson & Ladky, 2007; Walker et al., 2010). Parents are also more likely to attend events in which their child is a participant or their child's work has a central role or in which they may be able engage with their student, such as student-family activity nights (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Ramirez, 2003).

Numerous and diverse models for maximizing parent involvement exist. Some suggest that schools establish an action team of administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and community members that work together to form an annual plan for parent involvement (Epstein, 2004; Ramirez, 2003). Others suggest having a point person who leads the effort to increase family involvement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Rah et al., 2009), particularly someone who works as a counselor at the school and is bilingual (Ramirez, 2003; Walker et al., 2010). The suggestion for having a school counselor act as leader for increasing family involvement stems from a number of elements of the counselor role that are often unique to their position within a school. Included in that list are counselors' ability to develop multiyear relationships with students and their training in communication and sensitivity to diverse cultures and family arrangements. Research also suggests that counselors work to increase sociocultural awareness among staff and advocate for helping create a staff that reflects the cultures present in the school. Further recommendations include the counselor recruiting parents to serve as greeters and to perform other roles at school and during school events.

The educational research literature advocates that principals are essential to increasing parent involvement. This may be especially true in schools with high rates of English Language Learners (ELL) as well as students from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Chen et al., 2008; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005, Peterson & Ladky, 2007). Principals may also be able to address certain suggestions that require a school-wide approach to facilitating and encouraging greater parental involvement, especially among families of color. Staff attitudes towards families are very important to encouraging participation, as parents should be made to feel important and comfortable. This feeling may be accomplished partially by building relationships between the school and other community organizations including churches and community centers (Peterson & Ladky, 2007; Walker et al., 2010), as well as with local employers (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Such relationships may be encouraged by increasing the participation of school staff in the community by shopping at stores and visiting parks or other locales around the school (Moll et al., 1992; Risko & Walker-Dalhouse, 2009). Principals may also want to provide access to family involvement strategies for teachers in various professional development opportunities so that teachers can build their skills and share successes (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Peterson & Ladky, 2007).

Teachers can help facilitate increased parent involvement with the child's school by being prompt in their responses to family inquiries and not overly technical (Chen et al., 2008; LaRocque et al., 2011). Students may also be given assignments that allow them to share their cultural background with the school and their classmates, thus advancing students' participation and helping to create a welcoming and informed environment for families with diverse backgrounds within the school (Lopez, 2001; Risko & Walker-Dalhouse, 2009). Teachers building relationships with the families of their students was also indicated as a contributor to

higher parental involvement (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Quiocho & Daoud, 2006). Studies have shown that teacher attitudes and biases have changed and deficit perceptions were diminished when they visited the homes of their students and had a first-hand experience of the daily lives of their students' families (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006; Panferov, 2010; Ramirez, 2003; Zarate, 2007). Teachers may also need to work with some families to help them understand their role as an important provider of information about the child's learning habits, interests, and similarly pertinent aspects of the child (Ascher, 1988; Lopez, 2001; Vazquez-Nuttall et al., 2006). Teachers should also be encouraged to recognize parents as partners in the educational endeavor who serve as educators and have diverse experiences that may provide specific expertise about a variety of topics (Peterson & Ladky, 2007; Walker et al., 2010). Also suggested as beneficial for building the teacher and family relationship is the provision of time, resources, tools, and facilities for contacting and meeting with families (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Peterson & Ladky, 2007; Zarate, 2007).

Efforts at improvement should be viewed as a continual process rather than a one-time event (Walker et al., 2010). Ultimately, schools and families need to reach a mutual understanding of what family and parental involvement should look like (LaRocque et al., 2011).

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disadvantaged? *The Journal of Educational Research*, 102(4), 257-271.

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Considerations and Recommendations

Welcoming parents

Ascher, (1988)

- Create a more accepting environment for working and single parents, as well as those undergoing separation, divorce, or remarriage, or acting as custodial parent.

Zarate, (2007)

- Teachers should initiate more positive contacts with parents and not concentrate efforts on interactions for negative reasons;
- Teachers can solicit non-traditional types of contact information such as alternative home phone numbers or cell phone numbers, phone numbers of relatives, and parents' email addresses.

Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green, Wilkins, & Closson, (2005)

- Attend to the critical role of central factors in the creation of positive school climate: principal leadership; long-term commitment to improving and maintaining positive school climate; creation of trust through mutually respectful, responsive, and communicative teacher-parent relationships;
- Focus on developing two-way family-school communication (asking question, listening well to responses);
- Offer specific invitations to specific events and volunteer opportunities at school;

Consideration of parents

LaRocque, Kleiman, & Darling, (2011)

- Businesses and community organizations can provide financial and service support so that parents, teachers, and students can spend time together. Through two-way communication, the roles and expectations can become clearer.

Ascher, (1988)

- Increase the awareness and sensitivity of the school staff to parents' real time constraints and announce meetings and other events long enough in advance for parents to arrange for time off from work, if necessary;
- Allow open enrollment so that children can attend school near their parents' places of work;

Zarate, (2007)

- Teachers can increase schedule flexibility to increase parental involvement. Specifically, greater flexibility allows for parent-teacher meetings or special event attendance during non-traditional school hours.

Hoover-Dempsey et al., (2005)

- Offer suggestions for support of child's learning consistent with parents' circumstances;
- Adapt current involvement approaches as needed to enhance the fit between invitation and family circumstances; craft new strategies to enhance opportunities for communication;
- Advertise involvement opportunities clearly, attractively, repeatedly, using methods targeted to interest and needs of school families.

Involvement and empowerment

The literature, suggests that one of the most important methods in increasing parental involvement is a paradigm shift regarding which practices qualify as involvement and how those activities are approached.

Trotman, (2001)

- Provide parents with more authority. Use the team-oriented approach described by Comer (1988). This approach allows parents to feel welcome to participate in meaningful ways. Also, reinforce academic achievement at home while administrative and mental health teams implement and monitor the program at school;
- Ask parents about their interest in the school. Too often the school chooses what the parents should hear although the parents may have little or no interest in what is being presented. Give parents what they are interested in and provide them with interesting speakers so that their enthusiasm and excitement will remain at peak levels;

Rich (1985) – [via Ascher, (1988)]

- Provide bilingual hot-lines for parents who need aid in helping their children with their homework.

Zarate, (2007)

- Assign a physical space on school campuses for parents' exclusive use. A parent center can be used for networking, parent meetings, English classes, naturalization workshops and college-readiness information sessions. This space should be available evenings and weekends. Assign key teachers as liaisons between the parent center and school staff;

- Organize incentives for parents to accumulate “house of service” or “volunteer hours” at the schools.

Hoover-Dempsey et al., (2005)

- Develop routine school practices focused on discussion and development of positive, trusting parent-school relationships; make family-school relationships and interactions a part of the school’s daily life and culture;
- Systematically seek parent ideas, perspectives, opinions, and questions about school and family roles in student learning;
- Seek parents’ perspectives on the child and child’s learning; seek parent suggestions and follow through on them;
- Offer time-limited suggestions and learning assignments that require or encourage parent-student interaction; where possible, target suggestion;
- Create multiple opportunities for success (begin with small steps, offer clear notes and comments of thanks for parental help; express clearly that parents’ activities are making a difference for the student);
- Draw on families’ “funds of knowledge” in creating home learning tasks; create assignments for “homemade homework” that focus on family routines and tasks;
- Ask parents for feedback on their perceptions of their involvement activities’ influence on their child (e.g. influence on child’s behavior, attitudes, learning content, or processes in assignments).

Information distribution – Programmatic

Trotman, (2001)

- Follow the lead of the Chapter 1 program. The Chapter 1 program, which was developed to improve the educational opportunities of children by integrating childhood and adulthood education, is based on the notion that children will develop quickly as well as be more productive when the parents are both involved and are growing and developing themselves. It is designed to assist parent development through family orientation programs such as in-school parent centers, ongoing home visits, and collaborative projects with family service agencies. The program includes a parent coordinator and a parent room on the school site. This program has been successfully implemented in the Philadelphia school system, where consistent gains in students' test scores, grades, and attendance have been reported (Davidoff & Pierson, 1991). Other urban school districts can rally the funds to put such programs into place to enhance the relationship between home and school.

Ascher, (1988)

- Provide both legal and custodial parents with regular information on what is going on in the child's classroom, as well as the assistance they may need to help.

Rich (1985) [via Ascher, (1988)]

- Conduct bilingual media campaigns on the important role of the home in educating children;
- Stress by ministers and other respected leaders of the importance of parental involvement;

- Develop family learning centers in schools, store fronts, and churches that offer assistance (that is bilingual, when necessary) to parents wanting to help their children learn;

Zarate, (2007)

- Employ DVD technology to introduce parents to the US educational system, school specific policies, and opportunities for parental involvement. The video can address college preparation, opportunities for after-school activities or tutoring programs, and standardized testing. It also can familiarize parents with a child's annual learning objectives.

Hoover-Dempsey et al., (2005)

- Use school events as venues for distributing brief, attractively formatted information in appropriate languages on issues in parental involvement (e.g., developmentally appropriate, easy-to-implement suggestions for supporting student learning; information on effects of parental involvement; information on school policies and upcoming events);
- Offer information about what parents do when they are involved, emphasizing the wide range of activities different families employ (e.g., talking about the value of education, discussing the school day, communicating with teachers, coming to school, offering positive reinforcement for learning effort and accomplishment, attending child's school events, creating home practices that support students' schoolwork);
- Give parents suggestions for helping their children targeted to current assignments and learning goals;

- Offer information (by grade or course level) on learning goals for a specific period; this enables parents to know what is expected of their children and offers a context for understanding links between learning tasks and learning goals;
- Seek and share information on school and grade-level learning goals.

Information distribution – Developmental

Trotman, (2001)

- Urge parents and or guardians to become active in their child's educational process. Reiterate to them that they serve as their child's primary educators. Their presence during the child's educational career contributes to better behavior, which could lead to more school pride, higher self-esteem, and better grades.

Hoover-Dempsey et al., (2005)

- Note that even when student learning tasks surpass parents' knowledge, parents' interest in child's schooling, encouragement, reinforcement for learning, and modeling continue to support student learning and school success;
- Offer information about behavioral effects of parental involvement (e.g., students spend more time on school tasks, are more attentive in class, pay increased attention to homework and related assignments, do better in school);
- Communication about the value and importance of education models parents' commitment to schooling;
- Positive reinforcement gives information about expected learning behaviors and outcomes;
- Creating home practices that support student homework encourages more focused attention to learning tasks.

Parent-led actions and parent networks

LaRocque et al., (2011)

- School administrators can facilitate the development of a parental involvement committee;
- Support networks can provide the forum for parents to motivate each other.

Trotman, (2001)

- Ask the parents who attend meetings to spread the word to other parents. This strategy could grab the interest of parents who normally do not participate and increase the amount of parental involvement at all levels.

Ascher, (1988)

- Act as a facilitator for teen, single, working, and custodial-parent peer support.

Zarate, (2007)

- Parent leadership committees and organizations at school can recruit a membership pool representative of the student populations and make accommodations to ensure participation from all parents.

Teacher practice, development, and support

Zarate, (2007)

- Teachers must expend extra energy and resources to successfully engage parents. During the school officials' interview, multiple respondents felt the teachers who were successful in engaging parents invested more energy and resources than the average teacher.

LaRocque et al., (2011)

- Teachers can receive professional development in communication skills necessary to work with families;
- Colleges of education can teach educators how to successfully include parents in education.

Zarate, (2007)

- In order to increase the pool of non-English speakers in schools, federal and state funding can support non-English speakers in schools, federal and state funding can support non-English language learning opportunities for teachers or potential teachers;
- Clear and objective measurements can be used to compensate teachers with strong records of parental engagement. Flexible meeting times place demands on teachers and counselors and need to be recognized in the distribution of class or student load;

Hoover-Dempsey et al., (2005)

- Allocate regular faculty meeting time to discuss parental involvement, involvement practices that have been successful in the school, information from other sources on new ideas;
- Develop dynamic in-service programs that support teacher efficacy for involving parents and school capacities for effective partnerships with families;
- Offer teachers opportunities to collaborate with and learn from colleagues and parents;
- Create opportunities for practice and revision of strategies suggested;

- Draw on published programs of interactive homework (e.g., TIPS: Epstein et al., 1995) in making homework assignments;
- Allow time for parent-teacher interactions that clarify learning goals (by phone, in meetings, in conferences); hear parents' concerns, ideas, and goals for children.

Student centered approaches

LaRocque et al., (2011)

- Students can play a role in getting their parents excited about school happenings.

Trotman, (2001)

- Make sure that each child is properly educated and attends school regularly.
Administrators, teachers, and parents should work together and reach a common goal to ensure that the child will receive a quality education and make the child aware of the importance and value of a good education.

Organizational strategies and suggestions

Zarate, (2007)

- Schools in the study were adequately providing essential communication in Spanish. However, greater Spanish-language fluency among staff is needed to engage parents in more substantial ways. States and school boards should aim to increase Spanish-fluent staff at schools with high concentrations of students from Spanish-dominant households by using incentives or recruitment strategies;
- Schools and school districts should develop and disseminate clear goals and objectives for increasing parental involvement. Objectives should be measurable with measurements reflecting appropriate motivation and incentives;

- Schools and school programs should frequently evaluate their interactions and activities with parents. Surveys and interviews can be used to understand parents' preferred involvement practices and how parents evaluate current activities.

Hoover-Dempsey et al., (2005)

- Develop and maintain an active school file of teacher and parent ideas: one that is helpful and effective in inviting parental involvement, and raising public awareness of family-school relations in the school. Allow development of a school specific resource bank to support teacher skills and capacities for improved parent-teacher relations;
- Enable school development of involvement plans responsive to teacher, family, and community needs;
- Use after-school programs to increase family-school communication: include after-school staff in in-house communications, faculty meetings, professional development opportunities;
- In middle and high schools, create advisory structures that allow parents to check in with one adviser for general information on child progress, program planning, etc;
- Seek district and community support for creation of new structures to support family-school interactions and communication (e.g., parent resource room, telephone and e-mail access in classrooms, staff position dedicated to parent-school relationships, school-based family center;
- Offer a full range of involvement opportunities, including standard approaches (e.g., parent-teacher conferences, student performances) and new opportunities unique to

school and community (e.g., first day of school celebrations, parent workshops, social/networking events);

- Use these events to seek parent comments and suggestions for involvement;
- Share ideas about parent involvement activities that have worked.

Special cases

Trotman, (2001)

- Develop a case history of the family in an effort to determine what is hindering their involvement. Once a cause has been determined, incorporate a strategy to bridge the gap and make the parent feel more comfortable in the school setting.

Annotated Bibliography

Arias, M.B., & Morillo-Campbell, M. Promoting ELL parental involvement: Challenges in contested times. *Education Policy Research Unit, 1-22.*

This policy brief analyses factors that are related to the development of effective parental involvement in schools for English Language Learners (ELLs). The authors, drawing from an extensive literature review, highlight Epstein's typology, one of the most-cited typologies for parental involvement, for suggestions for how parents can support student academic achievement in different contexts, but also note the limitations of this typology, especially its lack of attention to cultural knowledge, and recommend that schools look at more non-traditional models for parental involvement that are based on developing a reciprocal relationship between schools and families. The key barriers to parental involvement for parents of ELLs are: (1) school based deficit perspective; (2) lack of English language proficiency; (3) parental educational level; (4) disjunctions between school and home; (5) logistical issues. To overcome these barriers, the authors suggest that policymakers and school officials do the following: (1) support the implementation of traditional parental involvement programs that are culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate; (2) fund the implementation of non-traditional parental involvement programs that reflect a reciprocal involvement in the school/parent community; (3) support the professional preparation of teachers who can identify funds of knowledge for curricular development and school outreach; (4) support community based education programs that inform parents about school values and expectations and work with parents to help them become advocates for their children.

Ascher, C. (1988). Improving the school-home connection for poor and minority urban students. *The Urban Review*, 20(2), 109-123.

A review of literature suggests shifting family situations in the lives of poor and minority youth require shifts in notions of parental involvement and inquires how to best facilitate family involvement in a broader sense. Urban schools need to be cognizant not to confuse lack of presence in the school with lack of involvement or interest in a child's academic endeavors. Various methods for supporting family involvement are also provided with particular focus on families of students of color and students from lower-income families. These methods primarily have to do with making accommodations for families with low information or functional barriers.

Blakely, M. (1983). Southeast Asian refugee parents: An inquiry into home-school communication and understanding. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 14(1), 43-68.

The author, through an extensive qualitative study consisting of interviews with Southeast Asian parents of school-age children and a two-year observation of family interactions, documents efforts of a school district to learn about and help refugee families adjust to American schools during the early years of the migration of more than half a million refugees from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. An emphasis is placed on understanding parents' perceptions of the language and the social environment of the schools. The study findings indicate that school officials need to first communicate face-to-face and then communicate via phone in order to best serve the needs of these immigrant families. There are significant limitations related to literacy, both in the native language and in English, which makes written communication suspect and often ineffective. Southeast Asian parents are also much more likely to take an indirect role in

the education process, primarily due to their wariness about authority figures and institutions of the state, which is directly tied to their experience as refugees of war and political strife. Both native language and English literacy programs are recommended to encourage better communication and participation in the relationship between the school and the parents.

Chen, C., Kyle, D.W., & McIntyre, E. (2008). Helping teachers work effectively with English language learners and their families. *The School Community Journal*, 18(1), 7-20.

Aware of the rapidly expanding cultural and linguistic diversity of school communities, the authors observed and analyzed a professional development project for teachers that sought to assist teachers in becoming more comfortable in working with students and families who speak little or no English. In this qualitative study, the researchers followed two cohorts of teachers who engaged with a Sheltered Instruction and Family Involvement Program (SIFI) over an 18-month period. Key observations were that teachers' fundamental points of views changed as they became more aware of specific family practices and home involvement in education, and that teachers made numerous modifications to their teaching methodology in order to better connect with and build upon their students' background experiences and knowledge.

De Gaetano, Y. (2007). The role of culture in engaging Latino parents' involvement in school. *Urban Education*, 42(2), 145-162.

This qualitative study observed and analyzed a three year project that was designed to improve the academic outcome of English Language Learners through the active involvement of parents in the schooling process. The research was predicated upon three basic assumptions: (1) most parents want the best for their children; (2) a good deal of learning goes on at home; (3) parental support for children's learning can take place in various sites – home, school, district,

and community level. The study found that teacher prep programs must explore the power of a culturally relevant approach to working with parents. School officials must also focus on the development of English speaking skills as well as literacy skills, both English as well as the native language. Through praxis, school officials and parents would better appreciate the importance of learning and dialogue and parents would gain cultural capital.

Epstein, J.L. (1992). School and family partnerships. *The Practitioner*, 18(1), 1-8.

In this brief article, which became the source for one of the key typologies for traditional parental involvement in schools, Epstein notes that school officials need to develop more comprehensive programs of family-school partnerships due to significant changes taking place in student needs, family needs, and school structures and programs. Epstein identifies six major types of involvement categories: (1) basic obligations of families; (2) basic obligations of schools; (3) involvement at school; (4) involvement in home learning; (5) involvement in decision making, governance, and advocacy; and (6) collaboration and exchanges with community. An action team, made up of teachers, parents, and administrators, must be put into place to ensure the implementation, development, and monitoring of these practices. While helpful as a starting point for school communities to analyze their parent-involvement programs, knowledge of the cultural traditions and practices of the primary communities in the district must be added to this typology for its applications to be relevant to the current demographic realities of most school districts throughout the country.

Epstein, J. L. (2005). Attainable goals? The spirit and letter of the No Child Left Behind Act on parental involvement. *Sociology of Education*, 78(2), 179-182.

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act requires attention be paid to parental involvement. Schools need to involve parents and consider issues of equity when doing so. All

parents need to be involved, not just those who show interest or are easily accommodated. A team approach to advancing parental involvement is strongly recommended. Further study of parental involvement will be required to better meet the requirements of the NCLB.

Green, C. L., Walker, J. M., Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., & Sandler, H. M. (2007). Parents' motivations for involvement in children's education: An empirical test of a theoretical of parental involvement. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 99*(3), 532-544.

This empirical study tests a three part theoretical model for predicting types and levels of parental involvement during elementary and middle school years. The theory suggests that parental involvement is based on a parent's self-concept or understanding of their role in the child's education, their belief about their efficacy in helping in their child's education, and invitations from the school to participate. The study found that while involvement did decrease as the child aged, the three-part theorem generally held true.

Hill, N. E., & Craft, S. A. (2003). Parent-school involvement and school performance: Mediated pathways among socioeconomically comparable African American and Euro-American families. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 95*(1), 74-83.

Many types of parental involvement exist. These types of involvement may vary by culture with certain groups participating more often in certain ways while other groups participate in different ways. This study examines the impacts of various types of participation by parents on students of different racial backgrounds. African-American students were found to most benefit from involvement at school or with the school rather than at-home involvement. Further, results suggest that while many parents would like to be more involved, they may lack the knowledge of how to do so.

Hill, N.E., & Taylor, L.C. (2004). Parental school involvement and children's academic achievement pragmatics and issues. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 13(4), 161-164.

Many schools and institutions want to increase parental involvement. There are certain mechanisms through which this is possible. While patterns of involvement may vary across cultures, there is general agreement that greater involvement by parents or families has a positive impact on students' academic success. Also, even though at-school involvement may decrease over time, at-home involvement increases. The provision of more information on how involvement can help students and ways to be involved as well as the formation of parent networks can support increased involvement overall.

Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., & Sandler, H. M. (1997). Why do parents become involved in their children's education? *Review of Educational Research*, 67(1), 3-42.

There is a three part formula for determining the likelihood and types of parental involvement. The formula for parental involvement is based on a parent's self-concept or understanding of their role in the child's education, their belief about their efficacy in helping in their child's education, and invitations from the school to participate. Based on this model, certain efforts may prove effective at increasing rates of parental involvement. Providing teachers time to contact parents and providing parents with formal invitations from teachers can help build parents' visions of their role and their efficacy. Defining opportunities for parents, working with employers to facilitate parental participation at school, and distribution of information on how parents can be involved (when formatted in a concrete and succinct manner) should all prove to increase parent involvement.

Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., Walker, J. M., Sandler, H. M., Whetsel, D., Green, C. L., Wilkins, A. S., & Closson, K. (2005). Why do parents become involved? Research findings and implications. *The Elementary School Journal, 106*(2), 105-130.

Providing a continuation of previous work, the three part theory of parental involvement was reexamined. The theory suggests that parental involvement is based on a parent's self-concept or understanding of their role in the child's education, their belief about their efficacy in helping in their child's education, and invitations from the school to participate. Research indicates that as feelings of efficacy increase, so does parental involvement. Formal teacher requests for parental involvement were found to be highly effective. Professional development opportunities for teachers should recognize the important role teachers play in helping parents construct an understanding of their own efficacy as the primary educators of their children. Positive attitudes by all staff towards families were also reported as important. In keeping with the components of the three part theoretical model two lists of strategies were provided for advancing various attributes that may determine parental involvement.

Jeynes, W. H. (2003). A meta-analysis of the effects of parental involvement on minority children's academic achievement. *Education and Urban Society, 35*(2), 202-218.

A meta-analysis of the effects of parental involvement on minority children's academic achievement was conducted. The analysis reviewed 21 studies and four different markers of academic achievement. While some differences existed between racial groups, the study found that for all groups, academic achievement in all areas was increased by greater parental involvement. The group most advantaged by greater parental involvement was African-Americans, followed by Latinos, then Asian-Americans.

Kohl, G. O., Lengua, L. J., & McMahon, R. J. (2000). Parent involvement in school: Conceptualizing multiple dimensions and their relationships with family and demographic risk factors. *Journal of School Psychology, 38(6), 501-523.*

Parental involvement as a factor in students' academic success was measured via a sample of 387 kindergarten and first grade students from high risk neighborhoods in four different sites. The study identified six types of parental involvement – Parent-teacher contact, parent involvement at the school, parent involvement at home, quality of parent-teacher relationships, teacher's perception of the parent, and parent endorsement of the school. Risk factors (3) were also examined. These were parental education level, maternal depression, and single-parent status. The individual risk factors were found to be differentially associated with the various types of parental involvement; however, no significant differences appeared between ethnic groups. Findings suggest that multiple types of involvement may be present for parents and families, that the quality is more important than the quantity in terms of parent-teacher interactions, and that too often teachers initiate parent contact only when a student has done poorly socially or academically.

LaRocque, M., Kleiman, I., & Darling, S. M. (2011). Parental involvement: The missing link in school achievement. *Preventing School Failure, 55(3), 115-122.*

While the value of parental participation is widely accepted, it can be difficult to promote or maintain. As schools become more diverse, these challenges intensify. Families are important partners in helping schools meet the needs of their students, but teachers often struggle to know how to work effectively with diverse parents. Many methods exist for using families' cultures and experiences. Though varying types of involvement exist, at-school involvement has been shown to be most salient. Communication, transportation, and scheduling barriers should

all be addressed, as well as providing parents with information on how to become involved so as to not mistakenly identify parents as disinterested when instead they are facing functional or cultural obstacles to inclusion.

Lee, J. S., & Bowen, N. K. (2006). Parent involvement, cultural capital, and the achievement gap among elementary school children. *American Educational Research Journal*, 43(2), 193-218.

This study examines the level and impact of five types of parental involvement on elementary school children's academic achievement by race/ethnicity, poverty, and parental education level. The sample was 415 third through fifth graders. Parents with different demographic characteristics were found to participate differently; those matching the patterns of the dominant groups were found to attain the most academic achievement. There did exist, though, some differences in benefit among different groups from different types of involvement. While white parents were more likely to be involved in schools, parents of color were more likely to be involved outside of schools. Increasing in-school parental involvement for children of color was linked to greater achievement. When parents faced cultural barriers in participating in in-school activities, once those barriers were crossed their impact lessened significantly. Lack of involvement in schools did not indicate lack of care on the part of the family but more often was representative of various barriers that exist to involvement for some parents and families.

Lightfoot, D. (2004). "Some parents just don't care:" Decoding the meanings of parental involvement in urban schools. *Urban Education*, 39(1), 91-107.

Parental involvement is a broad term that can encompass a variety of activities or meanings. The use of the phrase parental involvement does not exist in a vacuum but rather in an environment loaded with power imbalances and cultural expectations. Use of language in

discussing parental involvement should be intentional and words and language used should be understood to shape the concepts and realities students and families experience. Language that creates binaries can reflect subtle racism that disregards non-dominant families or cultures. It is important to not try to make immigrant families or kids reflect white middle class notions of success or life-paths unless they individually choose to do so. Parents and families should be consulted in the design of educational programs and programming.

Lopez, G.R., (2001). The value of hardwork: Lessons on parent involvement from an (im)migrant household. *Harvard Educational Review*, 71(3), 416-437.

In a challenge to the traditional and hegemonic concept of parental involvement in their children's education, the author of this case study, involving a sample of five immigrant Latino families, explored how parents were involved in their children's educational development, outside of traditional school-related models. Rather than viewing involvement as the implementation of specific scripted school activities, the parents who took part in this study understood involvement as a means of instilling in their children the value of education through the medium of hard work. Through observations of family interactions and interviews with the parents, it became very clear to the author that immigrant parents perceived the concept of involvement in schools in a radically different way than did most school educators. The findings strongly recommended that: (1) schools must partner with parents; (2) schools must identify how parents are already involved with their children's education "funds of knowledge"; (3) schools must validate home cultures; and (4) educators must give up predetermined involvement typologies that cause marginalized parents to be labeled as uninvolved.

McKay, M. M., Atkins, M. S., Hawkins, T., Brown, C., & Lynn, C. J. (2003). Inner-city African American parental involvement in children's schooling: Racial socialization and social support from the parent community. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 32*(1-2), 107-114.

Parents ($n = 161$) and teachers ($n = 18$) at an urban elementary school serving primarily African American students answered questionnaires regarding racial socialization, social support, and involvement in activities that support youth academic achievement. Parental reports of racism awareness and contact with school staff were correlated with parent reports of at-home involvement and at-school involvement. These results suggested that parents concerned about racism may try to shield their children from it by engaging with them more frequently at-home rather than at-school. Attempts to increase parent involvement may also need to address past experiences with racism or perceptions thereof. Parents and teachers were indicated to have differing levels of religiosity and afro-centric values, with parents rating higher in both categories. These findings indicate that simple cultural awareness may not be sufficient, and in fact a paradigm shift regarding parental involvement is crucial to success. One effort at such a shift is increasing social events like welcoming parties or Mother's Day breakfasts (the latter were indicated to have been attended at rates six times higher than PTO or parent workshops).

Moll, L.C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory Into Practice, 31*(2), 132-141.

The authors in this qualitative and ethnographic study sought to capitalize on household and other community resources in order to organize classroom instruction that goes beyond traditional rote-exercise instruction. Using ethnographic observations, open-ended interview

strategies, life histories, and case studies, the researchers, working with Latino families in the southwestern United States, focused on “funds of knowledge” as a means to connect the experience of the home and the community with the school curriculum. These “funds” are “historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being.” The researchers coordinated their analysis of the interrelated activities of household dynamics, classroom practices, and after-school study groups with teachers. The results of the study strongly suggested that it was feasible and useful to have teachers visit households for research purposes. Teachers can become the learner and establish a new and more cooperative relationship with the parents and the students. Also, this relationship can become the basis for the exchange of knowledge about family and school matters, thus reducing the isolation of the classroom, and contributing positively to academic content that is based on the lived experience of the community.

Panferov, S. (2010). Increasing ELL parental involvement in our schools: Learning from the parents. *Theory Into Practice, 49(2), 106-112.*

This limited case study looked at the experiences of two immigrant families, one from Russia and the other from Somalia, in relationship to their involvement with supporting the educational experience of their English Language Learner (ELL) students. The researcher, through observations and interviews with the parents, wanted to learn: (1) how ELL parents viewed literacy and their own literacy practices; (2) what were the qualities of literacy practiced in the homes; and (3) what were the issues specific to parent-child and parent-school interactions and communications that might contribute to academic success. The study findings indicated that: (1) parents have to advocate for their children’s schooling and literacy development; (2) educators need to educate parents more directly about the ways in which they can help their

children with school work; and (3) educators need to encourage ELL parents to volunteer in classes or at school events to promote information about the home language.

Peterson, S.S., & Ladky, M. (2007). A survey of teachers' and principals' practices and challenges in fostering new immigrant parent involvement. *Canadian Journal of Education, 30(2), 881-910.*

Multiple factors, including families' ethnic and language backgrounds, socio-economic status, and educational history, contribute to parental involvement patterns with their children's educational experience. The authors of this study, using questionnaire and interview data, examined how educators in Canada created opportunities for immigrant parents to support their children's literacy growth and academic achievement. Attitudes and assumptions of school officials influence parental involvement, and the study asserted that to promote positive parental involvement with their children's education, teachers and principals need to focus on three key principles: (1) build on the culture and life experiences of immigrant families; (2) build bridges between the new and native cultural and educational experiences of immigrant families; and (3) help parents see themselves as teachers of their children, along with the school's teachers.

Quiocho, A.M.L., & Daoud, A.M. (2006). Dispelling myths about Latino parent participation in schools. *The Educational Forum, 70(3), 255-267.*

In this straightforward qualitative study, the authors spent an academic year in two schools in southern California where school officials had low expectations of Latino children and their parents. The questions that guided the research were: "What perceptions did teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs) have about Latino parent involvement?" and "How do Latino parents of ELLs see themselves in relation to the school." Through interviews with parents, teachers, administrators, and school staff, as well as observations of school activities and public

meetings, the authors reported results that directly challenge popular negative perceptions that are based on the deficit perspective and some degree of racial bias of Latino parents and their participation in their children's education. The study reports that teacher attitudes and biases changed when they visited homes and had a first-hand understanding of their students' families. The study also shows that Latino parents do have high expectations of their children's academic achievement, and they want to be more involved in the school and educational activities. The authors recommend that parental involvement programs need to be customized based on cultural experiences, traditions, and literacy level.

Rah, Y., Choi, S., & Nguyen, T.S.T. (2009). Building bridges between refugee parents and schools. *International Journal of Leadership in Education: Theory and Practice*, 12(4), 347-365.

In this qualitative study, rooted in theory and constant comparative analysis, the authors sought to understand how public school officials create conditions to facilitate refugee parent involvement in their children's education. Drawing from data from a recent doctoral dissertation as well as interviews with nine school officials who worked with recently arrived Hmong students, the authors identified three prominent barriers to refugee parent involvement: (1) language proficiency; (2) time constraints due to family socio-economic status and traditional family structures; and (3) deferential attitudes toward school authority. Three recommended strategies for those working with the refugees were presented in the findings: (1) create a parent liaison position; (2) utilize the resources of existing community service organizations; and (3) provide parent education programs.

Ramirez, A.Y.F. (2003). Dismay and disappointment: Parental involvement of Latino immigrant parents. *The Urban Review*, 35(2), 93-109.

The authors interviewed parents in a predominantly Latino community in southern California to learn about the concerns of immigrant Latino families regarding their children's schools. Primarily through the use of group interviews and member checks, the authors identified three primary themes of concern for the parents: communication, expectations, and accountability. Parents were very clear in their expressed desire for schools to listen more to their voices. They were frustrated with either lack of communication about school issues and events or lack of clear communication that did not take cultural and linguistic interpretations and nuances into consideration. The parents wanted school officials to be attentive to cultural differences among varied Latino communities. They also wanted teachers to be more involved in knowing about the lived experiences of their students and their students' families.

Risko, V. J., & Walker-Dalhouse, D. (2009). Parents and teachers: talking with or past one another--or not talking at all? *The Reading Teacher*, 62(5), 442-444.

Literature indicates that power imbalances exist in communication between schools and families. Cultural barriers may exist as well. Multiple researchers have found that parents and teachers may find frustrations when trying to communicate with each other. Participation in the community by teachers and school officials and also building a friendly and warm rapport with parents is important. Similarly important are opportunities for students to include their culture and their family's experiences in the classroom. Having students complete assignments about themselves is one way to accomplish that. Parents should be asked what information could help them become more involved and schools should help link parents to other social services they may need.

Smith, J., Stern, K., & Shatrova, Z. (2008). Factors inhibiting Hispanic parents' school involvement. *The Rural Educator*, 29(2), 8-13.

With the mandates of No Child Left Behind intensifying the need for school districts to improve academic achievement, particularly of at-risk and marginalized students, and the clarity of the research that parental involvement has a positive impact on academic achievement, educators have to be able to identify obstacles to parental involvement of marginalized groups and then work with the community to remove or at least lessen the impact of those obstacles. In this qualitative study that focused on non-urban schools, the authors sought to identify the primary obstacles to parental involvement for Latino parents. Three primary factors were found to inhibit Latino parent involvement: (1) the failure of the school to send correspondence and other written materials in Spanish; (2) the inability of parents to speak and understand English in their communication with the school office staff and with teachers; and (3) the reluctance of parents to question authority or advocate for the rights of their children.

Trotman, M. F. (2001). Involving the African American parent: Recommendations to increase the level of parental involvement with African American families. *Journal of Negro Education*, 70(4), 275-285.

One method for improving the achievement of African American students is to increase the level of involvement of their parents. While a number of challenges may exist for parents, schools can help increase their involvement with a variety of organizational steps. The teacher-parent relationship is particularly important and teachers should be afforded time to contact parents. Initiating contact once the student has had a negative social or academic experience at the school is not preferred; instead, parents should be contacted early and a positive rapport and

relationship established. Parents should also be provided information on the importance of their involvement and tips for getting involved.

Turney, K., & Kao, G. (2009). Barriers to school involvement: Are immigrant parents disadvantaged? *The Journal of Educational Research*, 102(4), 257-271.

The authors of this study, very aware of the data that shows a strong correlation between parental involvement at school and positive results for their children's academic and behavioral achievement, conducted a quantitative study of data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort (2001) to determine whether or not race and immigrant differences create barriers to parental involvement in school. A sample of responses from almost 13,000 parents led the authors to present several key findings. Minority immigrant parents perceive a greater number and magnitude of barriers to getting involved in their children's schools than did native born parents, and thus were less likely to participate in their children's school. Among immigrant parents, time in the United States and English language ability were positively associated with involvement. The authors did acknowledge that parents may have different ways of demonstrating their commitment to their children's education. They emphasized the need for schools to pay close attention to this data, especially because teachers often interpret the level of parental involvement at school as an indicator of how much parents care about their children's academic achievement. Gaps in achievement begin at an early age, and minority students may be unfairly penalized by teachers who interpret lower levels of parental involvement as a sign of less engagement in the educational process.

Vazquez-Nuttall, E., Li, C., & Kaplan, J. (2006). Home-school partnerships with culturally diverse families. *Journal of Applied School Psychology, 22(2), 81-102.*

The partnership between the family and the school is one of the key indicators of a student's academic success. Traditional family involvement practices are inadequate when working with multicultural families within the rapidly diversifying school communities. The authors, drawing from Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Development, conducted a case study with Hmong families in an urban school setting to illustrate how an ecological framework can be applied to promote home-school partnerships. Using this ecological model, the home-school partnership can be seen within the belief systems and resources of the entire community. The authors identified parental involvement programs that were successful in the community and then assisted the school district in building multicultural awareness and competencies among school personnel through specific interventions. School personnel, at all levels, need to reach out to minority parents and learn how to inform them about the functioning of American schools and how parents can become involved in effective ways, both at school and at home.

Walker, J. M., Shenker, S. S., & Hoover-Dempsey, K. V. (2010). Why do parents become involved in their children's education? Implications for school counselors. *Professional School Counseling, 14(1), 27-41.*

Schools generally recognize the importance of parental involvement but do not always have effective plans for advancing involvement. Systematic knowledge of how and why parents become involved is important. Similarly, knowledge of how involvement impacts students is important. Parent involvement is driven by a parent's self-concept or understanding of their role in the child's education, their belief about their efficacy in helping in their child's education, and invitations from the school to participate.

School counselors are in a unique position to be able to help advance the involvement of parents in their children's educational lives. School counselors have a variety of skills that are useful in such an endeavor. They can address staff attitudes, create welcoming environments, and increase sensitivity and sociocultural awareness. They can also train staff to help families feel empowered and their voices heard. Families generally respond best to specific personalized invitations to events where children are active participants. Organization of parent support networks and links between the school and other community groups is important as well.

Zarate, M.E. (2007). *Understanding Latino parent involvement in education. Tomas Rivera Policy Institute, 7-18.*

This study, acknowledging the perception of low parental involvement by Latino parents in the public schools and hoping to fill the gap in research on what constitutes parental involvement in the middle and high school years, examined: (1) Latino parent's perceptions of their participation in the education of their children; (2) schools' and teachers' expectations of parental involvement; (3) programmatic initiatives addressing parental involvement in education; and (4) Latino students' perceptions of the role of parental involvement in their education. The findings indicated a wide divergence of definitions and perceptions of parental involvement in education amongst the stakeholder groups. Also, the data showed that most schools lack clear organizational goals and objectives on how best to involve parents in the school. This study is helpful because it provides not only a significant number of policy and program recommendations for most of the key stakeholder groups – policymakers, schools, administrators, and teachers, but it also captures the voices of the students, both in terms of their perception of parental involvement and their acknowledgement of the importance of non-academic support and strong elementary school support for their academic success.