THE IMPACT OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT
ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to:

My Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, thank you for covering me with your hand of protection.

Thank you for stirring up the gifts in me and using me for your glory! Thank you for continually molding and shaping me into the leader you desire for me to be.

Calvin, you encouraged me and supported me throughout this journey. Through all the bumps in the road, you held my hand and helped me to stand strong. I love you dearly!

Mom, one of your favorite songs was “Wind Beneath my Wings,” and you have been just that for me. I value your wisdom and dedication to education. Thank you for being my inspiration and for imparting me with your passion for education. I pray I can carry on your torch of wisdom and continue fighting the war on illiteracy on your behalf. Thank you for being my angel! I love you!

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I love you and I hope I make you proud!
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ABSTRACT

This study examines aspects of parental involvement that lead to student academic achievement. This study will provide schools and districts with objective data that will allow stakeholders to identify specific and effective strategies to increase parental involvement. The researcher explores the social capital theory, cultural capital theory, social reproduction theory and Joyce Epstein’s model of the six domains of parental involvement. Using a quantitative approach, the researcher investigates the correlation between parental involvement and student achievement, as well as the impact of parental involvement on student achievement. Findings indicate that identifying organizational barriers, identifying possible effective strategies to overcome the organizational barriers, and establishing an effective and collaborative partnership between school and home has a great impact on parental involvement, and may lead to an increase in student achievement. Implications for all stakeholders and recommendations for future research are offered.
CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Background

Prior to the beginning of the 20th century, formalized schooling was a collaboration between families and schools. In the late 1800s, the family dynamic was clearly defined by the father’s role of being the financial supporter of the family, while the mother’s was to manage and control the home. Within the context of the societal norm of the time, children were collectively reared by a cooperative of mothers who provided a nurturing environment for children in the community. Accordingly, it was in 1897 that a group of mothers from across the nation founded the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) to support a healthy growing relationship between parents and teachers. This movement was very active in political affairs, and worked toward passing laws in support of children’s rights (e.g. child labor laws, food and drug acts, and housing legislation).

Currently in the 21st century, there has been another major shift in the structure of families. These days, it is not uncommon to find the breadwinner of a single parent home working numerous jobs to support a basic lifestyle for their children. By comparison, two-parent homes usually find both father and mother working full-time in order to financially support the family.

With the shift in financial responsibilities, many families are unable to support their children when it comes to parental involvement in schools, in the traditional sense. Research has indicated disconnects between parents’ engagement, as well as support, in school activities, and because of this shift, schools have been forced to take much of the responsibility in educating students, both academically and socially. Consequently, the school system has switched roles with the parents and is now granted the integral responsibility of being the primary caregiver of a child, instead of being mere supporter.
With a high correlation between academic success and parental involvement, alternative methods must be established that will assist parents in supporting their children with the current family structures in place. Schools are now challenged to find creative methods to inform and involve parents on strategies and techniques to support their children in addition to building a successful partnership between school and the home (Burns, 1993).

Closing the achievement gap in education has continued to be a major topic of discussion over the last decade. The achievement gap refers to the large disparity in academic achievement between specific demographics of students, for example, the performance gap between African-American and Latino students, as compared to their White and Asian peers. Student progress reports, standardized test scores, dropout rates, and college completion requirements indicate the numerous factors causing disparities in the achievement gap.

Socioeconomic factors can also be attributed to the disparity in student achievement. Based on data from the U.S. Department of Education, there is a strong correlation between students performing low on state-wide standardized assessments and students who fall into the low socioeconomic status (SES) category. On the opposite socioeconomic spectrum, the U.S. Department of Education also confirms a strong correlation between students of middle to high SES performing in the middle to high percentage of the state standardized assessments.

There are a number of key factors that contribute to successfully bridging the gap between White and Asian students and their African-American and Latino peers. The 2009 California Accountability Progress Report (APR) indicates minority students have an achievement gap of approximately 150 points below their White counterparts (California Accountability Progress Report, 2009). With the White and Asian population taking a large academic lead, the Latino students are trailing behind and the English Language Learners (who
are identified as non-fluent English speakers) scored higher than African American students, overall.

In 2001, the federal government created a system that was designed to narrow and eliminate the gap between all children. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act is a system that is designed to identify and acknowledge the gaps between students and strategically eliminate them. Title I is the cornerstone of the NCLB Act. Many of the major requirements of NCLB Act, such as teacher requirements and accountability, sanctions for schools, professional developments and parental involvement are outlined in Title I. Nearly ten years later, there is still a significant discrepancy in test scores, which indicates there is still a flaw in the educational system.

Federal policies described in NCLB and Title I require individual states, districts and schools to directly address the gaps in the educational system. Through this government initiative, substantial financial support is provided to schools and districts with socioeconomically disadvantaged students. Another requirement for the schools and districts to receive the Title 1 funds is that at least one percent of said funds are spent on parental involvement. Parents, as the students’ primary caregivers, have an enormous impact on their children’s education in a variety of ways. Districts and schools must learn how to best utilize each parent as a resource and identify which models of parental involvement are most closely associated with student achievement. In essence, Title 1 requires parental involvement in school governance, planning and decision-making, as well as a governing committee, at school sites and district levels.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was designed, in theory, to produce educational reform based on principles that suggested setting academic standards and measurable goals that are attainable for all students enabling them to perform at a proficient level of education by 2014. Proficiency is determined based on the percentage of individual students, and subgroups of students, scoring at or above 800 on the English Language Arts and Math statewide tests. The
The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act was created to keep schools and their districts accountable to the students they serve, and the communities in which they reside, by improving the quality of the educational programs provided. Its purpose was also to take into account the alarming disparity between minority students and their peers.

Researchers have not indicated specific causes of the achievement gap; however, some of the myriad causes could include factors such as culture, socioeconomic status and environment. As it is suggested that the culture and environment in which many children are raised play a role in the academic gap, experts argue that there is an inequality that minorities face putting them at a disadvantage during the start of their educational careers. Regardless of what factors have the greatest impact on the gap, the facts continue to point to a clear distinction between minority students and the other subgroups of students at a school site.

All students becoming proficient or advanced is a probable goal, however, based on the current data, which indicates the achievement level of students in California, there is a huge disparity between the Caucasian and Asian communities and the African-American and Latino communities. According to the California Department of Education, 39% of the African American population is performing at a proficient level. That is a difference of 34% in comparison to the Asian population who has 74.6% of their population performing at the proficient and advanced levels, and 69.9% of the White population performing at proficient/advanced levels (California Department of Education, 2009).

In an effort to address the nationwide academic achievement gap, the federal government instituted the following guidelines that school districts must adhere to in order to produce the best positive results in affecting the gap. Every school within each district must prepare an annual report card, to be made available to parents and community members, detailing the student academic achievement for all subgroups. The report must show a comparison of students at all
the achievement levels within the school district as compared to students in other districts nationwide. The report card must also indicate that a teacher is “highly qualified” based on the national definition. The federal government instituted these policies to ensure equitable opportunities for all students, and to assure schools’ accountability to the students and parents they serve.

In addition to making schools accountable to their students, the NCLB Act also includes a component specifically designed to incorporate parental involvement. NCLB provides partnership opportunities for parents to ensure that they are aware of their legal rights, and are abreast of each school’s obligations to their community of students (NCLB Act of 2001). The law has specific requirements on parental involvement that include:

1. State agencies must support the collection and dissemination of information on effective parental involvement methods to local educational agencies and schools.
2. Title I schools have specific measures that a school must follow; in order to receive the Title I funds a school must involve parents in the overall planning at the district and school levels, coordinate parent workshops, provide parental trainings, and coordinate annual meetings for federal education programs (e.g. Head Start, and Reading First).
3. The school district must distribute an annual report card specifying how the school and district are performing as a whole. The district must also allow parents the choice to change schools if the school is not performing at an adequate level.
4. School districts and schools must involve parents in the annual evaluation of the school and the design of parental involvement programs for parents.
5. Schools must have a strategy for two-way communication between the school and the parent keeping them informed of their students’ learning progress and other school activities. In addition, districts must ensure that there are opportunities for the parents to
contact the school and discuss any concerns with the administration of the school site, as well.

One strategy that has been correlated with student achievement is the increase of parental involvement by means of classroom support, homework help, and active involvement in PTA/PTO. Understanding the positive correlation between parental involvement and student achievement, research has shown that low SES parents find it difficult to be actively involved based on the current structure of parent programs and support opportunities at school sites (Hill & Taylor, 2004). Traditionally, schools have involved parents in the PTA/PTO, fundraisers, and include them as classroom volunteers and chaperones on fieldtrips. However, most of the parent support opportunities are during the school day and doesn’t allow working parents to participate. Therefore, there is a misunderstanding of the support provided by low SES parents and their children. This is largely due to the barriers parents of a low socioeconomic status face when asked to volunteer in a traditional parental involvement model. Further research indicates that there are more effective strategies for parental involvement based on the SES and ethnicities of the parents (Hill & Taylor, 2004).

**Theoretical Framework**

Whereas parental involvement is not a mandate in public education, it should be seen as a viable resource based on data revealing the significant impact on student achievement. Parental involvement in schools has been a focus of discussion since the mid 1800s with the establishment of the Parent Teacher Association that was designed to build a healthy supportive relationship between the parents and teachers in an effort to increase student achievement. It has been suggested that through parental involvement a student may see the importance of education
through the lens of their parents, therefore directly impacting the student’s academic achievement.

This study will be based on the Social and Economic Capital framework and the Reproduction Theoretical framework. The Social Capital theoretical framework is a concept which “focuses on the degree and quality of middle-class forms of social support inherent in a young person’s interpersonal network” (Stanton-Salazar, 1997). The Social Capital theoretical framework also emphasizes and supports the need for adults to participate in a more active role in the lives of children. Data from the studies supports a significant difference when there is a genuinely supportive relationship between an adult and a student, and a system is in place that is designed to support that relationship.

**Statement of the Problem**

The Current models of parental involvement, inclusive of PTA organizations and classroom volunteer opportunities, may not correlate with what experts suggest have benefitted parents based on Social and Cultural Capital. Social Capital socioeconomic barriers include non-flexible work schedules, lack of overall resources (including transportation to school sites), stress as a result of residing in high risk communities, as well as past negative experiences with the school itself (Burns, 1993, p. 12). Research further indicates the parental involvement opportunities that may be more effective for specific subgroups, for example: building partnerships between schools, families and the communities in which they reside, in essence, making the school a community center; creating opportunities for school-parent contacts outside of the school; providing transportation to and childcare for PTA/PTO meetings, in addition to scheduling meetings and workshops/classes with the working parents’ schedule in mind (Lee & Bowen, 2006) (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007).
Parents and schools should be accountable to one another in an effort to increase parental involvement in schools because there appears to be a lack of training for parents on the requirements and needs of students. Parental training should include effective decision making skills and knowledge on assisting their child with school related activities, as well as augmenting their learning process at home. Documented cases reflect how parents’ self-perceptions of their own academic competence affect their involvement in assisting their children. Confidence in the parents’ intellectual abilities is the most salient predictors of their school involvement.

The disconnect between the school and home is largely due to the type of relationship established between the school personnel and the parents. Schools have not created an enriching environment for parents to actively participate directly in academic activities. Nor is there a parent resource center where parents can feel welcomed or attend workshops designed specifically to meet their needs. Effective partnerships have not been established between school personnel and homes. Professional development opportunities that are designed to train teachers and school personnel on effectively involving parents while identifying ways to help facilitate a healthy home/school relationship are areas that research suggests be considered.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study will examine the aspects of “parental involvement” that lead to academic achievement in students such as:

1. The type of parental involvement participation currently in schools/districts that have an impact on student achievement.

2. How the socioeconomic status (SES) of the parents is factored in when suggesting parental involvement and support.
3. An overview of successful parent involvement policies and procedures for schools/districts.

4. Evidence that will further guide the researcher in recommending parent involvement policies and procedures that are beneficial based on the SES of the parents.

5. Ways to develop parents’ accountability to the school, by educating parents on the needs of the students/school, supporting that educating parents to make effective decisions, as well as strategies, augment the learning at home which leads to academic achievement.

6. An in depth account of the best practices between school personnel and the parents. Establishing relationships with school personnel, and creating an environment where parents are welcomed and encouraged to actively participate in a variety of ways, can not only reduce problem behaviors with students but will increase academic achievement.

**Research Questions**

1. Are there organization barriers that attribute to low parental involvement, which, in turn, contributes to diminished student achievement?

2. What are possible effective strategies to improve student achievement and overcome the persistent barriers that hinder parental involvement?

3. What best practices will support a partnership between the school personnel and parents that may lead to an increase in student achievement?
The Importance of the Study

The importance of this study is to provide schools/districts with objective data that will allow them to identify effective strategies to clearly identify the parent roles, and specific strategies to involve them in the schools.

This study will be particularly useful to the four major stakeholders in education: the parents, students, teachers and administrators. Being the primary educator, this study will highlight ways in which parents can better support their child and the school, considering all the barriers, and build a healthy and productive relationship with the school and their child’s teacher. After reading this study, teachers will gain best practices that encourage partnership and includes healthy two-way communication practices with parents, in addition to effective support strategies. Administrators at the school and district levels will identify persistent barriers of parental involvement at their school/district site, and create a new model of parental involvement opportunities to overcome those barriers. Students will benefit overall from the collaborative efforts of both the schools and the home.

Upon completion of this study, the district, school site administrators, and teachers will be able to clearly identify specific strategies that will impact parental involvement and increase student achievement creating an enriched and welcoming environment for parents.

Limitations

This study may be limited as a result of being conducted at only one school in the district.
Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined below:

- **Academic Achievement**: Student performance at or above the states measure of proficiency.

- **Academic Performance Index (API)**: Measurement of the academic performance and growth of schools and districts. Each state has determined their level of proficiency. In California, a score of 800 denotes proficiency.

- **Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)**: A series of annual academic performance goals, mandated by federal law, establishing the percentage of students scoring proficiency on the state assessment for each school and the state, as a whole.

- **Cultural Capital**: Forms of knowledge; skill; education; any advantages a person has which give them a higher status in society, including high expectations.

- **Culturally Responsive Teaching**: A pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

- **Decision Making**: A process wherein an awareness of a problem, influenced by information, values and beliefs, is reduced to competing alternatives. From these alternatives, a choice is made.

- **Economic Capital**: Command over economic resources (cash, assets).

- **Parent**: Natural parent, legal guardian, or other person/caregiver including grandparent, step-parent, or person legally responsible for the child’s welfare.

- **Parent Involvement**: Commitment from the parents to actively participate in, both, the school and their children’s education.
Shared Decision Making: A process that includes the input of parents, teachers, administrators, community members, and possibly students in the decisions that affect how a school or school district operates.

Social Capital: Resources based on group membership, relationships, networks of influence and support.

Sociocultural Theory: The relationship between the social structures, the values of a society, how they change with time, and why.

Socioeconomic Status (SES): An individual’s or group’s position within a hierarchical social structure. SES status depends on a combination of variables, including occupation, education, income, wealth, and place of residence. Sociologists often use socioeconomic status as a means of predicting behavior.

Social Reproduction: The process of transferring aspects of society from generation to generation.

Overview of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one provided an overview of the academic achievement gap and the federal policies that are currently in place to close the gap. One of the federal policies discussed was the opportunity for parents to become involved in the academic process, thereby impacting the student’s achievement in a positive way and narrowing the achievement gap. Chapter one also included the statement of the problem, the purpose and significance of the study, research questions, definitions of the terms, and a general overview. Chapter two contains a review of the literature, identifying the positive correlation between parental involvement and student achievement through the collaboration and partnership of school personnel (teachers, administrators and other personnel) and the home (parents and
community members). Chapter three presents the methodology, population, the data collection and analysis procedures for this study. Chapter four presents the data of the study. Finally, Chapter five summarizes the findings and their implications for parents, teachers and administrators, as well as recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER TWO:
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The No Child Left Behind Act, in conjunction with the Title I initiative, is the government mandate requiring parents to be included in the governing body of the schools. This measure caused schools to develop programs in order to implement parental involvement strategy that would comply with Title I requirements, as well as being effective in improving student achievement. The overall goal of Title I is to improve the teaching and learning of children in high-poverty schools so that they can meet challenging academic content and performance standards (Patrikakou, 2005). In 1965, federal policy did not require parental involvement in regards to Title I. However, between 1971 and 1988, states were required to consult with parents to assure involvement in the program planning and implementation of parent advisory councils in the schools (D’Agostino, J. et al, 2001) Districts were encouraged to develop advisory councils, resource centers, parent liaison staff, and resources to support the parents and provide them with the necessities required to increase home learning. By 1994 new provisions were added to Title I for parental involvement. Schools that received more than $500,000 per year in Title I funds had to reserve 1% for parent involvement activities. This was in addition to each school having to develop a parent-school compact that described the school’s responsibility to provide a high-quality curriculum and instruction, as well as provide on-going school-home communication that
is necessary for achieving high standards. The school-parent compact also outlined the parent’s responsibility, which was to primarily support their child’s learning at home.

Parents are the child’s first and primary teacher. The National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement programs suggests that parents are a child’s life support system (1998). A parent’s involvement in their child’s school should be beyond the PTA or volunteering in the classroom; their involvement begins in their own home (Berger, 1987). The National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE), in conjunction with the California School Boards Association (CSBA), describes parent involvement to include: being a part of the decision-making at the school site, collaborating with teachers and coordinating activities that support the curriculum that can be done at home, and partnering with teachers in the educational process to enhance the development and academic achievements of their children (National Coalition for Parent Involvement In Education, 2010) (California School Boards Association, 2010).

Parental involvement is the focus of countless programs and policies, largely due to the amount of time children spend with their families in the early and impressionable time in their lives. Children spend more time with their families during the first ten years of life than in any other social context (Patrikakou et al., 2005). Therefore, family involvement sets the tone and condition upon which a child engages in education, thus affecting and impacting their academic success. A second reason parental involvement has been mandated by policies such as NCLB Act and Title I is due to the desire of both the school and parents to educate as well as build the social
capital of children effectively. In addition, schools have a strong ability to influence, encourage and empower parents to participate in their child’s educational experience, thereby promoting a positive school and community climate for learning (Brofenbrenner, 1975).

Patrikakou, et al. suggest three groupings that evidence how parental involvement impacts student achievement and success (2005):

1. Interventions with a family support component positively affect children’s outcomes.
2. Parental involvement is a mechanism through which the long-term effect of intervention is achieved.
3. Indicators of parent involvement are associated with significantly higher levels of school performance and success.

There is a natural variation in parental attitude and behaviors associated with student achievements, which include school performance, achievement test scores and educational attainment. Overall, high parental involvement, regardless of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, a child’s sex, and a child’s motivational level, have been found to produce a positive correlation with a student’s academic achievement (Patrikakou, 2005).

A study conducted by Hill and Taylor noted that parents from higher socioeconomic backgrounds were increasingly likely to be more directly involved in their child’s schooling than parents of lower socioeconomic status. They noted that a higher education level of parents is positively associated with a greater tendency for them to be a strong advocate for their child. However, parents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds faced barriers that impeded being
involved ranging from feelings of inadequacy due to their level of education, to basic scheduling needs and lack of resources (Hill & Taylor, 2004).

**Barriers to Parental Involvement**

Research suggests that based on studies conducted nationwide there is a strong correlation between specific components of parent involvement and student academic achievement; however, even with this knowledge, there are few schools and districts that have a strong established parental involvement program in place (Epstein, 1992). Rebecca Burns concluded that there are four major barriers to parental involvement, especially pertaining to parents with a low socioeconomic status. The major barriers include: Constraints on Parent’s Availability, Disparities between Home and School Cultures, Feelings of Inadequacies, and Parent and Teacher Attitudes (Burns, 1993).

The change in family structure has had a direct reflection on the time of parental involvement and availability parents have in schools. The number of single parent families that have more than one job, in addition to the number of traditional type of families, has increased. Therefore, many families have several time constraints that limit their ability to participate in activities during regular school hours, including volunteer opportunities, as well as teacher conferences. These types of socioeconomic changes directly impact the type of parental involvement a parent may have at the school site.
Another barrier that has an impact on parental involvement is the disparity between the cultures of the parents and teachers (Burns, 1993). Cultural Capital denotes the accumulation of knowledge, experience, and skills one has had through the course of their life that enables him a better chance to succeed versus someone from a less experienced background. Cultural Capital is further defined as the advantage gained by middle class, educated, European-American parents from knowing, preferring and experiencing a lifestyle congruent with the culture that is dominant in most American schools. Bourdieu (1977) suggests that the concept of cultural capital is based on the idea that schools and other social structures have a strong influence over an individual through the mechanism of the cultural capital. Studies conducted by Mannan and Blackwell (1992) determined that when the school environment wasn’t sensitive to the home language and culture, two-way communication was often very difficult, and many parents were discouraged from initiating any type of dialogue with the teacher. Hill and Taylor also suggest that it was not recognized that parental involvement seems to function differently and serve different purposes in different cultural groups (Hill & Taylor, 2004). Lareau, another theorist, suggests that students who lack cultural capital have limited parental involvement and are likely to have lower academic achievement than their peers.

One of the disadvantages that may occur when parents whose culture or lifestyle differs from that of the dominant culture include parents who have less of a desire to visit the school, resulting in less opportunity for the parent to gain the social, informational and material rewards gained by those parents who do actively participate. Also, the differences in cultural capital may
reduce the ability of parents to obtain information and parental skills (social capital) which can better equip their child in regards to school related activities, regardless if the parents are active or not active in the school (Hill & Taylor, 2004).

Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist, suggests that cultural capital exists in three states: institutionalized, objectified and embodied. In the objectified state, cultural capital can be increased by transforming economic capital into goods and objects. For example, a textbook is an “objectified” form of cultural capital since it requires prior training to understand the text.

Institutional capital is in the form of attained degrees (high school, college), and credentials (trades, jobs) which signify a level of cultural competence recognized by others in society. As determined by the researcher Michael Apple, embodied capital is recognized by a person’s disposition or aptitude that reflects the personal knowledge base and skills of an individual (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Based on these findings, the importance of parental involvement and the possession of cultural capital resources are significant. In order for a parent to participate and advocate for their child in the school, they must possess cultural capital resources that are recognized and acknowledged.

Everyone, regardless of background, brings a set of norms and values to the school; this is known as the social capital. Social Capital is a concept which “focuses on the degree and quality of middle-class forms of social support inherent in a young person’s interpersonal network” (Stanton-Salazar, 1997). Stanton-Salazar emphasized the need for educators to play an active role in the lives of students, thereby increasing their social capital and teaching them how...
to “encode the system”. This study highlighted the communication breakdown that is prevalent in the school system, which has denied students the ability to reach a level of success in regards to their educational goals (Stanton-Salazar, 1997). The limitations of the social capital resources are barriers that both the students and parents face. Many students and parents that have a low socioeconomic status may see attending school as a negative experience; however, when we equip our students with the skills needed to decode the system, they achieve at a higher rate (Stanton-Salazar, 1997). When considering Social Capital from the parents’ perspective, a school’s responsibility is to provide training and to ensure that parents become socially engaged in learning to decode the school system, which will provide more opportunities for their child.

This is not to imply that these parents don’t possess decoding skills in the overall sense, but they may lack the skills and training within the mainstream institution (Stanton-Salazar, 1997). Bourdieu (1986) suggests that the degree to which a person possesses social capital depends on the size of their network of connections. A school is a prime source for students to gain social capital because it is a primary place for their social interactions. The stronger the relationships between the school personnel and the students, the more students are exposed to social capital resources, as well as to decoding the educational system. James Coleman (1988) suggests that social capital has three forms: (1) level of trust as evidenced by obligations and expectations, (2) information channels, and (3) norms and sanctions that promote the common good over self-interest. Laureau (2001) suggests that Coleman’s work supports the idea that it is the family’s responsibility to adopt certain norms to advance their child’s chances in life, whereas
Bourdieu’s work emphasizes structural constraints and unequal access to institutional resources based on class, gender, and race. However, both theoretical frameworks are based on identifying an alternative explanation as to why there is an inequality in academic achievement among high SES students and low SES students (Dika and Singh, 2002).

Parents play a major role in student achievement; however, based on the Cultural and Social Capital framework, teachers and administrators are very instrumental to the students’ academic achievements as well. While building a partnership with parents, teachers gain a better understanding of the child’s culture, their needs and their academic capabilities, thereby addressing the social capital needs. A study conducted by Stanton-Salazar showed a significant difference in closing the communication gap that exists between the school and home, thereby breaking down the barriers that are in place, and equipping the students with the skills needed to decode the system and achieve at a higher rate (Stanton-Salazar, 1997).

According to Beyond the Bake Sale, it is suggested that successful methods to build cultural and social capital include providing parents with information and knowledge as the key to bridging the gap between home and school (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007). Informing families about how the educational system and local government work is one of the first ways to bridge the gap. Another method is to make the school a community resource center in and of itself where parents receive information about programs and community resources at the school site. The authors also suggest showcasing local businesses at the school and providing information about the services they offer while highlighting how they can benefit the school and
community, and ultimately impact their children in a positive way. Finally, the authors suggest that there is a greater chance for academic achievement when parents are empowered with knowledge to promote effective change in the school and their child, providing many ways parents can meet and discuss all issues with teachers and administrators concerning their child’s academic progress (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007).

Combining the findings of all the researchers, there is an important connection between parental involvement and empowering the parents with Social and Cultural Capital resources. Considering the findings of Bourdieu, conceptualization of social capital is rooted in the social reproduction theory and symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu argues that the educational system contributes to the reproduction of the structure of class relations by unevenly drawing on the social and cultural resources of members within the society. Bourdieu (1986), and Roscigno and Darnell (1999), having studied race, cultural capital and achievement, also suggested that within the theory of cultural capital, schools are not necessarily viewed as neutral institutions, but as institutions in which the preferences, attitudes and behaviors of the dominant class are most highly valued.

Laureau suggests that for many low-income and working-class families, educating parents on the workings of the school and the educational system is, at times, difficult. Low-income/working families are faced with barriers such as parental employment or unemployment, linguistic barriers, and extenuating circumstances that make the parents reluctant to participate fully or become involved even when the opportunities exist (Laureau, 1989). Laureau also suggests
that schools and societies do not teach students, or parents, ways in which a parent can gain social and cultural capital resources, neither through classes or other measures. Therefore, low-income and working-class parents may not be empowered or equipped with these resources, and may feel inadequate with participating and contributing to the creation and implementation of school policies and the school governing body.

Despite these barriers, Lareau (1989) posits that low-income and working-class parents are still involved with their child’s education, and find ways to support and help their child achieve success at school. The difference is in the actual type of involvement between the low-income, working-class parents and the higher income families. Bourdieu’s social reproduction theory suggests that the school’s governing system will be a reflection of the dominant culture, thereby impeding the student and parent’s involvement in the school. Therefore, the schools have the responsibility to educate the parents and level the playing field, while parents can support the students and the school equally.

In the context of parental involvement, schools and districts determine the types of social and cultural capital that are necessary to facilitate positive parental involvement on behalf of their child’s educational experience. Joyce Epstein designed a model that is comprised of six major types of parental involvement that supports academic achievement. Of the six components, four have been adopted to support the NCLB Title I parental involvement requirement at the national level. Epstein (1992) categorized parent involvement into six types:
Type 1 – Parenting: Helping all families to establish supportive environments for their children.

Type 2 – Communicating: Establishing two-way exchanges about school programs and children’s progress.

Type 3 – Volunteering: Recruiting and organizing parent help at school, home, or other locations.

Type 4 – Learning at Home: Providing information and ideas to families about how to help students with homework and other curriculum related materials.

Type 5 – Decision Making: Having parents from all backgrounds serve as representatives and leaders on school committees.

Type 6 – Collaborating with the Community: Identifying and integrating resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs.

Epstein argues that when schools frequently engage parents they have more successful outcomes because the students benefit from the consistent message generated by their home and the school about the importance of education.

Another major component that supports the correlation between parental involvement and student achievement is increasing the social capital (Bennett, 2001). Increasing the parents' skills and knowledge base will better equip them to assist their children at home. By providing the opportunity for parents to collaborate with one another, it makes room for them to share insight with one another on school policies, practices, community resources, as well as approaches to
parenting practices. According to Constantino (2003), creating a school culture that is welcoming and engages the family is the key component to parental involvement, which, research shows has a positive effect on student academic achievements. Constantino suggests that schools and families should engage and build a positive partnership by making schools the center of the community and not only involving the teachers, administrators and parents, but also including businesses and community members to support the school (Constantino, 2003).

The NCPIE describes parental involvement as exchanging information, sharing in decision making, volunteering at the school, and collaborating with teachers in the educational process (National Coalition for Parent Involvement In Education, 2010). Improving interactions between school and parents is essential to developing and nurturing parent involvement Epstein (1991), Constantino (2003), and Callison (2004) suggest that communication and collaboration are the key factors for improving interactions between the parents and the school. Epstein developed a concept known as “the spheres of influence” which places the student at the center of a partnership encompassing the school, family and community. If the school/students are the center of the community, it will allow all stakeholders the opportunity to positively influence students in the school. When students see that parents, teachers and the community members working together in a collaborative effort on their behalf, it will give the child a sense of being cared for from many vantage points. The students, as a result, see the value that the parents, school and community place on education.
In 1998, the National Parent Teachers Association (NPTA) identified six domains that represent key areas for the success of parental involvement in education. (The six domains were adopted from Joyce Epstein’s model of parental involvement: Communication, Parenting, Student Learning, Volunteering, School Decision Making and Collaborating with the Community.) Callison (2004) suggests the following ways to implement and support the domain areas the NPTA identified as key areas that will involve parents and have a positive impact on student achievement.

**Communication**

1. Providing various ways for parents to correspond with the school will strengthen the family-school partnership and build the mutual responsibility for the children. One option is for the school to put together a compact. A compact is a document that clarifies what parents and schools can do to help children meet the high expectations/standards of the school. The purpose of the compact is to outline the shared responsibility in a cohesive plan of action. As a school develops their compact, the best resources to use are the teachers, school staff, parents, community members and students who share a common concern about the school and student achievement.

2. Early identification of the factors that contribute to parental support at the school site such as family structures, parent work schedules, dominant language spoken, etc.
This information will be a helpful resource when determining the type of recommendations for participation that parents will likely engage in, and the best opportunities that will increase their participation.

**Parenting Skills Promoted and Supported**

1. Assess families’ needs and interests to determine the types of programs to offer parents. Provide a parent-family liaison to coordinate family activities and workshops for parents. Create a calendar of several programs and activities that meet the needs of the parents. Develop multiple outreach mechanisms to inform families, businesses and the community about family involvement policies and programs. Schedule opportunities for parents to utilize their areas of expertise in the school.

2. Encourage parents to visit their children’s classrooms. Establish year round family literacy events and programs at the school. These types of events help parents gain self-confidence in assisting their children at home.

3. Create an inviting and welcoming Parent Resource Center for parents and community members to utilize. Provide workshops and classes that meet the needs of the parents. Develop newsletters and resources that provide tips and techniques parents can use to provide assistance at home.
Volunteering

1. Have a clear procedure for parents to become volunteers.

2. Increase parental involvement by making parents feel welcomed and making sure they know that their support and assistance is needed and greatly appreciated.

3. Provide opportunities for parents to work with students in small group settings, or with classroom presentations.

4. Allow parents to present at staff meetings and share relevant information.

5. Treat the parent volunteers as paid staff, consider them human capital and value their presence on the campus.

School Decision Making and Advocacy

Callison (2004) defines shared decision making as a process that includes the input of parents, teachers, administrators and community members in making decisions about how a school operates. The organization and the management of the school becomes a shared responsibility when they follow these steps:

1. Clearly define the problem as a school site that needs to be solved. List the preconceived ideas about values and beliefs that are shared among all stakeholders. Next, decide on the framework, listing the possible sources to retrieve information about potential solutions to the problem. Decide the value of using the solution suggested.
Lastly, list alternative methods that can be used to reach the goal, and finally make the decision.

**Collaborating with Community**

1. Utilize knowledge that the parents in the community have to provide opportunities for them to obtain useful information and grant access to community programs/services that will benefit their children.

2. Establish a web-based Parent University course that provides an opportunity for online classes provided by local college and universities.

3. Create a safe-school plan in which all stakeholders contribute.

Joyce Epstein and the National PTA Committee contributed to the creation of the six domains suggesting that making parent groups constructive and inclusive provides opportunities for parents to be involved in the educational process for their children, as well as sets an example to their children by prioritizing educational opportunities. There is a strong correlation between parental involvement and student academic achievements regardless of culture, race, socioeconomic status, and all other perceived barriers. Building a strong school and family partnership is an essential component to involving the parents in meaningful programs beyond PTA meetings and bake sales (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007).

Moving beyond bake sales, parent conferences and PTA meetings as the traditional methods of parent involvement takes innovation and restructuring. The cumulative experience of
parental involvement is more than parents volunteering at the school and should be redefined to include recognizing that parents are a child’s first teacher, and that a school’s role is to help families create home environments that support learning (Burns, 1993). In an effort to increase student achievement through parental involvement, schools have to develop more effective ways to communicate and reach out to parents who are unable, unwilling or even reluctant due to cultural and social capital barriers. Schools must recognize the valuable contribution and resource that parents are to a school. As Burns suggests, parent involvement is about parents helping their child at home and the school assisting and supporting the parents’ efforts.

In a similar manner, “Comer School Development Program” suggests that providing parents with opportunities to develop their planning and decision making skills by partnering and collaborating with schools will meet the students’ social and academic needs, which are priority (Comer, 2010). Creating a partnership between the school and families refers to a mutual effort toward a shared goal, and results in a shared responsibility of families and educators in supporting students’ academic achievements (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001).

There are a number of practices that are considered the best in supporting a partnership between the school personnel and the parents, which move beyond mere “activities,” and regard the cultural and social capital of the parents. James Comer, a leading child psychologist, based his theory on the premise that a child’s experiences at home and in school deeply affect their psychosocial development, which in turn shapes their academic achievement. Therefore, he created the “Comer Process” which applied principals addressing the barriers that affect the social
and cultural needs of parents and students, and their relationship to the school. Through the School Development Program designed by Comer, parent involvement is suggested to be the cornerstone of the program and is designed to be an enriching, supporting, nurturing, and productive environment where children feel valued and secure. Comer suggests this type of environment facilitates academic learning; therefore, it is very crucial to the overall success of a comprehensive parent involvement program. The process, Comer suggests, is designed to build the support network of adults in order to provide an overall structure for students. The framework of the “Comer Process” is built around three main components: The School Planning and Management Team, The Student and Staff Support Team, and The Parent Team. All three teams consist of administrators, teachers, support staff and parents (Comer, 2010).

The School Planning and Management Team develops a comprehensive school plan that sets academic, social and community relations goals, and coordinates all school activities including staff development programs. This team monitors the progress of the plan and identifies areas the school plan needs to adjust, as well as provides opportunities to support the plan (Comer, 2010).

The Student and Staff Support Team focuses on building the social capital between students and the staff of the school. This team connects all of the school’s student services, addresses individual student needs, develops programs to better support the school as a whole, and accesses resources outside the school (Comer, 2010).
The Parent Team involves parents in the school by developing activities through which the parents can support the school’s social and academic programs. The parent team also involves parents at three different levels of participation. At the first level, the parents support the school by attending parent-teacher conferences, reinforcing learning at home, and participating in social activities. At the second level, parents serve in the school as volunteers and paid aides, and support learning activities. With the third level, parents serve on a school planning and management team (Comer, 2010).

There are three guiding principles throughout the “Comer Process” that stakeholders adhere to: the Collaboration, Consensus Decision-Making, and No Fault principles. The No Fault principle states that the team focuses on the problem and considers strategies that can be used to fix the problem and prevent them in the future. The second principle is the Consensus Decision-Making, which focuses the discussion around what is best for the children. In this stage of the process, all stakeholders must believe their views were taken into consideration. The final principle is the Collaboration phase where everyone works together towards the same goals and all staff, administrators, and parents feel supported while being provided with the necessary support to reach a level of success for all stakeholders (Comer, 2010).

**Distributed Leadership & Partnership**

Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, authors of Leading with Soul and Spirit, suggest that “Effective leadership in challenging times boils down to qualities such as focus, passion and
integrity.” In an effort to build a distributed partnership between the school and home, all the stakeholders will have a clear and defined role to make this type of shared/distributed leadership partnership effective. “A leader is needed to foster purpose, passion, and imagination” (Bolman & Deal, 1994). Northouse defines leadership as “….a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.” Northouse contends that leadership as a process means that leadership is not a linear, one-way event, but rather interactive. He suggests that when leadership is defined in this way, it becomes available to everyone. Leadership is no longer restricted to the person who is formally designated as the leader in the organization (Northouse, 2007).

Using Northouse’s definition of leadership as the basis and model, the school site administration’s goal is to set the direction and tone of the school or organization, establish the vision, and determine a plan to carry out the vision. In addition, a leader needs to have a team that is willing to align themselves with the vision, and work to execute the vision collaboratively. Finally, a leader is to inspire the people he or she is leading and guide them in overcoming the hurdles they may face while trying to execute the vision (Northouse, 2007).

With this paradigm shift, the administrative role is pertinent to the success of a positive school-home relationship (Bergmann et al., 2008). Bergmann suggests the following as a basic list of tasks that an administrator should undertake to foster effective parent involvement practices. As the leader, the administrator will:

1. Establish the climate and the model for the establishment of the home-school relationship.
2. Create a task force that will focus on designing the initiatives for parent involvement.
3. Oversee a written policy for parent involvement.
4. Devise effective routines for ongoing communication between home and school.

5. Provide training for teachers and parents centering on the impact and importance of parental involvement.

6. Provide current research and strategies to teachers.

7. Evaluate the policy and practices.

8. Establish a parent resource center.

Administrators are responsible for setting the overall tone and acceptance of parental involvement as a supporting resource and not as an annoyance or an extra task that is reluctantly being implemented (Bergmann et al, 2008). The key points that Bergmann emphasized centered on the idea that the administrator’s perspective and process of implementation of the program will have a positive overall effect where parents feel either welcomed, and valued, or the opposite effect.

As defined by Berger (1987), the teacher’s role includes facilitator, resource developer, effective communicator, program developer, as well as friend. Teachers share a large responsibility of implementing an effective parental involvement program. Bergmann suggests that teachers also have a critical role in supporting school-home interactions. Their roles include the following:

1. Communicating with parents and caregivers about the academic, social, and behavioral needs and progress of students.

2. Attending professional developments and trainings that support and build the social and cultural capital knowledge to better support the students’ and the parent’s needs.

3. Help families work with academic and behavioral goals at home to support school success.
4. Collaborate with administrators, parents and colleagues regarding policies, expectations and evaluation of collaborative efforts.

Based on the No Child Left Behind Act, and the need for accountability, parental involvement in the school governance has become a mandate and schools are required to implement ways to involve parents in the school with the defined goal of impacting students and increasing their academic achievement. In order to do this effectively, parents have to feel welcomed and know that their involvement in their child’s education is crucial to the child’s ability to attain academic success.

To create a model of distributive leadership that is efficient and effective with the overall goal of increasing student achievement, at least three important organizational preconditions must be applied: First, the development of a culture within the school that embodies collaboration, trust, professional learning and reciprocal accountability; second, a need for strong consensus regarding the important problems facing the organization; and third, a need for rich expertise with approaches to improving teaching and learning among all those working in the school (Copland, 2003).

Summary

This literature review illuminated the correlation between parental involvement and student achievement by increasing the social and cultural capital among all parents. Considering the impact parental involvement has on children, one could understand the goal of many educational policies and practices as a reason to enhance involvement by parents. Parental
involvement does contribute substantially to a student’s academic success. Parent expectations for children’s educational attainment and participation in school activities have consistently had influence on the child’s outcome (Patrikakou et al., 2005). Also indicated was the positive correlation between student achievement and parental involvement. Despite findings that support schools training students, teachers and parents about social and cultural capital, evidence also exists by means of social reproduction, reflecting how some educational institutions are not evenly distributing their social and cultural capital, and parents who do not possess it are not recognized, nor are they active participants in the schools.

Through the research conducted there were many ways proven in which schools can educate parents in developing the social and cultural capital resources needed, and the skills they should possess. Epstein suggested several techniques that, if utilized, could facilitate positive approaches to implementing and building positive relationships between the parents and the school, thereby increasing student academic achievement.
CHAPTER THREE:
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study is identifying the impact that parental involvement has on student achievement. This chapter outlines the problem and purpose overview, research questions and design, instrumentation, interview questions, data collection, and data analysis.

Purpose of the Study

Based on the findings presented in chapter two, research has shown a strong correlation between student achievement and the type of parental involvement and support provided. Parents and schools should be accountable to each other in the effort to increase their involvement in schools, thereby increasing overall student achievement. There is a lack of training and educating of parents on the requirements and needs of students in order to make effective decisions, and equip them with knowledge on assisting their child with school related activities, as well as augmenting their learning at home. Research shows that parents’ self-perceptions of their academic competence affect their involvement. Their confidence in their own intellectual abilities is the most salient predictors of their school involvement.

The disconnect between the school and home is largely due to the type of relationship established between the school personnel and the parents. Many schools have not created an enriching environment for parents to actively participate directly in academic activities, nor is
there space for parents to work with the school that include parent resources and workshops, making the parents feel welcomed and included in the schools. Epstein suggests establishing partnerships between school personnel and the home is essential in building an effective partnership. Professional development opportunities designed to train teachers and school personnel on effectively involving parents and identifying ways to help facilitate a healthy home and school relationship are areas that research suggests should be considered. Another goal of this dissertation is to identify more effective strategies for parental involvement based on the socioeconomic status, cultural capital and social capital and ethnicities of the parents (Hill & Taylor, 2004).

The purpose of this study is to examine which type of parent and community involvement practices correlate with student achievement. The secondary purpose is to examine the types of parental support that are outside of the traditional realm of parental involvement.

**Research Questions**

1. Are there organizational barriers that attribute to low parental involvement yet contribute to diminished student achievement?

2. What are possible effective strategies to improve student achievement and overcome the persistent barriers of parental involvement?

3. What best practices support a partnership between the school personnel and parents?
Research Designs

To address the research questions, a survey created by Epstein, et.al (2002) was adapted. This survey rates the types of parent and community involvement practices currently used by districts to engage parent, community and school partnerships. Qualitative Research primarily expands the understanding of how educational interventions actually work. McEwan & McEwan (2003) describe qualitative research in three forms: the naturalistic inquiry, life history methodologies, and case studies. The naturalistic inquiry is a type of qualitative research approach where the researcher is a firsthand witness to what is happening in a specific setting and studying the human action in a setting that has not been manipulated or staged. The life history method is a biographical approach that focuses on telling the history of the individual. Case studies are often used to focus on particular aspects of organizational or human behavior.

McEwan & McEwan (2003) suggest that qualitative research provides an explanation to an actual problem. The qualitative research provides observations, anecdotes, conversations and descriptions of how researchers, teachers and administrators deal with day-to-day issues. The qualitative researchers are constantly considering a variety of possible interpretations and explanations about what they observed. The quality in qualitative research comes from the depth and extent of its observations.
Unit of Analysis

The Unit of Analysis will identify ways in which parental involvement strategies have been most effective. The teachers, administrator and parents from the school that is being researched will be surveyed and interviewed. The parent participants being surveyed will be sampled from parents that are in the Low SES groups and High SES groups, Parent Teachers Associations, as well as Parent Volunteers at the school site. The administrator and teachers being sampled work at the school site.

Based on the data found on the website zipskinny.com, the school community in which the research will be conducted is a very affluent community. Over 54% of the community members have an annual household income ranging between $35,000-$149,999. In addition, 96% of the population has an undergraduate degree or higher, as well as 53% with a master’s degree. Based on the data, the community definitely has a high value placed on their student’s achievement.

Sample and Population

Specific criteria were established to identify a school with a high percentage of socioeconomically disadvantaged students that were performing well academically based on the state expectations, but were still performing below students in other subgroups. In order to gain an in depth understanding of the impact parental involvement has on student achievement, the population for this study was selected through purposeful sampling.
The following establishes the selection criteria for identifying a school in this study:

1. API scores of 650 or higher on the CST.
2. School with a high population of socioeconomically disadvantaged students.
3. School with a traditional parenting program.
4. Student enrollment of 500 or more.
5. Diverse school student body population.

Cherry Blossom Elementary School has a population of 639 students, whereby 50% of the students were characterized as Hispanic or Latino, 40% White (not Hispanic) and 10% other ethnicities (Figure 1). Of the 639 students, 45% of the total school population is characterized as being socioeconomically disadvantaged (Figure 2) (District, 2009). According to Cherry Blossom’s School Accountability Report Card, the teaching population at Cherry Blossom Elementary is fully credentialed and meets the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. For the 2008/09 school year, the STAR Test results for English/Language Arts by subgroup indicated only 44% of the economically disadvantaged students who scored at the proficient or advanced level, as well as 45% of the Hispanic or Latino group who scored at proficient or advanced, whereas 84% of the White (not Hispanic) population scored at proficient or advanced.
Population Sampling

Utilizing the information gathered from the 2009-2010 API report from the California Department of Education, identifying the subgroup of students that are considered having low socioeconomic status, Spring Unified School District has 1,773 students that fit in this category (CDE, 2010). Of the 1,773 low socioeconomic students district-wide, 287 students attend Cherry
Blossom Elementary School. The parents and teachers were randomly selected from Cherry Blossom.

In regards to the parent sampling, the researcher chose to sample low SES status parents, as well as parents with a high SES. To determine the targeted population, the researcher first identified California’s definition of socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status was defined as an individual’s or group’s position within a hierarchical social structure. Socioeconomic status depends on a combination of variables, including occupation, education, income, wealth, and place of residence. Based on the findings, students with low socioeconomic status were identified as those who were receiving free and/or reduced lunch (which is based on a family’s household income).

**Instrumentation**

This study will utilize Qualitative Data and Artifact Analysis. The use of these methodologies will include the use of survey questions, interviews, and analyzing achievement data within the study.

The artifacts the researcher will analyze are Cherry Blossom Elementary School’s CST scores, School Accountability Report Card, and the API and AYP reports to identify if there is a correlation between parent involvement and student achievement.

The surveys the researcher designed will identify the effectiveness of parental involvement and its impact on student achievement. The survey instruments designed are an
adaptation of the “six typology of parental involvement” survey instrument designed by Joyce Epstein. The survey instrument by Joyce Epstein has also been adopted by the national Parent Teacher Association to help educators develop school and family partnerships with the goal of increasing academic achievement in students.

Each subsection contains five to six questions that are rated on a five-point Likert-scale response. The Likert Scale options are (1) Not Occurring: strategy does not happen in our school; (2) Rarely: clearly not emphasized in this school’s parental involvement plan; (3) Occasionally: Not a prevalent component of this school’s parental involvement plan; (4) Frequently: A prevalent component of this school’s parental involvement plan; (5) Extensively: A highly prevalent component of this school’s parental involvement plan.

**Administrators**

Administrators will be surveyed and interviewed to determine the type of partnership that has been established between the school personnel and the parents. The survey and interview addressed the process by which they have educated parents on meeting the requirements and needs of students, as well as making effective decisions for their students. The administrative survey will focus on the vision the administrator has of parental involvement in their school by identifying the types of parental involvement support they believe is provided from parents to effectively support student achievement.
**Teacher**

Teachers will be surveyed and interviewed to identify their level of involvement with making effective decisions and equipping parents with strategies to assist their child in school related activities, as well as augmenting their learning at home. The teacher survey was designed to measure how the teacher and the school reaches out to, supports, and involves parents in a meaningful way.

**Parent**

Parents will be surveyed to determine the type of involvement they provided for their children, as well as the role the school played in providing parents with the necessary resources that will impact their students’ achievement. This survey was designed to measure how the school reaches out to and involves parents with the students’ academic goals. All parents at Cherry Blossom Elementary School were invited to participate in the survey.

**Interview Survey Instrument**

Three sets of interview questions were designed for parents, teachers and administrators. Each interview will consist of eight to ten questions. For consistency and reliability purposes, an interview protocol was designed. Each respondent will be asked the exact same question, using the same wording, yet the only differentiation will be in follow up questions that will be used to solely to clarify interviewees responses.
Patton suggests that the benefits of a standardized interview approach are: (1) The exact instrument used is available for inspection by those who will use the results of the study; (2) The interviewer is highly focused so that the interviewee’s time is used efficiently; and (3) Making the responses easy to find/compare facilitates the analysis (Patton, 2002).

**Data Collection**

Quantitative data identifying students’ success on CST and other state and district assessments was collected through the California Department of Education website as well as through the Testing Coordinator at Spring Unified School District office. Data from the survey was collected by way of a mailed survey. Data collected from the interview questions was completed during a 40-minute interview with ten parents and a combination of ten teachers and administrators that participated in the interview.

**Data Collection Protocol**

*Survey Protocol.* A participation letter (Appendix A), and an Information/Fact Sheet (Appendix C), as well as a research survey, were sent to 60 total participants, which included administrators (Appendix D & E), teachers (Appendix F), parents (Appendix G & H). Each survey and returned envelope were coded with a number helping the researcher to identify which parents, teachers and administrators had responded to the request agreeing to participate in the research. After three weeks, a reminder letter was sent to the parents, as well as a reminder
postcard to the teachers and administrator who had not yet responded. After five weeks, a final flyer was sent to the teachers and a final email reminder (Appendix B) asking for their participation. The multiple notification procedure was utilized to ensure adequate participation for this research.

**Interview Protocol**

Three categories of individuals were interviewed: administrators (Appendix I), principals (Appendix J), teachers (Appendix K), and parents (Appendix L & M). The protocol remained consistent for each category of individuals. The researcher scheduled the interviews and obtained permission to tape-record the participants. This allowed the researcher to focus on the interviewee’s body language, listen more adeptly, and engage in probing and follow-up questions.

The Administrators were chosen based on the administrative positions at Cherry Blossom Elementary School. The four teachers chosen to participate in the interview were selected randomly based on the teachers that were willing to participate. The eight parents chosen to participate in the interview were chosen randomly from the parent participant at Cherry Blossom Elementary School. Prior to choosing the parents to be interviewed, the researcher put the participants into two groups: parents with low socioeconomic status and parents identified as having high socioeconomic status, as defined earlier in this chapter. Once the SES of the parents was identified, they were numbered and coded, and then randomly selected for interviewing.
Document Analysis

Document analysis was conducted to gather information on the district and school’s background and profile. This information provided a historical perspective and highlights the district and school’s focus and mission. The documents analyzed, School Accountability Report Card (SARC), API and AYP reports are all public records and provided pertinent information such as student demographics, student achievement, school and class sizes, and special programs, etc.

Data Analysis

The data found in this study through interviews, surveys, observations and document analysis were analyzed using Creswell’s six-step model (2003). (See Figure 3.3)

Figure 3.3: Creswell’s Model for Qualitative Data Analysis

- Step 1: Organize and prepare the data for analysis.
- Step 2: Read through all the data.
- Step 3: Begin detail analysis with a coding process.
- Step 4: Use coding process to develop a description of the participants and/or setting. Use coding to develop themes or categories. Themes are analyzed for each interview and across interviews.
- Step 5: Decide how the description and themes will be represented in the study narrative.
- Step 6: Interpret or make meaning of the data.
At the conclusion, the interviews were fully transcribed, the surveys were tallied and the observational notes were typed and organized. All collected data was coded, reviewed, classified and examined to find common threads and themes.

**Ethical Consideration**

To ensure that the data collection for this study was obtained in an ethical manner, the researcher followed the guidelines of USC’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). All persons that participated in the study volunteered to be a part of the study. Confidentiality was a key factor, and all participants were assured of the confidentiality of their statements. Pseudonyms were used to enhance anonymity. All participants were provided a description of the research procedure, its purpose, risks and anticipated benefits. All participants were also offered the opportunity to ask questions or to withdraw from the research at any time.

**Summary**

This chapter shared the research methods that were designed to identify the impact parental involvement has on student achievement. The purpose of the research questions was discussed, as well as the purpose and participation of the parents, teachers and administrators. The survey and interview protocols were shared, as well as the data collection of the instruments. Chapter four will discuss results of the analyses of the qualitative research, while chapter five will outline the recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER FOUR:
ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

This chapter presents the data from a mixed-method study to identify the role of parental involvement, as well as the impact and correlation of their impact, on student achievement. This chapter will also present the strategies and techniques used to execute the district and schools’ policies and practices to involve parents. The specific data collected in this study consisted of survey responses and interviews from three groups of stakeholders: parents, teachers and district level administrators. The quantitative data was compiled from the responses from surveys with parents, teachers, and district-level administrators, and the qualitative data was compiled from sixteen one-on-one interviews: eight parent interviews, four teachers, and four district-level administrators.

Organization of Data Analysis

The data examined from this research, as well as a detailed analysis of the data, will be presented in this chapter. The chapter has been divided into four sections with each section representing the research question and the comprehensive analysis of the responses. Statistical analysis of the surveys and interview questions are also represented as they pertain to the specific research question. This investigative study was conducted to answer the following research questions:
1. Are there organizational barriers that attribute to low parental involvement, yet contribute to diminished student achievement?

2. What are possible effective strategies to improve student achievement and overcome the persistent barriers of parental involvement?

3. What are the best practices that support a partnership between the school personnel and parents?

Participants were asked to answer these questions using a Likert-scale. Participants had the choice of referring to the following answers as it relates to their school experience: (1) Not Occurring: strategy does not happen in our district; (2) Rarely: not emphasized in the district’s parental involvement plan; (3) Occasionally: not a prevalent component of the district’s parental involvement plan; (4) Frequently: a prevalent component of this district’s parental involvement plan; (5) Extensively: a highly prevalent component of this district’s parental involvement plan.

The quantitative data has been organized into charts using the SPSS system. This research study organized and described the characteristics of a collection of data using descriptive statistics. The components of the chart highlight the Mean, Standard Deviation, and Range.

The Mean score is the most common type of average that is computed. It is the sum of all the values in the group, divided by the number of values in that group. The Standard Deviation represents the average distance from the mean; it represents the average amount of variability in a set of scores. The Range score is the most general measure of variability. The range indicates how far apart scores are from one another.
Descriptive Characteristics of Respondents

Volunteer flyers were sent to Cherry Blossom Elementary soliciting volunteer participants for the study. Participants were grouped into four categories: Low SES parents of Cherry Blossom Elementary, High SES parents of Cherry Blossom Elementary, Teachers of Cherry Blossom Elementary, and District-Level Administrators of Cherry Blossom Unified School District.

The first category of participants identified in this study is the parents. All parents identified in this study have children attending Cherry Blossom Elementary School, and were later categorized as either having a high socioeconomic status or low socioeconomic status based on the state’s criteria determined by families with a child receiving free or reduced lunch. Parents identified as being low socioeconomic status were responsible for 20 of the 29 participating surveys (see Appendix G & H). Therefore, the parent’s high socioeconomic status was responsible for 9 of the 29 participants. 35 parent volunteers participated in the informational or attended the meeting where the principal investigator explained the study and gave the option to participate in the survey, as well as the interview. Out of the 35 parents attending the two informational meetings, 29 chose to participate. Of the 35 total surveys sent 29 surveys were returned reflecting an overall response rate of 83%.

The second category of participants in this study is the teachers and certificated staff members of the school, including the coordinators. 33 teachers, including other certificated staff
members, coordinators and teacher interns, were given a copy of the survey (see Appendix F), of which 31 surveys were returned, reflecting a 93% overall response and participation rate.

The final category of voluntary participants was categorized as District-Level Administrators. These participants are administrators that have a primary role in the implementation of parental involvement within the district. Five district-level administrators were identified and fit the criteria established, and were sent the survey (see Appendix D).

Of the 80 total numbers of volunteers who participated in the survey, 17 volunteered to also participate in a one-on-one interview. To maintain confidentiality, all interview participants were recorded by pseudonym. Table 4.1 lists the participants interviewed for this research.

**Table 4.1: List of Interviewed Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Blossom Unified School District (CBUSD)</td>
<td>District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Blossom Elementary</td>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Blossom Community</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Oak</td>
<td>Administrator in District Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Fern</td>
<td>Administrator in District Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Palm</td>
<td>Administrator in District Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Rose</td>
<td>Cherry Blossom Elem. Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Blossom Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Daisy</td>
<td>Classroom Teacher, Cherry Blossom Elem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Elm</td>
<td>Classroom Teacher, Cherry Blossom Elem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Cedar</td>
<td>Classroom Teacher, Cherry Blossom Elem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Holly</td>
<td>Classroom Teacher, Cherry Blossom Elem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOW SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Larch</td>
<td>Parent, Cherry Blossom Elem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Fir</td>
<td>Parent, Cherry Blossom Elem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Maple</td>
<td>Parent, Cherry Blossom Elem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Olive</td>
<td>Parent, Cherry Blossom Elem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGH SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Lilac</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Tulip</td>
<td>Parent, Cherry Blossom Elem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Pine</td>
<td>Parent, Cherry Blossom Elem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Spruce</td>
<td>Parent, Cherry Blossom Elem.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 1: Organizational Barriers

This section addresses the organizational barriers that attribute to the lack of parental involvement, which relates to student achievement. Based on the survey and interview questions, there were three primary barriers: communication and awareness, available resources, and language and/or cultural barriers.

The first barrier addressed focuses on communication and awareness. Epstein (1991) categorized parental involvement into six types. One of the six types focuses on Communication. Epstein (1991) established it as a two-way exchange that can include information regarding school programs and children’s progress. Some of the practices that would reflect effective communication between home and school would include the following: parent conferences with follow-ups as needed; effective newsletters including information about school events, student activities, and a place for questions posed by parents to be answered. In regards to communication between the district and the home, the following practices could be observed: clear information on school policies, program reforms assessments, and transitions. Finally, parents are given the opportunity to participate in an annual survey, which would assess the needs of the parents, and also determine if the types of programs being offered are beneficial and provide opportunities to increase parents’ involvement in the academic achievements of their children.

Epstein (1991) suggests that finding a variety of ways to correspond to parents, and having them also correspond with the school, will ultimately strengthen the partnership between
the school and the home. In addition to increasing the communication between the parent and the school, becoming aware of the factors that affect parents is essential as well. An example of those factors includes learning family structures, parent work schedules, and the dominant or comfortable language spoken in the home. Increasing the various ways to communicate and becoming aware of factors that affect parents participation may lead to an increase in parental involvement.

Table 4.2 reflects the overall average response to the questions regarding communication and awareness from the Survey Instrument given to the stakeholders that participated in this study.

Table 4.2: Communications & Awareness Response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication &amp; Awareness</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>3.8000</td>
<td>.16997</td>
<td>.38006</td>
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<tr>
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<td>31</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.5806</td>
<td>.13473</td>
<td>.75015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3.40</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.3500</td>
<td>.10942</td>
<td>.48936</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.80</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>5.00</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The initial look at the data indicates that the High Socioeconomic Status parents strongly believe they are knowledgeable of all of the school policies, and are aware of the volunteer opportunities and ways in which they can get involved. In many of the surveys responding to the question that were focused on identifying the communication and awareness barriers, the Low Socioeconomic Status parents were in alignment with each other, however, the following question rendered results that were very different.

**Table 4.3: Parent Response to Survey Question**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min Value</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Value</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the findings in Table 4.3, the data shows that 100% of the High SES parents responded to the question with “Always/Yes”. The high socioeconomic status parents strongly believe that they are well aware of ways in which they can become involved and volunteer at the school. However, only 60% of the Low SES parents responded “Always/Yes”, and the remainder of the participants responded “Most of the Time” or “Somewhat/No”.

The follow up interviews provided some insight into the thoughts of the 60% of the Low Socioeconomic Status parents who do get involved and/or are aware of the volunteer opportunities at the school. Ms. Fir responded, “I think the school does give a lot of opportunities, but the parents don’t want to come. The school does give phone messages, fliers, but it is really up to the individual parents to come to the meetings to find out about their kids.” Ms. Maple also responded, “In my opinion…they send us emails and information in Spanish, and that way we understand a lot and then know what is going on and what is expected of us.” Ms. Fir went on to
share that “it’s all a question of parents getting more involved for the academic success of their own children. So, it’s a question of themselves, and so, I think we do need more information in Spanish for us to get involved.”

Both low socioeconomic status parents shared their thoughts on the causes of the barrier in communication and awareness, and how it is centered on motivation of the parent to get involved. Both responded that correspondence is distributed to them in their language; however, the parents have to possess the desire to become involved. Both interviews indicated that written language was not part of the barrier, but the oral language may be more of the barrier. One interviewer responded that it would be helpful to have a Spanish speaking liaison available to the parents at all times for information purposes, or to answer questions in the parents’ most comfortable language.

The survey responses for all three stakeholders were analyzed to answer the following questions and ascertain noticeable trends, if any. The administrator and teachers survey questioned if they are aware of the clear and defined policies that encourage communication between parents and schools. Based on the findings, there is a clear discrepancy between the administrators’ responses regarding having a clear and defined policy for teachers that encourages communication with parents, as well as the teachers’ perspective on the clarity of the policies being defined. 50% of the administrators responded that they strongly believe the policies are clearly defined for the teachers, 33% agree that the policies were defined well, and the remaining respondents suggested that there was a basic understanding of the policies expressed to the
teachers. However, only 10% of the teaching staff agreed that they had a strong knowledge of the policies, 22% believed that they had an understanding of the policies, while 41% had a basic understanding of the policies, and the remainder had a very limited understanding of such policies.

Our District has clear and defined policies for teachers that encourage communication with the parents discussing the curriculum, student achievement, and ways a parent can be involved.

Table 4.4: Administrators Response to Survey Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrator Response</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min Value</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Value</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>0.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As a classroom teacher at my school and within my district I have a clear understanding of the defined policies for teachers that encourage communication with the parents discussing the curriculum student achievement and ways a parent can be involved.

Table 4.5: Teacher Response to Survey Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Response</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min Value</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Value</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interviews truly highlighted the teacher’s lack of clarity of the policies and procedures, and the disconnect between the administrators’ understanding the district’s mission or vision statement, with regards to parental involvement from the teachers lack of clarity of the policies and practices. Of the four teachers interviewed, two were somewhat familiar with the policies, whereas the other two had a no familiarity of the policies. However, they were all familiar with Cherry Blossom Elementary policies and the school’s vision and mission statement. Cocking her head to the side with a look of confusion, Ms. Elm, a teacher who was somewhat familiar, shared: “Well…I think they (the district) want to make sure that the parents
are actively involved and engaged in their children’s school activities.” Ms. Cedar, another teacher, shared: “Our district mandate is that we meet with parents at the beginning of the year for back to school night to welcome parents.” The interviews for all teachers showed a range of knowledge in their understanding of the district’s policies, vision and mission in regards to parental involvement.

The District Administrators were posed the same question which inquired about the district’s practices and policies. Mr. Oak, a district administrator shared that “from its conception the vision included parents in the process. Our district vision statement refers to how we are going to partner with parents and families to promote student success.” The disconnect in the findings was not because of the information gathered through the surveys, which stated that they were not as knowledgeable, but stemmed from the fact that there is no clarity of communication from the district in regards to the policies, practices, and vision statement from the District Level Administrators. The interesting fact is that the teachers were accurate with the understanding of the district mandates, but because they were not sure if they were correct, therein lays the problem.

In regards to the other questions that were categorized as Communication and Awareness barriers, other barriers included scheduling opportunities of activities for both traditional and non-traditional times and days. Scheduling considerations provide families with the opportunities to participate whether it’s a parent workshop, parent conference, family literacy or math night, or a district/school specific event. The final area in which stakeholders were surveyed on their
knowledge of what is available to them was in regards to whether the administrators and teachers provide information to the parents about ways in which they may assist their child at home, which directly correlates with increasing their child’s academic achievement. According to the results, a high percentage of parents agreed that there are ways in which the district and school provides them with information and resources to assist their children with academic skills. The teachers and administrators also indicated that they provide information to families on how to help improve their students’ academic skills.

In terms of the analysis of the organization, the barriers identified in this research are: the availability of resources, such as a Parent and/or Community resource center, or a resource directory that provides services, programs, and agencies that are available within the community for parents. Table 4.6 displays the data reflecting the availability of resources provided by the district and school for the use of parents and families.
Table 4.6: Available Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Available Resources</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statistic Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic Statistic Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic Statistic Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Statistic Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic Statistic Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic Statistic Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District –Level Administrators</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>2.7800</td>
<td>.34699</td>
<td>.77589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.0484</td>
<td>.15956</td>
<td>.88840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low SES Parents</td>
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<td>5.00</td>
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<td>Valid N</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data from the survey specifically asks about the school or district providing either a district-wide or school-wide parent resource center so parents can access resources for themselves and their children. The Low Socioeconomic Status and High Socioeconomic Status parents had a mean score ranging between 3.0 and 3.5, this indicates they were aware of the resources provided for them, specifically the Parent Resource Center that provides resources for the children, whereas the District Level Administrators and Teachers reported a very low occurrence of providing a parent resource center. The noteworthy occurrence is the lens through which each stakeholder determines what is defined as a Parent Resource Center.
The interview questions reveal the lens through which the stakeholders determine having a resource center and indicate resources available for all parents. Ms. Palm, a district administrator, reported:

“I think there are multiple levels of resource support. There are a number of networks that exist within the community and within the city that we partner with, or that we can partner with and share information. For example, we have a very strong educational foundation that is really parent driven. We canvas to the business community, but it’s really parents’ support that helps identify areas of need and areas of focus for putting additional resources into our school system. So there are those types of groups. We also have city libraries, we have a parent or community group called YES that brings business, parents and educators together just to share information about available resources. So, we try to build networks where we can connect with our parents and with our community.”

Ms. Elm, a teacher at Cherry Blossom Elementary, shared a specific parent resource center that is community based:

“The other thing, speaking of resources, is that we have the learning center. That’s a library here in the city of Cherry Blossom, and there’s a homework zone. It is part of the library services. It’s very close to our school. So that’s another resource that we use.”
Ms. Cedar, another teacher at Cherry Blossom Elementary, shared a similar comment regarding the Community Center Resource, again sharing the valuable resources available within the community of Cherry Blossom near Cherry Blossom Elementary:

“I know that in the community we have a center where parents can go and get help for their children and probably for themselves. I’m not sure how much resources are there, but there are some resources in the community that I am also touching on. I will make sure they know how to go to the library, [and] how to check out books at the Information center.”

On the other hand, the high socioeconomic status parents interviewed were asked, “What resources has your school/district provided to encourage parent involvement?” Ms. Pine, a parent at Cherry Blossom Elementary, stated:

“One thing was a parent homework night where they brought the parents in and showed them, ‘this is the homework that your child will have; this is how you can help them, this is what we expect of your child.’ So it is kind of an introductory in first grade to show what they expect you to do at home. So, that I enjoyed. They also had the GATE meetings about the program and what your role could be to help the child. They have back-to-school nights; I love those because you get to see what the teacher will be asking and if you need to help or things to look out for to make sure your child is ready for it.”

Ms. Spruce reflected on the time period she worked closely with the Parent Volunteer Coordinator at Cherry Blossom Elementary prior to the position being cut due to the budget
climate at the time the position was filled. She shared that there was a volunteer room on campus which was the heart of where many of the parents went to either assist with specific teacher projects or attend workshops focused on ways to work with their child at home. She went on to mention that the volunteer room is still in existence but not functioning at the full capacity.

The various degrees of responses allowed the researcher to identify how the interpretation of resources provided included many items like the use of technology, the community based organizations, the “Parent Homework Night”, or the quarterly Math and Reading Nights. None included a specific Parent Resource Center managed and run by the district or school, but several resources within the community of Cherry Blossom were identified as resources to assist parent involvement directly related to student achievement.

On the other hand, Ms. Palm, an administrator, shared that there are a number of parent trainings and resources available, however the challenge isn’t the amount of resources but the availability of the parents to utilize the resources. With the current family structure, many families are faced with the struggle of either having both parents working and/or maintaining a very active lifestyle. Ms. Palm remarks, “When you have both parents working or you have a very active family, it’s very hard sometimes to commit time outside of the day to be involved in the classroom, or even in parent training or information nights. I think the pressure of work puts a different spin on parent involvement.”

Mr. Oak also shared several opportunities the district has to involve parents on not just the local school governance, but being actively involved in the local community governing body.
He noted that if there were parents interested in that area of work, he would encourage them to come to school board meetings, or watch them on the local cable station, and then become informed and active on their own school site councils. He also shared how there is a very supportive education foundation in Cherry Blossom, and he highly encourages parents to become involved in that foundation.

Throughout Mr. Oak’s interview he constantly referred to communication as the most important factor in building a healthy partnership. With that said, another resource that was not thoroughly explored but was brought up in numerous interviews is the use of technology as a prominent resource. Within many interviews the administrators expressed that communication was very important to parental involvement. The district has granted all parents with an electronic resource that provides instant updates, instant connection to teachers and staff members, meeting dates, resource information and articles that are available in the district. “The School Loop” resource serves as one point of instant contact for parents to the school. Ms. Fern noted that through student ConnectED, phone messages are sent and parents can log in to instantly see all of the students’ teachers, assignments and attendance records. It can be checked via telephone in an office or at home. A parent can instantly reach out to teachers through this resource. Also, Ms. Rose noted that through the school website, and weekly voice mails, parents are connected to the school and students at all times.

Unfortunately, as Ms. Cedar points out, some parents don’t have access to a computer or an email account, some are either unknowledgeable or fearful of using a computer, and some
don’t have access to “The School Loop,” and, therefore, are not benefiting from this valuable resource. She believes that without access it will be difficult to become and remain knowledgeable of what’s going on in the district. She believes that it’s important to give parents the knowledge that will provide them with the know-how, whether it’s access to a computer or knowledge on how to open an e-mail account.

**Language & Cultural Barriers**

The final area being addressed in regards to the organizational barriers are the language and cultural differences. This was a consistent comment many of the interviewees shared as a challenge and barrier that attributed to the lack of parental involvement.

Moles (1993) suggests that language and culture are major barriers that have kept Mexican-American parents from actively participating in the schools or activities in their child’s classroom. A main component of students’ academic success according to research is parent support and involvement. Understanding that there are positive benefits for students with parental involvement, it is essential for Cherry Blossom Unified School District to identify the specific language and/or cultural barriers. When speaking with Ms. Palm, a district-level administrator, she shared that in her 30 years of experience in the field of education she noticed that language and culture were barriers often observed. She stated, “For language minority kids, sometimes parents don’t feel connected, whether it’s a language or even a cultural issue.” She further stated that she doesn’t believe that it has been a problem for Cherry Blossom USD due to the number of
ways they implement programs to make sure they are meeting the linguistic and cultural needs of their second language families. Ms. Cedar, a classroom teacher, shared the same sentiments, also explaining that many of the parents feel intimidated because they are not fluent English speakers and are unable to have small conversations because of their limited use of the English language.

Finally, Ms. Maple, who is more comfortable speaking in Spanish than English, shared that there is a discomfort in attending meetings or volunteering for “English speaking activities” (like PTA) due to the language barrier. She said, “There should be more people who speak Spanish because the people that speak Spanish sometimes are shy to speak English.” She continued, “Those of us who speak Spanish would get more involved and would not be shy. If someone is shy, they may not want to find out, or feel comfortable to find out how to get involved.” Moles (1993) stated, “For many disadvantaged parents, a serious handicap in supporting their children’s education is their limited education and their lack of fluency in English.”

The other barrier that co-exists with language is the culture. According to Barrett (1984), culture can be defined as “the body of learned beliefs, traditions and guides for behavior that is shared among members.” Throughout the interviews culture was identified as another barrier. Ms. Daisy, one of the parents, expressed that there appeared to be a cultural barrier that attributed to the struggle of parents becoming involved. She asserted that many parents don’t feel at home or welcomed when at the school sites. Ms. Tulip, another parent at the school site, suggested that it’s not the fact that parents don’t want to participate, but culturally the relationship between parent and teacher is one of reverence for the teacher. Ms. Tulip stated, “Culturally, they
see the teacher as so exalted and they (the parents) don’t really see how they can help.”

Carrasquillo & London (1993) suggest that many Mexican-American parents do not intervene in the teacher’s “professional duties.” This cultural attitude reflects in the type of involvement parents are engaged in at Cherry Blossom Elementary School. The district-level administrators, in addition to the PTA, are trying to bridge the cultural divide and ensure parents believe their contributions are essential to their child’s academic achievement. Ms. Tulip, a high socioeconomic status parent, shared:

“I think to try to bridge that cultural divide in the short term, maybe have a parent liaison explaining to [the parent] that they have a lot to offer. I think many don’t have even a high school education, but the liaison could explain how doing a little bit here and there would make them more comfortable coming in and helping the teacher and the school.”

In an effort to break down those barriers, Ms. Fern, a district-level administrator, asserts, “I think as much outreach as our sites can do breaks down those barriers; some parents do not really understand that it is a partnership and their involvement is critical.”

Bourdieu’s social reproduction theory suggests that the school’s governing system will be a reflection of the dominant culture thereby impeding the students and parents’ involvement in the school. Ms. Spruce shared, “I think the biggest challenge isn’t necessarily that we have a Spanish speaking and a non-Spanish speaking population, I just think that a lot of the magnet parents just kind of came in and took over. And I think if you’re someone who doesn’t speak English, you don’t feel comfortable trying to speak English. And in that shuffle you do lose a
voice, because you really aren’t voicing one because of discomfort.” Therefore, the
administrators and teachers have a responsibility to educate the parents and level the playing field
in order for all parents to feel comfortable in expressing their thoughts, thus, being equally
involved and support their child’s academic success, as well as the school over all.

**Research Question 2: Effective Strategies**

In the previous section we focused attention on the organizational barriers that were
possibly attributed to the lack of parental involvement, which relates to student achievement. In
this section Research Question 2, which asks, “What possible effective strategies overcome the
barriers and directly impact student academic achievement?” addresses the academic connection
to parental involvement.

Through both of the surveys and interviews, the responses to possible effective strategies
that may overcome the barriers to make a direct impact on student achievement were focused on
three main areas. The first area detailed providing training for parents, the second explained
effective strategy involving parents in setting academic goals, while the third strategy covered
educating the parents with specific strategies to assist them with skills to help their children.

When considering the Social Capital theory (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) from a parent’s
perspective, a school’s responsibility is to provide training and help the parents decode the school
system, which will ultimately provide the child with more opportunities to succeed. Many parents
already come with a set of norms and values, but what may be lacking are the skills and training
within the mainstream school system. The stronger the relationships between the school, the parents and the students, the more exposed they are to the social capital resources and to decoding the educational system.

Table 4.7, reflects the beliefs of the stakeholders in regards to the training provided for parents.

Table 4.7: Training Provided for Parents & Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Provided for Parents &amp; Teachers</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District – Level Administrators</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.0000</td>
<td>.38006</td>
<td>.84984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>2.5484</td>
<td>.11024</td>
<td>.61380</td>
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<td>Valid N</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the Low Socioeconomic Status parent interviewees especially highlighted the need for requesting assistance to help her child at home. She noted that it is extremely challenging for her to help her son with homework because she struggles with how to help him understand what to do. She stated, “The school has some help for many things, but the district took out some programs, so that’s terrible for the parents. So we need more help and more programs for my son and me because he has a low education level. So I need help and support for this.”
The survey questions specifically related to trainings being provided for teachers and parents were broken up into two categories. The first category addresses the type of trainings provided for teachers, and the second category focuses on the type of training provided for the parents.

**Professional Development**

The first category of questions specifically relates to the type of professional development provided by the district-level administrators for teachers. The directive was as follows: “Identify if teachers were given or had received trainings on ways to encourage partnership between school and home.” While building a partnership with parents, teachers will gain a better understanding of their students’ culture, needs and their academic capabilities, which will ultimately address the social capital needs of the families.
Our District provides productive professional developments that train teacher’s staff and administrators on the value of parents and ways to encourage partnerships between school and home.

Figure 4.1: District Professional Development Survey Response

Table 4.8: District Professional Development Survey Response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District-Level Professional Development</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min Value</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Value</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The teachers were asked the same question.

As a classroom teacher at my school and within my district I am provided with productive professional developments that train me on the value of parents and ways to encourage partnerships between school and home.

Figure 4.2: Teacher Responses to Professional Development Survey Question

Table 4.9: Teacher Professional Development Survey Response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Professional Development</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Min Value</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Max Value</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The mean score (Table 4.9) of 1.94 indicates the average responses were in the low range. Twenty-four of the thirty one teachers surveyed rated their response as “Not Occurring” or “Rarely” which indicates, there isn’t much being offered in terms of professional development and training for the teachers, who tend to have the most contact and impact on parents being involved. The second piece of information that this data indicates is the disconnect between the assistance that the district-level administrators believe is being provided, in terms of training provided to teachers, and the interpretation of what is actually being provided to them. There were four out of 6 of the administrators that believed this type of professional development is “Occasionally” being offered. Based on the data, there appears to be a strong need to train teachers on the value of parents and ways to encourage their participation and involvement in the school.

Two separate interviews with high socioeconomic status parents highlighted a strong need for training the teachers on the value of the parents’ involvement and ways for them to be involved. The parents indicated that many of the teachers are receptive to encouraging involvement and participation, but there is still a high percentage that is not receptive. Ms. Spruce and Ms. Tulip have been a part of the school community for a number of years and both suggested through their interviews that based on the history of the school, for various reasons, there were fewer parents attempting to visit the school and participate, volunteer, or even show up for parent workshops and trainings. One parent believed that the teachers had a bit of trouble shifting into the mode to cooperate with parents who wanted to participate and/or assist in the
classroom. One parent stated, “In the past, there were fewer parents attempting to volunteer, and so a lot of the teachers got used to never having parents around. So, when the parents started showing up, some teachers embraced it but some were confused, put off or uncomfortable by it; other teachers didn’t know how parents could help, so they sort of turned parents away.”

As noted in the literature review, the theorist Lareau suggested that disadvantages may occur when parents whose culture or lifestyle differs from that of the dominant culture, which include parents who have less of a desire to visit the school. This results in less opportunity for the parents to gain the social, informational and material rewards gained by parents who do actively participate. The idea of training teachers on valuing parents and the learning strategies to encourage parental involvement is crucial for equipping and empowering parents with the social capital needed to impact their child’s academic achievement.

**Training Parents**

The second category focuses on the type of training provided for the parents by either the district-level administrators or by the teachers. The researcher asked both the district-level administrators as well as the classroom teachers if training is provided for parents on developing home routines or creating conditions and environments that support their child’s learning.
Table 4.10 reflects the response of the district-level administrators; it also informs the researcher that there have been very few opportunities for training parents on developing home routines, and environments that would support their child’s learning.

Table 4.10: Training Provided for Parents by District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not Occurring</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Extensively</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min Value</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Value</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.11 reflects the classroom teacher’s responses.

**Table 4.11: Classroom Teacher Responses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not Occurring</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Extensively</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey responses reflect that not much direct training was occurring; however, based on the interview responses, one group of classroom teachers took on the responsibility of providing this type of direct training to parents on their specific grade level, and, based on the
positive responses, have made this training available for any interested parent. The classroom
teacher, along with the grade level team, chose to train parents on their own time because they
saw a need for a specific group of children who needed additional support. The teacher discussed
the following results to those specific parents:

“I am doing a special project right now that involves parent education. I am
working with many parents with children in my grade level to teach them how to work
with their children at home, and to help them be successful in school. I am doing that on
my own, but am working together with my colleagues in my grade level and my
principal.”

Another teacher continues on to discuss specific trainings that the grade-level facilitates
with the parents, and follows up with individual training techniques used in the classroom.

“In our grade level there’s a parent reading night where we invite all the parents to come
in. One session is in Spanish, one is in English. We go through how children learn to
read, how we teach them, and how parents can help them at home. We encourage them to
read and write at home. We also actively have parents in the classroom and teach them
how to work with their children.”

The teacher continued on to share how it is encouraged for parents to come into the
classroom and observe the teaching styles and techniques. This will then train the parents in
working at home with their child. The teacher also indicated that the parents observing at the
school are valuable training for the parents on how to work with their child at home. During the recess, lunch or during after school hours, the teacher then debriefs the parent(s) to discuss the skills they observed, and answers any questions the parents may have. She noted, “I’m teaching them [the parents] at that point in time.”

Training parents to build upon their social and cultural capital is the beginning stage to increase parental involvement in the home. Epstein (1991) categorized parent involvement into six types; type four is “learning at home”. Epstein suggests that providing information and ideas to families about how to help students with homework and other curriculum related materials are essential for student achievement. When asked by the researcher about the belief of their role as a parent in the goal of increasing their child’s academic success, each parent interviewed shared similar ideas and terms, such as: be involved, to support, to help and participate, to ensure success, to be hands-on, to be a facilitator, and to encourage. Both the high socioeconomic status parents and low socioeconomic status parents used verbs that illustrate how they believe their role is action related. The challenge is to train them with the “how to”, which will enable them to be effective and ensure success.

Another strategy to assist parents with being involved is in training them to set academic goals, monitor success, and develop specific academic skills to use at home with their child in order to become an active part of their child’s academic success.
### Table 4.12: District Level Administrator Statistical Views on Training Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Academic Goals</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting Academic Goals</td>
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<td>3.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.2500</td>
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<td>.95743</td>
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<td>Specific Skills Training</td>
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<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.6000</td>
<td>.50990</td>
<td>1.14018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

### Table 4.13: Classroom Teachers Statistical Views on Training Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Academic Goals</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting Academic Goals</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.2581</td>
<td>.20722</td>
<td>1.15377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Skills Training</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.4839</td>
<td>.18475</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.14: Low SES Parent Statistical Views on Training Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Goals</td>
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<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.2750</td>
<td>.15591</td>
<td>.69727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Skills Training</td>
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<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.1500</td>
<td>.27410</td>
<td>1.22582</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Valid N 20

Table 4.15: High SES Parent Statistical Views on Training Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Goals</td>
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<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.7222</td>
<td>.14699</td>
<td>.44096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Skills Training</td>
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<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.5556</td>
<td>.24216</td>
<td>.72648</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Valid N 9
The data in tables 4.12 – 4.15 shows another consistent pattern, when comparing the Mean Statistical score, between the teachers, parents and district in regards to training for parents being provided. The gap between the teachers, parents and district indicate an inconsistency that has been clearly observed in this section on training parents. The research found that there is a disconnect between what teachers believe they are providing and what the parents say they are receiving. As noted in an earlier section, the parents believe they are not receiving the maximum of what they could receive if teachers had more opportunity or more training themselves to assist parents in these specific areas.

One teacher observed many academic gaps in her students test scores. After looking more specifically at the gap, the teacher observed that one group of children weren’t successful on a particular group of skills, so the teacher organized a specific program to train the parents on those specific skills that needed to be addressed. After the school day hours, and on her own time, this teacher has organized a weekly Friday workshop for parents that addresses specific skills and techniques best utilized to assist their children at home. She explains:

“We [the grade level] do a reading night where we share with [the parents] different strategies we use in the classroom that they can continue to use at home. What I noticed is that a lot of parents who have children who are needy in the reading area, as well as math, they were not showing up. And they are the ones who really need this information. So, I took the approach of calling those parents and bringing them in [to the Friday workshops]. During conference time, I met with them and I invited them to this
workshop. And I find it quite successful. The parents that are committed, they really show up and they want to help their children. So that’s how I started it. Some parents came in, some didn’t show up, but some additional ones came. So, so far I’m helping about 12 families to learn the additional skills to help their children at home. So, I find that really valuable and I’m really looking forward to seeing some results with our students.”

The teacher goes on to share how the parents are thankful for the opportunity to come to the school on a Friday evening and gain the skills that their child’s teacher feels are necessary for them to have to be able to help their child at home. The teacher also felt that part of the receptiveness of the parents coming is the comfort level that the parents have because they share a commonality of language, and through that commonality they are able to get to know one another’s backgrounds, discovering other commonalities.

Another teacher, who also supports the parents of the students, spends one night a month providing workshops addressing specific techniques parents can use at home to support the learning taking place at school. In the teachers statements she details all of the workshops she has participated in during the previous months and shares her desire to see the workshops happening school-wide and district-wide:

“Well it’s easy to say we should do more, but it’s hard to find the time to do it. In addition to the reading night, starting in January we are going to have a family writing night, figuring that, by January, everybody in first grade can write at least a sentence or
two. So, we’ll have a family writing night, which will also be bilingual to encourage parents to write at home with their kids. And they’ll also be writing that when they come to school. In the past we had family science nights and family math nights. And, you know, if I had more to say about it, I think those should be school-wide or even district-wide events.”

A few parents interviewed commented on the workshops they have attended at Cherry Blossom and shared how helpful they have been. One parent shared that one teacher, in particular, had a “Parent Homework Night” where parents were brought in and shown the type of homework to expect each night. The parents were given specific strategies to help with homework time, and were provided with examples of the expectation level for the type of work teachers should receive back. She went on to say it was akin to an introductory to that grade level and sharing with them what is expected to be done at home.

Finally, one administrator stated, “As a district we do a lot of parent involvement in terms of parent training. Things like cyber-bullying, bullying in general, drug awareness and others. We have a fairly comprehensive district level parent education component. But each site tailors their parent education to meet their local community needs.”

Research Question 3: Best Practices to Support a School/Parent Partnership
The final research question, “What best practices support a partnership between school personnel and parents?” focuses on supporting the partnership between school and home, ensuring that all stakeholders, administrators, teachers and parents share in the development process of a partnership. The National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, in conjunction with the California School Board Association, describes parental involvement to include collaborating and partnering with teachers in the educational process, exchanging information, and volunteering at the school. Therefore, an effective partnership should also be a collaborative effort between administration and the parents as well. Christenson & Sheridan (2001) suggest that in order to create a partnership between the schools and family, all stakeholders must have a shared goal, which will result in a shared responsibility between families and school with student academic achievements as the focal point.

The administration’s goal is to set the direction and the tone of the school, as well as establish the vision. One district-level administrator stated:

“From its conception the vision included parents in the process to create [a mission & vision statement] first of all. As [the parents] did that, there’s a section for our district vision statement that refers to how we are going to partner with parents and families to promote student success. From the beginning it is inherent in our district that this is a partnership, and that we, the educators, can’t do it without the families.”

The administration team involved the parents to ensure the district mission and vision statement embodied the ideas and thoughts of the parents as well. Another district-level
administrator shared a similar thought: “I think parent involvement is a very big piece of our district’s mission and vision because they see the parent as an integral part of the partnership in educating students. So, if we are going to promote success in academic achievement, as well as social and emotional growth, a parent needs to be a big part of that, and that is reflected in our district’s vision.”

The administrators set the vision, and, based on the teacher interviews, the vision has been clearly defined. One teacher stated, “Our district mandate is that we meet with parents at the beginning of the year for back to school night to welcome parents.” Although there was a clear knowledge of the district’s mission and vision statement the teacher had a clearer understanding that engaging parents was essential to building the partnership between school and home. The teacher stated, “I think [the district] wants to make sure that the parents are actively involved and engaged in their children’s school activities. So there are a lot of things going on to promote that.”

One best practice that supports the partnership between the school personnel and home is having a clear mission and vision statement that clearly defines the vision statement and policies of the district and the school. Providing opportunities for all families to participate is another best practice that supports a partnership. Epstein (2002) suggests that a school-community partnership can take on a variety of forms. She also suggests that the partnership can range from being student-centered, family-centered, school-centered or community-centered. Student-centered activities include tutoring programs, awards, incentives or anything that provides a direct service
to students. A family-centered partnership includes activities where families are the primary focus. Activities include parenting workshops, family fun and learning nights, family counseling or any activities that focus on meeting the needs of parents and families.

Tables 4.16 and Table 4.17 reflect the responses of all stakeholders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min Value</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Value</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our District schedules district-wide activities and volunteer opportunities at traditional and nontraditional times and days so that all families have the opportunity to attend and participate.

Table 4.16: Stakeholders Response – Administrator & Teacher
### Table 4.16: Stakeholders Response Administrator & Teacher cont’d

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min Value</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Value</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4.17: Stakeholders Response Low & High SES Parents Response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min Value</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Value</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.17: Statistical Response Low & High SES Parents Response cont’d

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Socioeconomic Status Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the data, high socioeconomic status and low socioeconomic status parents both believed that activities and conferences are held at traditional and non-traditional hours to accommodate all families. One teacher shares that she often schedules parent conferences or family learning activities around the parents’ schedule. She outlined when they occur, “sometimes in the morning, sometimes in the evening. I typically keep a pretty open door policy with the parents.” An administrator shared that one focus of the district is to fully engage in the parent outreach, as well as train teachers and district-level administrators to extend opportunities to afterschool, evenings and on other days and occasions, as well. Allowing parents to see that parental involvement can take place in many forms, and not just during the school day, is a measureable approach to gaining parental involvement.
Making a parent feel welcomed and comfortable is another key component to building a partnership between the school and parents. One administrator stated that the most important thing an administrator can do is roll out “the welcome mat” for the parents every morning. The school-site administrator at Cherry Blossom Elementary shared that staying visible in the morning or at events, in addition to letting parents know that she is available to them when they need her, is a critical component to welcoming parents. This administrator went on to mention, “The key to getting them involved is that they know that they are recognized and valued, that it’s not a mystery to them.” The administrator also shared how staying committed to being visible to the parents is a simple task and has made a difference in the position in which the administrator serves. Further in the conversation, the administrator also noted that ensuring there are clear lines of communication was also the key to making parents feel welcomed.

“We have a lot of ways to communicate through a website, through weekly voice mail, and say in those words, you know, you are welcomed to attend. We use very welcoming words so they have every opportunity to hear that. And then, like I said, we’ve set up a whole system to bring people in and match their interest and talents with what we have going on in the school so they can be involved. “

Another administrator shared the same sentiment stating that sometimes parents don’t perceive schools as being welcoming because the parents aren’t being sought out to be involved.
Table 4.18: Parents Survey- Feeling Welcomed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Socioeconomic Status Parents</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.6667</td>
<td>.33333</td>
<td>1.00000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Socioeconomic Status Parents</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.7000</td>
<td>.12773</td>
<td>.57124</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valid N</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.18, highlights the results of the survey given to the parents indicating whether or not they feel welcomed when they visit the classroom without pre-scheduling an appointment. Based on the results both sets of parents felt very welcomed to visit the school or classroom unannounced. The parents were also asked to be specific and identify reasons for feeling unwelcome. 59% of the parents surveyed indicated their speaking very little English as the reason for the discomfort. The chart below outlines the reasons parents felt unwelcomed at the school-site.
Table 4.19: Parents Survey - Feeling Unwelcomed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Does not apply to me</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I speak very little English</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I’m not sure what to ask the teacher to get assistance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The teacher is of a different race</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I am embarrassed about my child’s academic problems</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I am embarrassed about my child’s behavior problems</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I am not able to get time off to meet with my child’s teacher</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I do not feel welcome in the classroom</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>* Other (please specify)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Other – I don’t have any problems

A teacher stated that the administrator at the school site is very welcoming and provides extra effort to welcome parents in their home language. The teacher stated,

“We have one administrator, and she’s been very involved. When we have those meetings, we have them in English and Spanish and she stays for all the English. Then
she stays and welcomes the parents in her Spanish, which is not fluent, but she makes an effort. She stays to say hello to everyone, then she leaves.”

The research has indicated that a clear vision is imperative in getting parents involved. From the district-level to the administrators and the classroom educators, all of the participants play a key role in boosting parental support. It is evident from these findings that the language barrier can serve as a major impediment to the collaboration with parents and must be addressed.

**Administrator & Teacher Beliefs**

Finally, to build a partnership between school and home there first has to be a belief that there is a correlation between the two. To measure the beliefs of the participants, Likert-scale questions were used in the survey to analyze the data from the interviews inquiring whether or not the participant believed there is a correlation between parental involvement and student achievement.

**Administrator Perspective**

Based on the survey, Figure 4.3 reflects a high ratio of participants that believe that there is a strong correlation between parent involvement and student achievement. The administrators surveyed were asked the following question:
I believe parent and community involvement is related to student achievement.

Figure 4.3: Correlation between Parental Involvement & Student Achievement (Administrator Response)

Table 4.20: Correlation between Parental Involvement & Student Achievement (Administrator Perspective)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min Value</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Max Value</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.80</td>
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<td>Variance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responses gathered during the interviews indicated all district level administrators believed that there was a strong correlation between parental involvement and student
achievement. Mr. Oak, a district-level administrator strongly believes that there is a correlation between parental involvement and student achievement. He also shared that the more informed the parent is in understanding how the educational system works, the setting of goals, and in having clear expectations, the better the student will be. Ms. Fern, another district administrator, stated that she absolutely believes there is a correlation between school and home. She goes on to share her personal belief: “Having two kids of my own and being a teacher for twenty years before I went into administration, the more involved the parents were in the child’s experience at school, the more positive that becomes. Because it truly is a cooperative effort and not seen as them and us. It’s a partnership and it’s important that the student realizes that a partnership exists because they’re more apt to behave, participate and be involved in what’s going on and get their work done if they know that open communication is there with that parent.” Ms. Rose, the school site administrator, went in depth and shared the correlation between an involved parent and the achievement of a child:

“Purely pragmatics, the number of hours a teacher has with a student vs. the number they have outside the classroom. Just attending to a child, take them out on trips, explain things, and model all the things that demonstrate an educated person, that too. That cuts across cultural boundaries too. A lot of it is about just giving the time to the child. There are studies that show that. Children who are most successful at school, typically it has been due to their experience at school. What didn’t happen at school, it happened living in a home that gives vast experiences for children.”
Teacher Perspective

A similar instrument was used to survey the teaching staff at Cherry Blossom Elementary. The results were similar to the Administrator survey.

As a classroom teacher at my school and within my district I believe parental involvement is related to student achievement.

*Figure 4.4: Correlation between Parental Involvement & Student Achievement (Teacher Response)*
Table 4.21: Correlation between Parental Involvement & Student Achievement (Teacher’s Response)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min Value</td>
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<tr>
<td>Max Value</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>0.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the total 31 teachers surveyed, two teachers felt that parental involvement was not a prevalent component to student achievement, whereas two other teachers believed that parental involvement was a prevalent component to student achievement. However, the majority of the surveys reflected that 27 of the teachers felt that parental involvement was a highly relevant component to student achievement.

The interview responses provided additional support as to the high relevancy and belies that parental involvement correlates to student achievement. Ms. Cedar suggested that when parents are involved they provide that extra pull for the student that reminds the child that the parent is there for them and believes in their success, which translates to the child seeing the importance of education. Ms. Elm shared her own personal journey as it relates to parental involvement. She reflected on seeing her own mother at the school she attended as a child, and
being visible. She shared that she encourages parents to be more visible, as well as participating in the educational journey with their child. Ms. Holly truly believes there is a correlation and suggested that parental involvement is not just about volunteering in the classroom or school, but truly begins at home. She stated:

“The more the parent is involved, the higher achieving the child is. For me there is no question about that. If they understand the curriculum, or even if they don’t understand it, but just putting the importance on education. Getting them there on time, ready to learn, prepared. I think that all comes from home and starts before the school day begins, as well as [when] the school experience begins. Just being able to sit and talk with children before they even go to school, before five years old, and have them sit and listen and respond and look in the direction of the speaker. Culturally, sometimes, that’s not appropriate. But just being aware of their surroundings, I think that’s all heavily involved with parent involvement.”

**Parent Perspective**

During the interviews the parents shared very similar sentiments regarding their beliefs about the correlation of their involvement and their child’s academic success. Ms. Olive shared that if she doesn’t get involved her child won’t learn. Ms. Maple felt that her being involved 100% of the time is what her child needs to be successful. Ms. Fir felt that getting involved keeps a parent in the know with what’s going on in the school and know how their child is doing. Ms. Larch said that her son finds it important for her to be there: “He sees me in the school, he’s very
happy, and that’s very important for him that I come and help him.” Ms. Pine’s reflection supports the others thoughts on involvement, she says, “It’s important that your child knows that you take education seriously then they know they should take it seriously. If you don’t care if they do their homework, then it’s a lot easier for them not to care.” Finally, the comment Ms. Tulip shares truly sums up the beliefs of all the parents. As with the others, Ms. Tulip was asked, “Do you think there is a connection between parent involvement and student achievement?”

Why?”

“Absolutely. Because the parent’s attitude toward school and education, and the importance of it in the child’s life, is crucial to the level of importance the child places on it. If the parents don’t think it’s important for the child to do all the things that are necessary, like eating well, going to bed on time, waking up on time, arriving to school on time, doing their homework, being prepared to learn, doing projects, studying, practicing, then the children won’t. And if the children don’t place a high priority on it, they won’t be successful. So, I believe that is instilled by the parents then eventually comes from within as the child gets older.”

Major Outcomes of this Study

To answer the overarching question, what attributes to parental involvement that presumably would impact student achievement, the findings provide information that detail the barriers and strategies to overcome those barriers. The data in this chapter illustrated the
relationship between parental involvement and student achievement. The data focused on isolating and becoming aware of the organizational barriers that attribute to the lack of parental involvement. The data also focused on the possible effective strategies that overcome those barriers. Finally, the data guided the researcher to focus on the support needed to build a partnership between the school and parents.

The major findings of the study are summarized as follows:

1. All stakeholders were very consistent in their responses about their beliefs that there is a correlation between parental involvement and student achievement. All stakeholders indicated that they believed there was a strong correlation between parents’ involvement and student achievement. They further stated that there is an overall belief that a stronger partnership needs to be established between the school and the parents.

2. The interviews reflected a disconnect between the district-level administrators and the teachers’ understanding of district policies and procedures regarding parental involvement. There was a lack of clarity in the understanding of the policies, in addition to a lack of clarity of the district’s mission or vision statement regarding parental involvement.

3. The research also showed that developing either a district-wide or school-wide parent resource center providing resource information for parents, as well as their children, is essential. The resource center would be the hub of where parents attend workshops, assist with specific teacher projects, have access to technology resources, and all other
strategies relating to parental involvement. In addition to establishing a resource center, providing a Spanish-speaking liaison will be advantageous so that all parents will be able to communicate with each other and school personnel while at the school.

4. Training teachers on the value of parents and ways to encourage the parent’s participation and involvement in the classroom, as well as their direct involvement with their child at home is critical.

5. Training parents on their value at the school and ways their involvement is beneficial to the school, and to their child’s academic achievement, is also critical. The data shows that parents need specific training on setting academic goals, monitoring success and specific academic skills to assist with their child at home.
CHAPTER FIVE:
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This chapter will begin with a review of the study and is followed by a summary of the findings. The next section addresses the implications of the study. The chapter will conclude with recommendations and suggestions for future research. This study examined aspects of parental involvement that may lead to academic achievement in students. The study also examined parent involvement participation or programs currently at Cherry Blossom Elementary and within Cherry Blossom Unified School District that have had an impact on student achievement. The organizational barriers were identified and effective strategies to overcome those barriers were explored. Finally, the study examined best practices occurring between the school personnel and the parents.

Restatement of the Study

This research study involved mixed methods of qualitative and quantitative inquiry regarding the current models of parental involvement. This included PTA organizations and classroom volunteer opportunities, which may not correlate with what research suggests have benefitted parents based on Social and Cultural Capital. Data was gathered using multiple sources including survey responses and interviews with volunteers of district-level administrators, teachers, and low and high socioeconomic status parents.
The targeted search for this study identified schools that had an API score of 650 or higher on the CST, a high population of socioeconomically disadvantaged students, a school with a traditional parental program, a student enrollment of 500 or more, and a diverse school body population.

Parents, Teachers and Administrators were sent the Parental Involvement Survey. After three weeks, a reminder letter was sent to the parents, teachers and administrators. Three sets of interview questions were separately designed for parents, teachers and administrators to ascertain each varied stakeholder’s perspective of parental involvement. (Participants volunteered to be interviewed) Interviews were one-on-one and scheduled at the participant’s convenience. The researcher obtained permission to audio record the interviews to allow researcher an opportunity to focus on body language and listen more adeptly.

Findings

A detailed discussion of the findings of this study is presented in response to the three research questions that guided this study.

Research Question 1: Organizational Barriers

The research question addressed the barriers that attribute to the lack of parental involvement, which relates to student achievement. There were three primary organizational barriers identified in the research: communication, availability of resources, and the language and
cultural barriers. Based on the findings regarding communication and awareness, there was a mean score of 4.54 from the low and high socioeconomic status parents indicating that the parents believed they were made aware of the school and district’s policy regarding parental involvement. The parents also indicated that they were made aware of parent volunteer opportunities at the school site, and also information on their child’s learning goals and progress made, as well as being provided with information to assist their child’s academic growth. These findings support Joyce Epstein’s model (1992) as well as the National PTA (1998) National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement. Standard I. of the National PTA standards suggests that communication between home and school occurs regularly, and is two-way and meaningful. The National Standards indicate when positive relationships are developed and there is effective communication, students make greater progress. Applying the survey data findings from the interviewed parents to Epstein’s model and the National PTA’s Standard, the findings correlate with that of Epstein’s model. The data indicates that it is necessary to continue to keep the parents informed and also to continue communicating the policies on volunteer opportunities at the school site, as well as providing information on the child’s learning goals and the progress being made.

According to Decker and Decker (Decker & Decker, 2003), the goal is to build shared ownership for education thereby outlining a partnership continuum of activities providing greater levels of collaboration, shared responsibility, and participation in decision making. The continuum partnership suggests that a parent’s role in developing openness and two-way
communication can be done if the parent participates in the following: discusses concerns and
successes with the teacher, reviews information that is sent home from school, advises the teacher
of the student’s likes and dislikes, and informs the teacher of a change in routine. In an effort to
also address the language and culture barrier, the continuum of parent and community
involvement partnership also suggests creating a welcoming school environment for
parents (Decker & Decker, 2003). This may include a Spanish-speaking liaison for the Spanish-
speaking parent in addition to the school organizing a message board that indicates school events,
activities, resources and opportunities for parents.

The other major finding regarding organizational barriers was the lack of a parent
resource center. When the parents, teachers and district-level administrators were asked if there
was a resource center in the school or district where parents would be able to access resources for
themselves, the findings indicated that few of those interviewed and surveyed were familiar with
a school or community resource center. According to the research having a school-based or
district-wide resource center is an effective way for schools to support families as well as
proactively reach out to them. A parent resource center can provide a variety of services available
to both the students and their families. The resource center would not be as limited as an
information center, but would also provide support with homework, workshops specializing in
child discipline, self-esteem, stress management, etc.

Epstein (2001) suggests involving the community is essential because the community
offers a variety of resources that are valuable to the school, as well as to the families. Creating a
Parent Resource Center that includes the community members builds a strong partnership between the parent, school and community. The community provides resources that can directly affect the school like, health information and resources for families in need, or collaborate with medical or social service agencies, and provide adult learning opportunities or family support services. These resources will give families the Social Capital needed to fully support their child’s education. As noted earlier, the goal is to build shared ownership of education, which is inclusive of providing resources and creating equity for all students.

**Recommendations: Organizational Barriers**

This researcher’s overall recommendation to increase communication between school personnel and parents include the following key strategies. The first strategy is to create a newsletter for parents within the school-site as well as a newsletter district-wide specifically for parents. The newsletter will make parents more knowledgeable about events and activities happening directly at the school-site as well as district-wide. The next recommended key strategy suggests the district-level administrators establish a framework model indicating effective teacher to parent communication. Also, providing parents with computer training and accessing ConnectEd and The School Loop will provide more opportunities for parents to interact with teachers as well as administrators. Finally, implementing regular informal gatherings with the principal and teachers (i.e.: coffee with the principal and teachers) will provide informal opportunities for parents to meet and greet the teachers and administrators.
The researcher would suggest working with the district communications manager to develop communication strategies for parents possibly identifying several methods (i.e.: establishing a text-messaging system, and utilizing the ConnectEd system) that can be cost-effective and most beneficial for parents. The researcher would also suggest organizing a focus group to evaluate the effectiveness of ConnectEd and The School Loop, and discussing other possible communication methods.

In regards to an overall recommendation addressing available resources, the researcher suggests establishing a parent friendly environment that supports parental participation. Specifically for Cherry Blossom Elementary, the following recommendations are being suggested: 1. Reorganize and revitalize the parent/volunteer center at the school-site. Train parent volunteers on how to effectively organize and work with parents of enrolled students. Some of the responsibilities of the parent volunteer would be to assist in creating activities and regularly scheduled workshops on campus for parents, students and families. The parent volunteers would assist in providing both internal and external resources for the parent center. With consideration of the current budget climate, if a full time parent personnel position is not financially feasible, then identifying volunteers that are trained as the experienced parent volunteers, that can commit to working in the parent center for specific hours would be most recommended. In regards to monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of the parent center the district or the school-site should implement a data tool that quarterly monitor parent participation and overall satisfaction of the workshops provided and use of the parent center.
Research Question 2: Effective Strategies

What possible effective strategies overcome the organizational barriers and directly impact student achievement? Based on the survey findings, training both the parents as well as the teachers with specific strategies to effectively support one another is essential to directly impacting student achievement. When considering the Social Capital theory (Stanton-Salazar), educating the family is essential. Many times parents come with a set of norms and values that don’t always line up with the norms and values of the school system. Providing training that exposes the parents to the resources needed to level the capital between both low and high socioeconomic status parents will attempt to bridge the educational gap and provide parents with an opportunity to decode the educational system. There was a slight gap in mean scores comparing the low socioeconomic status parents to the high socioeconomic parents in regards to participating parent workshops and/or training. The LSES parents had a mean score of 4.0, whereas the HSES parents had a mean score of 4.6. Though the surveys didn’t clarify why there was a gap, the interviews identified language as the potential barrier. As noted in chapter four, language is a barrier; for some parents who don’t feel they understand enough English to make attending a meeting beneficial, they just choose not to come.

Moles (1993) stated in an article, “For many Hispanic parents as well as those from other countries, the school represents an alien and impersonal environment directed by Anglos who are insensitive to the minority’s language and culture. Consequently, they often feel uncomfortable and fearful in the school, especially when they cannot communicate effectively in English or have
suffered from discrimination in their own school experience” (Collins & Obregon, 1980). At
Cherry Blossom Elementary, the current volunteer room does not have personnel to manage the
center, or a Spanish-speaking liaison available whenever parents come in, and the number of non-
English speaking volunteers diminishes substantially. In addition to the previous observation, the
inability to financially staff a parent representative in the volunteer room to organize workshops
or trainings is part of the reason for workshops/trainings not occurring in the school, according to
one parent. Establishing a parent liaison or coordinator in the school or district whose primary
responsibility would be to develop and maintain programs without adding the task to individual
teachers is key.

The training opportunities on how to involve and incorporate parents and provide
meaningful workshops should not be limited to just the parents, but also the teachers. These
trainings will better equip the parents with tools to increase their capacity to help their children
achieve academic success. With there being an increase in second language students and parents
in the schools, there is a big need for teachers to be knowledgeable about parental involvement
and a parent’s role in facilitating a home-school connection (Simich-Dudgeon, 1993). Ferrara and
Ferrara, two leading researchers on the Teacher Preparation Programs, concluded through their
research that many teacher education programs don’t spend adequate time on courses that train
teachers in embracing the parents and welcoming them into the classroom while encouraging
participation in all levels of their child’s education. Through the research from this study, the
teachers mean score was 2.50, which indicates that most teachers believed they were rarely
offered trainings. Based on these findings the teachers did not believe they were being provided with adequate training on how to incorporate parents into the classroom and imparting the skills and strategies needed to increase student achievement. The interviews indicated that teachers were rarely offered workshops and/or provided with resourceful information to help families understand how children learn. The findings from the survey and interviews correlate with the research shared by Ferrara and Ferrara (2005).

Recommendation: Effective Strategies

The overall recommendation is to provide trainings for both the teachers and parents on parent involvement. The recommendation is to organize workshops that provide basic information regarding student success and how parents can support student development. Also training both the parent center volunteers as well as teacher volunteers to lead workshops on parent engagement and student support, is highly recommended. In alignment with the previous recommendation on establishing a parent center, creating a Parent Education series of workshops designed to support parents and families that surround student academic achievement and ways to support the classroom and the teacher is also recommended. In addition to parents being trained, organizing a series of professional developments for teachers training them on effectively engaging and incorporating parents in the classroom is recommended.
Finally, for teacher and parent stakeholders, organizing a follow-up system to check for effectiveness of the workshops, as well as developing a system that provides follow through on implementation of suggested practices at workshops is highly recommended.

**Research Question 3: Supporting a Partnership**

The National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, in conjunction with the California School Board Association, describes parental involvement to include collaborating and partnering with teachers in the educational process, exchanging information, and volunteering at the school. Therefore, an effective partnership should also be collaboration between administration and the parents as well. This research question focused on building a partnership between school and parents with the knowledge that what happens in the school has a direct affect in the home and vice versa. Beginning with all stakeholders obtaining a common goal in placing student achievement, as the focal point will result in shared responsibility between families and schools. Epstein (2001) suggests that children need to be able to transfer what they learned at school and apply it at home, and feel successful about the transition. Parents need to also feel confident and successful, as well, by realizing that there are ways in which they can successfully reinforce the skills with their children in the home. Rich (1993) suggests five ways to mobilize a plan and build a bridge between school and parents. The first is to train teachers to work with families as partners. The second is to provide ways for families to help one another; this is seen as a parent-to-parent approach for involvement in children’s learning. This strategy
really emphasizes and facilitates a sense of community and building friendships between families. As mentioned earlier, building the social capital is a great way to level the playing field between low and high socioeconomic parents. The third strategy is to establish a family education corps. This would include hiring a parent liaison or parent coordinator to work with parents and families in education. The fourth is to provide support to schools from all who care about children. Rich suggests beginning parental support training during the in-hospital care when a child is born. Providing parents with practical tips and information on how they can help their child developmentally from birth on is invaluable. The fifth strategy is to involve the wider community incorporating programs or resources that are actively a part of the community, i.e.: projects, foundations, businesses, religious-based organizations etc. All community members that have a stake in the development of the children in the community should have an opportunity to be involved in that child’s development.

**Recommendations: Supporting a Partnership**

The following recommendations are being suggested to clearly define the policies and practices of the school and the district. District-level administrators create a memorandum that clearly outlines the policies, practices and expectations of the schools in regards to expected parental involvement at each school site. The memorandum should explicitly outline the policies and procedures and be regularly reviewed, (via newsletter, announcements, bulletins, public addresses, etc.) by all stakeholders. With the district-level administrators establishing the
protocols, the schools as well as the parents observe the districts response and belief as it relates to the correlation of parental involvement and student achievement.

The researcher also suggests convening quarterly meetings with parent leader representatives, teacher liaisons, and school-site administrators to discuss specific concerns and provide feedback on the current initiatives as it relates to parental involvement. These meetings will allow all participants to become active participants in assisting the district with shaping a parental involvement program that meets the needs of all parents at the school-site and/or within the district.

**Overall Implications**

Finally, the findings from this study exemplify that all stakeholders believe that parental involvement is critical to the academic success of the children. In order for the findings from this study to impact the stakeholders, the following recommendations are being made for Cherry Blossom Unified School District, and, in particular, Cherry Blossom Elementary School. The recommendations are being made to address issues and insights in this study as they, (the school and district), continue to build a partnership between school and home.

**Overall Recommendations**

Throughout this entire study there is one common theme, and that is student academic achievement. In chapter four, the current model of parental involvement reflects a top down
model that has the district mandating the policy and its interpretation and implementation at the school site level. Based on the research, the current model should be transformed into one where students are the central focus and the stakeholders are corresponding and supporting each other in ways that will ultimately support those students in increasing their academic achievement. The common cliché, two heads are better than one, emphasizes the purpose of partnership. Epstein (2002) suggests, “When parents, teachers, students, and others view one another as partners in education, a caring community forms around students and begins its work.” Based on the research, and specifically this study, the current model of parental involvement should provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to correspond with each other (Figure 8). In the center of the figure all stakeholders are in communication with each other, working together to support student achievement. In addition to all of the stakeholders working together, the figure shows that there is a strong relationship between district level administrators to both teachers and parents. There is also a strong relationship between the teachers, the students, and administrators. The figure reflects the collaboration of all stakeholders and the individual relationships between the stakeholders as well.
Joyce Epstein (2002) identified six types of parental involvement that have proven to be successful for school, family and community partnerships. Applying Epstein’s six types of involvement, this researcher asserts that it is imperative for Cherry Blossom to readdress the following components: parenting, communicating, volunteering and collaborating.

To address the organizational barriers presented in this study, an overall recommendation would be to increase the social capital by providing more opportunities for parent trainings and workshops that reflect the specific needs of Cherry Blossom Elementary. Through the interviews, two teacher participants discussed the workshops they provide to their students’ parents within the related grade level. These workshops are focusing parents on specific skills needed to assist their child at home. The workshops were also specifically designed to guide the parents in the form of Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development, and lead the group in skill development based on the parents’ understanding of the skill.
In spite of the current budget climate, providing regular workshops similar to that of a “Parent College” would be recommended. It should also be suggested to build upon the current model of parent trainings that Ms. Daisy and Ms. Cedar (teachers at Cherry Blossom Elementary) have implemented with their students’ parents within their grade level. Providing multiple opportunities to train parents while offering assistance and support is essential to preparing the child for academic success, including learning strategies, parenting tips and child development.

Planned Professional Developments are an essential investment for both staff and parents in building the capacity to work with one another and with the community to support student achievement. Throughout the teacher interviews and surveys, the teachers expressed their understanding that parental involvement does lead to student academic success. Providing teachers with the know how to train parents may result in more teachers willingly providing workshops and/or literacy and math nights that are designed to train parents in assisting their child at home.

Within the research, it was noted that community partnerships are also an essential component to improving student’s success. It is also recommended to coordinate resources and services from the community that can specifically address parental needs.

Epstein (1991) suggested that finding multiple ways to correspond to parents would ultimately strengthen the partnership between the school and the home. Fundamentally, communication is the key to success. The researcher would suggest preparing documents and activities that would accommodate the various language and cultural needs. Currently Cherry
Blossom Elementary is addressing the communication barrier somewhat, but the school has not been able to fund a full-time parent liaison, which has resulted in a lack of available resources. The researcher also suggests that providing a parent liaison would increase the ability to build the communication with the school thereby increasing the comfort level of the parents.

Reestablishing the Parent Resource Center to benefit each parent with a central point for communication purposes will allow parents to access computers and connect with the schools ConnectEd and the School Loop information resource. Having a resource center will also provide an opportunity for interaction with other parents and build one-on-one relationships, which are recommended to assist with increasing communication and decrease the language and cultural barriers tied to communication.

The National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE, 2001) suggests that in order to sustain a partnership, educators need a clear policy that supports the needs of the parents, specifically at the local level. The Goals 2000: Educate America Act and the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) have made parental involvement a national priority. The federal initiatives created a national vision of school-to-home partnerships, but the local leadership, i.e.: school board, district-level administrators and leaders, defines the specific vision for school-to-home partnership.

Therefore, the researcher recommends that Cherry Blossom USD adopt a formal parent involvement policy that clearly outlines the policies and practices of the district in regards to parental involvement. The district-level administrators should implement a focus group
incorporating an equal representation of all stakeholders to strategize effective implementation of the national policies. The discussion points should be centered on implementation and how best to use limited funds and resources, highlighting how to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation.

**Future Research**

Based on the results of this study and the review of the related literature, the following recommendations for further study are presented concerning bridging a partnership between school and home:

1. Conduct a study to explore specific community partners who would be essential to Cherry Blossom Elementary.
2. Replicate this study in an alternate school in the Cherry Blossom Unified School District and add an independent variable that may reveal additional information and/or correlations with school, home, and community partnerships.
3. Conduct follow-up studies with all stakeholders who participated in this current study to measure possible changes in the perceptions and practices as a result of exposure to this study.
4. Conduct follow-up studies with all stakeholders to determine their needs as they relate to school-to-home partnerships.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Callison, W. L. *Raising Test Scores Using Parent Involvement*. Lanham, Maryland: ScareCrow Education.


APPENDIX A: Participation Letter

October 19, 2010

Dear ____________________________________.

You have been invited to participate in a graduate research study conducted by Krishna Smith, doctoral student from the Rossier school of Education’s Ed.D. Program at the University of Southern California.

This study is focused on identifying the impact of parental involvement on student achievement. The second purpose it to examine how the SES of the parents is being considered when suggesting parental involvement and support. In addition to examining ways to develop partnership that produce parent accountability as well as examine best practices between the school personnel and the parents of that school. The findings in this study may have direct implications for current and future school policies and opportunities for parent and community involvement as mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

If you agree to participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete a 10 – 15 minute survey. If you agree, you will also be asked to participate in a face-to-face or phone interview. The interview would be 30 – 45 minutes in length and will be scheduled to accommodate your preference of time or location. The interview may be audio or video taped.

Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Any data collected will be destroyed per your request. All information obtained in connection with this study will be confidential and the data will be reported in combination with other data so your responses cannot be linked back to you. Pseudonyms (false names) will be used when quoting specific participants. There are no anticipated risks to participants.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding participation in this study, please contact me, Krishna Smith or Dr. Rudy Castruita at the University of Southern California. Thank you very much for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Krishna Y. Smith, Principal Investigator
USC Ed.D Student
Krishnys@usc.edu

Dr. Rudy Castruita, Faculty Supervisor
Professor, USC Rossier School of Education
rcastrui@usc.edu

Date of Preparation: 10/16/2010

UPIRB# : UP-10-00323
APPENDIX B: Final Attempt Email to Participants

From: Krishna Smith  
Sent: Monday November 01, 2010 7:30am  
Subject: USC Doctoral Candidate’s survey for dissertation – final attempt

Good Morning,

My name is Krishna Smith, and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Southern California. I’m emailing you to invite you to participate in a research study. Participation is voluntary.

I understand the time constraints you may be facing, the survey will take 10 to 15 minutes to complete. If you would rather have a paper copy, please reply to this email and you will be sent a survey with a stamped, pre-addressed envelope.

I appreciate your time and thank you in advance!

Krishna Y. Smith  
USC Ed.D candidate

Date of Preparation 10/16/2010  
UPIRB#: UP-10-00323
APPENDIX C: Information/Fact Sheet

University of Southern California
Rossier School of Education

INFORMATION/FACTS SHEET FOR NON-MEDICAL RESEARCH

The Impact of Parental Involvement on Student Achievement
Information Sheet

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
This project aims to examine (1) a parent involvement program that has an impact on student achievement. (2) This study will also examine how the SES (Socioeconomic Status) of the parents is being considered when suggesting parental involvement and support. (3) This study will examine ways to develop partnership that produce parent accountability. (4) This study will examine best practices between the school personnel and the parents of that school.

PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT
This research involves the completion of an anonymous survey. You may also be asked to participate in a none-on-one interview.

If you choose to participate in this research project, you will be asked to complete the survey either online or on paper.

You may also be invited to participate in a one-on-one 8-10 questions interview that will last approximately 30 - 45 minutes. The interview will be audio and video recorded. If you do not want to be recorded, you can continue your participation; handwritten notes will be taken instead.

PAYMENT/COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION
You will not be compensated for participation in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

Your name or other identifiable information will not be used when the results of the survey or interview are published. Instead a numeric code will be used to identify participants.

For the purposes of this study, the interviews will be recorded.

All survey and interview results will be placed on flash drives and recording devices, and stored in a locked security box. The members of the research team and the University of Southern
California’s Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) may access the data. The HSPP reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

The records and results will be kept for 3 years in the secured locked box, after which time paper copies of the data will be shredded on a crisscross shredder, electronic data destroyed and the recorded interviews will be permanently deleted.

INVESTIGATOR CONTACT INFORMATION
If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact Krishna Smith Krishnys@usc.edu.

IRB CONTACT INFORMATION
University Park IRB, Office of the Vice Provost for Research Advancement, Stonier Hall, Room 224a, Los Angeles, CA 90089-1146, (213) 821-5272 or upirb@usc.edu

Date of Preparation: 10/16/2010

UPIRB#: UP-10-00323
APPENDIX D: District-Level Administrator’s Survey

The following instrument is designed to measure how you and your district are reaching out to involve parents, and students. Please circle the rating that most closely matches your district’s current practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our District:</th>
<th>Not Occurring</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Extensively</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Offers workshops and/or provides resourceful information to help families understand how children learn.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provides training for parents on developing home routines, conditions and environments that support their child’s learning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Has clear and defined policies for teachers that encourage communication with the parents discussing the curriculum, student achievement and ways a parent can be involved.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Provides productive professional developments that train teachers, staff and administrators on the value of parents and ways to encourage partnerships between school and home.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Provides regular training opportunities for volunteers so they are properly trained and know how to be best utilized on the campus.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Provides a district-wide Parent Resource Center so parents can access resources for themselves and their children.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Schedules district-wide activities and volunteer opportunities at traditional and non-traditional times and days so that all families have the opportunity to attend and participate.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Assists families in guiding students to set academic goals, and to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Provides information to families on how to assist students with skills they need to improve.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I would be interested in participating in a 30 – 45 minute interview about my role in executing my District’s parent involvement programs.

_____________ Yes   ______________ No

You may contact me at the following number to schedule a follow-up interview

_________________________________

Thank you very much for completing this survey!

Krishna Smith,  Ed.D. Candidate
Rudy Castruita, Ed.D., Faculty Advisor
University of Southern California
**APPENDIX E: Principal Survey**

The following instrument is designed to measure how you and your school are reaching out to involve parents, community members and students. Please circle the rating that most closely matches your school’s current practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My School:</th>
<th>Not Occurring</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Extensively</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Offers workshops and/or provides resourceful information to help families understand how children learn.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provides training to parents on developing home routines, conditions and environments that support their child’s learning.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Have clear and defined policies for teachers that encourage communication with the parents discussing the curriculum, student achievement and ways a parent can be involved.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Provide productive professional developments that train teachers, and staff on the value of parents and ways to encourage partnerships between school and home.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Provides regular training opportunities for volunteers, so they are properly trained and know how to be best utilized on the campus.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Provides a Parent Resource Center so parent and community members can access resources for themselves and their children.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Schedules school activities and volunteer opportunities at traditional and non-traditional school times and days so that all families have the opportunity to attend and participate.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Assists families in guiding students to set academic goals, and monitor and discuss schoolwork at home.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Principal Survey continued on the next page
I would be interested in participating in a 30 – 45 minute interview about my role in executing my School’s parent involvement programs.

_____________Yes

_____________No

You may contact me at the following number to schedule a follow-up interview

_________________________________

Thank you very much for completing this survey!

Krishna Smith., Ed.D. Candidate
Rudy Castruita, Ed.D., Faculty Advisor
University of Southern California
**APPENDIX F: Teacher Survey**

The following instrument is designed to measure how you and your school/district are reaching out to involve parents, community members and students. Please circle the rating that most closely matches your school’s/ district’s current practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>As a classroom teacher at my school and within my district I:</th>
<th>Not Occurring</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Extensively</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Am offered workshops and/or provided with resourceful information to help families understand how children learn.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Train parents on developing home routines, conditions and environments that support their child’s learning.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Have a clear understanding of the defined policies for teachers that encourage communication with the parents discussing the curriculum, student achievement and ways a parent can be involved.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Am provided with productive professional developments that train me on the value of parents and ways to encourage partnerships between school and home.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Believe parents are being properly trained as volunteers to best be utilized on the campus.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Encourage the use of our Parent Resource Center that provides classroom resources and items parents can access.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Schedule conferences and volunteer opportunities at traditional and non-traditional school times and days so all families have the opportunity to attend and participate.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Assist families in guiding students to set academic goals, and monitor and discuss schoolwork at home.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Provide information to families on how to assist students with skills they need to improve.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher Survey continued on next page
I would be interested in participating in a 30 – 45 minute interview about my role in executing my School/District’s parent involvement programs.

_____________Yes  ____________No

You may contact me at the following number to schedule a follow-up interview

_____________________

Thank you very much for completing this survey!

Krishna Smith,  Ed.D. Candidate
Rudy Castruita,Ed.D., Faculty Advisor
University of Southern California
APPENDIX G: Parent Survey

The following instrument is designed to measure how you perceive your school/district reaches out to involve parents in building and facilitating a strong and positive partnership between the school/district personnel and the parents. Please circle the rating that most closely matches your school’s/district’s current practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>As a parent in this School/District I:</th>
<th>Never (No)</th>
<th>Sometimes (Somewhat No)</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Most of the Time (Somewhat Yes)</th>
<th>Always (Yes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Am aware my school has a policy that describes how the school is going to involve parents in the education of my child(ren)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Am aware that the teachers and the school principal offer parent volunteer opportunities for me to get involved in my child’s education.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Receive regular information about my child’s learning goals and progress made and information I can use to assist my child’s academic growth.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Am aware that the school provides a variety of ways in which I can get involved and volunteer at the school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Am aware the school schedules activities and conferences at traditional and non-traditional school hours that are convenient so all families will have the opportunity to attend and participate.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Am aware the school provides a Parent Resource Center so I can access resources for myself and my children.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Am aware that my school assists families in guiding students to set academic goals, and to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Am aware that my school provides information to families on how to assist students with skill they need to improve</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As a parent in this School/District I:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Never (No)</th>
<th>Sometimes (Somewhat No)</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Most of the Time (Somewhat Yes)</th>
<th>Always (Yes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. Am aware the school/district provides opportunities for parents of all diverse groups (e.g. racial, ethnic and socioeconomic) leadership roles at the school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Am aware the school/district provides a community resource directory for parents, providing services, programs and agencies within the community.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Feel welcome when I visit the classroom without pre-scheduling an appointment.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. If I feel uncomfortable or unable to speak with my child’s teacher, it is because: (Circle all that apply)

- Does not apply to me.
- I speak very little English.
- I’m not sure what to ask the teacher to get assistance.
- The teacher is of a different race.
- I am embarrassed about my child’s academic problems.
- I am embarrassed about my child’s behavior problems.
- I am not able to get time off to meet with my child’s teacher.
- I do not feel welcome in the classroom.
- Other (please specify)

I would be interested in participating in a 30 – 45 minute interview about my thoughts on the School/District’s parent programs.

_____________Yes _______________No

You may contact me at the following number to schedule a follow-up interview

______________________________

Thank you very much for completing this survey!

Krishna Smith., Ed.D. Candidate
Rudy Castruita, Ed.D., Faculty Advisor
University of Southern California
APPENDIX H: Parent Survey (Spanish)

El siguiente instrumento está diseñado para medir cómo perciben sus escuelas / distritos de llegar a involucrar a los padres, y miembros de la comunidad en la construcción y facilitar una asociación fuerte y positiva entre la escuela y el personal del distrito y los padres.
Por favor circule el número que más se acerque a la práctica actual de su escuela / distrito.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Como padre en esta escuela/districto 1:</th>
<th>Nunca (ningún)</th>
<th>A veces (Algo)</th>
<th>Inseguro (Un poco)</th>
<th>Casi todo el tiempo</th>
<th>Siempre (Sí)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Soy consciente de mi escuela tiene una política que describe cómo la escuela va a involucrar a los padres en la educación de mi hijo (s)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Soy consciente de que los maestros y el director de la escuela ofrecen oportunidades de padres voluntarios para mi para participar en la educación de mi hijo.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Recibir información periódica sobre las metas de aprendizaje de mi hijo y los progresos realizados y la información que puede utilizar para ayudar al crecimiento académico de mi hijo.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Soy consciente de que la escuela ofrece una variedad de maneras en que puedo participar y ser voluntario en la escuela.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Soy consciente de los horarios de las actividades escolares y conferencias en las horas de clase tradicionales y no tradicionales que son convenientes para todas las familias tendrán la oportunidad de asistir y participar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Soy consciente de que la escuela ofrece un Centro de Recursos para Padres para que pueda acceder a los recursos para mí y para mis hijos.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Soy consciente de que mi escuela ayuda a las familias en la orientación de los estudiantes a fijar metas académicas, y vigilar y discutir el trabajo escolar en casa.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continúa en página siguiente
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Como padre en esta escuela/distrito I:</th>
<th>Nunca (ningún)</th>
<th>A veces (Algo)</th>
<th>Inseguro</th>
<th>Casi todo el tiempo (Un poco)</th>
<th>Siempre (Sí)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. Soy consciente de que mi escuela proporciona información a las familias sobre cómo ayudar a los estudiantes con habilidades que necesitan para mejorar académicamente.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Soy consciente de la escuela/distrito provee oportunidades para que los padres de todos los diversos grupose (por ejemplo, raciales, étnicos y socioeconómicos) roles de liderazgo en la escuela</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Soy consciente de la escuela/distrito provee un directorio de recursos de la comunidad para los padres, la prestación de servicios, programas y organismos de la comunidad.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Se sientan bienvenidos cuando visitan el salón de clases sin pre-programar una cita.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Si me siento incómodo o no puedo hablar con la maestra de mi hijo, es porque: (Marque todo lo que corresponda)

- No se aplica a mí.
- Yo hablo muy poco de Inglés.
- No estoy seguro de qué preguntar al maestro para recibir asistencia.
- El maestro es de una raza diferente.
- Estoy avergonzado de problemas académicos de mi hijo.
- Estoy avergonzado por problemas de conducta de mi hijo.
- No soy capaz de conseguir tiempo libre para reunirse con el maestro de mi hijo.
- No me siento a gusto en el aula.
- Otros (especificar)

Estaría interesado en participar en un 30 - entrevista de 45 minutos acerca de mis pensamientos sobre la Escuela/Distrito programas s padres. ___________ Sí ___________ N

Usted puede ponerse en contacto conmigo en el siguiente número para hacer una entrevista de seguimiento: ______________________

Muchas gracias por completar esta encuesta!
Krishna Smith., Ed.D. Candidate
Rudy Castruita, Ed.D., Faculty Advisor
APPENDIX I: Administrator Interview Questions

1. In what ways does your District’s mission/ vision statement and objectives include parent involvement?

2. What are your District’s policies and practices in regard to parent and community involvement?

3. What role do you play in executing the district’s parent and community involvement policies and practices?

4. What organizational and structural barriers do you believe attribute to low parental involvement?

5. Are there any organizational and structural practices that could increase parental involvement?

6. What strategies have you used to encourage parent involvement?

7. What resources does your District have to encourage parent involvement? What part have you played to ensure these resources are being utilized?

8. Do you believe there is a correlation between parent involvement as it relates to student achievement? Why do you believe this?

9. What goals have you established or believe should be established for improving your District’s parent involvement policies? Describe one of the major goals or strategies in improving the parent partnership with your district over the next few years?

10. Please share any comments that my questions did not allow you to make.
APPENDIX J: Principal Interview Questions

1. In what ways does your school’s mission/ vision statement and objectives include parent involvement?
   a. 1b. In what ways does your district’s mission/vision statement and objectives include parent involvement?

2. What are your school’s policies and practices in regard to parent and community involvement?
   a. 2b. What are your district’s policies and practices in regard to parent involvement?

3. What role do you play in executing the district’s parent and community involvement policies and practices?

4. What strategies have you used to encourage parent and community involvement?

5. What organizational and structural barriers do you believe attribute to low parental involvement?

6. Are there any organizational and structural practices that could increase parental involvement?

7. What resources does your school have to encourage parent and community involvement? What part have you played to ensure these resources are being utilized?
   a. 7b. What resources does your district have to encourage parent involvement?

8. Do you believe there is a correlation between parent and community involvement as it relates to student achievement? Why do you believe this way?

9. What goals have you established or believe should be established for improving your District’s parent involvement policies? Describe one of the major goals or strategies in improving the parent partnership with your district over the next few years?

10. Please share any comments that my questions did not allow you to make.
APPENDIX K: Teacher Interview Questions

1. In what ways does your School’s mission/ vision statement and objectives include parent involvement?

2. What is your School/District’s policies and practices in regard to parent and community involvement?

3. What role do you play in executing the school’s parent involvement policies and practices?

4. What strategies have you used to encourage parent involvement?

5. What organizational and structural barriers do you believe attribute to low parental involvement?

6. Are there any organizational and structural practices that could increase parental involvement?

7. What resources does your school/district have to encourage parent involvement? What part have you played to ensure these resources are being utilized?

8. Do you believe there is a correlation between parent involvement as it relates to student achievement? Why do you believe this way?

9. What goals have you established or believe should be established for improving your District’s parent involvement policies? Describe one of the major goals or strategies in improving the parent partnership with your district over the next few years?

10. In your opinion, how involved have the administrators been in building the partnership between parent involvement and the school.

11. Please share any comments that my questions did not allow you to make.
APPENDIX L: Parent Interview Questions

1. What do you believe your role is in increasing your child’s academic success?

2. What are some of the struggles you face with increasing your child’s academic success?

3. Do you believe there is a connection between parent involvement and student achievement? Why do you believe this?

4. What resources has your school/district provided to encourage parent involvement? How have you utilized those resources?

5. In your opinion how effective is your PTA/PTO in increasing your involvement in the school?

6. What factors would have influenced you as a parent volunteering or participating in school activities?

7. What other ways would you suggest the school/district do to increase parental involvement in the school?

8. What has been the most useful parent involvement activities that you attended and/or participated in?

9. In your opinion, how involved have the administrators and teachers been in building the partnership between parents and school personnel.

10. Please share any comments that my questions did not allow you to make.
APPENDIX M: Parent Interview Questions (Spanish)

1. ¿Qué usted cree que su papel es cada vez mayor en el éxito académico de su hijo?

2. ¿Cuáles son algunas de las luchas que se enfrenta cada vez con mayor éxito académico de su hijo?

3. ¿Cree usted que hay una conexión entre la participación de los padres y rendimiento de los estudiantes? ¿Por qué crees esto?

4. ¿Qué recursos tiene su escuela / distrito se dan para fomentar la participación de padres? ¿Cómo se ha utilizado esos recursos?

5. En su opinión qué tan efectivo es su PTA / PTO en el aumento de su participación en la escuela?

6. ¿Qué factores han influido en usted como padre voluntario o participar en las actividades escolares?

7. ¿Qué otras formas sugeriría usted a la escuela / distrito hacer para aumentar la participación de los padres en la escuela?

8. ¿Cuál ha sido la actividad más útil la participación de los padres que asistieron y / o participado en?

9. En su opinión, ¿cómo han involucrado los administradores y maestros de estado en la construcción de la colaboración entre padres y personal escolar.

10. Por favor comparta cualquier comentario que mis preguntas no le permiten hacer.