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ABSTRACT
                This study uses data from 171 teachers at eight
inner-city elementary and middle schools in Baltimore to examine
general patterns and connections between teacher attitudes about
parent involvement, school programs, and the actual practices that
teachers use. These patterns are examined at different academic
levels, in different academic subjects, under different classroom
organizations, and under different levels of support for parent
involvement. Classrooms were self-contained, semi-departmentalized,
or departmentalized. Results are discussed in terms of: (1) how
teachers feel about parent involvement in general; (2)
interrelationships between five types of parent involvement; (3)
parent participation practices that are most important to teachers of
different subjects, including English/language arts, reading,
mathematics, science, and social studies; (4) the effects of school
level, student and teacher characteristics, and specific teacher
practices on school programs of parent involvement; and (5) the
effects of levels of support for parent participation on the strength
of school programs. Discussion formulates conclusions from the data
that warrant further study. (RH)

Center for Research On Elementary & Middle Schools

Report No. 32

March, 1989

TEACHER ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN INNER-CITY ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Joyce L. Epstein and Susan L. Dauber

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Teacher Attitudes and Practices of Parent Involvement

In Inner-City Elementary and Middle Schools

Grant No. OERI-G-90006

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The Center

The mission of the Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools is to produce useful knowledge about how elementary and middle sc'iools can foster growth in students' learning and development, to develop and evaluate practical methods for improving the effectiveness of elementary and middle schools based on existing and new research findings, and to develop and evaluate specific strategies to help schools implement effective research-based school and classroom practices.

The Center conducts its research in three program areas: (1) Elementary Schools; (2) Middle Schools, and (3) School Improvement.

The Elementary School Program

This program works from a strong existing research base to develop, evaluate, and disseminate effective elementary school and classroom practices; synthesizes current knowledge; and analyzes survey and descriptive data to expand the knowledge base in effective elementary education.

The Middle School Program

This program's research links current knowledge about early adolescence as a stage of human development to school organization and classroom policies and practices for effective middle schools. The major task is to establish a research base to identify specific problem areas and promising practices in middle schools that will contribute to effective policy decisions and the development of effective school and classroom practices.

School Improvement Program

This program focuses on improving the organizational performance of schools in adopting and adapting innovations and developing school capacity for change.

This report, prepared by the Middle School Program, examines the effects of multiple variables on five major types of parent involvement in inner-city elementary and middle schools.

Abstract

This study uses data from 171 teachers in eight inner-city elementary and middle schools to examine general patterns and connections between teacher attitudes about parent involvement, school programs, and the actual practices that teachers use. These patterns are examined at different academic levels (elementary and middle), in different academic subjects, under different classroom organizations (self-contained, semi-departmentalized, departmentalized), and under different levels for support of parent involvement (high or low support by significant other groups).

Teacher Attitudes and Practices of Parent Involvement
in Inner-City Elementary and Middle Schools

An extensive and growing literature documents the importance of school and family connections to increase student success in school and to strengthen school programs. For example, when teachers make parent involvement part of their regular teaching practice, parents increase their interactions with their children at home, feel more positive about their abilities to help their children in the elementary grades, and rate the teachers as better teachers overall (Becker and Epstein, 1982; Epstein 1986).

Despite increased attention to the topic of parent involvement over the past decade, few studies have focused on teachers' practices of involving parents in "difficult," inner-city schools. Indeed, a recurring theme in many studies and commentaries is that less-educated parents cannot or do not want to become involved in their children's education (Baker and Stevenson, 1986; Lareau, 1987). But other research challenges this generalization (Becker and Epstein, 1982; Clark, 1983; Epstein 1986; Scott-Jones, 1980).

In a large-scale study of elementary teachers, parents, and students, we found that teachers who did not frequently involve parents in their children's education made more stereotypic judgments about the involvement and abilities of less-educated parents, socioeconomically disadvantaged parents, and single parents. In contrast, teachers who were "leaders" in the use of parent involvement and who found ways to involve all parents did not prejudge less educated, poor, or single parents. Rather, they rated all parents as successful helpers with reliable "follow-through" on learning activities with their children at home (Epstein, 1984, 1986). Thus the attitudes and practices of the teachers, not the education, SES, or marital status of the parents, were the important variables for understanding whether parents were knowledgeable and successful partners with the schools in their children's education.

This paper examines programs and teachers' practices of parent involvement in eight schools in educationally disadvantaged neighborhoods. Our early research and that of others suggests that five major types of parent involvement are part of different schools' programs (Epstein, 1987a).

1. The *basic obligations of parents* include providing for children's health and safety, developing other parenting skills and child-rearing approaches that prepare children for school, and building *positive home conditions* that support school learning and behavior all across the school years. Schools can assist parents to develop the knowledge and skills needed to work successfully with children at each grade level through workshops at the school or in other locations, and in other education, training, and information-giving programs.

2. The *basic obligations of schools* include *communications* with parents about school programs and children's progress. This includes the memos, notices, report cards, and conferences that most schools conduct, and other innovative communications with parents that some schools create. Schools vary the forms and frequency of communications and greatly affect whether the information sent home can be understood by all parents.

3. *Parent involvement at school* includes parent *volunteers* who assist teachers, administrators, and children in classrooms or in other areas of the school, or as paid aides. It also refers to parents who come to school to support student performances, sports, or other events. Schools can improve recruitment and training so that volunteers can be more helpful to teachers and to students, and can contribute to school improvement efforts.

4. *Parent involvement in learning activities at home* includes requests and guidance from teachers for parents to *assist their own children* at home on learning activities that are coordinated with the children's classwork. Schools can assist parents on how to help their children at home by providing information on skills required of students to pass each grade. Parents want information from the schools on how to monitor, discuss, and help with homework, and how to make decisions about school programs, activities, and opportunities at each grade level so that all students can be more successful in school.

5. *Parent involvement in governance and advocacy* includes parents in *decision-making* roles in the PTA/PTO, Advisory Councils, Chapter I programs, or other committees or groups at the school, district, or state level. It also refers to parents as activists in independent advocacy groups in the community. Schools can assist parents by providing information needed by community groups for school improvement activities, by training parent leaders and representatives in decision-making skills and in ways to communicate with all of the parents they represent.

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This typology has face validity and research has provided pieces of evidence about one or more of the types of involvement, but data in earlier studies have not confirmed that the five types are actually separate. This study uses detailed reports from teachers about the five types of involvement in school programs, teacher practices, family practices and teacher attitudes to validate the typology.

Earlier studies focused on one level of schooling, either elementary (Becker and Epstein, 1982; Epstein, 1986; in press); the middle grades (Leitch and Tangri, 1988; Baker and Stevenson, 1986); or the high school level (Bauch, 1988; Clark, 1983; Dornbusch and Ritter, 1988), but no studies have included both the elementary and middle grades for comparisons across levels. This study compares parent involvement practices and programs across the elementary and middle levels.

Methods

We use data from 171 teachers in five elementary and three middle schools in Baltimore City to learn more about teachers' attitudes about parent involvement and practices in elementary and middle schools in inner-city settings. The schools were selected at random from a set of comparable Chapter I schools to conduct activities to improve their parent involvement programs and practices.

Questionnaires were developed with the assistance of Teacher Representatives for Parent Involvement in the eight schools. The teachers were provided with small planning grants to help them distribute surveys to the teachers and parents in their schools and to collect and return the surveys to the research team.

The questionnaires for teachers, on which this paper is based, included ten questions with over 100 items of information on teachers' attitudes toward parent involvement in general, teachers' practices of communicating with students' families, use of school and classroom

volunteers (including the numbers, frequency, tasks, and training of volunteers), level of program development of five types of parent involvement in the school, importance of specific practices of five types of parent involvement to the teacher for the grade level(s) taught, teachers' expectations for parents of students at the grade level taught, the involvement of hard-to-reach subgroups of parents, the level of support for parent involvement of the teacher, other school staff, parents, and community, and the characteristics of the student population, classroom organization, subjects taught, grade level(s), numbers of different students taught, and years of teaching experience. Open-ended comments about parent involvement practices and problems were also solicited.

Two stages of analyses were conducted. First, the data were analyzed for use by the teachers, principals and parents at the school. Descriptive statistics were provided to enable the school team to use the information to plan their action projects (Epstein, 1988, Epstein and Salinas, 1988). Each school was given two profiles or "Clinical Summaries" based on the data from teachers and from parents to help them recognize and understand their strengths and weaknesses on the five types of parent involvement and to develop an action plan for improving their parent involvement programs and practices.

Second, in this paper, the data from teachers in the eight schools are combined to study the general patterns and connections between teacher attitudes about parent involvement, school programs, and the actual practices that teachers use at different academic *levels* (elementary/middle); in different academic *subjects*; under different classroom *organizations* (self-contained, semi-departmentalized, departmentalized); and under different levels of *support* for parent involvement (i.e., high or low support by significant other groups). We analyze the data to specify the correlates of strong programs of the five types of involvement, to validate the typology of five major types of involvement, to discover the parent involvement practices of teachers of specific academic subjects, and to gain a better understanding of programs of parent involvement in inner-city schools.

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Results

How Teachers Feel About Parent Involvement in General

Overall, teachers in inner-city elementary and middle grades schools have strong, positive attitudes about parent involvement. The ten-item scale, scored 1-4 for negative to positive attitudes on each item, has an overall mean score of 3.07 (standard deviation of .32), indicating strong agreement overall and little variation in teachers' attitudes. Attitudes are more positive for teachers who teach in self-contained classrooms (r= +.234), and for those who perceive high support for parent involvement from their colleagues and parents (r= +.336). Teachers with more positive attitudes toward parent involvement voice stronger support for practices such as holding conferences with all students' parents, communicating with parents about school programs, and providing parents both good and bad reports about students' progress (r= +.215). They also report that they are successful in involving hard-to-reach parents including working parents, less educated parents, single parents, parents of older students, young parents, parents new to the school, and other adults with whom children live (r= +.383).

Table 1 reports the zero-order correlations of the strength of the five types of parent involvement with school, classroom, student and teacher characteristics. Column 1 reports basic correlations with school level -- elementary vs. middle grades. Teachers in elementary schools report significantly stronger programs of parent involvement than teachers in middle schools on the programs and/or practices of the five types of involvement (r= -.212 to r= -.484).

Table 1 About Here

Elementary and middle school teachers show no significant differences in having in place strong programs for effective communications with parents (r= -.121 NS). But specific

communications practices (such as the actual number of children's families that teachers had conferences with, met with informally, or talked with by telephone) are significantly more often used by elementary level teachers than by their middle grades counterparts (r= -.232).

Classroom organization follows a pattern similar to that of level. More elementary classes are self-contained and more middle grades classes are departmentalized (r=.631), with some overlap in semi-departmentalized arrangements. The self-contained classroom organization (column 2) is significantly linked to all types of parent involvment (r= -.155 to r= -.321), but elementary grade level (column 1) is the stronger correlate. Elementary teachers, whether in self-contained or semi-departmentalized classrooms, are more apt to have some programs in place that include parents in their children's education. We also note (though not reported in this table) that *within* elementary schools, the lower the teacher's grade level, the more likely the use of parent involvement, especially volunteers in the classroom. Although this has been reported before (Becker and Epstein, 1982), differences by type of involvement have not been previously documented.

Column 3 shows no significant association between the types of involvement with the percent of students below average in ability. All these schools have high proportions of low-ability students -- about 70% of the teachers report that over half of their students are below average in ability. Column 4 shows that teachers with fewer years of experience have slightly more communications with their students' parents (r= -.178) and more volunteers in their classrooms (r= -.169). Experience does not correlate significantly with the teachers' reports of the strength of their schools' programs to provide workshops, home learning activities, or governance activities for parents.

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Separate Contributions of the Five Types of Parent Involvement

Table 2 reports the intercorrelations of the five types of parent involvement (Panel 1) and the correlations of the three types that involve parents in children's schoolwork at school or at home with specific practices for these programs (Panel 2). The top panel shows that the five types of involvement are significantly interrelated (ranging from r=.303 to r=.569). More interesting, however, are the patterns that show the types are likely to make separate contributions to comprehensive programs of parent involvement. The predictive power of these correlations is relatively low. By knowing that one type of involvement was strong in a school, it would be hard to predict for sure the presence of any other type. The associated r2's show that such predictions would be correct only from 10% to 32% of the time.

Table 2 About Here

The coefficients in Panel 1 show a Guttman-scale-like pattern is emerging; that is, there seems to be a cumulative property such that schools with more difficult components of parent involvement have the easier ones in place. A strong school program in *communications* from school to home (Type 2) is least predictive of the other types (average r=.368 and average r2=.135.) Because most schools have some communications with families, the predictive power of this type of involvement of other types is low. By contrast, a strong school program in *learning activities at home* (Type 4) -- perhaps the most difficult type of parent involvement-- is most predictive of one or more of the other types (average r=.536; average r2=.287). That is, if schools are conducting programs to involve parents in learning activities at home, chances are they also are doing the other, less difficult types of involvement.

The average r2's in panel 1 suggest that schools probably build parent involvement programs in this order: traditional communications from school to home, PTA/PTO and advisory

committees to build leadership skills, workshops for parents in parenting and child-rearing skills. volunteers in the classroom, and finally involvement of parents in learning activities at home. This is not the only line of development, nor is it necessarily the best way to proceed in building a program of parent involvement, but it seems to be the pattern that schools presently follow.

Panel 2 of Table 2 shows another clustering of correlations that help to define the separate contributions of the three major types of involvement that encourage parents to interact with their children about schoolwork. Teachers who report strong programs at their school of COMMUNICATIONS home to parents are more likely to emphasize the importance of specific communications at their grade level (r= .231), and are more likely to use practices to increase communications with more of their students' families as part of their teaching practice (r= .154). Strong VOLUNTEER progams at the school is associated with teachers' use of volunteers in their own classrooms (r= .390). The clustering is less clear in the final column that links strong school programs to involve parents in LEARNING ACTIVITIES AT HOME with the use of volunteers and attitudes about the importance of practices to involve parents in their children's schoolwork (r=.233 and r=.222, respectively).

The typology of five types of involvement help us understand different attitudes and practices of teachers in the elementary and middle grades. When schools have strong practices in one type of involvement, teachers in that school tend to assign greater importance to that type of involvement in their own practices and their own grade level.

Parent Involvement Practices That are Most Important
to Teachers of Different Subjects

Teachers were asked to check all of the subjects that they taught in an average week. Teachers of each major academic subject -- English/language arts, reading, math, science, and

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social studies -- tended to stress different parent involvement practices. Table 3 shows the zero-order correlations of the specific types of involvement that the teachers supported according to the specific subjects they taught. The first column of coefficients shows that teachers of reading (compared to teachers who did not teach reading) gave significantly more support to involving parents in listening to their children read aloud and to involving parents as volunteers in their classrooms.

Table 3 About Here

The second column of the table shows that teachers of English/language arts (compared to teachers who did not teach that subject) emphasized the importance of helping parents become involved in several types of learning activities at home, including listening to the child read, discussing schoolwork, practicing skills for spelling and other tests, listening to the child's writing assignments, and assigning homework that requires parent-child interaction and discussion. These teachers also stressed the importance of conferences with all parents. The specific practices of the reading and English teachers encourage parent involvement in language and reading skills that should help to promote students' success in those teachers' classrooms. Teachers of reading and English also reported strong and positive involvement of typically "hard to reach" parents (see bottom of Table 2), including less-educated parents, single parents, young parents, and other adults (not parents) with whom some children live.

Teachers of math, science, or social studies (compared to teachers who did not teach these subjects) did not emphasize specific parent involvement practices. Indeed, compared to others, math teachers were significantly *less* supportive of attending evening meetings or activities; science teachers were significantly *less* supportive of informing parents of the skills required to pass their subject at each grade level; and social studies teachers were significantly *less* supportive of participating in student-parent-teacher clubs and activities.

Earlier research found that teachers who frequently involve parents in learning activities at home are most likely to request their involvement in reading or reading related activities (Becker and Epstein, 1982), and that this involvement has some positive influence on students'growth in reading scores (Epstein, in press). In the present data, we see some subject-specific connections between the academic subjects taught and the teachers' use or lack of use of particular practices. Teachers of math, science, and social studies may need special assistance in pre-service and in-service training to understand how to involve parents in their children's learning activities in those subjects.

The Effects of School Level, Student and Teacher Characteristics, and Specific Teacher Practices on School Programs of Parent Involvement

Table 4 shows analyses of the effects of four variables on the strength of three types of parent involvement programs. The four variables are *level* of school (coded elementary=0 or middle=1), years of *teaching experience*, percent of students *below average* in ability, and the importance to the teacher's own practice of *specific practices* that relate to each type of involvement. The three types of parent involvement are communication from school to home, volunteers at school, and learning activities at home.

Table 4 About Here

Standardized regression coefficients represent independent effects of each variable, controlling statistically on the other variables in each equation. These coefficients are more informative and accurate than correlation coefficients for understanding present patterns of program development and for clues about directions for improving the different types of parent involvement.

The first column of Table 4 shows that a strong program of *communications* from school-to-home is not influenced by the level of schooling, years of teaching experience, or the percent of students below average in ability. The strength or weakness of programs of communications with families are explained mainly by the teachers' own communication practices. The coefficients suggest that regardless of school level or students' abilities, strong communications programs can be developed if teachers are willing to make the effort needed to contact all parents frequently with clear and purposeful messages about the school and the student.

The second column shows that, with other variables taken into account, strong programs of *volunteers at school* are explained by (1) level of school -- more volunteers are used in the elementary grades (b=-.360); (2) years of teaching experience-- newer teachers more likely to frequently use volunteers (b= -.176); and (3) the importance that individual teachers attatch to this practice (b=.237).

The third column shows that helping parents understand how to help their children on *learning activities at home* is most influenced by level -- elementary schools are much more likely to have strong programs of this type of involvement than middle schools (b= -.310). Strong school programs to involve parents in learning activities at home are also influenced by individual teachers' practices to help parents know how to help their children on schoolwork at home (b=.163).

The four variables in these equations explain little of the variance in strength of communication programs (r2=.07), a moderate level of the variance in the strength of programs for increasing involvement in learning activities at home (r2=.16), and a considerable amount of the variance in the strength of programs to involve volunteers (r2=.30).

Two types of influence on parent involvement may be at work in schools. The importance teachers assign to specific practices of parent involvement at their own grade levels contributes

to their perceptions of the strength of the programs at their schools. Because cross-sectional data do not reveal causality, it may also be that the overall strength of particular school programs in communication, use of volunteers, and learning activities at home influences the practices of individual teachers to involve students' parents in these ways.

The Effects of Levels of Support
For Parent Involvement on the Strength of School Programs

Teachers were asked to report on their own and others' support for parent involvement to indicate the climate at their school for supporting family-school connections. They rated their own level of support (none, weak, some, or strong) and estimated the level of support for for parent involvement of their principal, other administrators, their teacher colleagues, the parents of students in the school, and others in the community. Discrepancy scores were derived to note the degree of difference between the teachers' own support and that of other individuals or groups around them. It was hypothesized that *great discrepancies* between teachers and others would be linked to *weaker programs* of parent involvement at the school. Overall, the teachers reported that they were similar to their principals in their strong, overall support for parent involvement. They said that they, as individuals, were stronger supporters of parent involvement than their teachercolleagues, and much stronger supporters of parent involvement than the parents of their students.

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Table 5 About Here

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Panel 1 of Table 5 suggests that greater discrepancies between teachers' reports of their own support compared to their reports about parents' support occur at schools that have more students below average in ability, more departmentalized programs, and, consequently, teachers having to teach greater numbers of students. Teachers who teach greater numbers of students in

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departmentalized classes are less likely to know their students' parents and are more likely to view parents as disinterested or uninvolved.

Also, some discrepancies exists between the principal and teachers in schools that have more below-average students, with the teachers believing that they are more supportive of parent involvement than the principal.

Panel 2 suggests that greater discrepancies between teachers and their colleagues and between teachers and parents are associated with *weaker programs* of the five major types of parent involvement, with the exception of the teacher's own use of classroom volunteers. Individual teachers can make personal decisions about volunteers, even if they believe other teachers around them are not eager to involve parents ($n = +.134$). They make less use of volunteers if they believe their students' parents are much less supportive of parent involvement than the teacher is, and that the parents are not interested in being involved ($r = -.140$).

Panel 3 in Table 5 shows that greater discrepancies between the teacher's reports about themselves and parents are linked to *less successful connections* with several groups of "hard-to-reach" parents. If teachers believe parents are not interested in becoming involved in their children's schooling, teachers make fewer efforts to contact, inform, and work with parents -- especially those parents who are hard to reach, and especially on the more difficult or time-consuming types of involvement such as involving parents in learning activities at home, building their leadership skills, or providing extensive workshops on parenting and child rearing for each grade level.

A highly discrepant environment, where teachers believe that they are different from other key groups at the school, is not likely to support strong, comprehensive programs of parent involvement. More coherent programs are linked to less discrepant environments where teachers see themselves as similar to their own school administrators, colleagues, and parents.

Discussion

The data from teachers in inner-city elementary and middle schools offer many intriguing pieces of information about the strengths and weaknesses of programs and practices of parent involvement. The following conclusions from these data should be pursued for confirmation in new studies:

o Elementary school programs of parent involvement are stronger, more positive, and more comprehensive than those in the middle grades.

o Almost all teachers express strong, positive attitudes about parent involvement in general, but few teachers have strong programs in place. Teachers' attitudes about parent involvment are more positive when their schools have stronger programs and when teachers personally use more practices to involve parents.

o Teachers of certain academic subjects -- particularly English and reading -- use more practices to involve parents in their children's education. Yet, many of the same techniques can be used in any subject (e.g., listening to a child read something the child wrote, practicing skills before quizzes or tests, and assigning homework that specifically requires a student to interact with a parent or other member of the family).

o Different classroom organizational forms -- e.g., self-contained, semi-departmental or teamed, and departmentalized programs -- change the number of students and families that are the teachers' responsibility. Different teaching responsibilities affect the likelihood, frequency, and reasons that teachers contact students' parents. Teachers are more apt to make more frequent and diverse contact with parents if they teach self-contained classes with limited numbers of students. They may feel more in control and familiar with a small number of parents or more fully responsible for the students' school programs, including home learning activities.

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o Analyses of discrepancy scores show that greater differences between self and principal, self and teacher colleagues, and self and parents were consistently associated with weaker parent involvement programs and practices.

o Teachers who see more *similarity* between themselves, their colleagues, and students' parents have stronger programs of parent involvement, are less affected by disadvantaged characteristics of the student population, different classroom organizations, and make more contacts with parents that others find "hard to reach."

o Most teachers believed they were stronger supporters of parent involvement than the other teachers in the school. Of course, this logically inconsistent belief means that the teachers did not know that their colleagues also were strong supporters of parent involvement. Teachers said that parents and others in the community were not strongly supportive of parent involvement. But, surveys of parents in the same schools contradicted the teachers' beliefs about parents (Dauber and Epstein, 1989). Teachers may be creating false and exaggerated discrepancies about parent involvement between themselves and their principals, other teachers, and parents. Teachers' beliefs about other teachers and teacher and parent beliefs about each other often are inaccurate until they are assessed, shared, and compared (Epstein and Becker, 1988; Epstein and Salinas, 1988). Only then can schools and families begin to develop plans to improve programs of parent involvement based on their actual starting points and present practices.

o Families of disadvantaged students are often viewed by educators and researchers in terms of their deficiencies. But in this sample of eight inner-city schools there is important variation in teachers' practices to communicate with and involve inner-city parents at school and at home. Disadvantaged populations of students and schools are not all the same, and the fact that a population is economically disadvantaged does not justify ignoring parents as a resource to support school programs. Indeed, almost all teachers reported that they expected all parents to fulfill 12 difficult parent involvement responsibilities, ranging from teaching their children to

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behave, to knowing what children are expected to learn each year, to helping them on those skills. Yet, most teachers and most schools did not have in place systematic practices to help families fulfill these responsibilities.

The conclusions point to the critical need for teacher and administrator training in the uses of productive practices of parent involvement. At the school level, a comprehensive program for involving parents helps to create a positive school climate that ultimately affects all teachers' practices to involve the parents of their students in the educational program each year. At the classroom level, teachers' practices can help parents understand how to help their own children at home, how to monitor student work, ideas, and progress in different subjects, and how to discuss schoolwork at home. Presently, neither teachers nor administrators are educated in how to develop, monitor, and improve connections between schools and families (Epstein and Scott-Jones,in press; Stallworth and Williams, 1981).

Without the schools' assistance, the knowledge of parents and their actions to help their children are heavily dependent on their social class or education. But schools -- even inner city schools -- can develop strong programs of parent involvement. With the schools' assistance, all parents can become knowledgable in their children's education.

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Table 1

Zero-Order Correlations of Strength of Five Types of Parent Involvement with School, Classroom, Student, and Teacher Characteristics

How Strong is THIS TYPE of Involvement in Your School?	Level Elementary vs. Middle	Organization Self/Contained vs. Departmentalized	Characteristics % Below Average Students	Years of Teaching Experience
Type I - Workshops	-.403*	-.311*	+.012	.028
Type II - Communications	-.121	-.010	-.018	.007
Program Teachers' Practices	-.232*	-.200*	-.005	-.178*
Type III - Volunteers	-.484*	-.321*	-.080	-.169*
Type IV - Learning Activities at Home	-.343*	-.241*	-.111	-.019
Program Teachers' Practices	-.212*	-.155*	+.056	.028
Type V - Governance and Leadership	-.273*	-.188*	-.064	-.034

Correlations of .14 are significant at the .05 level; .19 at the .01 level. N = 171.

Table 2

Panel I. Intercorrelations of Five Types of Parent Involvement Programs

Type	I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	Average R	Average R2
I. Workshops in Parenting, Home Conditons for Learning	--	.378	.482	.569	.467	.474	.225
II. Communications from School to Home		--	.341	.449	.303	.368	.135
III. Volunteers at School			--	.561	.519	.476	.226
IV. Involvement in Learning Activities at Home				--	.567	.536	.287
V. Governance and Leadership					--	.464	.215

Panel II. Zero-Order Correlations of Teachers' Attitudes and Practices With Strength of Parent Involvement Programs

Teachers' Specific Attitudes and Practices in:

Strength of Program at School	Communications		Volunteers	Learning Activities at Home
	Importance	Actual Practice	Actual Practice	Importance
Traditional Communications	.231	.154	.155	.111
Volunteers at School	.068	.058	.390	.233
Involvement in Learning Activities at Home	.002	-.009	.354	.222

Correlations of .14 are significant at the .05 level; .19 at the .01 level. N = 171.

Table 3

Zero-Order Correlations of Subjects Taught and Most Important Parent Involvement Practices to Teachers

		Teachers of:			
Most Important Practices:	Reading	English/Language Arts	Math	Science	Social Studies
Holding Conferences with All Parents at Least Once a Year	--	.164	--	--	--
Attending Evening Meetings, Performances, Workshops	--	--	-.135	--	--
Participation in Parent-Teacher-Student Clubs and Activities	--	--	--	--	-.148
Involve Parents in Classroom	.138	--	--	--	--
Inform all Parents of Required Studies	--	--	--	-.117	--
Provide Ideas for Discussing TV Shows	--	.164	--	--	--
Assign Homework that Requires Student to Interact with Parents	--	.143	--	--	--
Suggest Ways to Practice Skills at Home Before Tests	--	.133	--	--	--
Listen to Child Read	.141	.160	--	--	--
Listen to Something Child Wrote	--	.168	--	--	--

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- continued -

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Level of Involvement of:	Reading	English/Language Arts	Math	Science	Social Studies
Most Parents	.198	.139	--	--	--
Less Educated Parents	--	.154	--	--	--
Single Parents	.165	--	--	--	--
Young Parents	.190	--	--	--	--
Parents of New or Transfer Students	--	--	.212	--	--
Other Adults with whom Child Lives	.163	.177	--	--	--

Correlations of .14 are significant at the .05 level; .19 at the .01 level. N = 166.

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Table 4

Summary Table: Effects on Strength of School Programs of Different Types of Parent Involvement of School Level, Teacher and Student Characteristics, and Teachers' Specific Parent Involvement Practices

(b = standarized beta coefficient)

How Strong is this Type of Involvement at Your School? a>

	Communications from School to Home	Volunteers at School	Learning Activities at Home
	(b)	(b)	(b)
Level (Elementary/Middle)	-.104	-.360***	-.310***
Years of Teaching Experience	.003	-.176*	.016
% Students Below Average Ability	-.056	-.022	-.124
Importance to teacher of *this type of practice* at own grade level b>	.232**	.237**	.163*
R <2>	.07	.30	.16

a> Responses (scores 1-4) ranged from Not Important and not part of school's program, to Need to Develop, Need to Stregthen, or Already Strong program. Communications included 3 items, volunteers included 2 items, and learning activities at home included 2 items.

b> Teachers reported whether the following practices were important to conduct at their own grade level: *communication practices* includes 5 items on conducting formal conferences with all parents at least once a year, attending evening meetings, and 3 contacts about students' report cards and progress; *use of volunteers* by the teacher includes the frequency of volunteers in teachers' classrooms in an average week; *learning activities at home* includes 9 items (giving information on required skills, providing parents with variety of ideas on how to talk with and help students on school work, listen to students read, practice reading, spelling, writing, and social studies, skills, and discuss TV shows).

Levels of significance: *p < .05-.06; **p < .01, ***p < .001 for N = 171.

Table 5

Discrepancy Scores: Zero-Order Correlations of Teachers' Own and Others' Support for Parent
Involvement with Classroom Conditions, Parent Involvement Programs, and Involvement of
Hard-to-Reach Parents

Panel I.   Discrepancy Scores and Classroom Conditions

	% Below Average Students	Number of Different Students	Classroom Organization Self-Contained vs. Departmentalized
Individual - Principal	+.184	--	--
Individual - Parents	+.142	+.172	+.180

Panel II.   Discrepancy Scores and Strength of Parent Involvement Practices

	Conduct Workshops	Communications School Program	Communications Own Practices	Volunteers	Learning Activities At Home	Leadership/ Governance Activities
Individual - Colleagues	--	-.186	-.261	+.134	--	--
Individual - Parents	-.152	--	---	-.140	-.230	-.132

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Panel III. Discrepancy Scores and Perceived Involvement of Hard-to-Reach Parents.

	Working Parents	Less Educated Parents	Single Parents	Parents of Older Students	Parents New to School	Other Adults
Individual - Principal	--	--	-.114	--	-.194	-.133
Individual - Parents	-.175	-.209	--	-.222	-.192	-.200

Note: A positive discrepancy score indicates the individual teacher saw his/her own support for parent involvement as higher than the principal, other teachers, or parents in that school.

A (+) correlation suggests that a more positive discrepancy score is associated with a higher level of the measured variable; a (-) correlation suggests a more positive discrepancy is associated with a lower level of the measured variable.

Correlations of .14 are significant at the .05 level; .19 at the .01 level; -- means correlation was not significant. N = 171.