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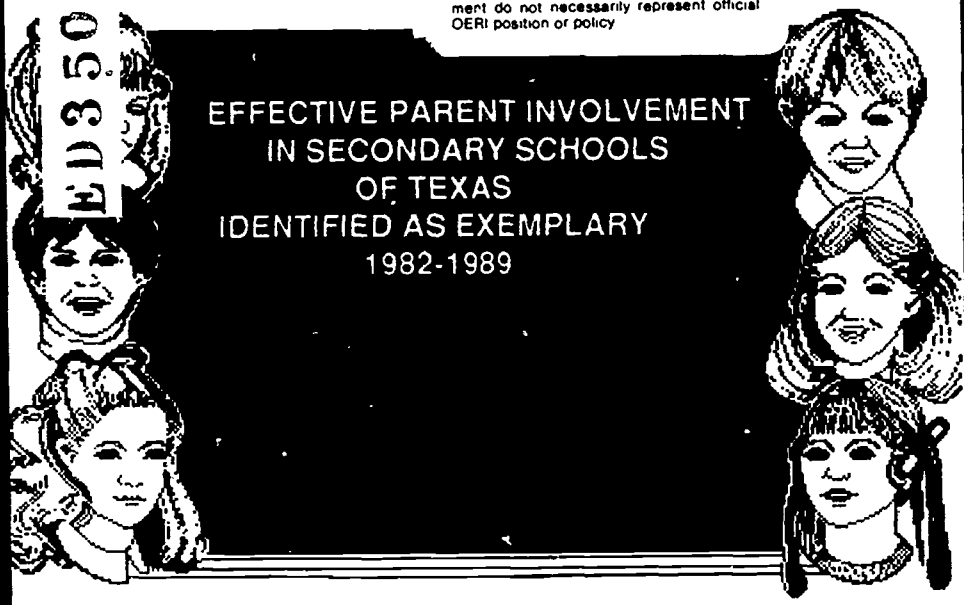
ABSTRACT

Findings of a study that examined effective parent involvement programs in selected Texas secondary schools are presented in this paper. Surveys were mailed to a total sample of 464 respondents in 35 secondary schools identified as exemplary--35 principals, 35 counselors, 175 teachers, 175 parents, 22 district superintendents, and 22 district school board presidents. A total of 229 surveys were completed, a 49 percent response rate. Onsite visits were also conducted at two middle and three high schools in the sample, where parents and school personnel were interviewed. Findings indicate that parent participation in school-based decision making (budgeting, staffing patterns, curriculum, etc.) is limited and generally not desired by school personnel or parents. Parents' lack of involvement is due to misunderstandings, not a lack of time. Recommendations are made for improving parent participation programs: offer a broad spectrum of activities; meet parents' needs; delineate a clear plan; involve the entire community; and reach out to nontraditional parents. Three figures and 17 tables are included. (Contains 92 references.) (LMI)



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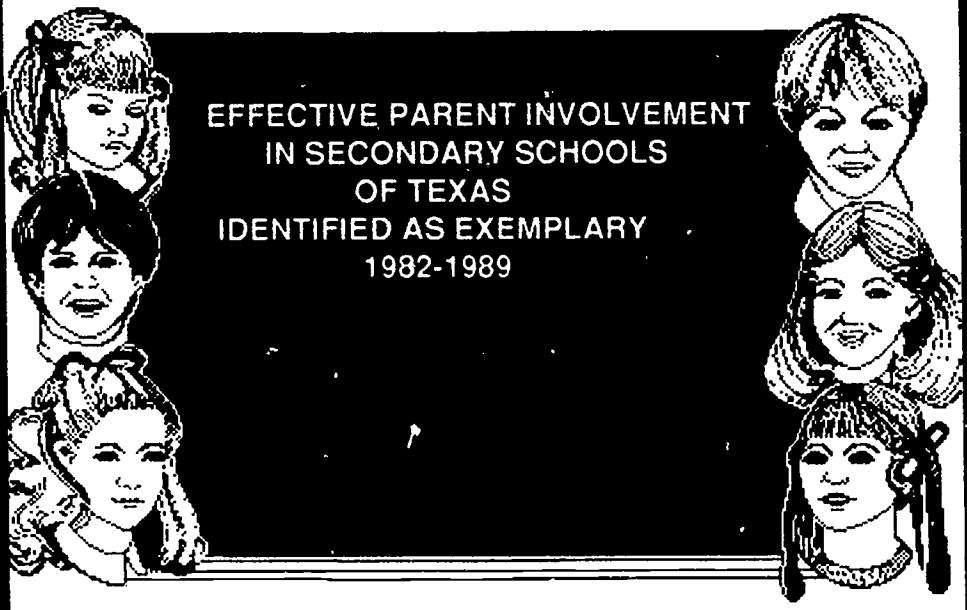

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The media, influenced by the renewed impetus of recent legislation, are expounding the virtues of parent involvement in the schools. An often repeated statement that parents are a child's first teachers reminds one of the importance of parents to the educational efforts. Research provides the positive effects of parents' being in partnership with the schools even at the secondary level.

At the same time, however, parents are caught up in a fast-paced world full of financial, occupational, and civic responsibilities that leaves precious little time for their children. As children approach the teenage years, their involvement with their peers and with other outside activities decreases the children's desire for their parents to be involved in their schooling. According to the 1989 Gallup poll (Baugh, 1989), lack of parents' interest replaced discipline as the top concern by 34 percent of the teachers surveyed.

While summarizing the growing research for improved student achievement and parent involvement, Henderson (1987:10) noted the gap in research. Among the questions she listed as in need of further study was "What forms of parent involvement are most appropriate for students in middle, junior high, and high schools?" Effective means must be outlined to ensure the reality of parent involvement throughout all of the grade levels.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gather information that would benefit schools at the secondary level which desired to implement parent involvement activities. The study included the following objectives:

1. To identify research findings concerning involvement of parents in the secondary schools.
2. To measure the presence and the effect of parent involvement activities in a select group of secondary schools in Texas.
3. To develop guidelines for schools to use to initiate and maintain effective parent involvement programs.

Research Questions

The following research questions addressed by this study included:

1. What are the common practices, processes, and techniques utilized by secondary schools to involve parents?

most effective by public school personnel?
3. What programs are considered most effective by parents?
4. What parent involvement programs are utilized in the selected secondary schools of Texas identified by the Secondary School Recognition Program?
5. How effective are parent involvement programs for the various parent populations?
6. To what extent are parents' needs considered in the development of parent involvement programs?

Significance of the Study

The structure of society has changed over the past half century. Demands on students in the last decade of the twentieth century differ substantially from earlier generations. Society, including the family structure, presents new challenges. Yet, attempting to provide guidance for our children is part of a very traditional educational system that has repeatedly been attacked for its failures. The time has come for schools and parents to join forces to better the educational program that is offered.

Delimitations of the Study

Delimitations of the study include the following:

1. Only secondary schools of Texas identified as exemplary by the United States Department of Education in its Secondary Recognition Program from 1982-1989 were included in the survey;
2. Results depended upon responses of the professional educators and parents;
3. Principals selected the teachers, parents, and counselors who responded to the survey.

Method of Procedure

This investigation explored the involvement of parents at the secondary school level in order to develop guidelines that others might be able to use. The viewpoints of parents, teachers, principals, counselors, superintendents, and board presidents were gathered in this study.

Following an extensive review of the literature, questionnaires for the various groups were developed. These instruments were refined with the help of the doctoral committee, reviewed by noted researchers in the field, and field tested on sample populations for their clarity.

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Secondary schools in Texas that have been identified by the United States Department of Education through its Secondary School Recognition Program were included in the survey. From the responses to the questionnaires, schools were ranked according to the five categories of parent involvement outlined by Joyce Epstein (1987b). Five schools with strong programs were selected for on-site visits.

Treatment of Data

The data from the questionnaires were organized into tables. Averages or percentages of responses, as appropriate, were provided to the various questions. Summaries of the findings from the on-site interviews were included in the analysis of the data.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were identified for the purpose of this study:

Secondary schools: Schools that include any or all of grades seven through twelve.
Parent involvement activities: Formal activities that foster the home/school partnership.
Secondary School Recognition Program: A program of the U.S. Department of Education that identifies exemplary schools according to given criteria, including community and parent participation.

Basic Assumptions

This investigation was based upon the following assumptions:

1. Respondents to the survey instrument participated willingly and honestly.
2. Practices of the schools identified as exemplary by the United States Department of Education in its Secondary School Recognition Program are worthwhile to other schools.

Organization of Remaining Chapters

This study focused on parent involvement at the secondary school level. It included an analysis of responses on parent involvement by

educators, board members, and parents as outlined in this chapter.

Literature related to this investigation will be presented in Chapter 2. The method of procedure is described in Chapter 3, and an analysis of the data is contained in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 presents a summary, findings, conclusions, and recommendations that include guidelines for an effective program in parent involvement at the secondary school level.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Literature

With all the publicity that parent involvement is receiving, one would think that it is a specific and new phenomenon. The term was used several years ago by Dr. Julius B. Richmond, first director of Head Start, as a replacement for the term "parent education." He wanted to convey the need to involve parents in all aspects of the program's operation rather than in just classes for child development (Coletta, 1977).

The concept of parent involvement, however, can be traced to much earlier times. Coletta (1977:7) noted the following quote dated 1891:

> We must labor as earnestly in the homes as in the kindergarten. The former is [sic] the starting point of all civilization; and, in the effort to elevate humanity, we should endeavor to strengthen and purify, if possible, the home. To do this, regular and systematic home visiting must be done by persons who are especially prepared for the work . . . .
> To more closely connect the kindergarten and the home interests, mother's [sic] meetings should be inaugurated; the objects of these gatherings being to give talks on the care of children, household duties, and the responsibility of motherhood . . . .

The Dade County Public Schools (1990:1) included in its report on parent involvement a similar quote made by one of its teachers in 1896, cajoling the patrons of the local newspaper to become involved in their children's education:

> When *you* show an interest in *our* work, we are inspired thereby to do much better work . . . get acquainted with your teachers as soon as possible . . . invite them to your homes . . . Call at the schoolhouse often. Don't go to be entertained by the teacher. Don't take her time; it is valuable. But go to see how your boy or girl stands in class recitation and general deportment . . . .

That cry for parent involvement is again being echoed in the 1990s. Alder, Kahn, and Gilliland (1990:3) wrote that "active efforts to promote the interaction of families and schools are essential to realize the full potential of every child." Guidance in forming this needed partnership may be found through research of parent involvement efforts.

This review of literature will examine the focus on parent involvement from five perspectives: government requirements, classifications of parent involvement, elements of effective programs, benefits of parent involvement, and finally barriers to parent involvement.

Government Requirements

In his address on national goals, President George Bush announced to the nation that the students in the United States would rank number one in achievement in math and science by the year 2000 (White House, 1990). In addition, every child would enter school ready to learn and graduate from school as a literate consumer. As state and national leaders have scurried to reach these ambitious goals, many have included the aspect of parent involvement in their new programs and mandates.

Several federal programs and laws have led the way in parent involvement including Head Start (United States Code, 1988g), Follow Through (United States Code, 1988d), the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and its amendments (United States Code, 1988b), the Bilingual Education Act (United States Code, 1988e), and the Education for All Handicapped Children (United States Code, 1988a). Newer federal initiatives that also emphasize parent involvement include Even Start—a program that combines the teaching of underachieving parents with the education of their young children, ages 1-7 (United States Code, 1988c); FIRST (Fund for the Improvement and Reform of Schools and Teaching)—a competitive grant program that rewards creative thinking for school/family/community partnerships (United States Code, 1988f); and Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning—a consortium of higher education institutions that is supported by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement to research the effects of partnerships that affect children's learning from birth through adolescence (Epstein, 1991).

Probably one of the better known programs from the above list is Chapter 1, created by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. From its beginning, it has required parent involvement, with the Hawkins-Stafford School Improvement Amendments of 1988 reaffirming this commitment. As noted in the Chapter 1 Policy Manual (U.S. Department of Education, 1990:77), the United States Congress concluded that activities by schools to increase parent involvement are "a vital, integral part of Chapter 1 programs." As a result, each school district receiving funds through Chapter 1 to supplement the reading and math programs for educationally deprived students must have a policy on parent involvement that has been developed through consultation with parents. Other responsibilities of schools to include parents in planning and participation are outlined. According to D'Angelo and Adler (1991), the new mandates broaden the definition of parent involvement to include more comprehensive programs and require the self-evaluation of such programs, which may result in generating new and better ideas for improvement.

State initiatives regarding parent involvement are in most instances tied to federal mandates such as those outlined for these programs for special populations. However, Nardine and Morris (1991:364) contend that state led programs and policies are necessary to legitimize parent involvement

programs. They note that through the "strategic application of legislation, policies, guidelines, and staffing decisions and with the judicious allocation of state and federal funds, high-level state administrators can, to a large degree, ensure the success of parent involvement in a state." Several states are attempting to do just that.

Initiatives in Texas

During 1990, the state board of education for Texas (Texas State Board of Education, 1991:69) adopted its goals and objectives for education. Goal six states that "parents will be full partners in the education of their children." The objectives for school districts to meet include:

- Encourage parental participation in all facets of the school programs;
- Increase interaction between school personnel and parents regarding the performance and development of students;
- Provide educational programs that strengthen parenting skills;
- Expand adult literacy programs to help parents provide educational assistance to their children.

The state board of education also proposed that the state develop a plan for parent involvement and that districts train their staffs to work with diverse groups of parents. To ensure the accomplishment of this goal, the Division of Accreditation of school districts in Texas included the area of parent involvement in its guidelines for districts. Within a year, Texas also passed two pieces of legislation that strengthened parent involvement.

Senate Bill 1 (Texas, 1992a), passed during the summer of 1990, made the first inroads into parental participation in decision making. The bill redefined performance indicators for schools as academic excellence indicators. The indicators include results of criterion-referenced tests, norm-referenced tests, attendance, and graduation rates. The law mandates annual collaborative planning of campus performance objectives for each of the academic excellence indicators by a committee. This campus committee is led by the principal and composed of two-thirds classroom teachers with the remainder of the committee made up of other educational professionals, parents, and community residents. The appraisal of the principal is tied to the campus's performance on the objectives determined by this committee.

A major shift in school governance resulted from House Bill 2885 (Texas, 1992b), which requires that school districts develop and implement a plan for site-based decision making not later than September 1, 1992. School committees are to be involved in decision making regarding goal setting, curriculum, budgeting, staffing patterns, and school organization.

The plan may extend the process of the campus committee established by Senate Bill 1 and does require the involvement of community representatives. In fact, the bill encourages that business representatives be included.

Initiatives in Other States

A similar state mandate in Kentucky requires all schools to implement site-based management by 1995. By June 1991, one school per district was required to pilot the concept of a school run by a teacher-and-parent-controlled council. Parents were reported eager to have this new forum opened to them. Many schools were already involving teachers in decision making. Yet, Harp (1991) reported that Bob Lumsden, superintendent of Henry County, cautioned that teachers might be overwhelmed unless they were supported by extensive management training. In addition, nearly one-half of the districts had not met the June deadline.

Just earlier than Texas and Kentucky, the California State Board of Education adopted a policy on parent involvement in January 1989, according to Chrispeels (1991). This enabling legislation stressed the importance of involving families at all grade levels and from all programs. Solomon (1991) noted that in September 1990 Assembly Bill 322 tightened requirements by specifying that those districts which receive certain federal or state funds must have programs for parent involvement and the other districts must have policies on parent involvement.

To aid other states or districts that may adopt a similar legislation on parent involvement, Solomon (1991) outlined steps for the development of a policy and then noted the strategies that California had utilized during the first two years of the implementation of its five-year plan. The policy was announced by the chief educational officer for the state, and then information was disseminated to administrators, teachers, and parents. According to Solomon, the state department took an active role in supporting the communication efforts regarding parent involvement. They developed booklets for parents and provided summaries of research, assisted local education agencies in the development of policies, and coordinated the work on parent involvement through interdepartmental committees representing all agencies that are involved in parent involvement services.

An example of a local educational agency extending the leadership of the state is found in the San Diego parent involvement policy. In it, the board, according to Chrispeels (1991:369), committed to the following:

- involve parents as partners in school governance, including shared decision making and advisory functions;
- establish effective two-way communication with all parents, respecting the diversity and differing needs of families;
- develop strategies and program structures at schools to

enable parents to participate in their children's education;
- provide support and coordination for school staff and parents to implement and sustain appropriate parent involvement from kindergarten through grade 12; and
- use schools to connect students and families with community resources that provide education enrichment and support.

The policy sets the direction of parent involvement activities and demonstrates the district's belief in it. Chrispeels (1991) summarized San Diego's implementation of the plan to involve parents into three main areas: building the capabilities of staff members to work effectively with all parents, creating partnerships with parents and the community through grants, and providing follow-up and support through making parent involvement an integral part of the school's effort including committee meetings and improvement planning.

California leans toward enabling legislation rather than mandates. Final decisions concerning the process are left to the local district to set forth in its policy statement. Nardine and Morris (1991) questioned the practice of some states using suggestive language—words like "encourage"—rather than more enforceable language that would lead to accountability. Solomon (1991) and Chrispeels (1991), on the other hand, thought that the success of parent involvement programs in California was enhanced by the fact that the California policy was an enabling statement rather than a mandate. Solomon also believed that having the ultimate goal in California to be the strengthening of curriculum, with parent involvement being a means, made for a better situation than having parent involvement as the goal.

Other states have dealt with parent involvement through grant and innovative program efforts. An early believer in parent involvement was the Indianapolis Public School System. Beginning with a three-year grant in 1978 from the Lilly Endowment, the district began "Parents in Touch" (Warner, 1991). Included was a multitude of parent involvement activities for parents of students ranging from kindergarten to twelfth grade in all five areas identified by Joyce Epstein (1987b). At every grade level, conferences were held with all parents at the end of the first six weeks. At these meetings, report cards were distributed, and information was shared. Contracts, signed by parents, teachers and students, committing to support such things as homework, attendance, and study time, were available. In addition, innovative use of technology was implemented to involve the parents.

In 1986, the Tennessee General Assembly appropriated $1,000,000 to design and implement a statewide parent involvement initiative. Eleven model programs at seventeen different sites, although differing in emphasis and magnitude, were similar in their reliance on the importance of parent involvement for improved student performance, attitude, and behaviors. Lueder (1989) surveyed the parents following the first year of implementa-

tion and found that over 90 percent reported their children's skills and overall attitudes were improved and 81 percent perceived an improvement in children's behavior.

In 1987, the state of Illinois established the Urban Education Partnership Grants to meet the needs of at-risk students. Through this program, schools were rewarded for efforts in school improvement that included a partnership approach. Three major principles guided the programs: collaboration, enhancement of educational equity, and networking. Chapman (1991:358) reported that outside evaluators of the program concluded that "parent involvement affected student achievement and that many more parents had become involved with their children's education as a result of the schools' efforts."

Even with such results, efforts from the states have been limited. In the study conducted by Nardine and Morris (1991) on the states' investments in parent involvement, both through financial obligations and legislation and guidelines, the results showed that 20 percent of the forty-seven states responding to their survey had enacted parent involvement legislation. Only six states noted that they had written guidelines on parent involvement, with twenty-one of the states having neither legislation nor written guidelines directly related to parent involvement activities.

While the majority of the states did not have legislation regarding parent involvement, more than half of them were involved in the parent involvement initiatives. According to Nardine and Morris (1991), 68 percent of the states held seminars or workshops for educational personnel, with 58 percent conducting them for parents also. Sixty-six percent distributed materials and information on the subject, with 53 percent developing materials. Up to 80 percent of the states responded that they were planning to conduct these activities during the year following the survey. Inservice training and evaluations of parent involvement activities were not as prevalent, with only 37 percent and 35 percent, respectively, of the states reporting such efforts and over 50 percent of the states noting they had no plans to do so in the future. In addition, most of the activities documented in the survey were tied to federal mandates. Nardine and Morris (1991:366) concluded that with regard to parent involvement, the data indicated the following:

> State leadership and the assignment of state staff members have reflected only minimal efforts. . . and that much of the existing state legislation amounts to little more than lip service paid to the widely accepted idea that parents play a critical role in a child's education.

Such evidence indicates that while legislation has brought a focus on parent involvement, more than legislation is needed to make parent involvement a reality.

Classifications of Parent Involvement

There are numerous ways for homes and schools to join forces. Parent involvement is a rather broad term that encompasses many activities. A variety of roles is listed for parents—adviser, audience, home tutor, school supporter, co-learner, paid school staff, advocate, decision maker—and the list could continue. Cone, Delawyer & Wolie (1985) developed an index that consisted of sixty-three parent activities.

According to Jowett and Baginsky (1988:37), the "common theme is that all of these activities seek to bring together in some way the separate domains of home and school." Davies (1991) described the theme as centering on success for all children, serving the whole child, and sharing responsibility. Various researchers have, however, attempted to classify types of parent involvement.

With many diverse activities falling under the umbrella of parent involvement and those not being specific to a particular category but falling under several headings, Jowett and Baginsky (1988) found difficulty in narrowing their classification of activities to six areas. The activities included those that directly involved the parents in the curriculum with their own children, those that involved parents in the periods of transition, and those that involved parents in general school and classroom duties. Others provided courses and support for parents, allowed their input into decision making and management, and provided information and feedback to parents as consumers that facilitated better two-way communication.

According to the study by Jowett and Baginsky (1988), parents at the secondary school level responded to all of these types. Several schools reported parents being directly involved in the teaching of reading at this secondary level. In addition, some extensive orientation programs were offered, with one school opening its doors to parents for visits during the entire year prior to their child's entering the school. Secondary parents were found serving as volunteers in the office, library, or classroom and sharing their expertise with several groups. They were involved in workshops and served on committees.

Several researchers noted classification systems for parent involvement activities found at the elementary school level. An early classifier of types of parent involvement was Ira Gordon. Gordon (1979) combined activities into three models: parent impact, school impact, and community involvement. The parent impact model includes school influences on the environment of the child, such as health education, parenting classes, support groups, and home visits. Summarizing this model, Gordon indicated that as the family is influenced from the outside, then the family is able to impact the social force. The school impact model deals with control, where parents are involved in the classroom and as decision makers in the school. The community involvement model consists of those forces that influence both the parent and the school, such as classroom volunteering,

paraprofessional positions, and adult education classes.

Similarly, Gestwicki (1987) had three patterns of parent involvement: parents as participants in intervention education programs, parents as decision makers, and parents as partners. Through these activities, parents could be taught to work more effectively with their children, and two-way communication could be established. In addition, the involvement of parents in activities that allowed parent input helped ensure their commitment to projects.

Chavkin and Williams (1987) listed seven parent involvement roles in their survey of parents and administrators in a six-state area of the southwest. Areas listed were paid school staff, school program supporter, home tutor, audience, advocate, co-learner, and decision maker. The participants were asked to respond to the importance of each role. Parents and administrators ranked the same three roles as being most important, with audience as number one; home tutor, as two; and school program supporter, as three. Parents, however, found co-learning to be more important than did administrators as they ranked it fourth compared to the administrators' ranking of last.

Landerholm and Karr (1988) listed four categories for parent involvement activities present in early intervention programs and Head Start. They included basic parent support activities, social support activities, education program activities, and leadership activities. Within these categories, they suggested forty different parent involvement activities to build a strong program, ranging from transportation for parents to family activities to home learning activities.

Probably the most widely used model for classification today belongs to Epstein. Epstein (1987b) noted five types of parent involvement: basic obligations of parents, basic obligations of schools, parent involvement at school, parent involvement in learning activities at home, and parent involvement in governance and advocacy. Basic obligations of parents have to do with the basic needs of individuals for health, safety, and a positive environment. Basic obligations of schools concern communications about school programs and students' progress. The other three are self-explanatory. A sixth type that ties the family/school connection to the community has been recognized as states have implemented parent involvement practices (Solomon, 1991; Texas Education Agency, undated). Epstein and Dauber (1990) believe that more research is needed to determine if it is, indeed, a sixth type or merely a strategy for strengthening the other five.

Most schools have portions of these five types in place, but to different extents. When activities from all five areas are in place, the school has a better opportunity of reaching all children. Although the five types are related, they can be offered separately. Different types of parent involvement result in different outcomes for the parents and child. For example, according to Gordon (1979:11), the "quantity of home visits seems to be the

single most important variable influencing achievement of all...." However, Epstein and Dauber (1990) listed home learning as probably the most difficult to implement. Activities from the basic obligations of schools, which mainly include communications, appear to be the most common type of parent involvement. From the studies, they suggest that a Guttman scale-like pattern is in effect, meaning that if the more difficult aspects of parent involvement are in place, then the easier ones are. Nevertheless, knowledge of parents' needs can inspire a school to work to have a particular activity in place even if other types are not.

The classification system merely gives schools a communication and evaluation tool to determine whether they are doing all that is possible to reach the goal of success for all. All schools are probably doing some of the activities, perhaps even from all the different categories. Seeley (1989) pointed out in his discussion of Levin's accelerated school movement that the activities being implemented were not unlike those tried in other schools. The difference was that Levin did more of them, trying all areas. In general, he attributed the success of these schools to the high intensity such actions received in these schools.

Elements of Effective Programs

The consensus that comes out of the differing classifications of parent involvement is the fact that many different activities from several areas exist for the improvement of the education of the child. Becher (1984) commented that no one program content was shown to be more effective than another, and Williams and Chavkin (1989) found no one perfect program in their study of promising parent involvement programs at the elementary level. Likewise, Henderson and Marburger (1990) concluded that the form of parent involvement is not as important as the fact that it is planned, comprehensive, and long-lasting.

In studying the elements of programs in elementary schools that have been deemed effective, researchers have, however, noted some commonalties or helpful suggestions. According to Henderson and Marburger (1990), schools have to realize that parents share certain common perspectives, such as the knowledge they have about their children. In addition, schools should acknowledge that parents are already making important contributions to their children's education, and that they really care about their children. Finally, several studies show that parents need to be consulted about how they are to be involved.

Parents' Needs

Most researchers agree that the programs should be centered on the

parents' interests and needs (Brandt, 1989; Rich, 1988a) rather than the schools' needs. Baugh (1989) quoted Comer as claiming that parents want to know what is happening at school, particularly in relation to their child; how the system operates; and what they can do at home to help their child achieve. Epstein (1988, 1990) concurred. In "Operation Fail-Safe" in Houston, parents came to school, according to Reagan (1979), because they were given three things: a friendly, accepting atmosphere; the educational status of their child; and activities that they could use at home with their children. Solomon (1991), too, attributed program success in California to the emphasis placed on ways that parents can help their child learn both at home and at school and ways that teachers can help parents understand what is being taught.

Epstein and Becker (1982:111) commented that home learning may be "the most educationally significant" of all parent involvement activities for it is one in which virtually all parents can participate. Rich (1988b) contended that these home learning activities needed to differ from school activities. Therefore, she identified and centered suggested parent involvement activities on ten skills that she believed were necessary for success. While listing home learning activities as one of the characteristics of an effective program, Rich, Van Dien, and Mattox (1979) also noted that parent activities are sustained if parents can see that what they are contributing is resulting in their child's achieving. Hobson (1979) concurred that the activities have to be worthwhile.

Becher (1984) noted that the more personal the interaction, the more effective was the approach. Therefore, home visits and one-to-one parent-teacher relationships had better results than group interaction. Epstein (1982), too, pointed out that the personal contact made a difference. Although home visits are noted as one of the most successful techniques (Gordon, 1979), fewer than one-fourth of the teachers in the study done by Epstein had made home visits, and only two percent of these visited more than just a few of their students.

When developing a successful program, Landerholm and Karr (1988) advised that schools must pay attention to the stress that parents may be facing as well as the developmental level of the parents. The needs of parents fall along a continuum from basic support to leadership positions (Henderson, Marburger, and Ooms, 1986). Based upon these data, the school would then provide activities that might meet the needs of these parents. Ross (1988) quoted Bloom as suggesting that the programs be made convenient for parents by providing child care or transportation.

Related to parents' needs is the feeling of being welcomed on a campus. Rosa Lujan (1992), Texas Teacher of the Year, commented that "It is not that parents don't care. They don't feel welcomed and a part of the school. We must reach out to them." Ross (1988) reported that Bloom found in his study of schools in New Jersey that a warm climate where parents were made to feel welcome and were treated as vital parts of the program

was present in schools with successful programs. Likewise, the staffs of these schools were committed to having parents involved. Epstein (1990) concurred that school climate affects parent involvement as did Hobson (1979) who commented that schools need to remember to be sensitive and warm to parents. The Texas Education Agency (undated) in its migrant report suggested that mutual trust and mutual respect are needed.

Teachers' Role

According to Chrispeels (1988), it is the teacher who fosters the climate for effective home/school partnerships. Epstein (1982) and Gestwicki (1987) voiced similar findings. Gestwicki noted that if teachers were committed to the worth of parent involvement, they would find the means to reach the parents. Epstein (1985b) agreed that effort, time, and commitment were needed on the part of the teacher.

Varied/Innovative Activities

Involvement needs to be offered in ways other than the traditional volunteering or advisory groups so that all might have an opportunity to participate, especially special needs parents such as single parents (Rich, Van Dien, and Mattox, 1979). Davis (1989), an elementary principal in California, worked to find ways to involve parents in the school. Coming from a campus with parents from the traditional hard-to-reach category, Davis was successful in finding opportunities for all parents to be a part of the school program. Epstein (1988)pointed out that successful parent involvement programs are designed specifically for the site and its leadership.

From his interview with Epstein, Brandt (1989) reported that she also suggested that new methods must be found to reach all parents, perhaps through using technology. The TransParent School Model of Baugh (1989) utilized phone lines with answering machines or electronic mailboxes as a means to open the classroom to homes on a daily basis. A beginning place, according to Epstein and Dauber (1990), would be to assess the present practices and then plan from there to strengthen practices in all five areas outlined earlier by Epstein (1987b).

In the study of Schools Reaching Out, Davies (1991) found that strategies that moved a school toward a true parent/school partnership included establishing a parent center staffed by a coordinator. Epstein, too, according to Brandt (1989) noted that successful programs had someone in charge.

Communications

Two-way communication efforts were present in the successful programs (Williams and Chavkin, 1989). Davis (1989) believed that the key to parent involvement centered on constant communication and appropriate recognition. Epstein also included the recognition of businesses that allowed parents release time from work to participate in school programs. Ross (1988) reported that Bloom, too, noted the need to find a multitude of ways to communicate that would keep the whole community aware of the efforts of the program.

Rich (1988a) advised that involvement must move beyond the school setting, requiring what she termed "infrastructure"—a connecting of schools to the rest of society. To help accomplish this restructuring, she suggested that a media campaign about parents as educators be launched and teachers be trained in working with families as partners. Ways for families to help each other and ways to involve senior citizens and the whole community should be developed. Williams and Chavkin (1989) noted the presence in successful programs of networking between schools and similar agencies to provide support for parents.

Training

Rich was not the only one that included training as a part of successful programs. Williams and Chavkin (1989), Hobson (1979), Epstein (1985b), and Bermudez and Padron (1988), noted that inservice for both teachers and parents was important. Becker and Epstein (1982) stated that few teachers had received training in how to work with parents. Chavkin and Williams (1988) reported in their study on teacher training that approximately 87 percent of the elementary teachers surveyed and 92 percent of the parents felt training was needed. A slightly lower percentage—70 percent and 80 percent, respectively—favored a required course on parent involvement. Yet, of the 575 educators surveyed, only 4 percent had completed a course, 15 percent had part of a course devoted to parent involvement, and 37 percent had spent one class period on it. Therefore, a substantial number of educators have had little or no training on working with parents.

Bermudez and Padron (1988) suggested that parents needed training to help them better understand the home/school partnership. Their study included training for parents on the rights and responsibilities of the parents for educating the child. Hobson (1979) included training in leadership skills and duties of volunteers. Workshops, attended by both teachers and parents, demonstrated basic instructional skills that parents needed in order to help in the reading and math areas as tutors in the school or in the home. Others indicated that training in parent/teacher conferencing skills helped

ease the tension in such sessions. Parents were made aware as to what to expect and how they could make the conference more successful.

Secondary Programs

Essential elements for an effective middle school program on parent involvement include basically the same elements as noted above from the research at the elementary level. The key to turning around the idea that parents at the secondary level do not want to be involved is to design programs that are specific to the needs of these parents at this level (Ross, 1988). They want seminars on timely topics such as drug abuse, suicide prevention, and college and vocational opportunities.

Berla, Henderson, and Kerewsky (1989), however, did advise that the school be organized so that at least one person knows each child well and stays in touch with the parent. In addition, they suggested that the school offer opportunities for parent-to-parent communications, allowing parents to get to know each other better and to form support networks.

Policy and Commitment

At any level, the parent involvement program needs to be treated as fundamental to the school and further supported through policy (Williams and Chavkin, 1989; Epstein, 1991; Ross, 1988; Chrispeels, 1991). However, as stated earlier, most states are lacking in legislation, policies, and guidelines to see that parent involvement takes place. In implementing a plan, Solomon (1991) suggested that schools use the skills of staff members as a foundation, create partnerships within the community, and provide follow-up and support services. Policies in successful programs were also backed up by personnel and money. As noted earlier, a parent coordinator was found in the more effective programs. In addition, as with all effective programs, continual evaluation and follow-up are needed.

Dauber and Epstein (1989) found a direct link between parents' level of involvement and the school's effort to involve the parents. The specific practices of the schools to inform and involve parents at school and at home were more significant than the demographics of the parents and students. Parents became more involved when there was a tradition of involvement at the school.

In schools with effective parent involvement programs, a true partnership approach was followed. Parents had input in planning, goal setting, and instructional and curriculum matters. Hobson (1979) advised schools that allowing parents to have input in the decision-making process is not an abdication of power but a cooperative effort to meet needs of children.

Benefits of Parent Involvement

Citing the effective school research that time on task is proportional to how much a child will learn, Billy Reagan (1979) noted that parents are vital to improving the educational accomplishments of our students. While the answer for America's educational ills is not so simplistic as to revolve around only one factor, educators, researchers, and government leaders alike are calling for this home/school partnership to play a major role in improvement. Aiding in this call for parents are such leaders as James Comer (1986), Yale psychologist who initiated school improvement in the New Haven schools; Henry Levin (1987), father of the accelerated schools movement; and Scott Thomson (Ross, 1988), executive director for the National Association of Secondary School Principals. The reason for this common cry for parent involvement is the strength of the research supporting its benefits.

Comer (1986) pointed out that many of today's young people do not have the benefit of living in a town where everyone knows the family. In addition, the number of students having the benefit of living in a traditional nuclear family is growing smaller. Therefore, many students lack the support system that was in place earlier in the twentieth century and the security that comes from being surrounded by interested adults. Parent involvement can increase that security for the child, according to Gestwicki (1987), through the child's sensing a mutual trust and understanding between the parents and the teacher.

Gordon (1979) found that ten of the fourteen studies he reviewed showed positive results from activities which he classified as belonging to the parent impact model—programs that strive to improve the family's capabilities. He noted Kinard's study in 1974 of the Follow Through program in Florida in which Kinard found children with directly involved parents tended to achieve higher scores. Programs of the community impact model—those in which the parents' behavior is influenced by but that are also an influence on the school—showed similar results. From his studies, Gordon concluded that the educational achievement of students will be influenced by the parent and school impact model, and their combined approach in the community model.

Gordon is just one of many who has shown the effects of partnerships with parents. During the past twenty-five years, researchers have continued to build the case for parent involvement. Becher (1984) noted over twenty sources documenting that parent education programs are effective in improving the intellectual functioning of young children. Anne Henderson (1981) listed over thirty-five studies on parent involvement in her annotated bibliography, The Evidence Grows. This summary was followed by The Evidence Continues to Grow (Henderson, 1987), containing forty-nine studies that indeed provide evidence of the worth of parent involvement in the schools.

Much of the research has centered on early childhood and elementary,

but studies have also documented the effect on later years (Becher, 1984; Gestwicki, 1987; Gordon, 1979; Henderson, 1981). Henderson and Gordon both noted that students in early intervention programs that involved parents continued to have higher academic and social levels ten years later. Gestwicki documented research showing gains up to fifteen years later. Epstein (1990) stated that if schools will develop programs, even secondary parents will respond.

The benefits of parent involvement fall naturally into the three categories of benefiting the child, benefiting the parent, and benefiting the teacher/school. The results of parent involvement actually have a spiraling effect on those involved, according to Comer (1986). Parents understand teachers better and support the schools; students, recognizing this support, do better in school; and teachers become encouraged by the students' accomplishments and the parent input and work for even more parent involvement.

Benefits for the Child

The research supports an increase in student achievement when parents become involved in their child's education (Comer, 1986; Becher, 1984; Epstein, 1985a; Chavkin and Williams, 1987; Dornbusch and Ritter, 1988; McDill and others 1969; Fehrmann and others, 1987; Gordon, 1979). Comer found that those elementary campuses that implemented his model of a management team concept, where parent participation was heavily emphasized, jumped from being at or near the bottom of the district in academic achievement to very near the top. Similarly, in her extensive study of elementary schools in Maryland, Epstein found that students whose teachers were leaders in parent involvement showed gains in reading. However, Epstein's study did not demonstrate the same improvement in math. She attributed the difference in the subjects to the fact that the home activities centered on reading. According to Gordon, parents are usually better suited for helping with reading. McDill found that math achievement and college aspirations of high school students were related to the degree of parent and community interest in quality education.

Other academic improvements were also noted at the secondary level. Summarizing a study of high schools, Dornbusch and Ritter (1988) found that even parents' attendance at school events, such as ball games or performances designed for parents, was associated with the students' making higher grades. The correlation was still present when consideration was given to the social class and ethnic membership of the families involved. McDill and others (1969) likewise found that the one environmental factor affecting school performance was the extent to which parents were involved and interested in the schools and their students' performance. When this climate factor was substantial, the achievement of the students increased.

Reginald Clark (1983) took a somewhat different approach in looking at

the correlation between parent involvement and achievement. Working with families of twelfth graders in a Chicago suburb, he looked for patterns present in high versus low achieving families. He found several contributing patterns in the high-achieving families that were not present in the low-achieving families. These factors included parental standards and encouragement of participation in learning activities—both as homework and leisure activities, adult instruction and guidance, a wide range of resources in the home, adult modeling of reading and learning, parents joining teachers as "co-managers" of the students' learning, and parents' expressions of the personal worth of the child. These factors, centering on home/school partnerships, are needed from kindergarten to grade twelve for students to achieve, changing only in their emphasis as the child grows.

Clark's findings were supported by Thomson (Ross, 1988), who reported a study of schools with Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores that did not decline. The one common factor was the emphasis the community placed on education. The only somewhat negative study concerning achievement was done by Fehrmann, Keith, and Reimers (1987). They found that parent involvement did not seem to affect the standardized achievement test scores of high school students. However, it did impact elementary results, according to Keith's (1986) earlier report. In addition, Fehrmann, Keith and Reimers noted that their study of 28,051 seniors from the High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study (HSB) showed important direct effects on student grades and parent involvement. Earlier, Keith (1986) reported that homework had a positive impact on achievement, and parents did influence time spent on homework.

Another benefit to the student often mentioned was the development of a more positive self-esteem that influenced motivation and a more positive attitude about learning (Epstein, 1982; Gestwicki, 1987; Henderson, 1987). As mentioned earlier, researchers in Tennessee reported improvement not only in skills but also in attitude and behavior. Epstein (1985a) and Chavkin and Williams (1987) also noted more positive behavior as a benefit of parent involvement. Congress and other governmental agencies agree on the relationship between parent involvement, improved student performance, attitude, and behavior (First Grant, 1991; Texas Education Agency).

Benefits to the Parents

Like their children, parents also displayed more positive self-esteem as a result of their involvement in the schools (Becher, 1984; Epstein and Becker, 1982; Gestwicki, 1987; Henderson and Marburger, 1990). Many of the activities designed to involve parents increased their general intellectual skills and knowledge while at the same time provided a better understanding of child development and support in needed areas. With their new learning came enhanced self-esteem, which Gestwicki reported as being extremely

important for effective parenting.

In addition, by becoming involved, parents had the opportunity to see for themselves the world of their students (Dornbusch and Ritter, 1988). Through their better understanding of the educational process, the relationship with their children and the support for the teacher improved (Becher, 1984). Similar findings were reported by Bermudez and Padron (1988) at the conclusion of their study on a parent education training model involving teachers and parents in an English-as-a-second-language program. According to Jowett and Baginsky (1988), understanding is the reason for parent involvement. From it comes the valuing of schooling that is transferred to the children, causing them to do better (Comer, 1986; Dornbusch and Ritter, 1988).

Benefits to the Teacher/School

Finally, the teacher would benefit from parent involvement if only from the improved attitudes, accomplishments, and behavior of the students. In addition, however, the teacher who had parents involved was seen by these parents as doing a better job teaching and was provided positive feedback (Becher, 1984; Epstein, 1984; Gestwicki, 1987). Parents considered the teacher to be more professional and innovative. Teachers involving parents also received highest ratings on their teaching ability by their principals (Epstein, 1985a, 1987a).

Through parent support for homework and home learning, parents were able to continue the child's growth and to facilitate the retention of skills often lost during summer months (Becher, 1984; Epstein, 1982). By working with these parents, teachers raised their own expectations and appreciation of parents (Epstein, 1990). They rated all parents as being more helpful and were less likely to stereotype parents based on social or ethnic background. Teachers also gained knowledge about the students through the longitudinal information of parents, increasing their understanding of the children's needs.

Not to be overlooked were the resources provided by these parents both in terms of hours volunteered and material goods donated. Davis (1989) noted that he utilized parents for everything—from tutor to gardener. Henderson, Marburger, and Ooms (1986) encouraged the use of parents in what they know best—preparing the child for the transition to the work force. In addition, parent involvement generates support for the school and its programs in the community as parents become more aware of the needs and the strengths of the schools.

Generalizations

Coletta (1977) stated that Jenkes and Coleman gave evidence that school is secondary to the home in determining a child's success in school. Gordon (1976), too, noted that attitudes toward learning are formed in the home and expectations for success influence a child's performance. As a result, it is incumbent on the schools to pair with the home in a joint effort to reach the child. McDill and others (1969:27) quoted Bloom who said it nicely, "School and home environments which are mutually reinforcing are likely to achieve greater academic growth of students than those lacking such consistency."

Barriers to Parent Involvement

Don Davies (Ross, 1988:6), researcher at the Institute for Responsive Education, noted, "Most of the parents in our study were 'reachable,' but the schools were either not trying to involve them or were not knowledgeable about or sensitive to ways to overcome cultural and social class barriers." Likewise, others such as Espinoza (1988), Leitch and Tangri (1988), Henderson and Marburger (1990), and Epstein (1987a), report that parents care and want to be involved. Yet, barriers can appear that will impede successful parent involvement programs.

Leitch and Tangri (1988) reported that both teachers and parents blame parents for the lack of involvement. Epstein (1990) noted discrepancies between teachers' and parents' beliefs. In any case, many of the reasons for lack of parent involvement which are given center on misconceptions, stereotyping, and misunderstanding. Gestwicki (1987) categorized the barriers to effective parent involvement into three areas: those caused by human nature, those resulting from the communication process, and those by external factors.

Human Nature Factors

By human nature, Gestwicki (1987) referred to those threats to one's self esteem that become barriers. Both parents and teachers are held back by a fear of failure, fear of criticism, or fear of each other's differences. Jowett and Baginsky (1988) found that teachers at the primary level ranked teacher apprehension as the most important barrier to parent involvement.

Feelings of failure arise when parents are told that their child is having trouble in school. Many parents respond defensively. In addition, parents may be lacking in skills to successfully work with their child at home or school. According to Becker and Epstein (1982), they may not have the knowledge of the subject matter or the skills of teaching or tutoring.

Gestwicki (1987) also noted that parents may feel threatened by being replaced by the teacher.

Past experiences both at school and with one's own parents may result in barriers. Included on the list made by the National School Public Relations Association (Ross, 1988) of reasons for lack of parent participation were negative school experiences of parents when they were in school, being confronted by impersonal bureaucracies when they have had previous problems, experiencing rudeness or indifference upon entering the building, and lack of information about activities. Thus, human nature colors the communication efforts of both teachers and parents.

In fact, parents view what educators would term "professionalism" as cold and undesirable according to Lindle (1989). His study of four Pennsylvania school districts indicated that parents were uncomfortable with schools that treated them too businesslike or did not respond to them as equals. They favored a personal touch in school relations where they felt the school was genuinely interested and knew their child. Interestingly, the parents preferred regular contact between home and school through notes and calls rather than conferences. They also wanted communication to be one of sharing where they could give the child's perspective to the teacher.

Teachers, too, are vulnerable to feelings of insecurity, fearing questions from parents, or being at a loss as to how to help the child. This insecurity makes the teacher avoid encounters that may result in criticism. Another way is for teachers to hide behind their professionalism. Some may fear failure of their efforts to get parents involved. Horne (1988) cautioned that a school had to start small and let the program grow. In fact, he predicted that having 25 to 30 percent of the parents involved is realistic to expect.

Teachers are sometimes trapped by their own stereotyping of parents, prejudging those different from them. Research has shown that teachers who were effective in the use of parent involvement were successful with all socio-economic levels of parents; whereas, non-users of parent involvement tended to see income as a barrier (Leitch and Tangri, 1988; Becker and Epstein, 1982a; Epstein and Dauber, 1990). Brandt (1989) noted Epstein as stating that if schools were not committed to parent involvement, then the social class and income did indeed determine who was involved. However, teachers who were committed to the idea of parent involvement found ways to reach all parents although the activities might differ with different groups. Teachers in schools with more black youngsters reported more home learning activities while those with more white students reported more parent volunteers in the classroom, according to Becker and Epstein (1982a). As noted by (Becker and Epstein, 1982a:36), ". . . the common belief that less-educated parents cannot or will not assist in the instructional program is a consequence of teachers not having the methods of using parent involvement approaches."

Communication Factors

Seeley (1989) attributed the lack of success in getting parents involved to an idea of delegation being communicated by society. The job of education, like fire or police needs, has been "delegated" to the schools; therefore, the parents are only responsible for paying the taxes that support the school and then holding the institution accountable. He claimed that successful schools have been able to replace this delegation model with one of a true partnership or collaborative model.

The inability to communicate a real need for parent support seemingly impedes the process. Many parents reported that they had not been asked to do anything, according to Leitch and Tangri (1988). Often, information concerning the child was shared, but nothing was planned as a follow-up. The authors thought that the lack of specific planning on how to utilize the efforts of both parents and teachers is the major barrier to good home/school partnerships. Likewise, Chavkin and Williams (1987) noted that parents ranked high the fact that teachers did not ask them to be involved as a reason for less involvement at the secondary school level. Other communication problems high on the list of secondary parents included parents' lack of understanding of courses and lack of parent/teacher conferences.

External Factors

Time, personal problems, administrative policies, busy lifestyles, and outmoded ideas affect the program's success. As previously mentioned, district policies can have a positive effect on parent involvement programs. Care should be taken that other policies do not inhibit the participation.

Secondary respondents in the study by Jowett and Baginsky (1988) listed lack of time for teachers to develop programs for parent involvement as the biggest obstacle. In addition, teachers questioned the amount of time parents and students had to spend on home learning (Epstein and Becker, 1982). It is obvious that parent involvement requires a commitment of time.

From Espinoza's (1988) survey of sixty elementary schools in the Austin area, a major barrier to parent involvement appeared to be a rigid schedule at work. Less than half of the single parents reported having access to another adult for assistance with school. Dual-career families likewise faced loss of a day's pay to attend school functions. Employers could help by providing their employees with a flexible leave program. The work place could also be used for parenting seminars.

Leitch and Tangri (1988) reported that working parents appeared to be more involved than non-working parents. Epstein (1988) reported that while single parents and working parents were less likely to interact with the school directly, they were as likely or more likely to spend time with their child at home on school activities than other parents.

While excuses for lack of involvement may be given by both parents and educators, D'Angelo and Adler (1991) note that schools with successful programs of parent involvement take time to study how and when parents are hard to reach. Varying factors may create barriers at different times. Schools have to be willing to seek solutions to the different situations. Teachers, administrators, and community have to believe that parent involvement is important. The key to removing the barriers, as is the key to all effective parent involvement, is the teacher (Gestwicki, 1987; Epstein, 1982; Chrispeels, 1988).

Summary

School personnel must honestly answer the question as to whether they truly want parents involved. Weighing the benefits supported by the research, one would seemingly have to emphatically answer in the affirmative. Laws cannot mandate successful programs, but policy can demonstrate the importance placed upon it and encourage the development of strong programs for successfulparent involvement.

Commitment of the teacher, led by a visionary administrator, can overcome the barriers to parent involvement. Home and school partnerships, creatively designed around the five areas identified by Epstein (1987b), can ensure success for many students who might otherwise fail.

CHAPTER 3

Research Procedures

This study utilized the survey methodology to gather data on parent involvement at the secondary school level. Survey research has a long history of use with the field of sociology initiating many of the recent developments (Borg and Gall, 1983). Many of the studies done in educational research now utilize the survey method, which incorporates data gathering through questionnaires or interviews and the statistical analysis of the results.

For this study, questionnaires were developed to gather opinions and current activities concerning parent involvement at the secondary school level. Questionnaires were developed for the different populations addressed in this study which included superintendents, principals, teachers, counselors, board presidents, and parents. The instruments utilized components of two similar questionnaires used in studies of elementary programs by Joyce Epstein and Henry Becker at Johns Hopkins University and David Williams and Nancy Chavkin at the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. These researchers reviewed copies of the revised questionnaires for the secondary schools and gave their input. In addition, the questionnaires were field tested for clarity by the appropriate populations. Suggestions from the above group were included in the final questionnaires. Open-ended and multiple choice questions using a Likert-type scale were asked in addition to demographic information.

The survey included items on attitudes about effectiveness of parent involvement and its activities, communication efforts, use of volunteers, the existence of the five types of parent involvement identified by Epstein (1987b), and the importance of different parent involvement activities. Respondents were also asked to rate the extent of parent involvement of various groups and the support for parent involvement in addition to providing some demographic data.

Schools selected for this study were those secondary schools in Texas named by the United States Department of Education as exemplary in its Secondary School Recognition Program. The purposes of the Secondary School Recognition Program are to give public recognition to those schools across the United States that are effective in providing quality education to all students and to offer them as a model for other schools to emulate. In addition to providing evidence that students are obtaining solid skills in the academic areas and in citizenship, the Texas Education Agency (1990:1) states that the schools "must show strong leadership and effective working relationships among the school, parents, and community."

The thirty-five schools recognized as "national schools of excellence" between the years 1982 and 1989 included twelve middle schools, twenty-

one high schools, and two private schools. Twenty-two school districts were represented by this group.

A letter of transmittal was sent to each district superintendent of the selected schools along with questionnaires for the superintendent and board president. The superintendent was asked to distribute the package of questionnaires to the principal of the identified school. In the letter of transmittal for the principal of the school was a request that he/she select five teachers and five parents to complete the survey along with the counselor. The questionnaire was in a tri-fold format to ease the return.

Following the initial mailing, telephone calls were made first to the superintendents of the non-responding districts, followed by telephone calls to the individual principals. Second sets of materials were sent upon confirmation by the principal of the intention to participate. Finally, letters were sent to principals and superintendents of still unresponsive schools and to board presidents who had not replied to seek their cooperation.

A preliminary review of the results indicated several schools that had activities in all five areas identified by Epstein (1987b). Two middle schools and three high schools were selected for on-site visits. An interview structured on the suggested criteria of Henderson, Marburger, and Ooms (1986) for self-evaluation was conducted with the principal, teachers, other staff members, and parents of these schools in order to gain a more in-depth look at the activities involving parents.

The data were organized in table formats. Averages were used to display attitudes on the effectiveness of parent involvement and reasons for lack of involvement. Percentages of responses to a Likert-type scale were figured on other questions to compare suggested parent involvement activities and programs. The free response question and notes from the interview provided information, which was summarized in a narrative form.

From the data gathered in the study and reviewed in the literature, conclusions were made. Guidelines for effective parent involvement programs at the secondary school level were suggested that might assist other schools that desired to implement programs. Recommendations were also made for further study on the topic.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

The focus of this study was parent involvement at the secondary schools level. Its purpose was to present some guidelines that schools might use in developing effective parent involvement programs at this level. The scope of the study was the thirty-five secondary schools in Texas recognized as exemplary by the United States Department of Education from the 1982-83 school year through the 1988-89 school year.

Instrument Return Rate

A total of 464 questionnaires was mailed in the first contact to the twenty-two school districts in Texas represented in the Secondary School Recognition Program. Each superintendent received a short questionnaire as well as for the board president. In addition, a school packet was prepared for each principal of the thirty-five schools, containing a questionnaire for himself, his counselor, five teachers, and five parents. A total of 35 principal questionnaires, 35 counselor questionnaires, 175 teacher questionnaires, and 175 parent questionnaires was sent out.

Following the first mailing, 119 questionnaires were returned, representing fourteen of the school districts. Telephone calls were made to the superintendents of the non-responding districts encouraging their participation. As a result of the conversations, second copies of the questionnaires were mailed to six districts. Telephone calls were also made to principals of non-responding schools. The second request resulted in eighty-five questionnaires being returned. Letters were then sent to principals, board presidents, and superintendents who had not responded. Twenty-five more responses were gained for a total of 229 returned questionnaires. Represented were twenty of the twenty-two districts and twenty-eight of the thirty-five schools.

Using the information provided from questions on activities and ways to involve parents, campuses were ranked according to the five categories of parent involvement outlined by Joyce Epstein (1987b). According to Epstein and Dauber (1990), the existence of strong programs in home learning are indicative of other types of parent involvement being in place. Two middle schools and three high school campuses were selected for on-site visits based on the strength of their responses, with those in relation to home learning activities being a major factor.

During the on-site visits, interviews were conducted with the school personnel and parents, when possible. The questions for the interview,

although informally asked, were structured on the checklists found in Beyond the Bake Sale (Henderson, Marburger, and Ooms, 1986). These data were combined with that of the questionnaires to provide more insight for suggested guidelines.

Respondent Data

Of the 229 returned questionnaires, 15 were from superintendents, 10 from board presidents, 24 from principals, 19 from counselors, 94 from teachers, and 67 from parents. Principals responding averaged 22.8 years of experience in education, and counselors, 21.4. Teachers averaged 15.5 years of experience. Teachers also varied in assignments with nineteen teaching English; seventeen, math; fifteen, science; eleven, social studies; eight, reading; seven, foreign language; four, physical education; three, fine arts; two, business; two, special education; two, library skills; one, religion; one, vocational; and two, not indicated. The teachers' class loads varied from 10 to 200, with an average of 112 students. Twenty-eight percent of the teachers taught one subject all day to several groups of students. Sixty-six percent of the teachers taught more than one subject during the day.

Of the responding schools, fifteen were considered high schools and thirteen were middle schools or junior high schools. The enrollments varied from 550 to 2800 with the average enrollment being over 1500 students. According to the principals and/or counselors of these schools, 32 percent of them had students in the Chapter 1 program, 48 percent had a state compensatory program, and all had students involved in programs for the gifted and talented. In fact, 44 percent of the espondents considered over 50 percent of their student body to be above average in ability.

The parents who responded to the survey were mostly Anglo and married with family income above $25,000. The educational backgrounds were somewhat varied although over 84 percent of them had at least some college credit. Of those replying, 32.8 percent worked full time, 20.3 percent worked part time, and 46.9 percent did not work outside the home. Over 98 percent indicated that their spouse worked full time. Eighty-five percent of the parents reported that their schools had an active parent organization, with 80 percent of them being members.

Description of Instrument

Statistical findings were reported when appropriate from the six different sub-populations surveyed: superintendent, board president, principal, counselor, teachers, and parents. In question one, all groups were asked for their judgment about parent involvement. Averages of these responses are presented in table fashion. All were asked for their most successful

parent involvement practice. These practices are categorized under Epstein's (1987b) five types and a summary is provided.

Superintendents and board presidents responded to an abbreviated questionnaire that reflected the district's commitment to parent involvement. Summaries of the existence of certain common practices are given.

Teachers, counselors, and principals were asked about teacher contact of families and the parent volunteer program. The groups were also asked to rank specific ways of involving families with the school and the rate of involvement and support of various groups. Percentages of respondents to the given categories are noted in the tables and the discussion. Finally, they were asked to express levels of agreement on reasons for less parental involvement at the secondary school level. Averages of these responses are provided.

Parents were asked questions similar to those of educators but with less educational terminology. They were asked to report their involvement in certain parent activities and the extent to which they had been contacted the prior year by the teacher. In addition, they were asked their opinions on the rate of involvement and the support for parent involvement of various groups. These data are arranged by percentages of responses. Parents, too, were asked to rank reasons for less involvement by secondary parents. Averages of these responses are given.

Presentation of Data

The data from each major section of the questionnaire and summaries of the observations made in the interviews are arranged by the research questions guiding this research on parent involvement at the secondary school level. Tables and figures are added to facilitate the presentation of the findings of this study.

Effectiveness

This study researched attitudes about parent involvement at the secondary school level. In order to determine the effectiveness of parent involvement and what programs were considered effective, question one asked superintendents, board presidents, teachers, principals, and counselors to express their opinions on certain statements. Parents were also given similar statements.

Principals and counselors gave the strongest agreement to the statement that a parent's involvement in school is important to a student's staying in school ($\bar{x}$=3.9 and $\bar{x}$=3.8, respectively). Teachers also ranked it as a top area ($\bar{x}$=3.7). Strongest agreement for teachers came in the area of home/school connections on topics of dropouts ($\bar{x}$=3.8) and drug abuse ($\bar{x}$=3.7).

Superintendents strongly agreed that parent involvement helped teachers be more effective (x=3.9) and, likewise, indicated the importance of home/school connections for the prevention of drug abuse and drop outs and for the sharing of college information (x=3.7 each). Board members gave strongest agreement to the school's having an active parent/teacher organization (x=3.8) followed by parent involvement being keys to more effective teaching and student success (x=3.6 each). Table 1 presents the responses of the different groups associated with the schools according to the average score each statement received.

Table 1

School Personnel Ratings on Effectiveness of Certain Parent Involvement Practices

Ideas on parent involvement	Mean score*				
	Teacher	Prin.	Coun.	Supt.	Bd. Pres.
Some parents already know how to help with schoolwork at home	3.2	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.3
This school has an active parent organization	3.4	3.6	3.7	3.5	3.8
Every family has some strengths to be tapped to increase student success	3.2	3.2	3.4	3.0	3.5
All parents could learn ways to assist child on schoolwork if shown how	3.4	3.4	3.6	3.4	3.3
Parent involvement helps teachers be more effective	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.9	3.6
Teachers should be in charge of getting parents involved	2.2	2.7	2.3	2.7	2.8
Teachers should receive compensation for time spent on parent involvement	2.9	2.4	2.8	2.0	2.6
Parents want to be involved more than they now are at most grade levels	2.3	2.7	2.6	2.3	2.9
Teachers cannot take time to involve parents in very useful ways	2.2	2.0	2.1	1.9	2.1
Teachers need inservice training on effective parent involvement practices	2.8	3.0	3.2	3.3	3.1
Parent involvement is important for student success in learning	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.6	3.6

Table 1 (continued)

Ideas on parent involvement	Mean score*				
	Teacher	Prin.	Coun.	Supt.	Bd. Pres.
Parent involvement is important for students' staying in school	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.6	3.5
Family/school connections are important on the following topics:					
Drug and alcohol abuse	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.4
Teen Pregnancy	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.5	3.2
Drop out prevention	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.4
College preparation	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.2
This school has one of the best climates for teachers, students, and parents	3.4	3.7	3.5	-	-
Parents should have the final decisions about their child's education	2.7	2.6	2.8	2.9	2.3
Parents should take a more active part in school decisions	2.8	3.1	2.7	3.1	3.2
School districts should have policies for involving parents	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.2	3.3
Parents need to be involved in evaluation of school personnel	1.9	2.3	1.9	1.8	2.9
Parents need to be involved in the process for hiring personnel	1.7	2.0	1.6	1.7	2.4

* 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = agree; 4 = strongly agree

As shown in Table 2, parents responding to similar questions expressed strongest agreement for the importance of family/school connections in the areas of college preparation (x=3.8), drug abuse (x=3.7), drop outs (x=3.7), and pregnancy (x=3.7). They also strongly agreed that parents should be responsible for getting more involved in their children's school (x=3.6) and that parents should make sure that children do their homework (x=3.5). Strong agreement was also shown for teachers' giving ideas about helping with homework (x=3.4) and for parents' desire to cooperate with teachers (x=3.4).

Ranking the lowest by school professionals was parent involvement in the hiring process (counselors, x=1.6; principals, x=2.0; teachers, x=1.7; and superintendents, x=1.7). School personnel also did not want parents involved in the evaluation of school personnel (counselors, x=1.9; principals, x=2.3; teachers, x=1.9; and superintendents, x=1.8). While counselors (x=2.1), principals (x=2.0), and superintendents (x=1.9) disagreed strongly that teachers cannot take the time to involve parents in very useful

ways, teachers showed equal disagreement with teachers' being in charge of getting parents involved (x=2.2).

Board presidents disagreed most with teachers not taking time to involve parents (x=2.1), parents' having the final say (x=2.3), and parent involvement in hiring (x=2.4). Parents strongly disagreed that parents have little to do with their children's success (x=1.3), that working parents do not have time to be involved in school activities (x=1.5), and that teachers have enough to do without also having to work with parents (x=1.9).

Table 2

Parent Ratings on Effectiveness of Parent Involvement Practices

Ideas on parent involvement	*Mean score
Teachers should give ideas about helping with homework.	3.4
Teachers should be in charge of getting parents involved in the school.	2.1
Teachers have enough to do without also having to work with parents.	1.9
Teachers need to be trained for working with parents.	2.7
Principals should be in charge of getting parents involved in the school.	2.5
Parents feel at ease when they visit the school.	3.2
Parents do not have enough training to help make school decisions.	2.0
Parents should make sure that children do their homework.	3.5
Working parents do not have time to be involved in school activities.	1.5
Parents would help more with homework if they knew what to do.	2.9
Parents should have the final word in decisions about their children's education.	2.9
Parents want to cooperate with the child's teachers.	3.4
Parents should be responsible for getting more involved in their children's school.	3.6
Parents want to be involved more than they are now.	3.0
Parents have little to do with their children's success in school.	3.3
Parents should take part more in school decisions.	3.2
School districts should have policies for involving parents.	3.2
Parents should help evaluate their children's teachers and principal.	2.9
Parents should be involved in the hiring of school personnel.	2.0
Family and school connections are important for the following topics:	
drug and alcohol abuse	3.7
teen pregnancy	3.7
dropout prevention	3.7
college preparation	3.8

* 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = agree; 4 = strongly agree

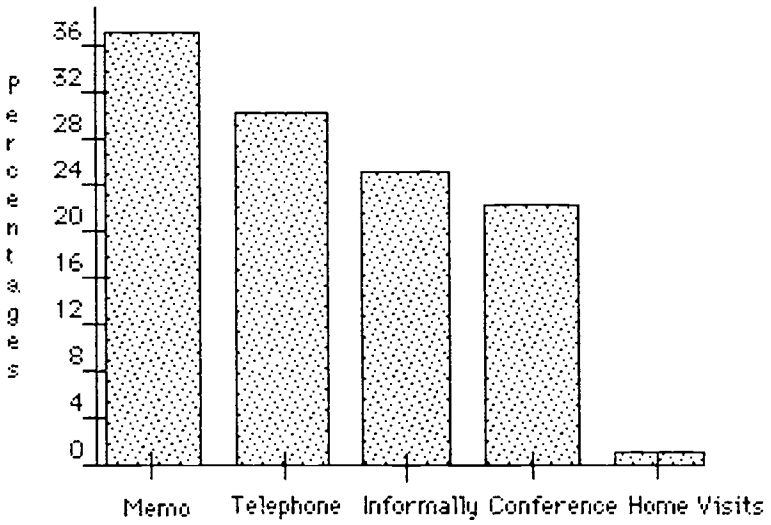
Common Practices

To explore some of the common practices utilized in these secondary schools, the questionnaire explored teachers' contact with the students' families, volunteer efforts, staff development, and needs assessment. The on-site interview included questions and observations relating to the climate of the school, commitment of personnel and parents, and the reputation of the school.

Teachers, principals, counselors, and parents were asked questions con-cerning family contact. Teachers reported that more families were contacted by memo (37%) than by other means. Almost none (1%) of the families receivedhome visits. Figure 1 shows the teacher response concerning family contact.

Figure 1

Means by Which Families Are Contacted by Teachers



Both counselors and principals indicated that teachers contact families of students in trouble more frequently than either all of their students or those that are successful. In such cases, the majority of the counselors and principals indicated that the telephone was the method used to contact the families. Table 3 displays these responses.

Parents reported the times they had been contacted the previous year by their child's teacher. Only one reported a home visit, and the majority

(61.5%) noted that they had not had a formal conference. Almost half of the parents reported never having been contacted by memo (46.9%) or telephone (43.9%). The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 3

Percentage of Principals and Counselors Reporting Teachers' Contact with Families

Percentage of teachers using method for all students	Memo	Telephone	Informal talk	Conference	Home visit
0%	12.0%	18.2%	24.0%	16.7%	45.8%
1-30%	32.0	13.6	28.0	37.5	16.7
30-79%	4.0	22.7	8.0	8.3	0.0
80-100%	16.0	4.5	4.0	0.0	0.0
No response	36.0	40.9	36.0	37.5	37.5
For students in trouble					
0%	16.7	0.0	16.0	0.0	37.5
1-30%	12.5	4.2	28.0	21.7	25.0
30-79%	16.7	20.8	12.0	21.7	0.0
80-100%	16.7	37.5	8.0	17.4	0.0
No response	37.5	37.5	36.0	39.1	37.5
For successful students					
0%	8.3	4.3	15.4	12.5	45.8
1-30%	29.2	47.8	26.9	37.5	16.7
30-79%	8.3	4.3	11.5	4.2	0.0
80-100%	16.7	4.3	11.5	8.3	0.0
No response	37.5	39.1	34.6	37.5	37.5

In reporting reasons for the contact by the teachers, the parents noted that they are least likely to be called to provide information about a course their child is taking with 66.7% of the parents responding that they had never been contacted for that purpose. In addition, the data show that when they are contacted more than once, it is usually a request for volunteer help (20.6%) or to report their child's success (18.8%). Reasons that parents are contacted are reported by percentages in Table 5.

Teachers, principals, and counselors were also asked about the volunteer efforts at their school. In reporting the number of different parents that helped in their school, principals gave a range of 6 to 800 with an average

Table 4

Parent Contact by Teachers as Reported by Parents

Means of contact	Never	Once	More than once
Memo	46.9%	15.6%	37.5%
Telephone	43.9	28.8	27.3
Informal visits	25.4	22.2	52.4
Formal conference	61.5	27.7	10.8
Home visit	98.4	1.6	0.0

of 188 volunteers. Counselors gave similar results, estimating a range of 15 to 1000 with an average of 120. Breaking that down to the volunteers working each week on the campus, principals reported an average of thirty-two and counselors, thirty-eight volunteers.

Table 5

Reasons for Parent Contact by Teachers as Reported by Parents

Reasons for contact	Occurrence of event		
	Never	Once	More than once
To report child's success	39.0%	42.2%	18.8%
To report a problem	46.9	46.9	6.3
To provide information on course	66.7	29.6	4.8
To ask for volunteer help	47.6	31.8	20.6

each week on the campus, principals reported an average of thirty-two and counselors, thirty-eight.

Teachers were asked how often a parent volunteer assisted them in the classroom. Almost 57 percent reported that a volunteer had never assisted them in the classroom. Four percent indicated a parent volunteer assisted every day, and twelve percent had volunteer help a few times each week. Figure 2 gives the complete breakdown.

According to the superintendents and board presidents, nine districts have full time district coordinators responsible for parent involvement, and four others utilize part-time district coordinators. All but three of the schools indicated that they had a person responsible for parent involvement. Of the schools indicating a person in charge, twelve of them were headed by volunteers with the others being a part of the staff. At the campus level, eight were staff positions with other duties assigned. Five indicated a full time staff

person. Table 6 displays the information.

Figure 2

Occurrence of Volunteer Assistance in the Classroom as Reported by Teachers

Table 6

Existence of District/Campus Coordinators for Parent Involvement Programs

Type of coordinator	Number of Campuses/Districts
Full time district coordinator	9
Part-time district coordinator	4
Full time campus coordinator	5
Staff with other duties campus coordinator	8
Volunteer campus coordinator	12
No campus coordinator	3

All of the campuses noted that they actively recruit parent volunteers and also provide training of the volunteers. Several indicated the training was informal while others have special training sessions provided by the parent/teacher organization. During the on-site interviews, the staff explained that the recruitment was done through the campus newsletter in addition to invitations included in students' registration packets at the beginning of school. One school held a coffee to recruit new volunteers.

Superintendents and board presidents were asked about the staff development efforts. Of the nineteen districts represented by their responses, fifteen reported that staff development on parent involvement had been offered in the district. The majority noted that personnel had not been

required to attend it, however. Three of the districts indicated that the teachers were required to attend, and four noted that administrators and support staff had required staff development on the topic.

Superintendents and board presidents were also asked how often they conducted a needs assessment for parent involvement. Six districts reported that they had not done such an assessment. Seven reported having conducted an assessment in the last five years with six others committing to an annual assessment.

From the on-site interviews, certain commonalties and practices were observed. All of the campuses were very well maintained, free of vandalism. Landscaping and cleanliness made the buildings inviting. All of the schools had designated parking for visitors. All but one of the schools had a comfortable waiting area with information on the school displayed. Only one school had posted signs greeting visitors and provided a map of the school.

Most impressive was the warm welcome given visitors. Personnel were extremely friendly and helpful. From the visit, it was evident that the same warmth was shown to parents. The support of parents was deemed important as indicated in the comment of a vice-principal, "We treat our parents as highly esteemed (sic). They know they're valued and welcomed." One school had a log-in and badges for its volunteers.

When asked how the school would be described in the community, all five reported a reputation for a strong academic program. In interviews, parents from two different schools stated that they had moved into the area because of the school. As one said, "I moved here for the schools; therefore, it is important that I offer to help." Other special features for which the schools were known included student accomplishments, innovations, open-door policy, and a caring attitude.

Principals reported a personal goal of having parents involved although only two had written statements of such. They actively sought the partnership with the families. As one principal commented, "We couldn't get along without our parent volunteers." However, none of the schools provided designated work areas for parents, but rather included them as an integral member of the team. As one administrator said, "We want them to feel a part of this school so they're encouraged to share the same lounge and work areas that the staff uses."

Parent Involvement Programs and Activities

To find the parent involvement programs that are utilized in the selected secondary schools, principals, counselors, and teachers were asked about different types of parent involvement at their schools. Using a Likert-type scale, the respondents had the choices of "not needed," "need to develop," "need to improve," or "already a strong program." In addition, the questionnaire included a free-response prompt asking for the most helpful parent

involvement activity. During the on-site visits, those interviewed also shared parent involvement activities.

Parent involvement programs. The strongest programs were in the area of communications. Of the teachers responding, 63.8 percent indicated that communications from the school to the home that could be understood by all families was already a strong program. Following closely behind it was communications about report cards with 62.8 percent reporting that it was a strong program. Almost half of the teachers reported strong programs in parent/teacher conferences (46.2%), the use of volunteers to obtain and train others (42.2%), and activities sponsored by the parent/teacher organization (40.7%).

Principals and counselors also expressed their opinions about ways to involve families in the school. Both principals (56.5%) and counselors (84.2%) agreed that communications about report cards was the strongest program offered. Over half of the counselors rated other communications from the school to home (63.2%), the use of volunteers to obtain and train others (57.9%), and recognition events (52.7%) as already being strong programs. The activities of the parent/teacher organization was ranked as a strong program by almost half of the principals (47.8%).

Overwhelmingly, 90 percent of the teachers indicated that participation by parents in the hiring of school personnel was not needed. Similarly, 76.4 percent thought evaluation by parents of school personnel was not needed. Table 7 displays the prompts and responses of the teachers to the question concerning the programs.

The principals and counselors were also in agreement with teachers on programs that were not needed. Both groups considered participation by parents in the hiring (principals, 65.2%; counselors, 94.4%) and evaluation (principals, 56.5%; counselors, 88.9%) of school personnel as not needed. Counselors also gave low ratings to parent involvement on committees for the planning of the budget and what is taught in the school with 68.4 percent and 73.7 percent, respectively, for reporting such activities as not needed. Tables 8 and 9 display the data from the two groups.

Parent involvement activities. Parents were asked about specific parent involvement activities. They responded as to the existence of the activity at their school and to the degree of their participation in those activities offered by their school.

Activities in which more parents reported participation as being often were going to "open house" or other special programs (92.4%), helping with school activities such as coffees and fund raisers (77.3%), and discussing with their child the school activities for the day (77.3%). Other activities that over fifty percent of the parents reported participating in often were volunteering at schoo at school in the library, cafeteria, or various offices of the school (65.2%), visiting the school (64.6%), taking part in parent/teacher meetings (64.6%), chaperoning or supervising special parties or activities (56.1%), and organizing parent volunteer activities (53.9%).I

Table 7

Teacher Responses to Parent Involvement Programs

Programs for parent involvement	Not needed	Need to develop	Need to improve	Strong program
Workshops to build skills in parenting	5.4%	37.6%	37.6%	19.4%
Workshops on home conditions for learning	5.4	46.7	38.0	9.8
Communications from school to home	3.2	5.3	27.7	63.8
Communications about report cards	6.4	6.4	24.5	62.8
Communications in parent/teacher conferences	17.2	6.5	30.1	46.2
Volunteers to obtain and train parent volunteers	6.7	28.9	22.2	42.2
Parent volunteers to assist teachers in classroom	20.4	38.7	26.9	14.0
Information on how to monitor homework	2.2	35.5	48.4	14.0
Information on how to help with specific skills and subjects	1.1	39.4	48.9	10.6
Involvement by more in PTA/PTO activities	3.3	15.4	40.7	40.7
After school recreation and homework help	27 2	42.4	20.7	9.8
Committees on planning the school budget	51.1	19.6	9.8	19.6
Committees in planning what will be taught	55.4	22.8	5.4	16.3
Evaluation of school programs	34.5	27.6	17.2	20.7
Participation in hiring of school personnel	90.0	5.6	3.3	1.1
Evaluation of school personnel	76.4	18.0	2.3	3 4
Assessment of parents' needs	12.1	45.1	26.4	16.5
Recognition events to honor parents' contributions	5.4	28.0	30.1	36.6

Table 8

Principal Responses to Parent Involvement Programs

Programs for parent involvement	Not needed	Need to develop	Need to improve	Strong program
Workshops to build skills in parenting	4.4%	13.0%	60.9%	21.7%
Workshops on home conditions for learning	4.4	30.4	60.9	4.4
Communications from school to home	0.0	13.0	47.8	39.1
Communications about report cards	0.0	0.0	43.5	56.5
Communications in parent/teacher conferences	0.0	13.0	73.9	13.0
Volunteers to obtain and train parent volunteers	4.4	30.4	47.8	17.4
Parent volunteers to assist teachers in classroom	8.7	21.7	47.8	21.7
Information on how to monitor homework	0.0	26.1	60.9	13.0
Information on how to help with specific skills and subjects	0.0	17.4	73.9	8.7
Involvement by more in PTA/PTO activities	0.0	4.4	47.8	47.8
After school recreation and homework help	21.7	34.8	34.8	8.7
Committees on planning the school budget	30.4	21.7	26.1	21.7
Committees in planning what will be taught	8.7	13.0	47.8	30.4
Evaluation of school programs	4.4	30.4	52.2	13.0
Participation in hiring of school personnel	65.2	13.0	21.7	0.0
Evaluation of school personnel	56.5	21.7	17.4	4.4
Assessment of parents' needs	4.4	30.4	47.8	17.4
Recognition events to honor parents' contributions	8.7	26.1	34.8	30.4

Table 9

Counselor Responses to Parent Involvement Programs

Programs for parent involvement	Not needed	Need to develop	Need to improve	Strong program
Workshops to build skills in parenting	0.0%	31.6%	52.6%	15.8%
Workshops on home conditions for learning	5.3	36.8	52.6	5.3
Communications from school to home	0.0	0.0	36.8	63.2
Communications about report cards	0.0	5.3	10.5	84.2
Communications in parent/teacher conferences	5.3	42.1	42.1	0.0
Volunteers to obtain and train parent volunteers	15.8	5.3	21.1	57.9
Parent volunteers to assist teachers in classroom	27.8	22.2	16.7	0.0
Information on how to monitor homework	0.0	10.5	63.2	26.3
Information on how to help with specific skills and subjects	10.5	21.1	52.6	15.8
Involvement by more in PTA/PTO activities	11.1	0.0	10.5	21.1
Committees on planning the school budget	68.4	10.5	5.3	15.8
Committees in planning what will be taught	73.7	10.5	10.5	5.3
Evaluation of school programs	31.6	21.1	31.6	15.8
Participation in hiring of school personnel	94.4	5.6	0.0	0.0
Evaluation of school personnel	88.9	11.1	0.0	0.0
Assessment of parents' needs	15.8	36.8	31.6	15.8
Recognition events to honor parents' contributions	5.3	26.3	52.6	0.0

Over seventy percent of the parents indicated that their schools did not have homework hot lines (79.4%) or parent participation in the hiring of teachers and principals (73.9%). Other activities that over 50 percent of the

Table 10

Parent Responses to Parent Involvement Activities

Parent involvement activity	Level of participation				
	Does not have	Never	Seldom	Some	Often
Helping with homework hotline	79.4%	15.9%	3.2%	0.0%	1.6%
Visiting the school to see what is happening	1.5	1.5	12.3	20.0	64.6
Going to "open house" or special programs	1.5	0.0	3.0	3.0	92.4
Going to workshops which help with child at home	33.3	4.6	10.6	25.8	25.8
Helping with school activities (fund raisers, etc.)	1.5	3.0	3.0	15.2	77.3
Helping teachers with class learning activities	15.4	18.5	20.0	30.1	15.4
Volunteering at school (libraries, cafeteria, etc.)	1.5	10.6	3.0	19.7	65.2
Chaperoning/supervising parties or activities	0.0	6.1	9.1	28.8	56.1
Going to activities for parents	28.8	12.1	6.1	34.9	18.2
Organizing parent volunteer activities	1.5	9.2	9.2	26.2	53.9
Taking part in parent /teacher meetings	3.1	4.6	6.2	21.5	64.6
Helping to plan school budget	51.5	33.3	9.1	3.0	3.0
Helping to plan what will be taught in the school	55.4	29.2	4.6	6.2	4.6
Helping children learn materials at home	15.4	4.6	7.7	23.1	49.2
Working to improve the schools through community groups	6.3	9.4	23.4	31.3	29.7
Helping decide how well school programs work	18.2	15.2	21.2	31.8	13.6
Helping to evaluate teachers and principals do their jobs	50.8	16.9	15.4	12.3	4.6
Helping to hire teachers and principals	73.9	21.5	1.5	3.1	0.0
Going to conferences about student	4.6	4.6	15.2	36.4	39.4
Giving ideas to the school for making changes	10.6	18.2	19.7	33.3	18.2
Attending school board meetings	0.0	27.3	37.9	15.2	19.7
Discussing school activities for the day with child	1.5	0.0	3.0	18.2	77.3
Contracts with teacher about child	24.2	30.3	10.6	18.2	16.7

Table 11

Teacher Responses to Activities for Parent Involvement at Their Grade Level

Programs for parent involvement	Not needed	Need to develop	Need to improve	Strong program
Conduct conferences with all parents once a year	44.4%	15.6%	24.4%	15.6%
Attend evening meetings, performances, workshops	28.9	6.7	24.4	40.0
Contact parents about students' problems or failures	1.1	0.0	9.9	89.0
Participate in parent/teacher/student clubs or activities	15.6	8.9	36.7	38.9
Inform parents when children do very well	1.1	5.5	51.7	41.8
Involve some parents in the classroom	22.0	27.5	37.4	13.2
Inform parents of the skills required to pass subject	3.3	14.4	26.7	55.6
Inform parents how report card grades are earned	5.5	5.5	22.0	67.0
Provide activities that parents/students can do to improve grades	13.5	22.5	47.2	16.9
Provide ideas for discussing day's activities at home	22.7	33.0	34.1	10.2
Assign homework that requires interaction with parents	18.0	27.8	41.0	12.2
Make visits to students' homes	82.4	13.2	4.40	0.0
Contract with parents on students' academic activities	37.5	22.7	21.6	18.2

parents noted as not being present at their school were parent help in planning what was to be taught (55.4%), parent help in planning the budget (51.5%), and parent participation in evaluating teachers and principals

(50.8%). Table 10 displays further information on the responses of parents to parent involvement activities.

In addition, teachers were asked about specific activities that were important at their grade levels. In considering the worthwhile activities to assist students, teachers rated the contact of parents about students' problems or failures as highest with 89 percent of them indicating that it was already a strong program. Informing parents how report card grades are earned was rated as already a strong program by 67 percent of the teachers.

The vast majority of the teachers, 82.4 percent, believed that home visits to students' homes were not needed. Conducting conferences with all parents at least once a year was judged not needed by 44.4 percent of the teachers. Table 11 shows the how teachers rated the importance of certain parent involvement activities at their particular grade level.

Most helpful activities. All respondents were asked to describe the most helpful parent involvement activities that they had used or heard about. A broad spectrum of activities was described. These were classified according to the five areas outlined by Joyce Epstein (1987b)—basic obligations of the parent, basic obligations of the schools, parent involvement at school, parent involvement in learning activities at home, and parent involvement in governance and advocacy.

A number of activities revolved around helping parents in their basic obligations. Several schools offered training or conferences on parenting needs. "Parent Education Series," "College of Parental Knowledge," and "Practical Parenting Program" were a few of the names given for the sessions offered parents on topics of concern to them for their child's age such as peer pressure, drug use, suicide, and college choices. One school offered a career center where both parent and child could get information on job opportunities and college requirements. Another school described a support group for English as a Second Language (ESL) parents that was flourishing. Another told of grade level socials for parents where they could identify with other parents having similar experiences. In addition, several schools mentioned mom's or dad's clubs where parents aired concerns and worked for the common good of the school. Two schools mentioned parent/faculty retreats.

The school's basic obligation of communicating with parents was met in numerous ways. Open houses and orientation programs were frequently noted. Much thought went into offering such programs at the most convenient time for families with some schools hosting programs twice during the day, offering them in May, or during the summer. However, personal contact by the school through telephoning, personal notes and letters, and even home visits topped the list of communication efforts. "I really came to know my minority students better by accepting dinner invitations and getting to know the total family," commented one such teacher. One school offered parent conferences every fourth week of the six weeks, and another had initiated parent/teacher/student conferences.

One successful requirement noted was the use of an assignment book which contained the objectives and homework for the day which parents signed each week. Another school held home/school meetings one evening of each reporting period. One principal noted that he hosted a coffee each month for parents for communication purposes. Another mentioned family socials which helped parents stay informed. Still another school had formed a parent communication committee that reviewed and coordinated the various school activities.

Communications were strong in the schools being interviewed. At one school, all administrators called the parent when a child came to the office. Many conferences and phone calls were reported by the school staffs. As one teacher explained, "Our parents demand it." One of the schools had a secretary designated to schedule the conferences for the teachers. Counselors in the high schools also did extensive mail-outs to the parents.

Interestingly, the school newsletter in those schools interviewed was produced and distributed by the parent organization. Through the newsletter, they spotlighted the accomplishments of the students and staff, as well as informed parents of coming events and volunteer opportunities. Three of the schools sent home directories of key people, but none of the schools had a "hot line." While the schools were open for parent observation in class, few parents had utilized the opportunity.

The volunteer efforts of parents were most often noted by the respondents as being the most helpful. Parents assisted in clerical or preparation work in the library, guidance department, nurse's office, attendance office, computer rooms, and for individual teachers. They were used to call absentees and to initiate four-year planning programs for students under the direction of the counselors. One school paired a parent with a teacher. Parents also worked in the cafeteria, school store, concession stands, and ice cream shops. They were also active in booster clubs and fund raisers for the schools.

Parents were also found helping students to be more successful. One school interviewed reported a buddy system where a parent was paired with a student for one-hour sessions each week. Counseling, tutoring, or just being a friend was offered as needed. Tutoring by parents was also used in other schools. Parents worked with students in contests such as Future Problem Solving and in special events such as science and health fairs. Parents provided meals for one study on a balanced diet. Parents also offered training for students in leadership, safety and study skills, in addition to serving as various guest speakers.

Often noted was the use of parents as chaperons for field trips and social activities. Mentioned by several schools were the joint efforts by parents to provide memorable but safe activities for students at such times as homecoming, graduation, and prom nights. Parents also initiated breakfasts for honor students, honor roll parties, lunches for faculty, and scholarship programs. Parents' support for a "Celebration of Youth Week" to highlight

student achievement and an "Ali Star" program for anti-substance abuse and self-esteem were noted by individual schools. Another school used parents of students who were incoming officers to perform the initiation ceremony for the clubs.

Schools were also active in providing ways to recognize parents. Logs were kept at several schools to track hours and ways that parents supported the schools. One of the schools visited had special badges for their volunteers. Awards for their parent organization were prominently displayed. In addition, several schools held coffees or banquets to honor their parents with plaques and pins given for service.

Although noted by only a few respondents, some parent involvement activities were of the home learning type. One teacher mentioned a writing project done by both parent and student following the reading of a story. Parents were also asked to supply a checklist on students' characteristics as preschoolers and as teenagers to be used in a comparison/contrast writing assignment. Another teacher asked for family interviews in assignments given. Another included home projects and gave controversial topics to be discussed at home before class discussions.

Finally, several schools mentioned the role of parents in the area of governance and advocacy. As one superintendent noted, "The parents are part of the needs assessment each year." The participation of parents in the parent/teacher organizations was also deemed effective. Parents commented that the "PTA helps one stay on top of happenings at school" and "it gives me a 'window' of my daughter's world," as they expressed the value of such groups.

When asked how parents were involved in planning or development of policy, all of the schools interviewed referred to the campus committees required by Texas law. Most had been using the process prior to the law, however. One principal explained that a campus committee including parents participated in the interviewing of some personnel, especially those who would be working with parents more directly in extracurricular activities. Another noted that parents were surveyed before the school applied for a waiver on student exemptions for exams.

Parents in one district were part of the New Friends Club which provided parties and activities for the community. One of the schools interviewed had parents in an extensive, community-wide business/education partnership that included committees on curriculum and student achievement.

A rather extensive array of activities and programs was thus found in the schools in the study. Most of those activities, however, did center on the idea with which the majority of people equate parent involvement—that of parent volunteers. Nevertheless, some activities from all five areas of Epstein's (1987b) classification were found in the schools being studied.

Involvement of Parent Populations

Respondents were asked to rate the involvement of various parent populations to determine the effectiveness of programs being offered by the schools for these groups. Few groups were perceived by the respondents as being "much involved".

Over half of the counselors and principals rated most of the groups of parents as showing some involvement. However, 47.1 percent of the counselors rated white and Asian parents as having much involvement, and 44.4 percent agreed to that rating for "most parents." Principals agreed on the white parents and most parents, with 41.2 percent and 39.1 percent, respectively, of the principals rating them as much involved. They disagreed with the counselors on the Asian parents as only 11.8 percent of the principals gave them a rating of much involvement.

Over 50 percent of the counselors and principals rated parents from lower socio-economic conditions as having little involvement as shown in Tables 12 and 13. More than half of the principals also gave that rating to persons who are acting in the place of parents and to non-custodial parents.

Few teachers, on the other hand, gave ratings of much involvement to any group. The majority of the teachers saw the groups as only being somewhat involved with more than half of the parents classifying three groups as little involved.

Table 12

Principal Ratings of Involvement

Groups of parents	Level of involvement			
	Much	Some	Little	None
Most parents	39.1%	56.5%	4.4%	0.0%
Parents who work	13.0	60.9	26.1	0.0
Parents with less formal education	8.7	43.5	43.5	4.4
Single parents	4.4	56.5	39.1	0.0
Younger parents	13.0	65.2	21.7	0.0
Parents new to the school	9.1	63.6	27.3	0.0
Persons standing in the place of parent	4.6	22.7	72.7	0.0
Non-custodial parents	0.0	40.9	50.0	9.1
Parents of lower socio-economic conditions	4.6	36.4	54.6	4.6
Black parents	0.0	64.7	35.3	0.0
Hispanic parents	0.0	62.5	31.3	6.3
White parents	41.2	58.8	0.0	0.0
Asian parents	11.8	76.5	0.0	11.8

Table 13

Counselor Ratings of Involvement

Groups of parents	Level of involvement			
	Much	Some	Little	None
Most parents	44.4%	55.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Parents who work	11.1	83.3	5.6	0.0
Parents with less formal education	5.6	61.1	33.3	0.0
Single parents	16.7	66.7	16.7	0.0
Younger parents	23.5	76.5	0.0	0.0
Parents new to the school	77.8	5.6	0.0	0.0
Persons standing in the place of parent	16.7	61.1	22.2	0.0
Non-custodial parents	11.1	33.3	44.4	11.1
Parents of lower socio-economic conditions	5.6	33.3	61.1	0.0
Black parents	5.9	76.5	11.8	5.9
Hispanic parents	5.9	64.7	29.4	0.0
White parents	47.1	52.9	0.0	0.0
Asian parents	47.1	52.9	0.0	0.0

White parents were deemed as much involved by 29.8 percent by the teachers. Parents with less education, non-custodial parents, and parents from lower socio-economic conditions were seen as little involved by 64.8 percent, 59.8 percent, and 58.2 percent, respectively. Table 14 displays teacher ratings.

Table 14

Teacher Ratings of Involvement

Groups of parents	Level of involvement			
	Much	Some	Little	None
Most parents	9.9%	70.3%	14.3%	5.5%
Parents who work	4.4	62.6	30.8	2.2
Parents with less formal education	1.1	26.1	64.8	8.0
Single parents	4.6	54.6	37.5	3.4
Younger parents	12.6	60.9	25.3	1.1
Parents new to the school	8.1	58.1	29.1	4.6
Persons standing in the place of parent	0.0	43.5	47.1	9.4
Non-custodial parents	0.0	23.2	59.8	17.1
Parents of low socio-economic conditions	0.0	30.4	58.2	11.4
Black parents	0.0	56.6	38.2	5.3
Hispanic parents	1.3	51.3	43.4	4.0
White parents	29.8	63.1	6.0	1.2
Asian parents	11.8	51.3	32.9	4.0

Table 15

Parent Ratings of Involvement

Groups of parents	Level of involvement			
	Much	Some	Little	None
Most parents	20.6%	57.1%	19.1%	3.2%
Parents who work	3.1	53.1	42.2	1.6
Parents with less formal education	3.3	37.7	47.5	11.5
Single parents	0.0	59.4	37.5	3.1
Younger parents	11.5	57.4	27.9	3.3
Parents new to the school	18.0	42.6	36.1	3.3
Persons standing in the place of parent	3.5	35.1	47.4	14.0
Non-custodial parents	5.4	23.2	46.4	25.0
Parents of lower socio-economic conditions	0.0	34.6	49.1	16.4
Black parents	13.7	43.1	43.1	0.0
Hispanic parents	17.0	35.9	45.3	1.9
White parents	54.7	41.5	3.8	0.0
Asian parents	15.6	28.9	42.2	13.3

Table 16

Combined Ratings of Teachers and Parents on Involvement of Various Groups

Groups of parents	Much or some involvement	
	Teachers' Ratings	Parents Ratings'
Most parents	80.2%	77.8%
Parents who work	67.0	56.3
Parents with less education	27.3	41.0
Single parents	59.1	59.4
Younger parents	73.6	68.9
Parents new to the district	66.3	60.7
People standing in the place of parents	43.5	38.6
Non-custodial parents	23.2	28.6
Parents from lower socio-economic conditions	30.4	34.6
Black parents	56.6	56.9
Hispanic parents	52.6	52.8
White parents	92.9	96.2
Asian parents	63.2	44.5

The only group that more than half of the parents rated as much involved were the white parents. While no groups were judged by more than fifty

percent of the parents as having little involvement, the majority of the groups were close, as indicated by the following percentages found in Table 15: parents from lower socio-economic conditions, 49.1 percent; less-educated parents, 47.5 percent; persons standing in the place of the parent, 47.4 percent; non-custodial parents, 46.4 percent; Hispanic parents, 45.3 percent; black parents, 43.1 percent; Asian parents, 42.2 percent; and working parents, 42.2 percent.

By combining the categories of "much" and "some involvement" into one category and the "little" and "no involvement" into another, parents and teachers were in agreement concerning the involvement of the three groups most involved. Those groups were white parents, most parents, and younger parents. They also agreed that the group least involved was the non-custodial parents as shown in Table 16.

Support for Parent Involvement

The respondents were also asked to rate their own support for parent involvement in the schools as well as that of others. Principals gave themselves the highest rating with 95.7 percent of them reporting strong support for parent involvement in their schools. Counselors and teachers likewise indicated the strongest support came from principals and other administrators with 94.4 percent of the counselors reporting strong involvement for these groups and 86.8 percent and 78.0 percent, respectively, of the teachers. Parents, however, saw themselves personally with the strongest support (89.1%), but only 42.2 percent of them saw other parents having that same strong support. That rating tied them with the community for last in the ranking by the parents responding to the survey.

Parents were also ranked last in strong support by principals and teachers. Only 38.5 percent of the teachers and 56.5 percent of the principals rated parents as having strong support. Counselors, however, had them rated above the community, board members, and teachers. In fact, counselors had the least percentage of strong support by teachers (55.6%) as shown in Table 17.

Reasons for Lack of Involvement in the Secondary Schools

Research shows that parent involvement declines as students advance in grade levels. Respondents were asked to rate reasons on a Likert-type scale for parents' becoming less involved at the secondary school level. Parents ($\bar{x}$=3.0), teachers ($\bar{x}$=3.1), counselors ($\bar{x}$=3.2), and principals ($\bar{x}$=3.3) agreed on the number one reason—children not wanting their parents to be involved in school.

However, there were some differences in the second and third reasons.

Teachers and counselors rated parents not having time to be involved (x=2.9, teachers; x=2.8, counselors) and parents not understanding some of the courses taken in the secondary schools (x=2.9, teachers;x=2.7, counselors) as top reasons. Principals, too, thought that parents did not understand (x=2.7). Principals also included the fact that teachers do not ask parents to be involved (x=2.9). Rated numbers two and three by parents were the statements that they were unaware of ways and opportunities to be involved (x=3.0) and that they were not asked by teachers to be involved (x=2.9). Having time to be involved in their children's education was rated in the lower half of the statements by the parents (x=2.6).

The two areas that did not seem to be a factor by all four groups were the distance from schools and lack of principals' encouragement for parent involvement. The results are graphically displayed in Figure 3.

Table 17

Ratings of Groups for Strong Support for Parent Involvement

Reported by Group	Counselor	Principal	Teacher	Parent
You, personally	83.3%	95.7%	58.2%	89.1%
Principal	94.4	NR	86.8	81.3
Other Administrators	94.4	91.3	78.0	68.8
Parents	72.2	56.5	38.5	42.2
Community	61.1	65.2	42.7	42.2
Board	66.7	69.6	67.4	50.8
Teachers	55.6	65.2	43.3	60.9
Counselors	NR	95.5	65.9	65.1

Summary

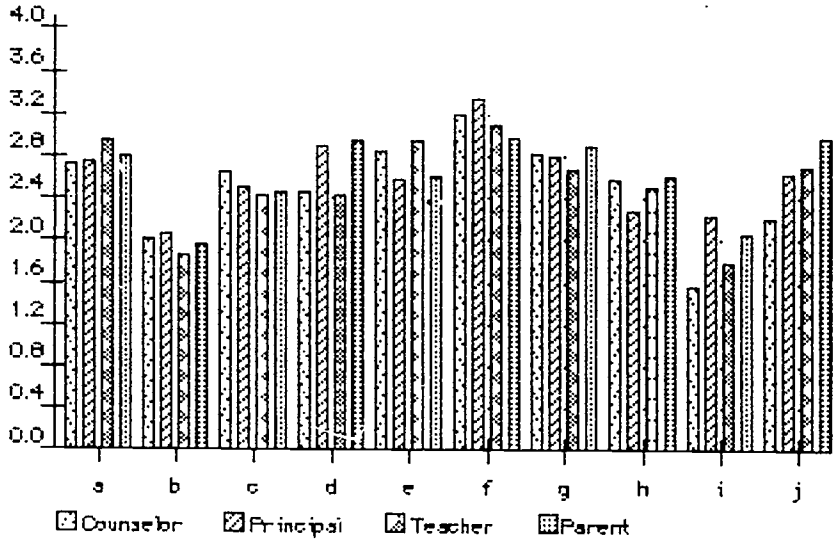
This chapter contained an analysis of data collected from school personnel and parents from those secondary schools in Texas that have been honored by the United States Department of Education School Recognition Program. Programs and practices for effective parent involvement at these grades were identified as perceived by teachers, principals, counselors, parents, superintendents, and board presidents.

Averages or percentages of responses were presented on the questions included in the questionnaire mailed to the respondents. The data were also summarized in tables and graphs. Descriptions of the findings

from the on-site interviews were included in the narrative section.

Figure 3

Ratings of Reasons for Lack of Parent Involvement at the Secondary Level



Reasons Given for Lack of Involvement

a = Parents may not understand some of the courses taken in secondary schools
b = The secondary schools are too far away from the home.
c = There are too many different teachers to talk to.
d = Teachers don't ask parents to be involved in school.
e = Parents do not have time to be involved in school activities.
f = Children do not want their parents involved.
g = Parents can't leave younger children alone at home.
h = There are not as many PTA/PTO activities.
i = Principals do not encourage parent involvement in the school.
j = Parents are unaware of ways and/or opportunities to be involved.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This chapter sumrnarizes the findings of the study on parent involvement programs in selected secondary schools in Texas that have been recognized by the United States Department of Education in its Secondary School Recognition Program. From the data, conclusions were drawn for suggested recommendations for guidelines for other schools desiring to implement parent involvement programs. The chapter also suggests other areas for future study.

Summary of the Study

Research has shown the positive effects of parents being involved in their children's education. Yet, data also reveal a steady decline in parent involvement as children progress through the grades. Effective means of ensuring parent involvement throughout all grades are needed. Students at the secondary level are still in need of their parents' support of their educational pursuits.

The purpose of this study was to identify the research findings concerning involvement of parents in the secondary schools and to measure the presence of parent involvement activities in a select group of secondary schools in Texas. From this information, guidelines were recommended to initiate and maintain effective parent involvement programs at grades seven through twelve.

Questionnaires were mailed to the superintendents and principals of the thirty-five secondary schools in Texas that had been recognized as exemplary by the United States Department of Education from the years 1982-1989. Superintendents asked board presidents to respond. The principals also distributed questionnaires to a counselor, five teachers, and five parents.

Responses from the 229 returned questionnaires, representing a 49 percent return rate, were analyzed by each question. The data were presented in table forms by percentages or averages of responses, as appropriate. In addition, based on the strength of the responses to questions on parent involvement activities, five schools were selected for on-site visits. During these visits, administrators, teachers, and parents were interviewed for a more in-depth understanding of the programs at these schools. The information was included as part of the narrative in the presentation of the data.

Summary of the Findings

The research on the positive aspects of having parents involved in their children's education is beginning to impact state education programs. Parent participation in the schools is being called for through legislation, guidelines, or other initiatives. Gains in students' achievement are the major benefit being attributed to various parent involvement activities. Positive self-esteem and positive behavior are also benefits from the parent partnership with the schools. Likewise, parents and teachers reap benefits in those areas of self-esteem, knowledge, and assistance.

Much of the parent involvement effort has been a result of federal programs which, for several decades have called for parent involvement. However, the search for effective schools has renewed the emphasis for all students. Even in the federal programs, some of the ways parents are involved have changed. As an example, in the Chapter 1 program for the remediation of math and reading initiated by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (United States Code, 1988b), parents have to be consulted for the development of policy and programs for parent involvement.

Texas' new mandate for site-based decision making involves parents in activities new to them in most school districts—budgeting, staffing patterns, curriculum, school organization, and, even to some degree, the evaluation of the principal. Thus, parent involvement has become a very broad term, encompassing numerous activities.

These activities have been classified in various ways; however, all of the systems are very similar. This study used the more prevalent model of Joyce Epstein. Her model includes the basic obligations of the parent, basic obligations of the school, parental involvement at school, parental involvement in learning activities at home, and parental involvement in governance and advocacy.

Findings from Literature

Barriers relating to human nature, communication, and external factors must be overcome to have effective programs. From the literature, common ingredients found in successful programs at the elementary level included the following items:

1. The programs centered on the needs of the parents, rather than those of the schools. Parents were reported as wanting to know how their child is doing, how the system works, and finally how they can help their child at home. In addition, the stress and developmental levels of parents are important factors that should be considered.

2. Effective programs offered a broad spectrum of activities from Epstein's (1987b) classification system in order to meet the needs of all groups of parents.

3. Non-conventional ways, such as the use of technology, were suggested as having possibilities for extending parent involvement activities.

4. Parents preferred personal interaction, with home visits considered most effective but least used.

5. Schools with successful programs welcomed the parents and considered them a vital part of the system.

6. The teacher was identified as the key to parent involvement at any level.

7. Two-way communication helped both the parent and the school to have a better understanding of ways to help the student.

8. Staff training in working with parents was reported as important. Few schools had initiated it, however.

9. Likewise, training for parents in areas related to the child's development and knowledge of the school program is needed.

10. The programs for parent involvement were well-planned, with parents able to see results and be useful.

11. Stated policies on parent involvement demonstrated the commitment to it.

12. A true partnership was stressed. As parents and schools shared the responsibility for student success, they jointly planned and openly communicated with each other.

13. Most successful programs had a person in charge of the parent involvement program.

Two additional factors were found in regard to secondary programs. Included were the following suggestions:

1. As districts developed programs for the secondary level, consideration was given to the changing needs of parents, such as parenting skills for the adolescence years and orientations for the changing school programs.

2. At the secondary level, parents wanted at least one person who knew their child well with whom they could converse.

Findings from the Study

Data from the questionnaires provided the following findings:

Effectiveness of parent involvement programs. In developing effective programs, the literature showed that schools should consider the needs of parents, especially as they change with the maturing of the child. Data from this study support the idea. On the question concerning effectiveness of parent involvement programs, the following results were found:

1. Strongest agreement from school personnel was shown for parent involvement being important to a student's staying in school, to a student's succeeding, and to a teacher's effectiveness.

2. School personnel and parents considered home/school connections as very important on such topics as college, dropouts, drug use, and pregnancy.

3. Board members considered an active parent/teacher organization as being important to effective programs for parent involvement.

4. In addition to the home/school connection, parents agreed that they should be responsible for getting more involved in their child's education and that they should see that their children did their homework.

5. School personnel agreed that all parents could learn ways to help their child be successful in school if shown how.

6. Parents indicated stronger agreement than school personnel for parents' wanting to be more involved than they presently were. Parents also gave a much higher priority than the others to parents' taking a more active part in school decisions.

7. School personnel showed the strongest disagreement with programs that involved parents in the hiring and evaluation of personnel.

8. All groups agreed that teachers have to take time to involve parents in useful ways. However, counselors and teachers were hesitant in saying that teachers should be in charge.

9. Parents strongly disagreed that working parents do not have time to be involved in their children's education.

10. All groups agreed that a good school climate was important to having an effective parent involvement program.

11. Schools in the study were recognized throughout the community for the strong academic programs provided for their students. Students were recognized for academic accomplishments.

Communications. Communications were a special need of parents according to the literature. The literature also indicated that parents preferred personal, less formal interaction with the school. Findings from the study concerning the communication efforts of teachers are the following:

1. Teachers used the more formal conference less frequently than the informal means of memo, telephone, and talks when contacting parents.

2. Teachers indicated the use of memos as the most frequent means of contact with parents, followed by the telephone. Parents indicated that they were contacted most often by teachers through informal talks.

3. While home visits are considered most effective by authorities, few if any families received them according to both teachers and parents.

4. Parents indicated they are least likely to be contacted by the teacher to provide information about a course.

5. Counselors and principals reported that teachers are more likely to contact families of students in trouble.

6. Little difference was shown in the percentages of teachers who contacted all of their students and those who contacted their successful students.

7. The majority of the parents reported being contacted by teachers for their child's being successful.

Use of volunteers. The use of volunteers was prevalent in the schools responding to the study. Other findings concerning volunteers shown in the study were the following:

1. The majority of the teachers had never had a volunteer assist them in the classroom. Volunteers were usually used in schoolwide activities.

2. All schools actively recruited parent volunteers and provided some training for the volunteers.

Other practices. Schools in the study also exhibited certain other practices:

1. The majority of the districts and the individual campuses had someone in charge of parent involvement. Schools were almost evenly divided as to whether the person in charge was a parent volunteer or a staff person.

2. A large majority of the districts offered staff development on parent involvement, but the staff attended on a voluntary basis. Compared to other respondents, superintendents expressed the strongest agreement for the need for training.

3. Only about one-third of the districts conducted an annual assessment of parents' needs.

Programs and activities utilized. Schools utilized activities in all five areas of parent involvement outlined by Epstein (1987b). Most frequently described by the respondents as the most helpful parent involvement activity were volunteer efforts of the parents. Rated as the strongest program by school personnel were the communication efforts of the schools. Additional findings on the parent involvement programs and activities included the following:

1. Only a few mentioned home learning/home visits. Those that did were extremely positive.

2. Over fifty percent of the parents reported that their schools did not have the following: a hot line or parent involvement in planning what is taught, in developing the budget, and in hiring and evaluating the staff.

3. When combining the ratings of the activities that schools did not

have or of the activities in which parents had never participated, more than five-sixths of the parents reported the same areas as above.

4. The activity participated in most often by parents was an open house at the school where parents had the opportunity to meet the teachers.

5. Other activities that over fifty percent of the parents participated in often were helping with school activities, discussing what is taught with their child, volunteering at school, visiting school, attending meetings and activities of the parent/teacher organization, chaperoning student activities, and organizing activities for parent volunteers.

6. The majority of the teachers and counselors indicated that the following programs were not needed: parent involvement in planning what is taught, developing the budget, evaluating school personnel, and hiring school personnel. A majority of principals agreed that parent involvement was not needed for hiring or evaluating school personnel but were positive about parent involvement in planning what was taught.

7. According to the school personnel, the strongest programs were communications from school to home and communications on report cards. Other strong programs were communications at conferences, use of volunteers to obtain and train others, parent/teacher organizations, and recognition events of parent and community efforts for the schools.

8. School personnel indicated programs needing development were after school programs, assessment of parent needs, and workshops on home conditions for learning.

9. In considering worthwhile parent involvement activities for their grade level, teachers rated visits to students' homes and conferences with all parents as activities that are not needed.

10. Those activities that were already strong practices at the teachers' particular grade levels included contact with parents of students with problems or failures, informing parents how grades were earned and what skills were required to pass, informing parents when their child did something well, and attendance by teachers at evening workshops and performances.

Groups involved. To determine how well programs were appealing to various parent groups, respondents rated the involvement of the different groups. These different parent groups included most parents, parents who work, parents with less education, single parents, and parents new to the district. Other parent groups included those standing in the place of parents, non-custodial parents, parents from lower socio-economic conditions, and parents from different ethnic groups. The following findings were made from the data provided by their responses:

1. No parent group was rated as "much involved" by a majority of any of the school personnel.

2. A majority of the parents did perceive white parents as much

involved.

3. White parents were also the group perceived as most involved by the largest percentage of school personnel.

4. Parent groups receiving the lowest ratings of involvement from all four groups of respondents were parents with less education, non-custodial parents, and parents from lower socio-economic conditions.

Support of groups. According to the literature, effective programs of parent involvement require a commitment. The four groups were asked for their ratings of support for parent involvement as well as their perception of the support given parent involvement by other groups. The findings were as follows:

1. Principals viewed themselves as having strongest support for parent involvement.

2. Principals were also perceived as having the strongest support for parent involvement by counselors and teachers.

3. Counselors rated their own support behind principals and other administrators but stronger than the other groups.

4. Teachers ranked their own support below that of the other school personnel but higher than that of the parents.

5. Parents answering the survey considered themselves as having the strongest support of any group but perceived other parents as having the lowest support.

6. Parents viewed teachers' support weakest of the school personnel. Counselors also gave teachers the lowest rating of support.

Reasons for lack of involvement. Principals, counselors, teachers, and parents were asked to express their judgment as to the reasons for the decline in parent involvement when students reached the secondary schools. The following findings were made:

1. All groups perceived that the children did not want their parents involved at the secondary school level as the major reason.

2. Teachers, counselors, and principals believed parents were not involved because they did not understand the curriculum.

3. Principals saw lack of involvement also due to teachers' not asking parents.

4. Counselors and teachers believed that parents did not have the time to be involved. Time, however, was ranked as a low reason by the parents.

5. Parents said they were unaware of ways to help and that teachers did not ask them to be involved.

6. Distance from school and lack of principal's encouragement were little supported as reasons for lack of involvement by all four groups.

Conclusions

Both the literature and the data from the study support the following conclusions for effective programs of parent involvement at the secondary school level:

1. Agreement seems to exist that parent involvement is important for a child's success in school. Teachers, therefore, have to find the time to involve parents in useful ways.
2. Site-based decision making includes parents' participation in activities such as budgeting, staffing patterns, curriculum, and school organization. Current practices, however, indicate that parent participation in these areas is very limited, and furthermore, neither school personnel nor parents desire increasing such participation.
3. Home/school partnerships on timely topics for parents of secondary students are important to develop.
4. Parents are most likely to be contacted when their child is in trouble, but they are also contacted by teachers to report something the child has done successfully. Some families, however, are missed. The average child appears to be overlooked.
5. Informal contact by the school with parents such as through memos, telephone calls, or talks, rather than the formal conference, appears to be the best means of communicating with parents.
6. While much is learned through home visits by both parents and school personnel, teachers' attitudes toward it will have to be changed before it will be used as a means of communication and parent involvement.
7. Parents at the secondary school level respond well to open houses held at the school. They appear to be an opportune way for parents and teachers to meet in an informal setting.
8. Most parent involvement at school centers on schoolwide projects rather than on individual classrooms. A valuable resource for teachers is being missed by not using parent volunteers more with the individual teachers.
9. No one right way is indicated, but a multitude of methods exists to involve parents in the education of their children. Effective programs consist of activities from all five areas of parent involvement outlined by Joyce Epstein (1987b). These areas include basic obligations of the parents, basic obligations of the schools (communications), parent involvement at school, parent involvement in learning activities at home, and parent involvement in governance and advocacy. By offering a wide variety of activities, more parents can be reached.
10. As indicated in the literature, communication efforts seem to be the easiest of the parent involvement activities to provide. The majority of the parent involvement activities in the secondary schools seems to be the very traditional means of communications and volunteer efforts, with some

workshops provided for parents. Work is needed to broaden parent involvement efforts in home learning and decision-making.

11. Parent/teacher organizations can be strong programs for secondary schools. They provide leadership in volunteer programs, communications, and workshops for parents.

12. Secondary parents reported strong participation in discussing with their child what is taught each day indicating a desire to be involved in their children's education throughout the years.

13. School personnel do not perceive any group of parents as being much involved in schools. Parents, however, do consider the white ethnic group of parents as being much involved. Obviously, many groups of parents are presently not being involved in the schools.

14. Unique and innovative ways must still be sought to reach those parents being missed, especially the non-custodial parents, parents with less education, and parents from lower socio-economic conditions. Technology, reaching out into the community, and special interest sessions for these parents offer possibilities.

15. Principals assumed a role of leadership in supporting parent involvement in the schools. Although teachers believed in the importance of parent involvement for a student's success, their support of parent involvement activities does not indicate that they are committed to it. All school personnel need to examine their commitment to having parents as true partners in education as parents want to be more involved than school personnel believe or desire as necessary.

16. Staff members of schools with effective parent involvement programs strongly believe in the benefits of having parents involved. They make a conscious effort to reach out to parents and to make them feel welcomed and comfortable at school.

17. Parents at the secondary level become less involved in their child's education because they believe that their child does not wants them to become involved.

18. Misunderstanding of other reasons for lack of involvement by school personnel may be causing a communication problem that prevents more involvement by secondary school parents. Time, according to parents, is not a major factor, but the fact that they are not asked and that they are unaware of ways to help are strong reasons for lack of involvement.

19. Effective parent involvement efforts include a planned program that meets the needs of the parents and is under the direction of a coordinator.

20. Activities and guidelines for parent involvement at the elementary school level appear to still be appropriate at the secondary school level. In implementing the program at this secondary school level, the changing needs of the parents as the child grows should be the guiding force.

Recommendations

As a result of this study, several recommendations are suggested to serve as guidelines for secondary schools that desire effective parent involvement programs:

1. Parent involvement must be considered a top priority by all, and a conscious effort must be made to communicate that message through policy, signs, and goal statements.
2. Teachers should be encouraged to be fully committed to involving parents in the education of their child through training and modeling by the administration.
3. Parents really do care about their children, want to be involved, and do discuss school activities with their children. Schools need to capitalize on this attitude by actively seeking parent involvement and offering ways that parents can support the learning at home. For example, homework assignments are designed to involve the family. Not all tasks have to be academic but can center on strengthening the communication between the parent and the child and the development of good citizenship.
4. Programs should be well planned. A coordinator, whether a volunteer or a staff person, needs to direct the program and keep it focused. Parents need to see good results from their involvement or offer of involvement.
5. The program should be centered on the needs of the parents, based upon an annual assessment of those needs. Their needs should then be coordinated with those of the teachers. Workshops and support groups for areas of concern for the parents of secondary students should be included.
6. Parents should be made to feel welcomed and comfortable when they come to school. The staff should make it known that parents are wanted and valued.
7. A broad spectrum of activities from all five areas identified by Epstein (1987b) should be offered, which include basic obligations of both parents and schools, and parent involvement at school, in home learning activities, and in governance and advocacy. Every avenue of parent involvement should be considered in order to reach the parents of all children. Volunteer efforts and communications may be the easiest to implement at first, but schools should expand into the other areas, especially home learning, since ideas on how to help their child at home are what parents desire most and offer the opportunity for most parents to be involved. Technology should be investigated for better use of the opportunities it offers. All activities should be made convenient for the parents.
8. Conscious efforts need to be made to work with the non-traditional parents. Their unique needs have to be considered, and activities to meet their special needs should be provided.
9. Joint ownership is found through shared decision-making so that a

true partnership exists. Schools need to look for ways to have parents involved in the development of policy and school programs and not feel they are abdicating their power or duty.

10. Many leadership and learning opportunities can be provided by parent/teacher organizations. These organizations can take responsibility for getting other parents involved and for providing many worthwhile activities for parents,
students, and teachers. Such things as school newsletters, workshops, and student assistance programs can be organized by them.

11. Communications and involvement should extend to the entire community, with schools working with businesses to allow parents time for parent involvement activities. Efforts of parents and the community should be recognized.

12. Programs should encourage ways to personalize the interaction of the school and the parent. Opportunities for parents to meet informally, such as open houses and other social opportunities, should be provided. The advantages of parents' attendance at any school event should be publicized.

13. The focus of all of the school's efforts should be student achievement with parent involvement used as a means to reach this goal.

Recommendations for Related Research

From the study, recommendations for other research in this area include:

1. Similar studies should be made of high achieving secondary schools that have a more diversified enrollment and/or that have more extensive federal programs.

2. Students at the secondary school level should be included in a study to determine if the perception of parents and school personnel is correct in finding that students do not want their parents involved. Consideration should be given as to whether the involvement may only mean volunteering at school.

3. Programs of home learning should be investigated to give guidance as to what types of activities to offer at the secondary school level.

4. Various parent involvement activities could be researched as to the group that responds and the results obtained.

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