Measuring Parent Involvement in Relation to Student Achievement

by

Tony O'Neal Brooks

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I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

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A Dissertation

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This Dissertation has been approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Lindenwood University by the School of Education

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of parent involvement in relation to the influence on student achievement within a school community. In addition, this study worked towards gaining an understanding of the parent's role in the school community. Researching educational data may suggest that more parent involvement will have a greater impact on student achievement, rather than little to no parent involvement, relating to student achievement.

Two sets of data were analyzed. One set came from information gathered in a parent questionnaire which was calculated to produce a parent rating score. The second set of data was derived from the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) scores focusing on reading and math in grades three and five.

In addition, the school's principal completed the needs assessment in order to identify ways in which parents are given opportunities to be involved. The needs assessment (a) analyzed the principal's opinions and ideas on the role of the parent in the school community, (b) ranked the importance of parent involvement in certain areas, (c) addressed the purpose of parent involvement in the school, and (d) assessed other areas of parent involvement in the Centerville Elementary School community in Cahokia, Illinois. The school is a part of the Cahokia Unit School District #187. The school was in transition. The staff was putting forth a serious effort in working towards making parents an integral part of the decision-making process at Centerville Elementary School.

The findings indicated that most parents agreed that involvement in their children's education made a difference in their academic performances. A small percentage disagreed. They felt that their level of parent involvement did not make a

difference. The results reflect a need to engage parents in dialogue to build a positive relationship concerning parent involvement and connecting to student achievement, leaving no parent behind. Study results could be used as a tool to assist in identifying if parent involvement is a significant factor in student achievement in schools.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Background of the Study

Parent involvement is a combination of commitment and active participation by the parent to the student and to the school (LaBahn, 1995). Dixon (as cited in LaBahn, 1995) stated parent involvement, in almost any form, produces measurable gains in student achievement. The theory of parent involvement impacting the student academically and socially in a school setting may be an essential factor and may generate great results. "However, it has been found that schools do not always know what the term *parental involvement* really means" (Vandergrift & Greene, 1992, p.57). According to Vandergrift and Greene, two key elements work together to make up the concept of parental involvement. One is a commitment to parental support. Parental support includes such behaviors as encouraging the student, being sympathetic, reassuring, and demonstrating an understanding of the role of the parent. The other element needed is a level of parental activity and participation, such as volunteering at school during the day. "This combination of level of commitment and active participation is what makes an involved parent" (Vandergrift & Greene, p. 57). Epstein, 2005; Jackson, Andrews, Holland, and Pardini, 2004; Jackson and Davis, 2000; National Middle School Association, 2003 (as cited in Pate & Andrews, 2006) pointed out that parent involvement is important to the educational success of a young adolescent and yet generally declines when a child enters the middle grades. Although inconsistent between elementary, middle, and high school, building an ongoing relationship between parents and schools could yield positive results and, in addition, keep parents involved throughout the academic career of a student.

Parent involvement may increase students' opportunities to achieve standards that have been set locally, statewide, and nationally. In 2002, President George Bush signed a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. The reauthorization, known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), strengthened the federal pressure on states to pursue a standards-based reform agenda specific to that state (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). NCLB included setting high academic standards, meeting the needs of all students in school communities, and holding federally funded schools accountable to produce promising results based on student performance, as measured by standardized tests.

According to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) (1999), the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) is administered in the spring. In addition, the ISBE (2008) references Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Meeting AYP is based on the percentage of students who meet or exceed grade level requirements on the ISAT. AYP specifically includes students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). An IEP is a document created to give opportunities for parents, teachers, administrators, related services personnel, and students (when appropriate) to work together to improve educational results for students with disabilities. AYP is a term used in NCLB to explain whether or not a school has met state math and reading goals. The school district's report card houses the information in reference to making AYP.

In addition, the U.S. Department of Education (2004) said that school districts must publicize school district report cards and test at least 95% of the student body. Under NCLB, each state is required to show academic proficiency in all students by the 2013-2014 academic school year. NCLB, according to the U.S. Department of Education

(2004), also includes a strong parental choice component giving parents the right to transfer their child away from what they perceive as chronically low-performing and/or dangerous schools. Further, NCLB says that parents, teachers, and others in the school community must work together to meet the needs of children in order to ensure that academic success is evident through data analysis. For the purpose of this investigation, academic success will be defined as the ability of a student to maintain at least a "C" average as a cumulative grade for one school year. In 2005, the staff of Great Schools, an independent, non-profit organization whose goal includes empowering and inspiring parents to participate in their child's development and educational success, identified five key skills for academic success: (a) organization, (b) time management, (c) prioritization, (d) concentration, and (e) motivation (Great Schools, 2007).

Communication between school and home has always been a critical component of successful student academic performance. Parent and teacher interaction is crucial because it provides for a dialogue between two parties that have an integral role in student success. In addition, administrators serve as instructional leaders for the school community and assist in consistently reiterating the importance of growth in student performance to the school's community. School officials understand that parent involvement is potentially a component of student success.

According to the National Education Association (NEA) (1994) parent involvement in a child's education can be defined by: (a) reading to the child, (b) checking homework every night, (c) discussing the child's progress with teachers, (d) voting on board elections, (e) helping the school to set challenging academic standards,

(f) limiting TV viewing on school nights, and (g) becoming an advocate for better education in the community and state.

Parenting abilities and skills are constantly changing. Over the past quarter century, the traditional idea of a family has changed. The increased use of technology among children (e.g., video games and the Internet), demands on families due to economics, and the high rate of divorce have resulted in less time for families to bond. Quality time between parent and child has dwindled. Hence, parent involvement in the school community has become a growing concern (NEA, 1994).

Epstein et al. (2002) conducted a study for over ten years that focused on the practices of teachers in relation to parent involvement and the school community. Epstein et al. designed a parent involvement model including six aspects: (a) parenting, (b) communicating, (c) volunteering, (d) learning at home, (e) decision making, and (f) collaborating with community.

The goals for the six aspects are the following

1) Parenting- help all families establish home environments to support learning and positive parenting.

2) Communicating- design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress.

3) Volunteering- recruit and organize parent help and support.

4) Learning at home- provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning.

5) Decision making- include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.

6) Collaborating with community- identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development. (Epstein, 2001, pp. 43-44)

The teacher-parent relationship is very important to student achievement. Teachers need to share with parents their knowledge of child development, student needs for success in school, the need for parental involvement in regards to discipline, social awareness of students, and the changes in educational expectations. Parents educate teachers on the same issues as they relate to the child at home. Understanding the dynamics of each student in the classroom is necessary for a teacher to maximize students' potential in the classroom. Maximizing student potential must involve a working relationship between the people in the school community, especially teachers, parents, and the principal.

Statement of the Problem

Schools are struggling to improve student achievement. At the time of this study, there was significant parent involvement in the study school community. However, there was no evidence that the parents, who were involved within the school community, were the parents of the students who were meeting or exceeding expectations on the ISAT, an assessment that measures individual student achievement. Hence, this study is significant because it assessed the relationship between parent involvement and student success on ISAT. NCLB mandates that schools be accountable for student achievement. Therefore, it is important for students to continuously strive to improve academically. Parent

involvement may be an important variable in students' continued growth. To make a connection between parent involvement and student achievement, this study looked at the role of parents in the schools and determined parent involvement in relation to student achievement in the classroom. Rather than determining the importance of parent involvement to student success, Centerville School focused on parent involvement as a strategy to improve achievement. NCLB prioritizes providing choices for parents and focuses on educating their child according to four principles (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

Parent-teacher conferences, report cards, midterm reports, and e-mail messages all communicate student achievement between parents and teachers. In identifying the influence of parent involvement on student achievement, educators agree that parents serve as the primary contributors to educating their children. Before children enter a structured academic setting, parent and home are greater influences than teacher and school. Because teachers and schools are an extension of parents and homes, communication is vital to maximize student potential. Major concerns about communication between school and home that may affect the parent-teacher relationship in the school community are (a) the need to encourage students and their responsibilities (for example, students taking ownership for ensuring that homework is completed and turned in on time and students maintaining communication with the teacher), (b) consistent communication between parents and teachers regarding student growth (academically and socially), (c) identification of mutual needs of students to be addressed, (d) an understanding of the role of the other in regard to student success

(teacher and parent), and (e) an accurate gauge of the influence of home life to school and the influence of school to the home life.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between parent involvement and student achievement. Student achievement was based on ISAT scores (results from an assessment that measures individual student achievement relative to the Illinois Learning Standards). Identifying the relationship between parent involvement and student achievement was assessed by observing parent involvement groups in the school community, parent-teacher relationships, the role of the teacher in parent involvement groups, the role of the building administrator in parent involvement groups, and parent surveys.

Rationale for the Study

The rationale for this study acknowledges that parents, teachers, administrators and other stakeholders play a vital role in preparing students to be productive citizens in society. Parents are primary stakeholders in preparing students and should actively learn about the school, state, and national expectations for student achievement. Parents must make an effort to place their child in the most advantageous position for academic achievement. Hence, the researcher considered parent involvement highly significant to student achievement. Ideally, if parents and teachers communicate effectively in an effort to work as a team to improve student achievement, and in the process, reduce negative misconceptions, the outcome will greatly enhance the school community in order to make sound decisions regarding improvement of student achievement.

The data collected from this project was used to assess the background of parents involved in this study by measuring the degree of parent involvement during the 2005-2006 academic school year (meetings attended, committee involvement, etc.), the amount of time contributed at home towards student achievement, and the principal's needs assessment. The collected data summarized the degree of relevance between parent involvement and student achievement.

Hypothesis

H_0: There will be no statistical difference on an annual standardized test (the ISAT) or difference in parent survey responses between the students whose parents are actively involved in the academic lives of their children and students whose parents are not actively involved in the academic lives of their children.

H_1: There will be statistical difference on an annual standardized test (the ISAT) and a difference in parent survey responses between the students whose parents are actively involved in the academic lives of their children and students whose parents are not actively involved in the academic lives of their children.

Null Hypothesis

Morgan (2003) affirmed that "When used, the null hypothesis is presumed true until statistical evidence in the form of a hypothesis test indicates otherwise. The null hypothesis is generally that which is presumed to be initially true, however, it is rejected only when it becomes evidently false, that is, when the researcher is 90%- 99% confident that the data does not support it." (pp. 209-221)

Schervish (1996) explained that "P-values (or significant probabilities) have been used in place of hypothesis tests as a means of giving more information about the

relationship between the data and the hypothesis than does a simple reject/ do not reject decision. Virtually all elementary texts cover the calculation of P-values for one-sided and null-hypothesis concerning the mean of a sample from a normal distribution." (p. 203)

In this study, the null hypothesis was there is no statistical difference on an annual standardized test called the ISAT. In addition, there was no difference in parent survey responses with actively involved parents and parents who are not actively involved in the academic lives of their children. Parent involvement does not make an impact on student achievement. Students were not able to provide evidence through standardized testing scores that more parent involvement in school equates to greater academic success. In addition, responses on a parent survey would not indicate that parents who have children who have scored on the meets or exceed level on the ISAT show a relation between parent involvement and academic success. Also, a needs assessment survey completed by the principal would not reveal any opportunities in the school community of which parents took advantage of opportunities that made a difference in the lives of their children.

Limitations of the Study

Economic class. Over 95% of the student body were eligible for free and reduced lunch during the study. This limited the study to a primarily low-income pool of students and parents which did not allow much variation to the effects of economics on the relationship between parent involvement and student achievement.

Percent of respondents by gender. Male parents completed 11% of the 42 surveys returned. Because respondents' gender heavily favored females, gender could serve as a

limitation to parent-student relationships when addressing topics such as the role of the primary nurturer and the limited role of the father in relation to student expectations.

Percent of respondents in one ethnic group. 100% of the parent population identified themselves as African-American. The lack of diversity in parents' ethnic groups could hinder various approaches that different cultures may encounter in working with schools to educate the child. Plante (2005) believes cultural limitations include different educational backgrounds and emphasis as well as an understanding of common experience.

Sample size. At Centerville Elementary School, 42 of 75 parents, or 56%, completed the survey that represented the student body in grades three and five. The 42 parents represented 46 students (13 out of 49 third graders and 33 out of 51 fifth graders) in this study.

Surveys returned. Some of the surveys returned were incomplete and did not have enough information to be utilized for both grade levels. The surveys that were not utilized could have made a significant difference in the overall percentages of the study including identifying similarities and differences between parents.

Definition of Terms

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). AYP is an NCLB indicator of progress. To make AYP, a school must meet certain levels established for the percent of students tested, the academic performance of students, and either the attendance rate for non-high schools or the graduation rate for high schools. Also, for schools not making AYP solely because of the IEP subgroup, a formula was created that added 14% to the percent

meeting and exceeding standards for the IEP subgroup to calculate AYP, as allowed by

the federal 2% flexibility provision (ISBE, 2007).

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). This act is the principal federal

law affecting K-12 education. The NCLB is the most recent reauthorization of the ESEA.

Originally enacted in 1965 as part of the War on Poverty, ESEA was created to support

the education of the country's poorest children and that remains its overall purpose.

Congress must reauthorize ESEA every six years. Changes have been made during each

reauthorization of ESEA, but NCLB was the most dramatic revision of the act since its

creation. NCLB provisions represent a significant change in the federal government's

influence in schools and districts throughout the United States, particularly in terms of

assessment and teacher quality (ISBE, 2007).

Highly qualified. A specific term defined by NCLB that law outlines a list of

minimum requirements related to content knowledge and teaching skills that a highly

qualified teacher would meet. The law, however, also acknowledges the importance of

state and local control of education, and therefore, provides the opportunity for each state

to develop a definition of highly qualified that is consistent with NCLB, as well as with

the unique needs of the state (ISBE, 2007).

Illinois Learning Standards. These standards are specific statements of knowledge

and/or skills within a goal. Taken together, the standards clearly define the learning

needed to reach that goal. Illinois Learning Standards represent the results of schooling

and thus may be considered exit standards (ISBE, 2007).

Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT). This test is an assessment that

measures individual student achievement relative to the Illinois Learning Standards for

grade level competency. The results give parents, teachers, and schools one measure of student learning and school performance (ISBE, 2007).

Individualized Education Program (IEP). An IEP is a functional document that includes information about a student and the educational program designed to meet his/her unique needs. An IEP is comprised of information about current student performance, annual goals, special education and related services, participation with non-disabled children, participation in state and district-wide tests, dates and places, transition services needed, needed transition services, age of majority, and measuring progress (ISBE, 2007).

Low income students. Students in this age group are aged 3 to 17, inclusive, from families receiving public aid, living in institutions for neglected or delinquent children, being supported in foster homes with public funds, or eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches (ISBE, 2007).

Needs Assessment. A needs assessment is a multi-step process of identifying issues, collecting information, and drawing conclusions about the primary educational issues facing students in the schools and communities so that the administrator can effectively tailor activities and programs to specific circumstances. A formal needs assessment will allow the administrator to uncover important issues and trends in the student body that would be difficult to detect as a casual observer (ISBE, 2007).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB). This law is the 2002 reauthorization of the ESEA. Since its passage in 1965, ESEA programs have provided federal funding for K-12 schools predominantly. Provisions in NCLB correspond to an important change in the federal government's authority on public schools and districts all over the United States,

chiefly in terms of evaluation, accountability, and teacher excellence. NCLB increased

the federal focal point on the success of disadvantaged students, including English-as-a-

second-language learners, students who reside in impoverished communities, provided

for ground-breaking programs, and supported the rights of parents to relocate their

children to a different school if their school was low-performing or unsafe (ISBE, 2007).

School District Report Card. This public document is produced by schools and

districts in order to satisfy a state requirement to make certain types of information

available to school communities. The report includes information about the school goals

and improvement plans, student support services, finance information, and a range of

student statistics, including student and staff demographics (ISBE, 2007).

Chapter 2 - Review of Literature

Experiences and paths in life, in addition to other aspects, shape an individual's perceptions of the world. In education, it has proven to be of importance to communicate and share opinions with others in the school community. By recognizing the importance of sharing opinions and ideas, it is imperative that educators understand how parent involvement benefits the development of a school community. Centerville Elementary School sponsors a parent program titled, The School Community Council. The council consists of parents, a teacher liaison, and an administrator. Teachers and parents organized the Council to establish a forum to discuss topics surrounding academic and social issues. The forum promotes dialogue among teachers, parents, and administrators in order to work towards resolving concerns in the school and in the home and to create a platform of trust between families and the school.

> The National Parent Teacher Association (2008) stated
>
> Parent involvement is essential to the health and well-being of a child. As a
>
> parent, you are the most significant influence in your child's achievement in
>
> school and in life. In this role, you have a fresh opportunity every day to get
>
> involved with your child. (¶ 1)

Parent involvement takes many forms, including parents' shared responsibilities in making decisions about their children's education. Responsibilities include participation in organizations that reflect the community's collaborative aspirations for all children in the school community. The relationship between teacher and parent is essential to the development of the school community. This connection seems crucial because teachers

and parents have an opportunity to interrelate with students on a daily basis and provide direct influence on the lives of the children.

According to Henderson and Mapp (2002), students with involved parents, in spite of of their income or environment, were more likely to: (a) receive higher grades and assessment scores and be admitted to higher-level programs, (b) be promoted, (c) pass their classes and earn credits, (d) have regular school attendance, (e) have better social skills, (f) show improved behavior, (g) acclimatize well to school, and (h) graduate and go on to post-secondary education. The researchers additionally said that families of all income and educational levels and from all ethnic and cultural groups are engaged in sustaining their children's education at home (Henderson & Mapp). "Caucasian, middle-class families, nevertheless, tend to be more involved at school and to be better knowledgeable about how to assist their children academically" (Henderson & Mapp, p. 7). Henderson and Mapp also suggested that "more involvement at school from all families may be an important strategy for addressing the achievement gap between whites, middle-class students, low-income students, and students of color" (p. 8).

Unfortunately, parent involvement may be difficult to achieve. NCLB recognized that parents are an important resource that may be difficult to keep involved (U.S. Department of Education, 2007).

> Parents who are committed and confident enough to get involved, make the necessary time to do so, recognize intuitively where and how they are needed, are prepared to meet the need, and are ready to step up as leaders—these parents are like gold: highly valuable but far from common. (U.S. Department of Education, 2007, p. 5)

In understanding the importance of parent involvement, it seemed vital according to Epstein (2005) for schools to recognize how to

(a) effectively communicate in a parent-teacher relationship, (b) participate in programs that promote parent-teacher relationships, (c) recognize the stresses of poverty, (d) understand the relationship between home and school, (e) acknowledge the relationship between achievement and family structure, (f) recognize parent-teacher partnerships in special education, (g) focus on the effects of culture and diversity on parent involvement, and (h) address the relationship between school and community. (p. 81)

Based on Epstein's findings, parent involvement would be valuable to a school in identifying problems that could be addressed by the school's community. Perhaps sharing the experiences of parents can prove beneficial to the decision making process. Hence, parent experiences may directly impact the role of parent involvement on student achievement.

The Importance of Parent-Child Relationships

There are many reasons for parents to be actively involved in their child's education. Henderson and Berla (1994) noted that

When parents are involved in their children's education at home, they do better in school. When parents are involved at school, their children go farther in school, and the schools they go to are better. In addition, children excel and are goal oriented when parents are involved in school. (p. 1)

Henderson and Berla also alleged critical contributions are made by the family in relation to student achievement from pre-school through high school.

The most extensive form of intervention for young children is parent involvement, whether through home visits and nearby group meetings, or as part of a preschool program such as Head Start. If the program is well-designed, the effects on children can be measured many years later. (p. 2)

In addition, studies such as the Eva Eagle Study (Eagle, 1989) show high school graduates with parents that were highly involved during the high school years were much more likely to complete a 4-year college education. A family's overall cultural style—not marital status, educational level, income, or social surroundings—determines whether children are prepared for competent performance at school (Clark, 1983).

The College Board 1994, a not-for profit examination board, (as cited in Colker, 2008) found that "reading achievement is more dependent on learning activities in the home than is math or science. Moreover, success in reading appears to be the gateway to success in other academic areas as well" (p.1). As reading achievement relates to parents, students could benefit from having access to favorable reading materials outside of school. Lee and Croninger (1994) discussed "how the availability of reading material in the home, whether owned or borrowed from the library, is directly associated with children's achievement in reading comprehension" (p. 319). One of the most important activities that parents may do to increase their child's chances of reading success is getting the family involved with reading at home. For example, parents can have children read the newspaper, recipes for dinner, magazine articles, and short stories in children's books. It benefits students to read about something pertinent to their lives.

Astone and McLanahan (1991), Sui-Chu and Willms (1996), and Finn (1993) claimed that children perform better academically when they regularly talk to parents

about school. If not exercised regularly, lack of communication between parents and their children may serve as a barrier for the growth of their relationship. The researcher's experiences indicate that communication between parents and children may contribute to problem resolution early in the process of addressing concerns and/or issues.

Finn (1998) discussed three forms of parent involvement at home that are consistently associated with higher student achievement: (a) actively organizing and monitoring a child's time, (b) assisting with homework, and (c) discussing school issues. When significant time is spent doing other activities at home, such as watching television, students and parents may not be utilizing time to improve student achievement. An exception to the rule may be using television programs as a tool to assist with a lesson.

Afflerbach, Baker, and Reinking (1996) argued that children who are read to by parents before they enter school are given a boost towards reading success. Talking to children about books and having stories read to them also supports reading achievement. The attention given to reading achievement at home may outweigh the contributions given in the classroom to reading proficiency. Cotton and Wikeland (1989) debated the following:

> The earlier parent involvement begins in a child's educational development, the more influential the effects may be on student achievement. Educators repeatedly point out the vital role of the home and family environment in determining children's school success, and it appears that the earlier this influence is harnessed, the greater the probability of higher student achievement. Early

childhood education programs with strong parent involvement components have

sufficiently confirmed the effectiveness of this approach. (p. 3)

In 1982, Collins, Moles, and Cross stated that positive outcomes of parent

involvement in their children's education included improved achievement, decreased

absenteeism, improved attitudes, and restored confidence and trust among parents in their

children's schooling. Through the researcher's experience, it has been recognized that

some parents who took initiative in becoming involved at school demonstrated

confidence in their child's academic progress due to their input. Parental influence on

their child's progress may also be reflected in the child's actions in school (such as

having the confidence to raise their hand to give correct responses in class or being a

team captain during recess), as well as outside of school (such as taking responsibility for

doing chores, and making sound decisions in the absence of adults and/or supervisors).

In summary, research indicated that the parent-child relationship is very important

to the success of a child's growth. The relationship between a parent and a child may

have a direct reflection on how a child performs in an academic setting. Research has

indicated that children with parents involved in their academic lives outperform students

who lack parent involvement. In addition, the parent-child relationship may contribute to

the betterment of the school community through increasing the number of people

dedicated to helping students achieve.

Effective Communication between Parents and Teachers

Maintaining frequent and open communication between teachers and parents is

important in building a solid foundation for parent-teacher relationships. Teachers and

parents contribute to the accountability of working with each other to produce the

foundation. According to Katz (1995), there are numerous strategies teachers can use to institute an environment that is encouraging to open communication.

In 1995, Barnett discussed parent-teacher communication strategies. He stated that true partnerships often begin to emerge when schools and teachers are the first to reach out to families. When schools approach families not with an agenda, but for the purpose of finding out more about the family's strengths and needs, the family's goals and expectations, the family's dreams for their child, then partnerships are formed. Schools and families can develop trust in the process of changing to a partnership approach that involves parents, teachers, and children in genuine education. (p. 6)

Some teachers encourage two-way communication by sending newsletters, narratives, or a short survey home regarding children's interests or parents' hopes and expectations for the school year. According to Nielson and Finkelstein (1993), there are other strategies that may be implemented to help teachers and parents foster open, ongoing communication, such as to "practice an open-door, open-mind policy" (p. 90). Teachers can invite parents to visit the classroom at anytime based on the availability of the parent. While visiting, parents can monitor their child's actions and observe a situation in order to see for themselves what the teacher is trying to achieve with his or her students.

According to Nielson and Finkelstein (1993), the second strategy is "to elicit expressions of parents' concerns and interests in preparation for parent-teacher conferences" (p. 90). Some schools organize parent-teacher conferences to discuss their goals early in the school year. During conferences, teachers can ask parents to share their

main concerns, goals, and objectives for their child. Interest surveys and brief questionnaires provide a basis for meaningful discussions during parent-teachers conferences. The third strategy is "involve parents in classroom activities" (Nielson & Finkelstein, p. 91). Teachers give parents suggested strategies on how they can be supportive and implore parents' assistance with particular activities. The greater parents are involved in what transpires in classroom actions, the greater the likelihood that they are to understand the teacher's goals and practices.

In summary, teachers may contribute to the school culture by encouraging open and honest communication with parents. Teachers who initiate open lines of communication with parents seem to have an advantage over their counterparts. Through open communication, students of parents who communicate with teachers may gain an advantage over those who do not have a parent communicating with their teacher.

Parents have an important role to play in nurturing open communication between themselves and teachers. According to Katz, Aidman, Reese, and Clark (1996), parents can "introduce themselves to teachers" (p. 4). At the beginning of the school year, parents can make contact with teachers and make them aware of when they can be reached most easily, daytime or evening, to talk about their child's classroom experience and how they would elect to be contacted (telephone, email, letter, etc.). The second strategy is to "be involved in classroom and school activities at whatever level work and family responsibilities allow" (Katz et al., p. 4). If parents cannot volunteer or go on field trips, they can let the teacher know that they are interested in helping in other ways, such as, weekend activities. Parents can let the teacher know that special circumstances (an extremely ill parent or an especially demanding job, for example) prevent them from

being formally involved, but they are always interested in how their child is doing and would welcome communications about their child on a regular basis, not just when there is a problem. The third strategy is that "you should initiate regular contact" (Katz et al., p. 4). Parents need not wait for the teacher to call them. They may contact the teachers at times identified by the teacher as convenient.

A multitude of strategies may be implemented by teachers and parents that could lead to an improved relationship allowing students to fully benefit from parent-teacher communication. Parents and teachers working together may serve as one of the primary attributes to the success of the student. Students may recognize the effort given by parents and teachers to inspire and put forth extra effort for success through dialogue.

Building School-Community Partnerships

The relationship between the school and the community could be an influencing factor on student development. One reason schools should take steps to engage a parent is to effectively enhance the school. When parents embrace bridging a gap between the community and the school, the school-community partnership will contribute to the betterment of students. It is the opinion of the researcher that communities should play a significant role in making decisions about the schools that serve the residents and employees working within the community (parents, students, teachers, etc.). In 2002, Henderson and Mapp noted that studies over the last twenty years document that community organizing has contributed to the subsequent changes in schools: (a) upgraded buildings and grounds, (b) better school leadership and staffing, (c) advanced quality educational programs, (d) new resources and programs, and (e) new revenue for supplemental school initiatives and family support programs. School-community

partnerships have the capability to "weave together a critical mass of resources and strategies to enhance caring communities that support all youth and their families and enable success at school and beyond" (Mental Health in Schools Training and Technical Assistance Center, 1999, p. 2). Further, the main scopes of school-community collaborations are

1. Taking an initiative.

2. Have shared efforts.

3. Focus on goals and objectives.

4. Maintain the extension of collaborations.

5. Gauge the potential positive impacts.

6. Take ownership and governance of school programs and student services.

7. Designate locations for the programs and services.

8. Assess the degree of cohesiveness among multiple interventions.

In building the partnership between the school and the community, there could be multiple concerns that may need to be addressed for the two to work together. Despite the fact that school-family-community collaborations are productive, many schools and community programs and services persist to work "in relative isolation from each other" (Mental Health in Schools Training and Technical Assistance Center, 1999, p. 7) and disagreements often occur over decision-making, use of space, discretion, and accountability when school and community professionals try to work in partnership. Developing school-community partnerships also takes time and partnerships are built "one relationship at a time" (Decker, 2001, p. 46) and need continual nurturing. Collaboration also regularly requires changes in conventional roles, responsibilities,

expectations, and schedules, which can provide evidence for complicated partnering (U.S. Department of Education, 1997).

The community plays a vital role in the success of a school. Parents and school programs serve a purpose for the greater good by infusing school and community. For example, grandparent breakfasts, parent advisory committees, and school-driven neighborhood clean-ups are opportunities to bring school and community together. School programs serve as a catalyst to provide parents with opportunities and contribute to the betterment of the school. School programs create a platform for discussion about the relationship between the community and the school. In addition, the school may serve as a tool to introduce the school community to interested volunteers, new businesses, and the elderly living in and around the community.

The Effects of Poverty on Parent/Teacher Communication

In strategizing communication variables, poverty may restrict some parents' access to communicate via electronic mail, a computer, and/or the Internet. When building a correlation between home, school, and academic success, it is important to recognize and understand how multiple aspects of a child's life, including a family's economic standing, have the power to increase or decrease the child's ability to become fully engaged in the learning process at school. It is crucial for the school community to be supportive of parents and students who may be at an economic disadvantage.

Taylor, Jacobson, and Rodriguez (2000) examined the psychological stresses of poor families, especially African-American and Puerto Rican families. In setting the stage for their analysis, they explained

   In many urban areas of the northeast, African-Americans and Puerto Rican children and families inhabit the poorest and most distressed neighborhoods. African-Americans and Puerto Ricans in the United States have similar rates of poverty, in that 33% of African-Americans and 39% of Puerto Ricans are poor (U. S. Census Bureau, 1993). African-Americans and Puerto Ricans also share some of the characteristics linked to poverty: 48% of African-American homes are single-female-headed households and single mothers head 43% of Puerto Rican homes. The poverty rates for African-American homes and Puerto Rican homes with single parent, female-headed households are 50% and 90% respectively. The unemployment rates for African-Americans and Puerto Ricans are 13% and 14% respectively, rates that are more than twice that of Caucasians. (pp. 35-36)

   If unemployed, African-American parents, in particular, may have to spend their time looking for jobs. Hence, their capability to verbally communicate with teachers during the day may be limited. Although sending letters back and forth may be helpful, when considering other methods of communication such as technology, poverty may hinder a parent's ability to stay effectively involved in his/her child's academic progress. When parents are presented with access to technology, their aptitude and comfort with communicating electronically increase. In some cases, their familiarity with language, such as with Spanish speaking families in an English speaking school community improves. Although Hispanic children may be bilingual, some parents may not be proficient in writing/typing the English language.

Teachers were asked about their experiences with the use of the Internet for school/home communication. Teachers discussed what they liked and didn't like and how they would like to improve communication with parents. "Major areas of discussion were related to difficulties with actual implementation: policies and procedures, school board support for funding, teachers actually using what is available, and parents being able to use it" (Center for the Study of Education Policy, 2004, p. 38).

While studying the historical phases of economic development (Coleman & Husen, 1985), the family's changing role was brought to light in this chronology: (a) children are of economic value as members of the family workforce (agricultural, subsistence societies), (b) children enhance the family situation by succeeding in school and qualifying for financially-rewarding employment (industrial society), and (c) children are fairly irrelevant to the economic circumstances of the parents and child rearing may compete with the parents' pursuits of professional and social aims (post-industrial affluence).

Poor parents are suspicious of people in the school community, especially teachers and other professionals, who they believe are not trustworthy and make attempts to comfort their children. Typically, however, parents respond positively when seeing their child benefiting from their social-emotional comforts being met. Teachers and other professionals meeting the needs of the children should (a) have outreach to these parents from other parents, (b) have schools provide a welcoming social context, and (c) influence parental behavior by presenting efforts that are beneficial to their children (Jencks & Phillips, 1998).

Jenks and Phillips (1998) believed that in order to improve on how the

school community meets the needs of children, it is essential to understand the

relationship between poverty and home life. This understanding can yield an

immediate impact on identifying strategies of improvement and student success.

Poverty can play a negative role in the education of children, but it does not limit

the level of success a student may achieve academically.

Home-School Relationships

Building positive relationships between the home and the school can be beneficial

for student achievement. The relationship between the home and school is worthy of high

priority. It is necessary to understand that home-school relationships serve as a better

indicator of academic achievement and ability as opposed to social class, parental

characteristics in relation to education, and family structure. According to the Henmon-

Nelson Test (a test that measures mental abilities), the relationship between academic

achievement, ability, and social class is weaker than the relationship between the home

processes and ability (Wolf, 1964). The relationship between the home process measures

and performance on subtests of the Metropolitan Achievement Tests for word knowledge

was strong (Dave, 1963). To this date, nothing was found to contradict this initial

conclusion. These findings confirm the view that what parents do is more important than

what they are (Kellaghan, Sloane, Alvarez, & Bloom, 1993).

Benson, Collins, Curtner-Smith, and Keith (1997) categorized the processes of the

home through: (a) work habits of the family (structure and routine in home management

and preference for educational activities over other activities), (b) academic guidance and

support (guidance on school matters and availability and use of materials and facilities

for school learning), (c) stimulation to explore and discuss ideas and events (family's choice of hobbies, games, and activities that require thinking and imagination), (d) language environment (language modeling and opportunities provided for correct and effective use of language), and (e) academic aspirations and expectations (including knowledge of the child's academic progress, rewards for scholastic achievement, preparation and planning for attainment of educational goals). These categories are not relegated to income although it may sound like a description of a middle class family.

Rutherford, Anderson, and Billig (1997) confirmed that the importance parents place on education far outweighs the amount of household income in regards to academic achievement and ability. The *curriculum of the home* (process variables) predicts school learning twice as well as the family's socioeconomic status (Wahlberg, 1984). Many parents seem to overcome the woes associated with economic struggle and personal lack of education to foster a home environment that is conducive to academic success in their children. Perhaps, in many instances, it is the experiences of the parents that motivate them to instill a high level of respect for education in their children. Education may be used as a tool for success, especially for students living in poverty. Many students are encouraged to meet their academic challenges because educational success can be used to achieve the "American dream" of having a spouse, children, a house, a car, and multiple incomes.

Assessing the value of having home involvement that emphasizes the importance of education, the relationship between home and school may prove to be immensely significant in identifying the level of success that can be expected from students from various backgrounds and family structure. Adelman (1994) believed that home

involvement was especially important when students display learning and behavior problems. In addition, McBride, Schoppe-Sullivan, and Moon-Ho (2005) supported the idea that children with fathers who were actively involved with the school (e.g., observing in the classroom, going to conferences, or meeting with counselors) experienced more educational success than children who only had mothers involved. Therefore, just as socioeconomic status, family structure, and parental characteristics have a positive effect on student achievement, so does emphasizing the importance of a good education at home.

Family Structure

Defining types of family structure has been a recent subject of debate, and the resulting ambiguity in terminology has contributed to the confusion about its effects (Popenoe, 1993). According to the Center for Marriage and Families (2005), over the past 35 years, the proportion of U.S. children being reared in two-parent homes has decreased significantly from about 85% in 1968 to 70% in 2003. The proportion of children living in single-parent homes has nearly doubled, from less than 12% in 1968 to more than 28% in 2003 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). A majority of all U.S. children are likely to spend at least a significant portion of their childhood in a one-parent home. This sharp increase in the proportion of U.S. children who do not live with their own two parents makes it important to understand how changes in family structure influence important areas of children's lives, especially in educational outcomes.

Some have argued that differences in life outcomes, including education, are largely determined by the characteristics of the family, such as its composition and social and economic resources (Cherlin, 2001; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). According to

Schneider and Coleman (1993), a fundamental characteristic of the family that has significant and sustaining effects on children is its structure. Schneider and Coleman also note that the family structure consists of the number of children in a household, the number of adults in the home, sibling spacing, and birth order. Family structures are primarily placed in two categories, traditional and non-traditional. Traditional family structures consist of two married parents and their biological children. Non-traditional variations in family structure include families with one biological parent and one step-parent, a single parent, cohabiting parents, or other relatives as caretakers. A family structure can constrain the availability of economic and social resources such as parents' ability to spend time with their child, be involved in educational activities, and expend monetary resources that can promote positive educational outcomes and well-being. It is the opinion of the researcher that family structure, whether traditional or non-traditional, may have bearing on the success of a student academically.

According to studies cited by Kellaghan et al. (1993), family structure may account for ten percent of the variance in children's measured abilities and achievements. Research has shown consistently that family structure can facilitate or limit ways in which parents are able to positively influence the future outcomes of their children (Amato & Keith, 1991). Kelleghan et al. argued, "First, a consistent finding is that there is a negative relationship between family size and measured abilities and achievements. . . . The amount of variance occupied for by family size in these studies ranges between four and ten percent" (p. 43). In addition, increasing the space between children may reduce the negative effect of family size. The number of siblings and their age may be indicative of the students' ability to exhibit academic achievement.

When parents take time to communicate with teachers, it is important to have equal time given to each teacher during conferences. Also, when parents have multiple children, giving equitable time to each teacher may be challenging, especially if their children have multiple teachers (i.e. middle and high school settings). The amount of time dedicated to communication may correlate to the students' progress. It is possible for parents, at times, to not have equity in monitoring their children's progress through the home/school communication. Therefore, families should plan to prioritize the need for communication based on a student's academic success. Hence, identifying factors that may influence academic success may serve as a starting point for families wanting to give the most attention where it is needed, the child with the least amount of academic success.

The Confluence Theory is one way to explain the effects of various factors of family structure on the child's cognitive development and readiness for schooling. The Confluence Theory states that the intelligence level in the family decreases as the number of children increases (Zajonc & Bargh, 1980, p. 356). The second component of the Confluence Theory claims that the rationale for this reduction is the fact that the older children teach their younger brothers and/or sisters. "In other words, the older children gain intellectually from teaching their younger siblings, and because last born children have no one to teach, their development, in turn suffers" (Row, 2008, ¶ 6). Rodgers (2000) argued against the Confluence Theory by stating that parents who have a better education and career options frequently have smaller number of children because they have a tendency to postpone having children. He claimed that intellect is by and large influenced by heredity and the quality of the child's upbringing. He continued, "Parenting

efforts can make all the difference in a child's development" (Rodgers, p. 20). The Confluence Theory may suggest that parent/teacher communication is most critical for the youngest siblings because they do not have younger siblings to teach resulting in cognitive development possibly disproportionate to older siblings. Although the Confluence Theory may suggest that birth order plays a role in identifying a student's ability to achieve, it is the researcher's opinion that parent involvement holds consistent as a major factor in determining student achievement.

Although some research suggests that family structure is related to outcomes such as educational attainment and mental health, the specific underlying mechanisms through which these effects occur are not well understood. Ermisch and Francesconi (2001), Case, Lin, and McLanahan (2001), and Evenhouse and Reilly (2004) found that family structure had a negative and significant effect on educational outcomes, while Gennetian (2005) found no significant effect of family structure on children's cognitive assessment outcomes. While most research in this area indicated that family composition had significant effects on the academic experiences and social development of children, little consensus was reached on why family structure matters (Schneider, Atteberry, & Owens, 2005). Even though a lack of clarity has been established when discussing family structure and parent/teacher communication, raising the educational expectations of parents for their children may benefit parent involvement in schools. Whether traditional or non-traditional, considering family structure may be an important strategy that parents can implement to combat negative consequences associated with non-traditional family structure.

Parent-Teacher Partnerships in Special Education

When parents, teachers, administrators and related service providers work together for the betterment of special needs students, they focus on matching the educational environment and appropriate supports with the learning needs of students with disabilities. The IEP process includes programs and services designed to maximize the success of every child (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). The primary goal of a special education program is to make accommodations for the child in an effort to integrate him/her back into a fulltime regular education program. Hence, studies such as, *The Longitudinal Evaluation of School Change and Performance in Title I Schools, Volume 1*, indicated that those parents who are active participants with teachers in the education of their children significantly increase the likelihood their children will achieve in school (Westat and Policy Studies Associates, 2001). Furthermore, in 1994, the NEA believed that constructive partnerships must be formed among parents and teachers to jointly concentrate on student needs. When parents place an emphasis on improving the quality of education of a special needs child, it is the opinion of the researcher that the parent-teacher relationship will prove to be very beneficial to foster student outcomes.

However, the typical due process information that is dispersed to parents throughout the special education process does not always provide a clear understanding of what their child's IEP should contain or how they can determine if their child is making progress. In order to contribute, parents should understand how to work effectively with teachers and how to collaboratively plan with their child's team. One might conclude that improving collaboration from the first IEP meeting will help to

ensure active parent participation and may reduce episodes of discrepancy and dissatisfaction later.

Misunderstandings can lead to serious conflicts among parents, teachers, and other members of the IEP team. Effective teacher, parent communication, and partnership skills could limit conflict. The NEA (1994) encouraged districts to provide professional development for both teachers and parents that focuses on building collaborative teacher-parent decision making skills at the local level.

Both parents and teachers need time before and during an IEP meeting to get answers to their questions and share information. In addition, parents need time and opportunity to build positive relationships with the school faculty and staff. It may prove beneficial to give parents time to observe their child in different school environments. Speaking with different members of their student's school team in order to gather a sense of how their child performs in school will prepare them for the effective IEP meeting. Teachers are temporarily relieved of instruction by substitute teachers who supervise their class during IEP meetings. Having support for personnel written into a student IEP negates competing pressures teachers feel when they are pulled away from teaching to speak with parents or to attend an IEP meeting. Parents are afforded time needed to participate actively in the decision making process for their child's education.

When discussing the importance of parent involvement and factors that may impact parent involvement (home-school relationships, the effects of poverty and parent-teacher relationships in special education, etc.), it is important that educators work toward closing gaps that may impede student achievement. Aspects of a child's life such as race, gender, and social class impact his/her life. Such aspects have less of an impact than

parent involvement on student achievement. Parents serve as the primary source of information in the home for school-home communication. Through building relationships with parents in the schools, the opportunities for positive communication may increase. Hence, students' opportunity for success increases through communication.

Culture and Parent Involvement

When working with parents, it is imperative for the school community to be aware of the influence of culture on parent involvement. Parents serve as a key component in attaining the improved academic achievement sought by school communities. Gaining an understanding of how culture may impact student academic achievement may offer insight into understanding what governs the actions of a student and/or a parent.

According to Lederach (1995), "Culture is the shared knowledge and schemes created by a set of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing, and responding to the social realities around them" (p. 9). Culture may be related to race, ethnicity, gender, or any other set of people. In the 21st Century, the United States faces many changes in population demographics that may lead to changes in schools and communities (Alexander, West, & Ebelhar, 2007). Populations will continue to transform in the 21st Century, principally in the area of ethnic and racial identification. Estimates point out that half of the increase in the U.S. population is due to immigration (Clausell, 1998; Day, 1996). People of Hispanic and Asian descent are two of the fastest growing populations in the U.S. because of immigration and enlarged birth rates (Ruff & Fritz, 1994). Facing an ever-changing future demographically, school communities may want to consider

creating a school culture that will supersede racial, social, and other relevant cultures in the schools.

Deal and Peterson (1993) offered a concise meaning of school culture. They simply state it is "an inner reality" (p. 90). Robbins and Alvy (1995) expanded the meaning by stating that "This inner reality reflects what organizational members care about, what they are agreeable to spend time doing, what and how they commemorate, and what they converse about" (p. 23). In creating a school culture, all care should be given to student welfare (primarily academic achievement). School culture is not about religion, race, socio-economic status, size of the school, or the latest standardized test scores (Phillips, 1993).

Some cultures share certain aspects of parent involvement, but value parent involvement for different reasons. For example, Hill et al. (2004) found no significant difference in the amount of involvement among African-American and Caucasian parents but stated that they may engage in their adolescents' schooling for different purposes. Hill et al. (2004) also agree that African-American parents may believe more strongly that they need to advocate on behalf of their children in the school system. In addition, their research acknowledged the influence of parent involvement on student achievement was superior for African-Americans than for Caucasians.

The need to advance academic achievement among diverse student populations—particularly African-American, Latino, Native-American, immigrant and language minority students, and students from poor families—is one of the most continual and demanding issues that education faces (Boethel, 2003). Parent involvement is a means of

combating the issues faced by these diverse populations. Chrispeels and Rivero (2000) agreed with Mapp (2002) that

> Schools that are successful in engaging families from diverse backgrounds share three key practices: (a) focus on building trusting, collaborative relationships among teachers, families and community members; (b) recognize, respect and address families' needs, as well as class and cultural differences; and (c) embrace a philosophy of partnership where power and responsibility are shared. (p. 1)

Learning to bridge the gap between the expectations of school culture and other cultures serve as constant challenge for some school communities.

Several topics would build a study that relates parent involvement to student achievement. The topics reviewed were (a) the importance of parent-teacher relationships, (b) the effective communication between parents and teachers, (c) building school-community partnerships, (d) the effects of poverty on parent-teacher communication, (e) the home-school relationship, (f) the family structure, (g) the parent-teacher relationships in special education, and (h) culture and parent involvement. The key findings from the literature indicated that there are several facets of parent involvement that can play various roles in the education of a student. The literature also referenced other aspects of parent involvement such as (a) where parent involvement should be happening, (b) how parent involvement should be happening, (c) the most effective strategies for implementing parent involvement, and (d) the academic benefits of having active parent involvement in the school community.

The research methodology used to analyze the data was comparative educational research, which attempts to identify a relationship between an independent variable and a

dependent variable. In this study, parent involvement serves as the independent variable while student achievement is the dependent variable. However, trying to establish the relationship between parent involvement and student achievement is based on what is more indicative than confirmed as the researcher does not have complete control over the independent variable. Chapter three explains the research methodology and the research design used in conducting this study.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between parent

involvement and student achievement at Centerville Elementary School located in the

Cahokia Unit School District # 187. The focus was on parents of students in grades three

and five. This study also investigated the effect of various types of parent involvement

within the school community. Chapter three describes the methodology of the study

including a description of the population, the Solid Foundation Demonstration School

Agreement between Centerville Elementary and Academic Development Institute (ADI).

In addition, chapter three includes the instruments used for collecting data and the

procedures followed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of data analysis

procedures.

Population and Setting

There were 42 parents representing 46 students (13 third grade students and 33

fifth grade students) that participated in this study. The potential population for this study

was 58 third graders and 53 fifth graders who attended Centerville Elementary.

Centerville Elementary is a part of the Cahokia Unit School District # 187. The school is

geographically located in the village of Cahokia within St. Clair County, Illinois. During

the 2005-2006 school year, Centerville Elementary had a total enrollment of 389. The

district had a total enrollment of 4,381 students. About 91% of the student body qualified

for public aid and met the federal guidelines for receiving a free or reduced lunch based

on income. About 98% of the student body was African-American while the remaining

2 % was Caucasian.

In March of 2006, teachers administered the ISAT to students in grades three through five. The ISAT is given to all students in grades three through eight district-wide. The Illinois Alternative Assessment (IAA) was administered to students with a disability whose IEP indicated taking the ISAT would not be appropriate. There were no students in this study who took an IAA in place of ISAT. Upon completion of ISAT, scores are recorded and distributed to parents at the fall parent-teacher conferences. Parents who do not meet with teachers during conferences receive a copy of student ISAT scores via the mail. Although ISAT is not utilized as a tool to measure promotion or retention, it serves as an assessment for measuring individual student achievement relative to the Illinois Learning Standards in the areas of reading, mathematics, and science.

Instrumentation

The instruments used to help identify and measure parent involvement were a parent survey that focused on the parents' proactive actions and social background in the home, ISAT results from the 2005-2006 school year, and a needs assessment survey completed by the principal. The parent survey was sent home with students and returned by parents via mail or personally. Student ISAT results were returned to the administrator after the assessment period was complete and scores were calculated. The needs assessment was received and completed by the administrator.

Parent involvement survey. The 20-statement survey, developed in part by ADI, addressed the following areas of interest: (a) open house, (b) parent-teacher conferences, (c) parent organizations, (d) classroom volunteering, (e) committee work, (f) parent education, (g) parent-teacher interaction, (h) parent-parent interaction, (i) child study habits at home, and (j) the amount of time given to education in the home. Of the 20

statements, 17 were closed end (*yes*, *no*, *unsure*) responses while the remaining three

statements asked for an estimated time that related to the previous statement. To measure

the level of parent involvement, the study focused on parents responding positively to all

of the statements. The more a parent responded *yes* to the 17 statements and gave time

estimations for the remaining three statements, the greater the opportunity a parent may

claim to have significant involvement in the education of their child. On the other hand, if

a parent responds with a *no* to multiple statements, their responses may indicate that a

parent may feel as if their level of parent involvement did not significantly correlate to

their child's academic achievement. The survey was rated from zero (no positive

responses) to 20 (all positive responses). This rating system was used to create an overall

parent involvement rating scale.

   Illinois Standards Achievement Test. This study focused on reading and math

scores for students in grades three and five from the 2005-2006 school year at Centerville

Elementary School. The Illinois State Board of Education (2007) states that the ISAT

reading test assesses material defined by standards related to the three state reading

learning goals and their objectives (see Table 1). The standards were created using the

1985 State Goals for Language Arts, a collection of state and national standards drafts,

and local education standards contributed by team members. These learning standards

were designed to direct language arts instruction in Illinois schools. This alignment of

assessment to the curriculum insures consistency and strengthens the influence of

standards and assessment on enhanced instruction and education.

   The reading test has two formats. The grade three reading assessment is

administered in three 35-minute sessions. One of these sessions consists of 12-15 word

analysis questions and one passage proceeded by 15-17 multiple-choice questions. The

two remaining sessions contain one passage proceeded by 15-20 multiple-choice

questions and one short answer question. The reading tests for grades five are also

administered in three 35-minute sessions. One of these sessions consists of a longer

passage with 15-20 multiple-choice questions. The other three-two sessions each contain

one passage with 15-20 multiple choice questions and one short answer question.

Table 1

Three Relevant Illinois Learning Standards Reading Goals and Objectives

Reading Goals	Reading Objectives
Goal 1 Read with understanding and fluency.	Relate word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections. Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency. Comprehend a wide variety of reading materials.
Goal 2 Read and recognize literature representative of various societies, eras and ideas.	Identify how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning. Read and infer a variety of literary works.
Goal 3 Write to correspond for an array of purposes.	Establish, organize, and utilize information from assorted sources to answer questions, solve problems and communicate thoughts. Analyze and assess information acquired from various sources. Apply acquired information, concepts and ideas to converse in a variety of formats.

Note. From "Illinois Learning Standards," Illinois State Board of Education, 2007.

The ISAT mathematics tests were designed to measure the learning math

standards. Listed in Table 2 are the goals and objectives, standards, and benchmarks are a

product of the 1985 Illinois State Goals for Learning influenced by the latest trends in

school mathematics (see Table 2). The mathematics assessment includes 80 multiple-

choice items administered in three test-sessions. In addition, the tests contain two short-

answer/problem-solving tasks. For the first two years of the assessment, schools and

districts received the short answer item scores for informational purposes rather than

accountability purposes.

Table 2

Five Related Illinois Learning Standards Math Goals and Objectives

Math Goals	Math Objectives
Goal 1 Exhibit and apply a knowledge and sense of numbers, including numeration and operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division), patterns, ratios and proportions.	A. Demonstrate knowledge and use of numbers and their representations in a wide range of theoretical and practical settings. B. Examine, correspond to and solve problems using number facts, operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division) and their properties, algorithms and relationships. C. Calculate and approximate using mental mathematics, paper-and-pencil methods, calculators and computers. D. Explain problems using the relationship of quantities, ratios, proportions and percents.
Goal 2 Approximately calculate, make and apply measurements of objects, quantities and relationships and determine acceptable levels of accuracy.	A. Determine and compare quantities using appropriate units, instruments and methods. B. Approximate measurements and determine acceptable levels of accuracy. C. Choose and use correct technology, instruments and formulas to solve problems, interpret results and communicate findings.
Goal 3 Use algebraic and systematic methods to identify and illustrate patterns and relationships in data, solve problems and predict results.	A. Describe numerical relationships using variables and patterns. B. Interpret and describe numerical relationships using tables, graphs and symbols. C. Solve problems using systems of numbers and their properties. D. Use algebraic concepts and measures to represent and solve problems.
Goal 4 Use geometric methods to analyze, classify and draw conclusions about points, lines, planes and space.	A. Demonstrate and apply geometric concepts relating points, lines, planes and space. B. Identify, describe, classify and compare relationships using points, lines, planes and solids. C. Build compelling arguments and proofs to solve problems.

	D. Use trigonometric ratios and circular functions to solve problems.
Goal 5 Collect, organize and analyze data using statistical methods; predict results; and interpret uncertainty using concepts of probability.	A. Organize, describe and make predictions from existing data. B. Formulate questions, design data collection methods, gather and analyze data and communicate findings. C. Determine, describe, and apply the probabilities of events.

Note. From "Illinois Learning Standards," Illinois State Board of Education, 2007.

The goals, standards, and benchmarks are a product of the 1985 Illinois State Goals for Learning affected by the newest trends in school mathematics. The mathematics assessment is comprised of 80 multiple-choice items that are given in three test sessions. In addition, the tests include two short-answer/problem-solving tasks. Schools and districts received the short answer item scores for informational purposes rather than accountability purposes during the first two years of the assessment.

Needs assessment. The needs assessment survey reflected the principal's opinions and ideas on the role of the parent in the school community. The importance of parent involvement in certain areas was ranked, addressing the purpose of parent involvement in the school. Some other areas of parent involvement were assessed, along with the previous stated areas of interest. This data was gathered based upon the 2005-2006 school year.

The principal of Centerville Elementary School was asked to complete the needs assessment created by ADI. This assessment was ranked in order types of parental involvement according to their importance to the principal. The assessment components (a) identified areas of training that would help parents in the school; (b) identified areas that would be helpful to teachers and staff in the school; (c) identified the two primary purposes of a parent or parent-teacher organization, if one was present at the school; (d)

averaged the number of parents who typically attended the parent or parent-teacher monthly meeting; (e) totaled the number of parents who would be considered very active in the school; and (f) categorized ways in which parents are given an opportunity to get involved at school (either through school-wide policy/activity or used by teachers).

Procedure

Solid Foundation Demonstration School Agreement. A partnership termed The Solid Foundation was created between Centerville Elementary School and ADI in 2003. ADI works with families, schools, and communities so that children may become self-directed learners, avid readers and responsible citizens, respecting themselves and those around them. Solid Foundation is a program, designed by ADI, to (a) help strengthen family-school connections, (b) engage parents in children's learning, and (c) improve student academic and social learning. The partnership focused on improving parent involvement within the school community. The U.S. Department of Education funded the partnership that produced a parent information and resource center within the school. The three-year project was created so that Centerville Elementary would serve as a demonstration school and participate in research that could be used to further assist other districts in trying to improve parent involvement.

In agreeing to be a part of the study, there were obligations for Centerville Elementary. The agreement stated that the school should have (a) demonstrated the Solid Foundation parent engagement model to a high degree of implementation; (b) maintained School Community Council (a parent involvement organization) that met twice each month and followed the agendas provided in the School Community Council Planning Guide; (c) used Reading School-Home Links three times each week in K-3 classrooms

and maintained a log of their usage; (d) allowed visitors from other schools, when

convenient and with prior arrangements, to attend council meetings and/or consult with

the principal and parent education facilitator (a paid teacher); (e) made all teaching

faculty available for a three-hour parents and learning workshop in the second and third

year of the project; and (f) collected and provided documentation on project-related

activities and submitted them to ADI in a timely fashion. For these services and

reasonable additional activities related to this project, the school received funds to pay the

teacher facilitator to host a family reading night and similar functions, to buy materials

for the family resource library, and to organize other activities and workshops for parents,

students, and teachers.

The study focused on parent involvement as it related to student achievement.

Data collected from Centerville Elementary School parents and the principal was used in

this study. The parent survey provided information concerning parents' school

partnerships, student home life in regard to education, and how parents perceived aspects

of their child's education. ADI allowed Centerville Elementary School to use the surveys

for parents. A needs assessment (a survey that has various questions focused on parent

involvement) was completed by the administrator.

It was predicted that the degree of positive parent involvement will have a

positive impact on student achievement (more parent involvement would equate to

greater student achievement). In addition, it was believed that constructive parent-teacher

relationships will serve as the catalyst for closing the gap between parent and teacher

perceptions. By looking at the results of the study, the school community was able to (a)

strategize on improving school-home relationships; (b) identify strengths and weaknesses

that affect student achievement, such as the level of parent involvement in the school; (c)

discover the role of racial culture in teacher-student relationships; (d) measure how

poverty may affect student achievement; and (e) assess the full implementation of parent

organizations, such as the School Community Council, for the 2005-2006 school year.

       Centerville Elementary School and ADI created a partnership agreement that was

used to assist in developing better relationships between parents and the school in an

effort to improve student-driven outcomes. The purpose of this study was to examine the

relationship between parent involvement and student achievement. In this chapter, the

researcher reviewed the population and setting, the instrumentation used in the study, and

the partnership agreement made between the school and an external education agency. In

addition, the procedure by which the study was carried out was reviewed. The study

utilized three forms of measurement to make an assessment of parent involvement in

relation to student achievement. The measurements were (a) standardized tests, (b) parent

surveys, and (c) a needs assessment by the principal. The procedure focused on the

purpose and benefits of the study and partnership agreement. Chapter four will present

the findings in this study.

Chapter 4 - Results

During the 2005-2006 school year, students, parents, and the administrator participated in a study that focused on parental involvement at Centerville Elementary School. In theory, parental involvement, in almost any form, produces measurable gains in student achievement (Dixon, 1992). The researcher based this study on the presumption that more parent involvement equals greater student achievement. The research methodology used to analyze the data was comparative educational research, which attempts to identify a relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable. Parent involvement served as the independent variable while student achievement was the dependent variable.

The rating scale for the parent survey ranged from zero (the least amount of parent involvement) to 20 (the highest amount of parent involvement) for the regression analysis. To create a single score for ISAT for this study, a summative score, combining reading and math scores, was used to identify the regression analysis ISAT score for students in grades three and five. The ISAT scores varied in range depending on the grade level and the tested subject. For third grade students, the reading scores ranged from 232 (exceeding standards) to 156 (below standards), and the math scores ranged from 275 (exceeding standards) to 175 (below standards). There was also a category of 155 and below that represented academic warning for reading and 162 and below that represented academic warning in math. The needs assessment completed by the principal ranked strategies of implementation of parent involvement based on its importance to him. The assessment also addressed areas of training that would be helpful to parents and identified some areas of education that would be helpful to teachers and staff.

Table 3

Survey Results Grade Three Students Meeting/Exceeding in Reading and Math

Survey Results for Grades Three for Students Who Met/Exceeded in Reading **and** Math on ISAT during the 2005-2006 School Year	YES	NO	UNSURE
1. Do you recall attending Open House during the 2005-2006 school?	7	1	1
2. Did you attend parent-teacher conferences during the 2005-2006 school year?	9	0	0
3. Did you attend two or more parent organization meetings in 2005-2006?	3	6	0
4. Did you volunteer in your child's classroom in 2005-2006?	2	7	0
5. Did you work on a parent involvement committee?	1	8	0
6. Did you ever participate in a parent education program in 2005-2006?	2	7	0
7. Do you recall having communication with your child's teacher throughout 2005-2006?	9	0	0
8. Do you recall having communication with other parents in your child's classroom throughout 2005-2006?	4	5	0
9. Did your child study four or more days a week during the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?	6	1	2
10. What was the average amount of time per day that was dedicated to study in the home (ex. 15 minutes, 30 minutes, one hour, two hours, etc.)?	On average, parents reported students dedicated one hour per day for their studies at home.		
11. Was there a quiet place in the home for your child to study?	9	0	0
12. Did your child ever take the initiative to study on his/her own?	9	0	0
13. Did your child read for pleasure at home five or more days per week in the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?	6	3	0
14. Did your child read for pleasure for 30 minutes or more a week (on average)?	7	2	0
15. Did you and your child talk about school work five days or more a week (on average)?	9	0	0

16. Did you and your child spend significant time talking about reading?	8	1	0
17. On average, how much time was spent talking about reading weekly in the home (15 minutes, 30 minutes, one hour, etc.)	On average, parents reported that 27 minutes were spent talking about reading weekly in the home.		
18. Did you and your child spend significant time talking about math?	7	2	0
19. On average, how much time was spent talking about math weekly in the home (15 minutes, 30 minutes, one hour, etc.)	On average, parents reported that 31 minutes weekly were spent talking about math in the home.		
20. As a parent, do you believe that your involvement in your child's education made a difference in his/her academic performance at school?	9	0	0

Table 3 illustrates parent responses to questions that pertained specifically to nine students in grade three who met/exceeded in reading and math on ISAT during the 2005-2006 school year. Each question had a total of nine possible responses. There were a total of 20 questions. Of the parents, 100% said "yes" to (a) "Did you attend parent-teacher conferences during the 2005-2006 school year?", (b) "Do you recall having communication to your child's teacher throughout 2005-2006?", (c) "Was there a quiet place in the home for your child to study?", (d) "Did your child ever take the initiative to study on his/her own?", (e) "Did you and your child talk about school work five days or more a week (on average)?", and (f) "As a parent, do you believe that your involvement in your child's education made a difference in his/her academic performance at school?"

At least 50% of surveyed parents said "yes" to (a) "Do you recall attending Open House during the 2005-2006 school?", (b) "Did your child study four or more days a week during the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?", (c) "Did your child read for pleasure at home five or more days per week in the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?", (d) "Did your child read for pleasure for 30 minutes or more a week (on

average)?", (e) "Did you and your child spend significant time talking about reading?", and (f) "Did you and your child spend significant time talking about math?"

There were no questions to which 100% of parent said "no." At least 50% of surveyed parents said "no" to (a) "Did you attend two or more parent organization meetings in 2005-2006?", (b) "Did you volunteer in your child's classroom in 2005-2006?", (c) "Did you work on a parent involvement committee?", (d) "Did you ever participate in a parent education program in 2005-2006?", and (e) "Do you recall having communication with other parents in your child's classroom throughout 2005-2006?"

There were three open-ended questions that allowed parents to state an average amount of time that students (a) dedicated daily to study in the home (one hour), (b) spent talking about reading weekly in the home (27 minutes), and (c) spent talking about math weekly in the home (31 minutes). Parents ranked the open-ended questions in 15 minute increments. The time was written in parentheses to represent an average time from their responses. One parent responded, "unsure," on the survey to the question, do you recall attending Open House during the 2005-2006 school? Two parents responded, "unsure," to the question, did your child study four or more days a week during the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?

Table 4 shows the results for grade three for students who met/exceeded in reading or math on ISAT during the 2005-2006 school year.

Table 4

Survey Results Grade Three Students Meeting/Exceeding in Reading or Math

Survey Results for Grades Three for Students Who Met/Exceeded in Reading **or** Math on ISAT during the 2005-2006 School Year	YES	NO	UNSURE
1. Do you recall attending Open House during the 2005-2006 school year?	1	1	0
2. Did you attend parent-teacher conferences during the 2005-2006 school year?	2	0	0
3. Did you attend two or more parent organization meetings in 2005-2006?	2	0	0
4. Did you volunteer in your child's classroom in 2005-2006?	1	1	0
5. Did you work on a parent involvement committee?	0	2	0
6. Did you ever participate in a parent education program in 2005-2006?	0	1	1
7. Do you recall having communication with your child's teacher throughout 2005-2006?	2	0	0
8. Do you recall having communication with other parents in your child's classroom throughout 2005-2006?	0	1	1
9. Did your child study four or more days a week during the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?	0	0	2
10. What was the average amount of time per day that was dedicated to study in the home (ex. 15 minutes, 30 minutes, one hour, two hours, etc.)?	On average, parents reported students dedicated 75 minutes per day for their studies at home.		
11. Was there a quiet place in the home for your child to study?	2	0	0
12. Did your child ever take the initiative to study on his/her own?	2	0	0
13. Did your child read for pleasure at home five or more days per week in the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?	2	0	0
14. Did your child read for pleasure for 30 minutes or more a week (on average)?	2	0	0
15. Did you and your child talk about school work five days or more a week (on average)?	2	0	0

16. Did you and your child spend significant time talking about reading?	2	0	0
17. On average, how much time was spent talking about reading weekly in the home (15 minutes, 30 minutes, one hour, etc.)	On average, parents reported that 38 minutes were spent talking about reading weekly in the home.		
18. Did you and your child spend significant time talking about math?	2	0	0
19. On average, how much time was spent talking about math weekly in the home (15 minutes, 30 minutes, one hour, etc.)	On average, parents reported that 38 minutes weekly were spent talking about math in the home.		
20. As a parent, do you believe that your involvement in your child's education made a difference in his/her academic performance at school?	2	0	0

Table 4 illustrates parent responses to questions that pertained specifically to two students who were in grade three who met/exceeded in reading or math on ISAT during the 2005-2006 school year. Hence, each question had a total of two possible responses. There were a total of 20 questions. The questions that parents agreed to 100% were (a) "Did you attend parent-teacher conferences during the 2005-2006 school year?", (b) "Did you attend two or more parent organization meetings in 2005-2006?", (c) "Do you recall having communication to your child's teacher throughout 2005-2006?", (d) "Was there a quiet place in the home for your child to study?", (e) "Did your child ever take the initiative to study on his/her own?", (f) "Did your child read for pleasure at home five or more days per week in the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?", (g) "Did your child read for pleasure for 30 minutes or more a week (on average)?", (h) "Did you and your child talk about school work five days or more a week (on average)?", (i) "Did you and your child spend significant time talking about reading?", (j) "Did you and your child spend significant time talking about math?", and (k) "As a parent, do you believe that

your involvement in your child's education made a difference in his/her academic

performance at school?"

At least 50% of surveyed parents said "yes" to (a) "Do you recall attending Open

House during the 2005-2006 school year?", and (b) "Did you volunteer in your child's

classroom in 2005-2006?" Of the parents, 100% said "no" to "Did you work on a parent

involvement committee?" At least 50% of surveyed parents said "no" to (a) "Do you

recall attending Open House during the 2005-2006 school year?", (b) "Did you volunteer

in your child's classroom in 2005-2006?", (c) "Did you ever participate in a parent

education program in 2005-2006?", and (d) "Do you recall having communication with

other parents in your child's classroom throughout 2005-2006?"

Three open-ended questions allowed parents to give an average amount of time

that students (a) dedicated daily to study in the home (75 minutes), (b) spent talking about

reading weekly in the home (38 minutes), and (c) spent talking about math weekly in the

home (38 minutes). One parent responded, "unsure," on the survey to questions (a) "Did

you ever participate in a parent education program in 2005-2006?" and (b) "Do you recall

having communication with other parents in your child's classroom throughout 2005-

2006?" Two parents responded, "unsure," to the question, Did your child study four or

more days a week during the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?

Table 5 shows the results for grades three for students who did not meet/exceed in

reading or math on ISAT during the 2005-2006 school year.

Table 5

Survey Results Grade Three Students Not Meeting/Exceeding in Reading or Math

Survey Results for Grades Three for Students Who **Did Not** Meet/Exceed in Reading or Math on ISAT during the 2005-2006 School Year	YES	NO	UNSURE
1. Do you recall attending Open House during the 2005-2006 school year?	0	2	0
2. Did you attend parent-teacher conferences during the 2005-2006 school year?	0	2	0
3. Did you attend two or more parent organization meetings in 2005-2006?	0	2	0
4. Did you volunteer in your child's classroom in 2005-2006?	0	2	0
5. Did you work on a parent involvement committee?	0	2	0
6. Did you ever participate in a parent education program in 2005-2006?	0	2	0
7. Do you recall having communication with your child's teacher throughout 2005-2006?	2	0	0
8. Do you recall having communication with other parents in your child's classroom throughout 2005-2006?	0	2	0
9. Did your child study four or more days a week during the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?	1	1	0
10. What was the average amount of time per day that was dedicated to study in the home (ex. 15 minutes, 30 minutes, one hour, two hours, etc.)?	On average, parents reported students dedicated 75 minutes per day for their studies at home.		
11. Was there a quiet place in the home for your child to study?	2	0	0
12. Did your child ever take the initiative to study on his/her own?	1	1	0
13. Did your child read for pleasure at home five or more days per week in the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?	1	1	0
14. Did your child read for pleasure for 30 minutes or more a week (on average)?	1	1	0
15. Did you and your child talk about school work five days or more a week (on average)?	2	0	0

16. Did you and your child spend significant time talking about reading?	1	1	0
17. On average, how much time was spent talking about reading weekly in the home (15 minutes, 30 minutes, one hour, etc.)	On average, parents reported that 68 minutes were spent talking about reading weekly in the home.		
18. Did you and your child spend significant time talking about math?	0	2	0
19. On average, how much time was spent talking about math weekly in the home (15 minutes, 30 minutes, one hour, etc.)	On average, parents reported that 15 minutes weekly were spent talking about math in the home.		
20. As a parent, do you believe that your involvement in your child's education made a difference in his/her academic performance at school?	1	1	0

Table 5 illustrates parent responses to questions that pertained specifically to two students who were in grade three who did not meet/exceed in reading and math on ISAT during the 2005-2006 school year. Each question had a total of two possible responses. There were a total of 20 questions. The questions that parents agreed to 100% were (a) "Do you recall having communication to your child's teacher throughout 2005-2006?", (b) "Was there a quiet place in the home for your child to study?", and (c) "Did you and your child talk about school work five days or more a week (on average)?"

At least 50% of surveyed parents said "yes" to (a) "Did your child study four or more days a week during the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?", (b) "Did your child ever take the initiative to study on his/her own?", (c) "Did your child read for pleasure at home five or more days per week in the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?", (d) "Did your child read for pleasure for 30 minutes or more a week (on average)?", (e) "Did you and your child spend significant time talking about reading?", and (f) "As a parent, do you believe that your involvement in your child's education made a difference in his/her academic performance at school?"

Of the parents, 100% said "no" to (a) "Do you recall attending Open House during the 2005-2006 school year?", (b) "Did you attend parent-teacher conferences during the 2005-2006 school year?", (c) "Did you attend two or more parent organization meetings in 2005-2006?", (d) "Did you volunteer in your child's classroom in 2005-2006?", (e) "Did you work on a parent involvement committee?", (f) "Did you ever participate in a parent education program in 2005-2006?", (g) "Do you recall having communication with other parents in your child's classroom throughout 2005-2006?", and (h) "Did you and your child spend significant time talking about math?" At least 50% of surveyed parents said "no" to (a) "Did your child study four or more days a week during the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?", (b) "Did your child ever take the initiative to study on his/her own?", (c) "Did your child read for pleasure at home five or more days per week in the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?", (d) "Did your child read for pleasure for 30 minutes or more a week (on average)?", (e) "Did you and your child spend significant time talking about reading?", and (f) "As a parent, do you believe that your involvement in your child's education made a difference in his/her academic performance at school?"

Three open-ended questions allowed parents to give an average amount of time that students (a) dedicated daily to study in the home (75 minutes), (b) spent talking about reading weekly in the home (68 minutes), and (c) spent talking about math weekly in the home (15 minutes).

Table 6 shows the results for grade five for students who met/exceeded in reading and math on ISAT during the 2005-2006 school year.

Table 6

Survey Results Grade Five Students Meeting/Exceeding in Reading and Math

Survey Results for Grades Five for Students Who Met/Exceeded in Reading **and** Math on ISAT during the 2005-2006 School Year	YES	NO	UNSURE
1. Do you recall attending Open House during the 2005-2006 school year?	16	4	0
2. Did you attend parent-teacher conferences during the 2005-2006 school year?	15	5	0
3. Did you attend two or more parent organization meetings in 2005-2006?	4	16	0
4. Did you volunteer in your child's classroom in 2005-2006?	3	17	0
5. Did you work on a parent involvement committee?	1	19	0
6. Did you ever participate in a parent education program in 2005-2006?	5	13	2
7. Do you recall having communication with your child's teacher throughout 2005-2006?	20	0	0
8. Do you recall having communication with other parents in your child's classroom throughout 2005-2006?	11	9	0
9. Did your child study four or more days a week during the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?	17	3	0
10. What was the average amount of time per day that was dedicated to study in the home (ex. 15 minutes, 30 minutes, one hour, two hours, etc.)?	On average, parents reported students dedicated 77 minutes per day for their studies at home.		
11. Was there a quiet place in the home for your child to study?	20	0	0
12. Did your child ever take the initiative to study on his/her own?	19	1	0
13. Did your child read for pleasure at home five or more days per week in the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?	14	6	0
14. Did your child read for pleasure for 30 minutes or more a week (on average)?	16	4	0
15. Did you and your child talk about school work five days or more a week (on average)?	18	2	0

16. Did you and your child spend significant time talking about reading?	15	5	0
17. On average, how much time was spent talking about reading weekly in the home (15 minutes, 30 minutes, one hour, etc.)	On average, parents reported that one hour was spent talking about reading weekly in the home.		
18. Did you and your child spend significant time talking about math?	19	0	1
19. On average, how much time was spent talking about math weekly in the home (15 minutes, 30 minutes, one hour, etc.)	On average, parents reported that 57 minutes weekly were spent talking about math in the home.		
20. As a parent, do you believe that your involvement in your child's education made a difference in his/her academic performance at school?	19	0	1

Table 6 illustrates parent responses to questions that pertained specifically to 20 students who were in grade five who met/exceeded in reading and math on ISAT during the 2005-2006 school year. Each question had a total of 20 possible responses. The questions that parents agreed to 100% were (a) "Do you recall having communication to your child's teacher throughout 2005-2006?" and (b) "Was there a quiet place in the home for your child to study?"

At least 50% of surveyed parents said "yes" to "(a) Do you recall attending Open House during the 2005-2006 school year?", (b) "Did you attend parent-teacher conferences during the 2005-2006 school year?", (c) "Do you recall having communication with other parents in your child's classroom throughout 2005-2006?", (d) "Did your child study four or more days a week during the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?", (e) "Did your child ever take the initiative to study on his/her own?", (f) "Did your child read for pleasure at home five or more days per week in the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?", (g) "Did your child read for pleasure for 30 minutes or more a week (on average)?", (h) "Did you and your child talk about school work five days or more a

week (on average)?", (i) "Did you and your child talk about school work five days or more a week (on average)?", (j) "Did you and your child spend significant time talking about reading?", (k) "Did you and your child spend significant time talking about math?", and (l) "As a parent, do you believe that your involvement in your child's education made a difference in his/her academic performance at school?"

At least 50% of surveyed parents said "no" to (a) "Did you attend two or more parent organization meetings in 2005-2006?", (b) "Did you volunteer in your child's classroom in 2005-2006?", (c) "Did you work on a parent involvement committee?", and (d) "Did you ever participate in a parent education program in 2005-2006?"

Three open-ended questions allowed parents to give an average amount of time that students (a) dedicated daily to study in the home (77 minutes), (b) spent talking about reading weekly in the home (one hour), and (c) spent talking about math weekly in the home (57 minutes).

Table 7 shows the results for grade five for students who met/exceeded in reading or math on ISAT during the 2005-2006 school year.

Table 7

Survey Results Grade Five Students Meeting/Exceeding in Reading or Math

Survey Results for Grades Five for Students Who Met/Exceeded in Reading **or** Math on ISAT during the 2005-2006 School Year	YES	NO	UNSURE
1. Do you recall attending Open House during the 2005-2006 school year?	6	4	0
2. Did you attend parent-teacher conferences during the 2005-2006 school year?	9	1	0
3. Did you attend two or more parent organization meetings in 2005-2006?	2	7	1
4. Did you volunteer in your child's classroom in 2005-2006?	2	8	0
5. Did you work on a parent involvement committee?	0	10	0
6. Did you ever participate in a parent education program in 2005-2006?	0	9	1
7. Do you recall having communication with your child's teacher throughout 2005-2006?	9	1	0
8. Do you recall having communication with other parents in your child's classroom throughout 2005-2006?	0	9	1
9. Did your child study four or more days a week during the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?	7	2	1
10. What was the average amount of time per day that was dedicated to study in the home (ex. 15 minutes, 30 minutes, one hour, two hours, etc.)?	On average, parents reported students dedicated 66 minutes per day for their studies at home.		
11. Was there a quiet place in the home for your child to study?	10	0	0
12. Did your child ever take the initiative to study on his/her own?	10	0	0
13. Did your child read for pleasure at home five or more days per week in the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?	5	4	1
14. Did your child read for pleasure for 30 minutes or more a week (on average)?	7	3	0
15. Did you and your child talk about school work five days or more a week (on average)?	6	3	1

16. Did you and your child spend significant time talking about reading?	7	3	0
17. On average, how much time was spent talking about reading weekly in the home (15 minutes, 30 minutes, one hour, etc.)	On average, parents reported that 23 minutes were spent talking about reading weekly in the home.		
18. Did you and your child spend significant time talking about math?	8	2	0
19. On average, how much time was spent talking about math weekly in the home (15 minutes, 30 minutes, one hour, etc.)	On average, parents reported that 24 minutes weekly were spent talking about math in the home.		
20. As a parent, do you believe that your involvement in your child's education made a difference in his/her academic performance at school?	9	1	0

Table 7 illustrates parent responses to questions that pertained specifically to ten students who were in grade five who met/exceeded in reading or math on ISAT during the 2005-2006 school year. Each question had a total of ten possible responses. There were a total of 20 questions. The questions that parents agreed to 100% were (a) "Was there a quiet place in the home for your child to study?" and (b) "Did your child ever take the initiative to study on his/her own?

At least 50% of surveyed parents said "yes" to (a) "Do you recall attending Open House during the 2005-2006 school year?", (b) "Did you attend parent-teacher conferences during the 2005-2006 school year?", (c) "Do you recall having communication to your child's teacher throughout 2005-2006?", (d) "Did your child study four or more days a week during the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?", (e) "Did your child read for pleasure at home five or more days per week in the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?", (f) "Did your child read for pleasure for 30 minutes or more a week (on average)?", (g) "Did you and your child talk about school work five days or

more a week (on average)?", (h) "Did you and your child spend significant time talking about reading?", (i) "Did you and your child spend significant time talking about math?", and (j) "As a parent, do you believe that your involvement in your child's education made a difference in his/her academic performance at school?"

Of the parents, 100% said "no" to "Did you work on a parent involvement committee?" At least 50% of surveyed parents said "no" to (a) "Did you attend two or more parent organization meetings in 2005-2006?", (b) "Did you volunteer in your child's classroom in 2005-2006?", (c) "Did you ever participate in a parent education program in 2005-2006?", and (d) "Do you recall having communication with other parents in your child's classroom throughout 2005-2006?"

Three open-ended questions allowed parents to give an average amount of time that students (a) dedicated daily to study in the home (66 minutes), (b) spent talking about reading weekly in the home (23 minutes), and (c) spent talking about math weekly in the home (24 minutes).

Table 8 shows the results for grade five for students who did not meet/exceed in reading or math on ISAT during the 2005-2006 school year.

Table 8

Survey Results Grade Five Students Not Meeting/Exceeding in Reading or Math

Survey Results for Grades Five for Students Who **Did Not** Meet/Exceed in Reading or Math on ISAT during the 2005-2006 School Year	YES	NO	UNSURE
1. Do you recall attending Open House during the 2005-2006 school year?	2	1	0
2. Did you attend parent-teacher conferences during the 2005-2006 school year?	1	2	0
3. Did you attend two or more parent organization meetings in 2005-2006?	0	3	0
4. Did you volunteer in your child's classroom in 2005-2006?	0	3	0
5. Did you work on a parent involvement committee?	0	3	0
6. Did you ever participate in a parent education program in 2005-2006?	0	3	0
7. Do you recall having communication with your child's teacher throughout 2005-2006?	2	1	0
8. Do you recall having communication with other parents in your child's classroom throughout 2005-2006?	0	3	0
9. Did your child study four or more days a week during the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?	3	0	0
10. What was the average amount of time per day that was dedicated to study in the home (ex. 15 minutes, 30 minutes, one hour, two hours, etc.)?	On average, parents reported students dedicated 70 minutes per day for their studies at home.		
11. Was there a quiet place in the home for your child to study?	3	0	0
12. Did your child ever take the initiative to study on his/her own?	3	0	0
13. Did your child read for pleasure at home five or more days per week in the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?	3	0	0
14. Did your child read for pleasure for 30 minutes or more a week (on average)?	3	0	0
15. Did you and your child talk about school work five days or more a week (on average)?	3	0	0

16. Did you and your child spend significant time talking about reading?	2	1	0
17. On average, how much time was spent talking about reading weekly in the home (15 minutes, 30 minutes, one hour, etc.)	On average, parents reported that 40 minutes were spent talking about reading weekly in the home.		
18. Did you and your child spend significant time talking about math?	3	0	0
19. On average, how much time was spent talking about math weekly in the home (15 minutes, 30 minutes, one hour, etc.)	On average, parents reported that 70 minutes weekly were spent talking about math in the home.		
20. As a parent, do you believe that your involvement in your child's education made a difference in his/her academic performance at school?	2	1	0

Table 8 illustrates parent responses to questions that pertained specifically to three students in grade five who did not meet/exceed in reading or math on ISAT during the 2005-2006 school year. Each question had a total of three possible responses. There were a total of 20 questions. The questions that parents agreed to 100% were (a) "Did your child study four or more days a week during the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?", (b) "Was there a quiet place in the home for your child to study?", (c) "Did your child ever take the initiative to study on his/her own?", (d) "Did your child read for pleasure at home five or more days per week in the 2005-2006 school year (on average)?", (e) "Did your child read for pleasure for 30 minutes or more a week (on average)?", (f) "Did you and your child talk about school work five days or more a week (on average)?", and "(g) Did you and your child spend significant time talking about math?"

At least 50% of surveyed parents said "yes" to (a) "Do you recall attending Open House during the 2005-2006 school year?", (b) "Do you recall having communication to your child's teacher throughout 2005-2006?", (c) "Did you and your child spend significant time talking about reading?", and (d) "As a parent, do you believe that your

involvement in your child's education made a difference in his/her academic performance at school?"

Of the parents, 100% said "no" to (a) "Did you attend two or more parent organization meetings in 2005-2006?", (b) "Did you volunteer in your child's classroom in 2005-2006?", (c) "Did you work on a parent involvement committee?", and (d) "Do you recall having communication with other parents in your child's classroom throughout 2005-2006?" At least 50% of surveyed parents said "no" to "Did you attend parent-teacher conferences during the 2005-2006 school year?"

Three open-ended questions allowed parents to give an average amount of time that students (a) dedicated daily to study in the home (70 minutes), (b) spent talking about reading weekly in the home (40 minutes), and (c) spent talking about math weekly in the home (70 minutes).

Table 9

2006 ISAT Reading Scores for Third Grade at Centerville Elementary (13 students

ranked highest score to lowest score).

Student   Reading Score

Student	Reading Score
1	232
2	217
3	214
4	211
5	211
6	202
7	200
8	200
9	197
10	197
11	188
12	177
13	156

Student Assessment Scores
Reading
227+ = Exceed Standards
226-191= Meets Standards
190-156 = Below Standards
155- = Academic Warning
and Below

Table 9 illustrates the reading scores of 13 students in grade three. Scores ranged

from 232 to 156. The average score was 200. One student exceeded the standards. Nine

students met the standards. Three students were below the standards. None of the

students were at the level of academic warning or below.

Table 10

2006 ISAT Math Scores for Third Grade at Centerville Elementary (13 students ranked

highest score to lowest score).

Student Math Score

Student	Math Score
1	275
2	233
3	223
4	219
5	217
6	214
7	210
8	207
9	201
10	200
11	180
12	178
13	175

Student Assessment Scores
Math
224+ = Exceed Standards
223-184 = Meets Standards
183-163 = Below Standards
162- = Academic Warning and
Below

Table 10 illustrates the math scores of 13 students in grade three. Scores ranged

from 275 to 175. Average score was 210. Two students exceeded the standards. Eight

students met the standards. Three students were below the standards. None of the

students were at the level of academic warning or below.

Table 11

2006 ISAT Reading Scores for Fifth Grade at Centerville Elementary (33 students ranked

highest score to lowest score).

Student   Reading Score

Student	Reading Score
1	253
2	253
3	253
4	247
5	247
6	247
7	245
8	245
9	245
10	241
11	238
12	238
13	232
14	229
15	229
16	226
17	221
18	221
19	218
20	218
21	213
22	213
23	209
24	209
25	204
26	204
27	204
28	202
29	202
30	200
31	197
32	189
33	182

Student Assessment Scores
Reading
247+ = Exceed Standards
246-215 = Meets Standards
214-161 = Below Standards
160- = Academic Warning
and Below

Table 11 illustrates the reading scores of 33 students in grade five. Scores ranged

from 253 to 182. Average score was 223. Six students exceeded the standards. Fourteen

students met the standards. Thirteen students were below the standards. None of the

students were at the level of academic warning or below.

Table 12

2006 ISAT Math Scores for Fifth Grade at Centerville Elementary

(33 students ranked highest score to lowest score).

 Student   Math Score

Student	Math Score
1	290
2	285
3	270
4	264
5	264
6	261
7	261
8	259
9	259
10	257
11	252
12	248
13	248
14	246
15	245
16	239
17	237
18	236
19	234
20	233
21	233
22	231
23	231
24	231
25	229
26	229
27	227
28	223
29	220
30	217
31	211
32	205
33	198

Student Assessment Scores
Math
271+ = Exceed Standards
270-214 = Meets Standards
213-180= Below Standards
179- = Academic Warning and
Below

Table 12 illustrates the math scores of 33 students in grade five. Scores ranged from 290 to 198. Average score was 242. Two students exceeded the standards. Twenty eight students met the standards. Three students were below the standards. None of the students were at the level of academic warning or below.

Background of Parents and Students in the Study

The following figures look at the background of the parents and students in the study. The figures address (a) the number of parents that represented each student (grade level-specific), (b) the percent of students with parents that were represented in the study, (c) the gender of the parents that participated, (d) the gender of the students that participated, and (e) the parents' and students' ethnic group.

There were a total of 84 students (57 students in the fifth grade and 27 students in the third grade) that could have been involved in the study. The figures represented 46 (55%) of the students in grades three and five. The students were represented by 42 parents who participated in the study. Figure 1 illustrates the number of parents who completed surveys for third grade students and fifth grade students.
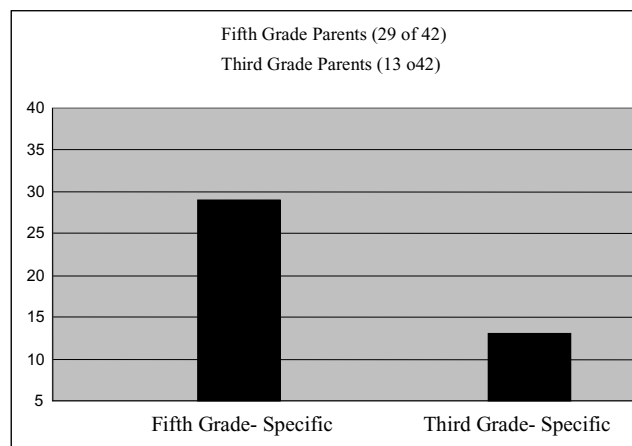

Figure 1. Number of parents who completed surveys for third grade students and fifth grade students.

Participants included 29 parents representing fifth graders and 13 parents representing

third graders.
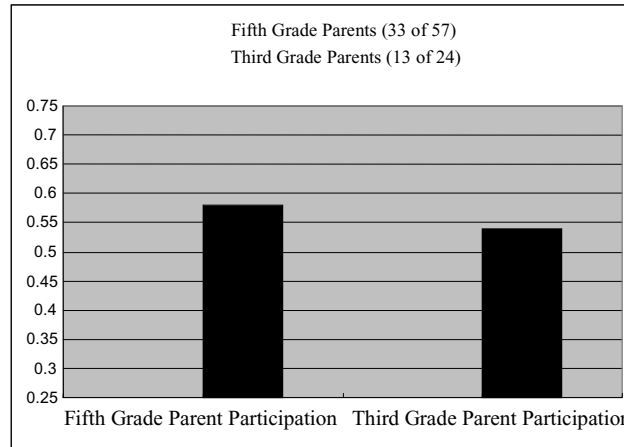
Figure 2. Percent of students that had parents participate in the study.

Figure 2 illustrates the percent of students that had parents participate in the study.

Parents reported on 55% of the students in the school community. For fifth grade, 33 of

57 (58%) students were included while 13 of 24 (54%) third grade students were

included.
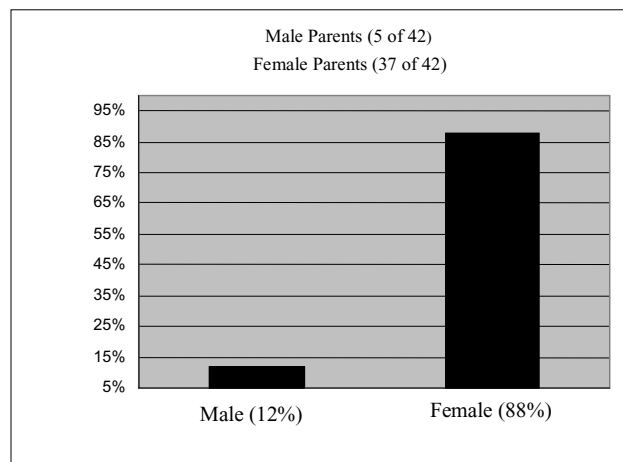
Figure 3. Parents' gender.

Figure 3 illustrates the parents' gender. Of the parents, 37 of 42 (88%) were of the female

while 5 of 42 (12%) were male.
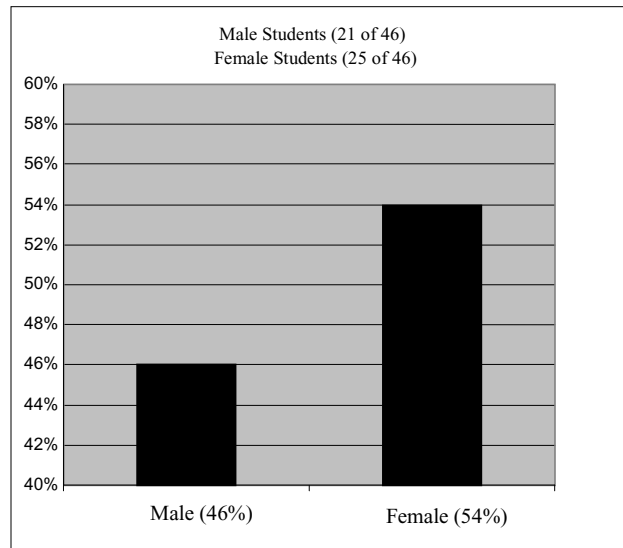
Figure 4. Students' gender.

Figure 4 illustrates the students' gender. Of the students, 21 of 46 (46%) were male and

25 of 46 (54%) were female. Figure 5 illustrates parents' ethnic group.
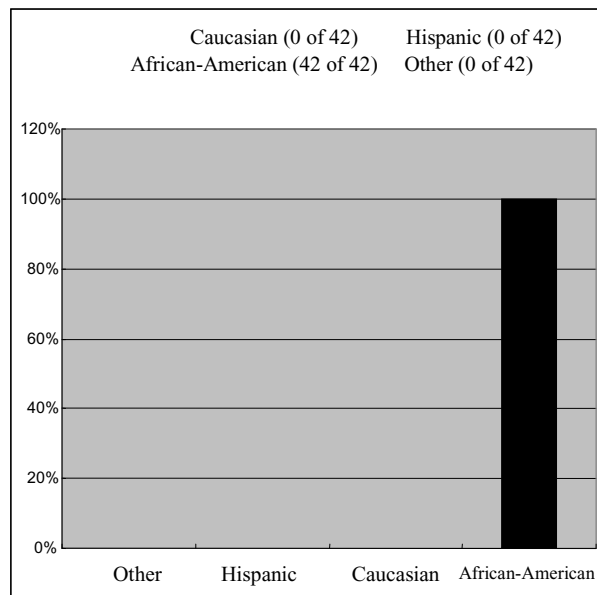
Figure 5. Parents' ethnic group.

African-Americans made up 42 of 42 (100%) of the parents' ethnic group.
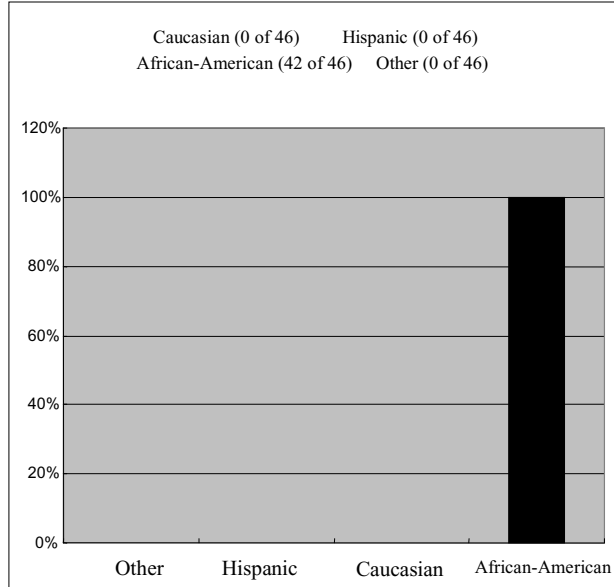
Figure 6. Students' ethnic group.

Figure 6 illustrates students' ethnic group. African-Americans made up 46 of 46 (100%)

of the students' ethnic group.

Table 13

Summary of Regression Analysis of Parent Rating Survey Scores and Student ISAT

Scores Who Met/Exceeded in Math and Reading in Grade Three

Parent Rating Survey Score (0-20)   Student ISAT Score (240-682)

Parent Rating Survey Score (0-20)	Student ISAT Score (240-682)
18	416
13	489
16	440
16	451
15	428
12	421
18	404
15	398
12	400

Table 13 illustrates the summary of regression analysis of parent rating survey scores and

student ISAT scores who met/exceeded in math and reading in grade three.

Correlation:

H_0: P=0

H_1: P≠0

F= 0.202966

P-value = 0.66596

Decision = H_0 was not rejected

Conclusion = There was a not significant correlation with parent rating scores and student ISAT scores who met/exceeded in math and reading in Grade Three.

Table 14

Summary of Regression Analysis of Parent Rating Survey Scores and Student ISAT

Scores Who Met/Exceeded in Math or Reading in Grade Three

Parent Rating Survey Score (0-20)	Student ISAT Score (240-682)
16	375
18	410

(Insufficient Information)

Table 14 illustrates the summary of regression analysis of parent rating survey scores and student ISAT scores who met/exceeded in math or reading in grade three.

Correlation:

F= N/A

P-value = N/A

Decision = N/A

Conclusion = Due to an insufficient amount of information/surveys that fit this criteria, a significant correlation could not be accepted or rejected in regard to parent rating scores and student ISAT scores who met/exceeded in math or reading in Grade Three.

Table 15

Summary of Regression Analysis of Parent Rating Survey Scores and Student ISAT

Scores Who Did Not Meet/Exceed in Math or Reading in Grade Three

Parent Rating Survey Score (0-20)	Student ISAT Score (240-682)
12	334
6	368

(Insufficient Information)

Table 15 illustrates the summary of regression analysis of parent rating survey scores and

student ISAT scores who did not meet/exceed in math or reading in grade three.

Correlation:

F= N/A

P-value = N/A

Decision = N/A

Conclusion = Due to an insufficient amount of information/surveys that fit this criteria, a

significant correlation could not be accepted or rejected in regard to parent rating scores

and student ISAT scores who did not meet/exceed in math or reading in Grade Three.

Table 16

Summary of Regression Analysis of Parent Rating Survey Scores and Student ISAT

Scores Who Met/Exceeded in Math and Reading in Grade Five

Parent Rating Survey Score (0-20)	Student ISAT Score (240-718)
15	501
17	535
20	538
17	496
17	509
13	511
16	502
13	480
13	512
14	495
17	481
13	478
13	483
17	460
15	482
14	454
15	481
14	480
9	460
15	448

Table 16 illustrates the summary of regression analysis of parent rating survey scores and

student ISAT scores who met/exceeded in math and reading in grade five.

Correlation:

H_0: P=0

H_1: P≠0

F= 4.891867

P-value = 0.040156

Decision = Reject H_0

Conclusion = There was a significant correlation with parent rating scores and

student ISAT scores who met/exceeded in math and reading in Grade Five.

Table 17

Summary of Regression Analysis of Parent Rating Survey Scores and Student ISAT

Scores Who Met/Exceeded in Math or Reading in Grade Five

Parent Rating Survey Score (0-20)	Student ISAT Score (240-718)
14	421
14	409
12	427
15	436
9	431
9	413
16	444
16	435
13	448
14	465

Table 17 illustrates the summary of regression analysis of parent rating survey scores and

student ISAT scores who met/exceeded in math or reading in grade five.

Correlation:

H_0: P=0

H_1: P≠0

F= 1.140729

P-value = 0.316664

Decision = H_0 was not rejected

Conclusion = There was a not significant correlation with parent rating scores and student

ISAT scores who met/exceeded in math or reading in Grade Five.

Table 18

Summary of Regression Analysis of Parent Rating Survey Scores and Student ISAT

Scores Who Did Not Meet/Exceed in Math or Reading in Grade Five

Parent Rating Survey Score (0-20)   Student ISAT Score (240-718)

14	424
14	414
11	395

Table 18 illustrates the summary of regression analysis of parent rating survey scores and

student ISAT scores who did not meet/exceed in math or reading in grade five.

Correlation:

H_0: P=0

H_1: P≠0

F= 7.68

P-value = 0.220463

Decision = H_0 was not rejected

Conclusion = There was a not significant correlation with parent rating scores and

student ISAT scores who did not meet/exceed in math or reading in Grade Five.

Table 19

Principal Needs assessment

Table 19 illustrates the principal's needs assessment.

Ranking parent involvement based on their importance to the administrator. Place #1 next

to the most important, #2 next to the second most important, etc.

<u>Parent involvement with</u>

1. Their own children at home in ways that encourage the children's learning and success.
2. Other parents in ways that teach those other parents to encourage their children's learning and success in school.
3. Other parents in ways that encourage a community sense of guiding and looking out for each other's children.
4. School governance, i.e. councils and decision-making committees.
5. Fundraising
6. School support, i.e. classroom volunteers, chaperones, office volunteers.
7. Youth organizations, i.e. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, etc.

As an administrator, which of the following areas of training would be helpful to parents

in your school? Please respond yes to all that would be appropriate in your school.

Yes	Building children's study habits at home.
Yes	Encouraging children to read.
Yes	The family's role in the children's sense of respect and responsibility.
Yes	Preparing preschool children to begin school.
Yes	Advanced training in study skills.
Yes	Effectiveness of parent leaders.

Please respond yes to the following areas that would be helpful to teachers and staff in

your school.

Yes	Understanding the role of parents in children's education.
Yes	Enlisting the support and assistance of parents.
Yes	Effective homework practices.
Yes	Teaching study skills and study habits
Yes	Research on the factors that contribute to children's learning.

If your school has a parent or parent-teacher organization, what are the organization's

two primary purposes?

| Purpose 1: To educate other parents on aspects of the school community. |
| Purpose 2: To encourage parents to get involved in the education of their child. |

 If your school has a parent or parent-teacher organization, how many times does the

organization meet each school year?

| Number of meetings | 9 |

If your school has a parent or parent-teacher organization, how many parents typically

attend the meeting?

| Average number of parents in attendance | 4 |

How many parents in your school would you describe as "very active"?

| Number of very active parents | 4 |

Table 20 illustrates the principal's assessment survey.

Table 20

Principal Assessment Survey - Ways in which parents are given an opportunity for

involvement in the school

2005-2006	School-Wide Policy or Activity	Used by Some Teachers
Open House	Yes	No
Parent-Teacher Conferences	Yes	No
Parent-Teacher-Students Conferences	Yes	No
Report Card Pick-Up Day	Yes	No
Routine Home Visits by teachers	No	Yes
Routine Telephone Contacts from Teachers	Yes	No
Written Notes Home to Parents	Yes	No
Parent Observation of Classroom Activities	Yes	No
Receive Newsletter	No	Yes
Contribute to Newsletter	No	Yes
Parents' Bulletin Board	Yes	No
Parents' Room	Yes	No
Classroom Volunteers	No	Yes
Office Volunteers	No	No
Athletic Boosters	No	No
Band Boosters	No	No
Fundraising	No	No
Parent-Teacher Organization	Yes	No

Findings

The researcher used a 20-statement parent survey, students' results on the Illinois

Standards Achievement Test, and a needs assessment, completed by the principal, to

establish a theory on the relationship between parent involvement and student

achievement. In Chapter Four, Tables 1 and 2 stated the Illinois Learning Standards of

reading and math. The tables highlighted the goals and objectives in relation to the

standards. Tables 3-8 gave insight to the responses given by parents on their surveys that

identified questions that most parents strongly favored and the questions on parents held

multiple opinions. In addition, parents had an opportunity to respond to three open-ended

questions regarding student time management at home. Tables 9-12 ranked the ISAT reading and math scores of students in grades three and five. Tables 13-18 summarized the regression analysis of the parent surveys and student ISAT scores. Table 19 was the needs assessment (a survey completed by the principal) that ranked levels of parent involvement based on their importance to the administrator. Table 20, an assessment survey completed by the principal, listed the multiple opportunities parents had to be involved in the school community through school activities and/or policies as well as teacher use. The figures in chapter four referenced the number of parents who completed the survey (Figure 1), the percent of students reported on by parents (Figure 2), parents' gender (Figure 3), students' gender (figure 4), parents' ethnic group (Figure 5), and students' ethnic group (Figure 6).

The study was able to (a) identify the need for parent involvement in the school community per the administrator's needs assessment; (b) research recognizable factors that may contribute to the level of parent involvement in different and similar communities; (c) discuss research that reinforces the importance of having the school community, especially parents and teachers, work together for the academic betterment of the student body; (d) assess ISAT scores from 2006 school year in relation to parent involvement; and (e) identify aspects about some of the parents' and students' backgrounds (i.e. gender, ethnicity, marital status) that may have some bearing on parents' responses to statements given.

This study was not able to correlate significance between parent involvement and student achievement in third graders because there was not a significant correlation found between parent rating scores derived from the parent survey and ISAT scores of students

who met/exceeded in math and reading scores. There was a significant correlation found

between parent rating scores and ISAT scores of students who met/exceeded in math and

reading in fifth graders. Although the majority of third and fifth graders met or exceeded

ISAT, there were no confirmed characteristics that indicate parent involvement was

directly responsible for student success. There is evidence indicating that parent

involvement made a difference or contributed to increased student achievement with

some of the students. However, the study would need more statistical data to definitively

support the idea that parent involvement significantly increased achievement for the

students in this study.

Chapter 5 - Discussion

Summary

The purpose of this study was to gather information in an effort to assess the

relationship between parent involvement and student achievement, to gain an

understanding of the role of a parent in the school community, and to research any data

that may suggest that the more parent involvement that is contributed to the student body,

the greater the opportunities are for student achievement. Possible factors that could

contribute to parent involvement having an increased impact on student achievement are

(a) parents understanding the importance of parent involvement, (b) parents recognizing

how to effectively communicate in a parent-teacher relationship, (c) parents participating

in programs that promote parent-teacher relationships, (d) parents recognizing the

stresses of poverty, (d) parents understanding the relationship between home and school,

and (e) parents acknowledging the relationship between achievement and family

structure. These factors have proven to be influential in gauging an expected level of

parent involvement in the school community. The underlying premise for identifying

these factors was to emphasize the crucial role that the school community, specifically

parents, plays in the education of students at home and school.

Implications of the Study

There were two notable implications of these findings. In this study, parents'

attitudes toward parent involvement and the relationship between home and school were

variables of student achievement. Persuading parents to be attentive to the educational

lives of some students made it possible for students to benefit from parent involvement.

As indicated by the responses on the parent survey, some parents were self-motivated to

be nurturing in the academic lives of students at school and at home. Moreover, a parent's attitude about academic success may be indicative of his/her child's attitude about academic success.

The other implication of this research demonstrates how home may impact school. The parent surveys addressed parents' involvement in school and parent monitoring of reading and studying time at home. The relationship between home and school could have a profound impact on student achievement. These research findings support parent involvement, whether at home or school, as an effective strategy to positively impact student achievement.

Recommendations for Practice

Based on the study findings, parent involvement improves student achievement. As mentioned in chapter one, Epstein (2005) identified six types of parent involvement. Table 21 illustrates Epstein's six types of parent involvement in relation to the practices used at Centerville Elementary to implement them.

Table 21

Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement and Practices at Centerville Elementary

School that Increased Parent Involvement

Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement	Practices at Centerville Elementary School that Increased Parent Involvement
1. Parenting- help all families establish home environments to support learning and positive parenting	Conducted home visits by teachers to meet the families of their students and build relationships in the home
2. Communicating- design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress	Sent out monthly and quarterly parent newsletters about relevant information to student life; maintained parent e-mail addresses for teacher contacts
3. Volunteering- to recruit and organize parent help and support	Used parents to decorate parent bulletin boards and serve as check-in and check-outs at evening events
4. Learning at home- provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning.	Included teacher-written helpful hints on the school's website to assist parents in understanding homework assignments and other ideas to inform parents of what's happening in class.
5. Decision making- include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.	Offered parent organization meeting twice monthly to discuss topics relevant to the growth of parent-teacher relationships, as well as, issues concerning the student body.
6. Collaborating with Community- identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.	Created partnerships between the school and businesses in the community. Also, businesses donated funds and gifts to the school that were used as incentives for students and parents.

Note: Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement are cited from *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action* (2nd ed.), by J. L. Epstein, M. G. Sanders, B. S. Simon, K. C. Salinas, N. R. Jansorn, & F. L. Van Voorhis, 2002, Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Using Epstein's six types of parent involvement to influence the practices at Centerville Elementary School made an impact on (1) how parents were acknowledged as stakeholders, (2) building a bridge between the community and the school, (3) working together at home and school, (4) understanding the importance of communication, (5)

integrating businesses in the community who contribute to the school community through donations and gifting, and (6) giving parents opportunities to be a part of the decision making process in the school.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings in this study parallel the research identifying the relationship between parent involvement and student achievement, which indicated the importance of parent involvement in relation to increased student achievement. In chapter two, this study examined such topics as poverty, birth order, family structure, culture, and other factors as they relate to student achievement. It is recommended that future research be conducted on effects of other family/community factors such as parents' marital status, families' economic status, demographically related information, and spiritual backgrounds that may improve student achievement.

The study school in this project had a parent and student population that was 100% African-American. Future studies on this topic that use a different school demographic may produce different results. Research may reveal variations of perceptions and opinions regarding parent involvement that may be linked to parent and student ethnicity. Other recommendations for future research may revolve around (a) using a different assessment other than ISAT to be able to do a compare and contrast of assessment tools, (b) focusing on middle and high school students rather than elementary students to find consistency in parent involvement throughout all levels of a child's schooling, (c) having a study that takes place in a suburban setting versus an urban setting to assess any differences that may be directly or indirectly related to location, and (d)

identifying statistics that may definitively bind the relationship between parent involvement and student achievement.

Conclusion

The administrator, teachers, and parents in the school community recognize the value of parent-teacher partnerships at Centerville Elementary School. Parent involvement during the 2005-2006 academic school year indicated a correlation to student achievement based on ISAT assessments and parent survey responses. Most parents (39 of 42) agreed that their involvement in their child's education made a difference in his/her academic performance in school. An overwhelming 93% of parents agreed to that statement while 7% (3 of 42) felt that their involvement did not make a difference.

This study can be used to show how parent involvement can impact a particular group of students based on a statewide assessment during a specific moment in time but cannot be used as a tool to indicate how parent involvement contributed to the overall student achievement. There were a number of variables (e.g., parent perceptions, lack of 100% parent participation on surveys, or use of adequate yearly progress in relation to student achievement as a gauge of success) that affected the study. Gaining an understanding of what, why, and how parents think is a step in the right direction for student success. Parent involvement should have a constructive influence on student achievement and positively impact school relationships if nurtured and given priority by a school community and its stakeholders.

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Appendix A

<u>Parent Survey Request</u>

February 19, 2008

Dear Parents,

Your attention is needed again in an effort of trying to collect data. As you know, I was the principal at Centerville Elementary and I am in need of your assistance in completing a survey that I will use to measure the level of parent involvement during the 2005-2006 school year. I know that time has past, but do your best to reflect on your level of parent involvement during that school year. I am specifically looking at grades 3 and 5 in reading and math. It is also important that you identify who you are as well as your child. Although you will identify you and your child on the survey, your names will not be used in the data collected for the dissertation. The names will be used in correspondence with Illinois Standard Achievement Test (ISAT) scores only. This will help me compare the test scores from that school year. The survey is comprised of 20 questions. The information gathered from this survey will be used to help collect data to measure the different levels of parent involvement in regard to student achievement on ISAT for the 2005-2006 school year. Your prompt return of this survey will be greatly appreciated. In addition, students will receive a pizza party for your participation in this study. Should you have any questions, you may reach me at 618-332-5900.

Thank you in advance for contributing to my project as well as the school community.

Mr. Tony Brooks
Principal
Wirth-Parks Middle School

Appendix B

Parent Involvement Survey

Parents' Name _____

Student Name _____

His/Her Grade Level in 2005-2006 _____

Please respond to all of the questions to the best of your ability and return immediately

1. Do you recall attending Open House during the 2005-2006 school year? _____

2. Did you attend parent-teacher conferences during the 2005-2006 school year? _____

3. Did you attend two or more parent organization meetings in 2005-2006? _____

4. Did you volunteer in your child's classroom in 2005-2006? _____

5. Did you work on a parent involvement committee? _____

6. Did you ever participate in a parent education program in 2005-2006? _____

7. Do you recall having communication to your child's teacher throughout 2005-2006? _____

8. Do you recall having communication with other parents in your child's classroom throughout 2005-2006? _____

9. Did your child study 4 or more days a week during the 2005-2006 school year (on average)? _____

10. What was the average amount of time per day that was dedicated to study in the home (ex. 15 minutes, 30 minutes, 1 hour, 2 hours, etc.)? _____

11. Was there a quiet place in the home for your child to study? _____

12. Did your child ever take the initiative to study on his/her own? _____

13. Did your child read for pleasure at home 5 or more days per week in the 2005-2006 school year (on

    average)? _____

14. Did your child read for pleasure for 30 minutes or more a week (on average)? _____

15. Did you and your child talk about school work 5 days or more a week (on average)? _____

16. Did you and your child spend significant time talking about reading? _____

17. On average, how much time was spent talking about reading weekly (15 minutes, 30 minutes, 1

    hour, etc.) _____

18. Did you and your child spend significant time talking about math? _____

19. On average, how much time was spent talking about math weekly (15 minutes, 30 minutes, 1 hour,

    etc.) _____

20. As a parent, do you believe that your involvement in your child's education made a difference in

    his/her academic performance at school? _____

Appendix C

**Academic
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Parents as Teachers - IL   Solid Foundation®   Alliance for Achievement®   Champions Together™

Academic Development Institute
Solid Foundation Demonstration School Agreement

In accordance with the application submitted by the Academic Development Institute for funding from the U.S. Department of Education to form a Parent Information and Resource Center, _Centerville Elementary_ (the School) agrees to participate as a demonstration site in the three-year project.

The School will:

- Demonstrate the Solid Foundation parent engagement model to a high degree of implementation.
- Maintain School Community Council that meets twice each month and follows the agendas provided in the SCC Planning Guide.
  - Provide SCC meeting minutes to ADI
  - The Parent Education Facilitator will maintain the Solid Foundation Parent Education Facilitator's Binder, which documents all program activities
- Use Reading School-Home Links three times each week in K-3 classrooms and maintains a log of their usage.
  - Weekly teacher reports will be submitted to ADI by the Parent Education Facilitator
  - 100% of K-3 teachers will implement School-Home Links
- Allow visitors from other schools, when convenient and with prior arrangements, to attend Council meetings and/or consult with the principal and Parent Education Facilitator.
- Make all teaching faculty available for a 3-hour Parents & Learning workshop in the second and third project years.
- Collect and provide documentation on project-related activities and submit to ADI in a time fashion.
  - School Community Index to be completed year one and year three
    - Parents (minimum 40% return)
    - Teachers (100% return)
  - Copies placed into the Parent Education Facilitator's Binder

For these services and reasonable additional activities related to this project, the school will receive:

1. An annual $1,000 stipend for the Parent Education Facilitator
   (A staff person assigned to this project and a member of the School Community Council)
2. $400 for Family Reading Night or other academically focused common experience for families
   (Reading, Math, Science etc.)

3. $400 for materials for the Family Resource Library
4. Reading School-Home Links for all K-3 classrooms
   (Each box contains enough links for 25 students)
5. Up to $2,000 to compensate home visitors
   ($20 per completed and documented visit)
6. Materials for home visits
   (The school will add materials specific to their school and community)
7. Annual training for the School Community Council
   (SCC consists of the principal, Parent Education Facilitator, social
   worker/counselor or other teacher and 4 parents)
   Year 1: initial training
   Year 2: consultation and planning
   Year 3: consultation and planning
8. $500 annually for projects related to Solid Foundation, as approved by the
   regional Education Specialist
   (SCC projects, family involvement activity, etc.)
9. Monthly, on-site consultations with the regional Education Specialist as
   appropriate
10. Parents & Learning workshops for teachers in the second and third project
    years
    Year 2: Parents & Learning for teachers with a focus of teacher parent
    communication
    Year 3: Working Together for Student Success for parents and teachers
    focusing on the roles and partnership needed for student success.

Centerville Elementary
School Address

_618-332-3727_   _618-332-3788_
Phone   Fax

Tony Brooks   _11/4/03_
Principal Signature   Date

Fred Deets   _11/4/03_
Superintendent Signature Date

_____   _11/4/03_
ADI Signature   Date

Appendix D

Lindenwood University

Institutional Review Board Disposition Report

<u>**To:**</u>   **Tony Brooks**
CC: Larry Matthews

The Institutional Review Board has approved the revised proposal for research.

Tammi Pavelec   1/25/2008
Signature IRB Chair   Date

Vitae

Tony Brooks is a native of St. Clair County where he is currently the Principal at Wirth-Parks Middle School in Cahokia, Illinois. He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Visual Arts Education (K-12) from Southern Illinois University of Edwardsville in Edwardsville, Illinois. He holds a Master of Arts in Education from Maryville University in Chesterfield, Missouri. He holds his administrative certification from Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri. He holds a Specialist Degree in Education Administration from Lindenwood University. This dissertation is the culmination of work leading to a Doctoral Degree in Education Administration from Lindenwood University. Tony has taught at the high school level and has also been an Assistant Principal. Tony has been an administrator at the elementary level prior to being an administrator at the middle school level. Tony has been a Principal in Missouri as well as Illinois.