A National Study of Parental Involvement: Its Trends, Status and Effects on School Success

Alandra Washington
Western Michigan University

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A NATIONAL STUDY OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT: ITS TRENDS, STATUS, AND EFFECTS ON SCHOOL SUCCESS

by

Alandra Washington

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
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Advisor: Jianping Shen, Ph.D.

Western Michigan University
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A NATIONAL STUDY OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT: ITS TRENDS, STATUS, AND EFFECTS ON SCHOOL SUCCESS

Alandra Washington, Ph.D.

Western Michigan University, 2011

Parental involvement has been emphasized as a mechanism for improving our public schools. In this study the author inquired into (a) the trend and status of parental involvement and (b) whether parental involvement is associated with schools meeting accountability measures. Secondary analyses were conducted on multiple waves of nationally representative data collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) School and Staffing Surveys (SASS). Descriptive statistics, discriminant function analysis, logistic regression, among others, were used for the study.

The analyses on the trend and status of parental involvement indicated that there was a statistically significant increase in parental involvement over the years. The analyses also suggested that there were statistically significant variations in parental involvement for schools in various census regions, with various levels of minority enrollment, and at elementary and secondary levels.

As to the association between level of parental involvement and meeting accountability measures, logistic regression analyses indicated that, with control for school level and demographics, involvement in (a) “setting performance standards for
students of this school” and (b) “evaluating teachers of this school” was positively correlated with meeting accountability measures, whereas parental involvement in (c) “deciding how your school budget will be spent” was a negative predictor. As to the association between the availability of parental involvement mechanisms and meeting accountability measures, the analyses indicated that with control for school level and demographics, the availability of (a) “parent/guardian workshops” and (b) “requirement that teachers provide suggestions for activities that parents can do at home with their child” was positively correlated with meeting accountability measures, whereas the availability of (c) “a parent drop-in-center or lounge” was a negative predictor.

In summary, findings of this study revealed that parental involvement has improved in our public schools over the years, and that parental involvement could be a double-edged sword—parental involvement could both help and hurt schools depending on the areas in which parents are involved. The findings have implications for teachers, administrators, parents, policymakers and others when developing strategies for parental involvement.
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Alandra Washington
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INTRODUCTION

A Historical Context

The impact of parental involvement in school reform has been an issue of exploration for several scholars (Brown & Anfara, 2003; Lee, Kushner, & Cho, 2007; Weiss, 1995). Many urban schools across the country are building models of school reform that recognize parents as a critical factor to achieve student and school success. Many of these reform efforts to involve parents are driven by educational policy such as the national No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. This policy had mandated parental involvement in Title I and low-performing schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). One of the central purposes of parent involvement in school reform is to help create conditions that will allow students to achieve academically. However, with many schools across the nation not meeting state mandated educational accountability requirements, educators, parents, and policymakers are trying to figure out the best ways to involve parents that will lead to improved academic outcomes for both students and schools (Broman, 2005; Brown & Hunter, 1998; Griffith, 1998).

The importance of parent involvement in schools has been supported by research revealing benefits for both students and schools (Epstein, 1985; Fan & Chen, 2001; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Shatkin & Gershberg, 2007). These types of seminal studies provide evidence of the difference parental involvement can make in their
children’s education. For instance, Epstein’s (1985) study of 16 school districts in Maryland surveyed 3,700 first, third, and fifth grade school teachers, their principals, and 1,200 parents of the children in the teachers’ classroom, and found a strong correlation between teachers who were considered leaders in parental involvement and gains in reading achievement with their students. In other research, Fan and Chen (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of quantitative literature regarding parent involvement and student achievement and found a meaningful relationship. In addition, Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994) found a moderate correlation between certain types of parent involvement and improvement in student grades. Research has also shown an association between parental involvement and successful school reform. For instance, Shatkin and Gershberg’s (2007) research of school-based councils in educational governance found that parent participation can lead to increased activism regarding school issues and can foster improvements in school performance.

Challenges of Parent Involvement and Significance

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and required that schools receiving Title I funding design and implement parental involvement programs. However, the mandate did not recommend any standardized or successful approaches to parental involvement previously found by research to lead to improved school outcomes. Most parental involvement programs across the country vary in the types and level of involvement,
parent participation in decision making, parent-centered communications, and enforcement (Public Education Network, 2007). Within NCLB, there were no distinct requirements for parental involvement programs, no monitoring, or follow-up regarding practices or what is working. Critics of NCLB encouraged that policymakers include best practice models of parental involvement in teacher and administrator education programs.

Another challenge of parental involvement is the lack of a clear definition. Lee and Bowen (2006) contend there is no unitary definition, model, or measure of parental/family involvement, and there is the tendency to rely on traditional definitions. Some researchers characterize traditional definitions as including parents in school fundraising activities, school plays, or school sporting events (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Sheldon, 2002). However, NCLB promoted the concept of parental involvement as a meaningful partnership consisting of regular communication and parent participation in the development and implementation of a plan for school improvement (Cowan, 2003).

Lastly, the types of activities associated with parental involvement can come in many forms, from talking to a child about their education aspirations, assisting with homework, volunteering at school activities, talking to teachers about a student’s progress, and being involved in school governance structures. For instance, McNeal (2001) provided a framework for parent involvement that included four elements: parent–child discussion, monitoring, involvement in school and classroom activities, and participation in school organizations. Other researchers such as Kenbrow and Benhart
focused only on two elements: parent-initiated contact with schools and parent participation in school organizations. Henderson and Berla's (1994) examination of 85 studies found three common elements within various types of parental involvement programs had positive results on students' performance: family interaction patterns, parental behaviors at home, and school interactions. Other researchers such as Desimone, Finn-Stevenson, and Henrich (2000) explored comprehensive whole-school reform models that implement parental involvement in school management and collaborative decision-making models. These shared decision-making models "reorganize decision making and service provision to develop a cohesive community of parent, teachers, and students" (Desimone et al., 2000, p. 270).

The relationship between parental involvement, student achievement, and successful school reform embodies many facets of complexity. Lawson (2003) pointed out that his analyses revealed teachers and parents have different perceptions of parental involvement. These different perceptions implicate diverse epistemologies, differential power, and competing purposes. Conversely, teachers and parents both claim that firm, mutually beneficial partnerships (or collaboration) between them are essential to children's learning, healthy development, and success in school.

The literature regarding parental involvement and student achievement has mixed findings. Some researchers have found a correlation between parental involvement and student and school achievement (e.g., Hill & Craft, 2003; Jeynes, 2007; Lee & Bowen,
Fan and Chen's (2001) meta-analysis of parental involvement programs found different indicators of parental involvement and student achievement including a positive correlation between parental involvement and a student's GPA. However, other researchers have found little to no association between parental involvement and student and school achievement (Singh et al., 1995; White, Taylor, & Moss, 1992). Singh et al. (1995), who used data from the National Longitudinal Study: 88, found no correlation between parental involvement in school activities and improved student achievement.

In addition, the literature reveals the importance of principals' and teachers' perceptions of parental involvement and its influence on the level of parental involvement (Barnyak & McNelly, 2009; Epstein & Becker, 1982; Hughes, et. al, 2005). Barnyak and McNelly's (2009) study noted that beliefs and practices shape their approach to parental involvement. Both teachers and principals play a critical role in parental involvement. To this end, I examine a trend analysis of teachers' and principals' perception of parental involvement over time (1999–2003), if teachers' and principals' perceptions are correlated with the level of reported parental involvement, and whether schools meet their state eligibility requirements.

By zeroing in on the perceptions of both principals and teachers over multiple years, I show whether these perceptions make are associated with parental involvement levels. This historical trend analysis provides information of school staff perceptions of parental involvement before, during, and after the implementation of NCLB. Because
NCLB mandated (albeit now under a different name) parental involvement and is currently being implemented in schools, the historical trends of staff perceptions can be useful to district administrators and educators as they continue to work with teachers and principals to design programs that increase parental involvement and train teachers and principals to more effectively interact with parents.

Research Questions

In this study I used a quantitative approach to examine research questions using data collected by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) School and Staffing Survey (SASS) for years 1990–2003. This is a set of surveys collected from private, public, public charter, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools nationwide about teachers, administrators, and the general condition of America’s elementary and secondary schools. There are multiple aspects of this dissertation study.

The central purpose of this study is to investigate whether the levels of parental involvement in key school decisions—and the mechanisms for parental involvement such as parent–teacher conferences, parent volunteer opportunities, and parental involvement in school governance issues—are associated with whether schools meet the state mandated school accountability requirement. A secondary purpose of this study is to investigate the historical trend of principals’ and teachers’ perceptions regarding the lack of parental involvement in schools (as measured by SASS for years 1990–2003) and if it makes a difference in the actual levels of parental involvement. The study disaggregates
by census regions, school level, and various percentages of free and reduced-price lunch eligible students. The study addresses the following questions:

1. What is the trend of principals’ perceptions regarding the lack of parent involvement from 1990, 1993, 1999, to 2003, and does this trend differ for schools in various census regions, at different levels, and with various percentages of free and reduced-price lunch eligible students?

2. What is the trend of teachers’ perceptions regarding the lack of parent involvement from 1990, 1993, 1999, to 2003, and does this trend differ for schools in various census regions, at different levels, and with various percentages of free and reduced-price lunch eligible students?

3. What was the level of parental decision-making power on key school matters in 2003, and does the level of parent’s decision-making power differ for schools in various census regions, at different levels, and with various percentages of free and reduced-price lunch eligible students?

4. What were the mechanisms for parental involvement in daily school activities in 2003, and do these mechanisms differ for schools in various census regions, at different levels, and with various percentages of free and reduced-price lunch eligible students?

5. To what extent is the level of parental involvement in schools associated with whether or not schools meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), after controlling for school level and school demographic factors?
Conceptual Model for Study

This study conducted secondary analyses of SASS data collected by NCES. The conceptual framework for this study provides a perspective on parental involvement in schools and its possible connection to whether schools meet their adequately yearly progress requirement. The conceptual framework was developed on the assumption that involvement of parents in school contributes to successful outcomes of school performance, which includes student academic achievement as shown in previous research (e.g., Fan, 2001; Jeynes, 2007; Niemeyer, Wong, & Westehaus, 2009). In order to improve levels of parental involvement that leads to improved school outcomes, there needs to be a greater understanding of teachers’ and principals’ perceptions regarding the lack of parental involvement, the level of parental involvement in key school issues, the mechanisms in schools for parental involvement, and the association of these variables with schools meeting its state mandated accountability requirements.

Figure 1 provides a conceptual framework illustrating the main components for this study. The two boxes at left examine the trend data of teachers’ and principals’ perceptions regarding the lack of parental involvement. This refers to the attitudes teachers and principals have regarding the level to which parents become involved in their child’s education at school and at home. It also speaks to the perceptions teachers and principals have about why parents may or may not become involved. Research notes that school staff’s approach, attitude, and perception of parents affect parental involvement levels (DeCastro-Ambrosetti
& Cho, 2005; DePlanty, Coulter-Kern, & Duchane, 2007; Gordon & Seashore Louis, 2009; Souto-Manning & Swick, 2006). Research shows that both teachers and principals attitudes toward parental involvement is a critical factor. For instance, Epstein and Becker (1982) suggested from their research of teacher practices of parental involvement that teachers’ opinions about the benefits of involvement were a factor in construction of parental involvement activities in the school and home.

**Parental Involvement in School Reform**

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<tr>
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<th>School Level</th>
<th>Percentage of Free and Reduced-Price Lunch</th>
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**Figure 1.** Conceptual Framework for Dissertation Study

The perception of school staff regarding parent involvement is essential to educational success. Scholars have examined the relationship that exists between key staff perceptions such as teachers and principals and if their perceptions are associated with successfully engaging parents in school reform. Many have found teachers’ perceptions of parent–school relationships can positively relate to students’ performance
Perceptions that teachers hold about parental involvement may contribute to factors of trust, quality of interactions, and frequency of interactions. A study conducted by Becker and Epstein (1982) revealed that teachers do not know how to initiate and accomplish the programs of parental involvement that would help them most. Most teachers felt that parental involvement is an important factor in solving problems faced by schools but many admitted that they do not know how to effectively involve parents (The MetLife Survey of Teachers, 2006).

Principals' perceptions regarding the lack of parental involvement and its association with the parental involvement levels are equally important to scholars. Past research indicates that principals play an essential and crucial role determining the level of parental participation and its effectiveness (Griffith, 1999). Research conducted by Goldring (1993) noted that specific leadership styles or administrator response strategies toward parents are associated with parent involvement levels. The type of leadership that a principal exhibits can hinder or facilitate effective parental involvement.

The two boxes to the right, level of parent involvement on key school decisions and mechanisms for involvement refer to the types of school matters that parents become involved with as well as programs schools offer for parents to become involved in school-based activities. It is not enough to engage parents in school reform, but finding ways to provide shared decision making models regarding key school matters may be
equally important. The conceptual framework suggests that successful school reform may correlate with what types of key matters parents are involved. Many researchers have defined what may constitute key school matters such as setting school student performance goals, establishing school curriculum, evaluating teachers, determining components for teacher professional development, setting discipline policy, teacher hiring, and deciding on school budget (Anguiano, 2004; Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2003; Desimone, 2002; Malen & Ogawa, 1988).

To further illustrate, Epstein’s (2001) study of school, family, and community partnerships revealed new responsibilities for parent organizations and leadership as well as new goals for community–schools collaborations. This study suggested functions of parental involvement becoming engaged in key school matters. This includes parents’ involvement in school decision making, governance, advocacy, and collaboration across community organizations. Matters such as policy, budgeting, curriculum development, principal selection, or school closings are critical parent involvement levels that may contribute to successful school reform (Desimone, Finn-Stevenson, & Henrich, 2000).

Several scholars have examined comprehensive school reform and the effects (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987; Malen & Ogawa, 1988; Talley & Keedy, 2006; Wholsetter, Smyer, & Morhman, 1994). Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) is a movement across U.S. schools that focus on coordinated efforts for holistic school improvement instead of implementing several isolated programs (Borman, Hewes, et al., 2003). A highly popular
approach being widely used across the country are School-Based Council (SBC) models or Site-Based Management Councils (SBMC), which provide shared decision-making authority for parents on school matters (Ferris, 1992; Malen & Ogawa, 1988; Shaktin & Gershberg 2007; Talley & Keedy 2006; Wohlsetter & Buffet, 1992; Wohlsetter, Smyer, & Mohrman, 1994).

Many schools have embarked on instituting these decentralized models with the notion that parent and community involvement in school governance can help to bring about improved school performance outcomes. For instance, a study conducted by Borman, Overman, and Brown (2003) of comprehensive school reform models (CSR) found that these models showed strong effects and consistent benefit. In addition, the researchers noted that effective models were clear about the involvement of parents and community in the governance of the school and the development of the school improvement plan.

Another aspect of parent involvement is mechanisms or models that provide schools programs for daily parental involvement in school based activities that may be directly associated with student and school academic achievement. My conceptual framework explores the association between these types of mechanisms and schools meeting their state mandated adequate yearly progress requirement. There have been several leading mechanisms for daily parental involvement such as volunteer activities at school, communications between parent and teacher, written contracts between parents
and schools, and workshops for parents. School-based parental involvement means that
parents must come in contact with schools and schools in contact with parents
(Pomerantz & Ruble, 1998). Home-based parental involvement is another perspective
found in the literature that explores ways in which parents utilize their resources toward
academic success for their children. Researchers have found that adolescents are
positively affected when strong relationships exist between both home and school
environments (DePlanty, Coulter-Kern, & Duchane, 2007).

*A state mandated adequately yearly progress requirement* is the outcome measure
for this study. This refers to the standards, assessment, and accountability measurements
that all U.S. state education departments must put in place based on the NCLB
mandated policies. This includes accountability measurements such as academic
achievement standards, Title I improvement standards, and student inclusion standards

The bar across the top of the conceptual framework refers to demographic
variables that will be considered for this study. For this study, census region is defined by
the U.S. Census Bureau (2010) and includes the following regions: (a) Northeast, (b)
Midwest, (c) West, and (d) South. School level is defined by the U.S. Department of
Education (2010) and refers to the school level type—elementary level, middle school
level, and high school level. Lastly, free and reduced-price lunch eligible students refer to
U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (2010) income eligibility
guidelines for schools, institutions, and facilities participating in the National School Lunch Program. The arrow running across the bottom of the conceptual framework relates corresponding years of the national data set collected by NCES. The data set for this study is the SASS collected from 1990–2003.

Contributions of the Study

This study is intended to contribute to the collective knowledge of the role that parental involvement can play in student academic achievement as well as schools meeting their accountability requirements. I examine how parent involvement and associated variables affect schools meeting their state mandated accountability requirements. The findings and conclusions of this study provide knowledge regarding parental involvement trends and how and what types of parent involvement are associated with student and school success. The data set being analyzed is from SASS 1990–2003, and the knowledge will be valuable for policymakers and educators for several reasons. First, this data set was collected before NCLB was implemented, as well as during implementation of the Act. It shows any emerging patterns, trends, or changes in parental involvement since NCLB parental involvement mandates were instituted. Second, this data set shows changes over time regarding parental involvement levels and whether certain variables are associated with schools meeting their accountability requirements. Third, because I examined changes over time (e.g., with school staff perceptions of parental involvement and its effects on the level of parent involvement), this information
can help policymakers and educators determine how to develop more effective parental involvement policies and programs. The results of this study can generalized to the national landscape because I used nationally representative data.

Chapter I Summary

Chapter 1 provides an important summarization of parental involvement and its importance in student academic and school achievement. This chapter introduced literature relevant to the effectiveness of parental involvement on student achievement, the importance of teachers’ and principals’ attitudes regarding parental involvement, the strategies and the types of key school issues that parents may be involved in solving, and the governance models and mechanisms provided to parents in order to become involved. Through the purpose statement, research questions, and conceptual framework, the reader has a deeper understanding of the nature of this study.

The remainder of this dissertation includes the following: a review of the literature in chapter two related to definition and conceptualization of parental involvement, variables of parent involvement, types of parent involvement, parent involvement as a predictor of student achievement, school governance models for parent involvement, and parent involvement on key school matters. Chapter 3 identifies methodology, research design, research questions, data analysis, and summary. A description of the research findings is set forth in chapter 4. Finally, chapter 5 discusses the research findings as well as identification of areas for further study.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature review presents research significant to parental involvement in schools and the difference it makes regarding student and school academic success. I begin the review by presenting information on the inconsistencies that exist in defining and measuring parental involvement. This section points out the concepts, ecologies, and constructs of parental involvement and the variations that exist.

In the next section, I delve into the characteristics of parental involvement. These are important variables when it comes to the level and type of involvement that parents have with their child’s education. I identify the motivations, predictors, and barriers to parental involvement.

In an attempt to provide a deeper understanding of the role school staff and personnel play in issues surrounding parental involvement, I focus the literature review on the perceptions and activities of school principals and teachers. In this section of the review, I investigate theoretical concepts of school personnel as influencers of parental involvement.

Lastly, I look in more detail at the role of parents in school governance and management issues as a way to implement school improvement. There is a school reform movement across the United States to democratize education and increase involvement of parents and community. These structures allow parents to become involved in shared
decision-making on a number of key school matters such as budgeting, school policies, and curriculum. This information is important to know for my study because it provides a deeper understanding of parental involvement and its influence on student achievement, the types of parental involvement that are strongly correlated with school achievement, and whether educational policies such as NCLB help affect parental involvement.

Definition of Parental Involvement

There are multiple definitions and inconsistencies in what defines parental involvement. This multiplicity of definition makes it hard to operationally define and empirically measure (Fan & Chen, 2001). In addition, multiple definitions provide persistent confusion between a range of behaviors, activities, goals, and outcomes for parent involvement (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Sheldon, 2002). These definitions represent multiple behaviors and practices such as parents’ communication with teachers (e.g., Epstein, 1991), parents’ participation in school activities (e.g., Greenwood & Hickman, 1991), and parents’ aspirations for their children (e.g., Spera, Wentzel & Matto, 2009). Sheldon (2002) agreed with Gronlick and Slowiaczek’s (1994) perspective that parent involvement is defined as parents’ investment of resources in their children. Chavkin and William (1993) expanded the definition of parent involvement to include (a) ensuring that children have proper school supplies, (b) monitoring the amount of sleep that children get, and (c) supporting the child in arriving at school on time.
Feuerstein (2000) defined parent involvement from a range of behaviors including discussing school with children to attending parent–teacher conferences.

Keith et al. (1989) noted that most definitions of parental involvement fall into the following areas: parent expectations; home learning environment; communication among parents, teachers, and students; parental involvement in school activities; and parental involvement in school decision making. Because researchers have defined parent involvement inconsistently and broadly, it has made it difficult to both define and measure.

There have been several interpretations and conclusions drawn to define parent involvement with research studies. Much of the discrepancy across such studies stems from the type of data being collected and the design of the studies. Although the role of parents in a child’s education was thought to be critically important in their success, it was not until the 1960s that parent involvement was analyzed through experimental design and research. In 1966, Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mod, Weinfeld, and York fostered a national focus on outcomes related to parental involvement by suggesting a substantial relationship between parental involvement in their child’s education and their child’s academic success. A number of researchers began to look at parent involvement in an attempt to measure the effect of parent involvement on student achievement. However, the inconsistencies persist because of the different definitions that researchers use to explain parent involvement, and the different behaviors and
activities researchers measure. With these practices, it is no surprise that inconsistency remains an issue. This is important to know for my study because I am use a more encompassing definition of parental involvement that is promoted by Keith et al. (1998) to include activities at home, in the classroom, and with the school more broadly.

Theories of Parental Involvement

Lareau (1987) contended that “family-school relationships are socially constructed and historically variable” (p. 74). Some researchers believe that the construct of parent involvement is often merely a laundry list of activities that parents should do for their children (Barton, Drake, Gustavo, St. Louis, & George, 2004). These scholars believe that parental involvement should not only include the “what” but also the why and how of involvement (p. 3). Delgado-Gaitan (1991) suggested that conventional parent involvement activities instituted by most schools consistently regulate the power to the institution and ignore the needs of the parents. A growing number of researchers share the point of view that the social constructs of parent involvement help to determine who gets involved and how they are involved. They further promote that parent involvement programs, practices, and policies should consider constructs such as parental empowerment, equity, cultural, and social capital as a part of the equation in design and implementation (Barton et. al., 2004; Goldring & Shapira, 1993; Hess & Leal, 2001; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Nakagawa, 2000). It is important to look at each one of these studies
because these concepts help to explain potential barriers to parental involvement that may contribute to the level of parental involvement in schools.

_Parental Empowerment_

Lareau and Shumar (1996) found that proponents of parent involvement models overwhelmingly promote policies with patterns of unequal power. Parents are not seen as nor included as, both co-designers and co-implementers of their child’s educational experience. The inequalities that were ingrained in the larger society also play out in our educational system. Often school personnel view children of color, especially those who live in concentrated poverty, from a deficit perspective (Harry, Klinger, & Hart, 2005). Research indicates that school personnel often believe the families of low-income children of color are not interested in their education, assume the parents are dysfunctional, and frequently blame parents for their children’s academic challenges (Giles, 2005; Marx, 2008; Noguera, 2001). Because parents are viewed from a deficit model, many parental involvement policies and programs do not infuse principles and practices of empowerment. The Cornell Empowerment Group (1989) provides the most cited definition of empowerment as an intentional ongoing process through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources.

Barton et al. (2004) promoted the idea of ecologies of parental engagement that considers a new conceptualization of parent involvement, seeing parents as both authors
and agents of the school experience with their children. This ecology model suggested that school structures promote the ideals and beliefs of a capitalist culture, which pushes low-income, minority, and immigrant families into a subordinate position. Drawing on literature of parent empowerment of children with disabilities, Nachshen’s (2000) review of the literature regarding parent involvement discussed the Family Empowerment Scale as a way to measure this phenomenon. This scale is comprised of two dimensions. My focus is on the second dimension of the scale which consists of three expressions: (a) attitudes—reflecting the parents’ beliefs and mirroring the intrapersonal component of empowerment, (b) knowledge—reflecting parent’s understanding of their environment and mirroring the interactional component of empowerment, and (c) behaviors—or what a parent actually does—reflecting the behavioral component of empowerment. The literature revealed that an empowered parent is able to be a change agent who knows how to navigate the educational system, solve problems, and successfully advocate for the needs of their children.

Equity

Another unconventional approach to measuring parent involvement included the equity framework. Many researchers have focused on the achievement gap associated with socioeconomic status and race/ethnicity (Desimone, 2006; Lareau, 1987; Lee & Bowen, 2006). There are historical and cultural factors in the educational system that continue to promote educational disparities and inequalities. The inequities of parental
involvement can be traced to issues of social class, race, and culture (Wiggan, 2007).

Because issues of class (Ream & Palardy, 2008), race (McKay, Atkins, Hawkins, Brown, & Lynn, 2003), and culture (Lareau & Shumar, 1996) continue to be strong predictors of parental involvement, examination of equity of parent involvement policies and practices have emerged as a part of the literature.

All organizations (systems) have inequality regimes, defined as loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities within particular organizations (Acker, 2006). It is these practices, processes, and actions that produce inauthentic participation. In order to become more equitable and authentic, schools must reduce barriers so that all have chance to participate in ways that result in educational success for their child. Gardner (1984) stated that there are two hopes that drive American society: individual achievement and equality. Title I programs that were designed in the 1960s during the “war on poverty” era was the government’s attempt to address these inequities in the U.S. educational system. However these inequalities still exist and can be found in the way that schools interact with parents.

DeCastro-Ambrosetti and Cho (2005) conducted a study with 160 secondary teachers in California enrolled in-service and pre-service education classes. The teachers completed an attitudinal survey measuring their attitudes regarding issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The survey consisted of questions about cultural and linguistic
diversity as well as multicultural issues and social structures. Their analysis found that taking courses that had cultural diversity concepts embedded in the curriculum improved participants’ attitudes about issues of diversity. However, an interesting finding of the study was that teachers continued to blame the parents’ lack of value toward education and being oblivious to other contextual factors such as issues of structural and societal racism.

*Cultural Capital*

In addition to issues of empowerment and equity, there are a number of researchers who promote theories of social and cultural capital as predictors of how and why parents become involved in their children’s education. The term *capital* refers to amassing knowledge, influence, and power (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Bourdieu (1986), whose work focused on structural inequities, identified three types of capital—economic, cultural, and social. Kao and Rutherford (2007) relied on definitions of social capital that are based on processes of social interactions leading to constructive outcomes. In addition, Coleman (1987) and Bourdieu (1986) promote a concept of social capital that is viewed from the individual level. This view of social capital rests on the premise that “my connections can help me” (Cross & Cummings, 2004; White, 2002, p. 260). Social capital is about establishing relationships purposefully and executing them to generate intangible and tangible benefits in the short and long terms. The benefits could be social, psychological, emotional, and economical (Lin, 1986). Coleman (1988) described three
components of social capital: (a) obligations and expectations of reciprocity in social relationships, (b) norms and social controls, and (c) information channels. Horvat, Weininger, and Lareau (2003) conducted an ethnographic study of 88 third grade children and their families to investigate the social class differences between families and schools and how social capital plays a role in the family–school interactions when there are problematic situations. Their findings suggested that working-class and poor parents interacted at an individual level and the networks that they may be connected to (i.e., church) did not offer support in their efforts. Conversely, middle-class parents often used the networks to act collectively. However, when they did act individually, there was the understanding that these parents had networks to draw on to support them in their efforts.

Kao and Rutherford's (2007) findings showed that social capital appears to facilitate favorable educational outcomes. Their findings suggested that parents of minority and immigrant children could increase academic success of their children by interacting with other parents through school events and volunteer activities. In other words, the type of relationship that parents' have with schools may be impacted by the networks, information channels, and relationships to which they are connected. Parents who have large amounts of social capital are more recognized and validated by the educational system (Lareau, 1987).

Cultural capital refers to histories, traditions, customs, and norms of a particular group. Cultural capital for parents is linked to the educational system in four different
forms: personal disposition, attitudes and knowledge, connections to education-related objects, and connections to education-related institutions (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Bourdieu (1976) argued that a high value is placed on the dominant cultural values. The characteristics of a ruling class are simply a reflection of their powerful position within society. A dominant class is able, in effect, to impose its definition of reality upon all other classes. Researchers Grenfell and James (1998) argued that some individuals have inherited capital through their powerful position in society that makes them more successful than others in the educational system. This may suggest that most parent involvement programs and practices may push a lens of involvement that does not take into account other sensitivities such as a parent’s education level, socioeconomic status, culture, and language. A qualitative study conducted by Symeou (2008) of both teachers and parents regarding parent–teacher networks in urban and rural schools in Texas found that these interactions were traditional in their ideological approach. Although partnerships were formed, it was one in which teachers knew what was best for the child and parents followed their lead. The study recommended that “schools should create more radical socio-cultural contexts that focus on the child in the context of the family” (p. 720). Teachers should create spaces and experiences where children’s home experiences are promoted, valued, modeled, and legitimized.
Types of Parent Involvement

Now let us turn our attention to the types of parental involvement. Understanding the types of parental involvement and its correlation with improved student and school academic outcomes are important to my study because it better explains what types of parental involvement activities are strongly correlated with my outcome of schools meeting their state mandated adequate yearly progress requirement. Literature revealed the practices and behaviors discussed by researchers that shape the definition of parental involvement rest in two domains—home based and school based. There are several different types of behaviors and activities depicted in each domain.

School-based parental involvement means that parents must come in contact with schools (Pomerantz & Ruble, 1998). This type of contact includes a continuum of interaction that runs the gamut from attending parent teacher conferences, school events, and contact with teachers or other personnel (Sheldon, 2002). The literature revealed that school-based parental involvement is one critical aspect that can help to determine the academic success of a child. Gronlick and Slowiaczek’s (1994) framework suggest there is a “difference between overall involvement with the child and the involvement in the child’s education” (p. 238). Although the literature states it is important that parents model the importance of school and education through their involvement, other researchers promote the theory that different types of parent involvement make the difference in the academic success of their child. For example, in Desimone’s (1999)
review and synthesis of literature that documents comprehensive school reform, she concluded there are four types of school-based involvement that make a difference in the academic success of children. Those activities that were school-based included (a) volunteering and fundraising at school, (b) involvement in parent–teacher organizations, (c) contact with schools about student’s progress, and (d) school contact with parents regarding student’s high school academic plan.

Home-based parental involvement is another perspective found in the literature that explores ways in which parents utilize their resources toward academic success for their children. Researchers have found that adolescents are positively affected when strong relationships exist between both home and school environments (DePlanty, Coulter-Kern, & Duchane, 2007). Literature also revealed that activities such as parent–child discussion about school, helping the child with homework, setting school-related rules at home, and sharing with child school-related aspirations of the parent all play a critical role in the social and emotional success of children (McKay, Atkins, Hawkins, Brown, & Lynn, 2005). Sheldon’s (2002) research implied that variables such as parents’ background, beliefs about education, and networks are all predictors of parental involvement at home. Other researchers, such as Fen and Chen (2001) who conducted a meta-analysis of 25 quantitative studies regarding the relationship between parental involvement and student academic achievement, and Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) who developed a multidimensional model of parent
involvement, concluded that parents' life contexts such as socioeconomic status, time, skill, knowledge, energy, and family culture are critical aspects. Dubois, Eitel, and Felner's (1994) 2-year longitudinal study of 157 adolescents ages 10–12 in small public schools in predominately poor and rural areas in Southeastern United States found that home-based parental involvement clearly had significant effects on student achievement.

Because of difficulties of operationally defining parental involvement, many researchers have concentrated their efforts on categorization of specific types of parent involvement. Early work in this area includes Gordon's (1977) classification of six types of parent involvement: (a) parents as by-standers, (b) parents as decision makers (e.g., PTA participation), (c) parents as classroom volunteers, (d) parents as paid paraprofessionals, (e) parents as learners, and (f) parents as teachers at home. Other researchers such as Williams and Chavkin (1989) have expanded with similar typologies.

Hester (1989) suggested five types of parent involvement that represent a broad spectrum of parent involvement activities and rank on a continuum from passive to active. The five types include the following:

1. Communication with parents—promote direct and personal contact between school faculty and parents.

2. Parents as teachers—provide opportunities for parents to work with their child on specific learning goals through homework projects and home administered tests.
3. Parents as supporters of activities—get parents involved in school activities as a way to enhance communication and relationships with school staff.

4. Parents as learners—provide parent education programs that are cooperatively developed with parents and staff.

5. Parents as advocates—emergence of a group of parents who are educational advocates willing to serve in capacities to help improve schools.

Hester noted that the communication support components embraced more of the traditional views of parent involvement, whereas parent as teachers and learners components embodied activities geared toward student achievement. Parents as advocates focused on activities that may result in legislative and policy changes for school reform.

Feuerstein’s (2000) study explored an array of school-level factors and their relationship to parental involvement. Data for the study was collected from the National Educational Longitudinal Study 1988 and includes survey data from 24,599 eighth-grade students, their parents, two of their teachers, and their principals. Through a component analysis, Feuerstein developed the following types of parent involvement across home-based and school-based factors:

Factor 1: Students talk with parents about school

Factor 2: Parent contact with school

Factor 3: Parent volunteerism

Factor 4: Parent expectations
Factor 5: Parent participation in PTO

Factor 6: Parents talk with student about school

Factor 7: Parent visit school

Factor 8: Structure of home-learning environment

Factor 9: Parents involved in grade placement decisions. (p. 34)

Feuerstein's study found that it may be difficult to stimulate parental involvement in the following areas: (a) students speaking to their parents about school, (b) the amount of time parents volunteer at school, (c) the expectation of parents for their children, (d) the amount of time parents become involved in PTA activities, and (e) the degree to which parents are involved in grade-placement decisions. Feuerstein's study also illustrated that contextual factors such as race, family size, socioeconomic status, percentage of students receiving free lunches at school, and school location (urban, suburban, or rural, and private vs. public schools) all played a role in the level of parent involvement. For example, the category of the amount of time that parents spend volunteering at school appeared to be lower for public school parents than private school parents. This decreased as school enrollment increased and was positively associated with higher socioeconomic status.

Sui-Chu and Willms (1996) attempted to describe what parents say they do to support their child's academic success. The researchers examined to what extent these activities influenced educational achievement and to what level family factors influenced
parent involvement. Sui-Chu and Willms also drew their data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study from a sample of 24,600 eighth-grade students from a stratified sample of 1,500 schools. Survey data was collected from parents and students. Achievement outcomes were measured by math and reading test scores. The following list illustrates the types of activities identified in the study:

- Student talk with mother
- Student talk with father
- Parent–student discuss child’s school program with child
- Parent–student discuss school activities
- Parent monitor school homework
- Parent limits TV time
- Parent limits student going out
- Parent at home after school
- School contacts parent
- Parent volunteers at school
- Parent belongs to PTO. (p. 131)

These identified categories included both home-based and school-based activities. When indexed, these activities fell into the following categories: home discussion, home supervision, school communication, and school participation.
Another leading body of research included Epstein’s (1995) framework for six types of parental involvement. Although this framework is not based on empirical evidence of what parents actually do to support their child’s education, it does offer a general framework of what parents should do. They include the following:

Type 1: Parenting—Help families establish home environments to support children as students.

Type 2: Communicating—Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs.

Type 3: Volunteering—Recruit and organize parent help and support.

Type 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.

Type 5: Decision Making—Include parents in schools decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.

Type 6: Collaborating with the Community—Identify and integrated resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices and student learning and development. (p. 141)

It is important to note that Epstein’s typology “offers a model of family-school-community partnerships based on the theory of overlapping spheres of home, school and community influences that shape children’s learning and development”
Although Epstein’s typology has been criticized for being school-based and Eurocentric, she recognized that parents participate in their children’s education along numerous dimensions (Smith & Wohlstetter, 2009). This model moves from individual activities of a parent and a teacher toward collaboration and partnership among parent, teacher, and community.

Likewise, Williams and Chavkin (1987) introduced six parental involvement roles:

1. Audience—Supporting their child as a member of the school community such as participating in bake sale and responding to messages and announcement from schools.

2. Home Tutor—Helping their own children at home assisting with school work or other educational materials.

3. Program Supporter—Assisting the school by participating in activities such as classroom volunteer, chaperoning field trip or party, organizing fund-raising school activity.

4. Co-learner—Attending in-service workshops with teachers and principals to learn more about teacher methods, child development or related topics.

5. Advocate—Making proposals (individually or through an organization) aimed at changing existing policies or practices in school or in the school systems or voicing opinions on educational needs, concerns or issues.
6. Decision Maker—Participating in school decisions by serving on an advisory board, school committee and/or governing board. (p. 174)

Williams and Chavkin (1987) studied perceptions of parental involvement across six states (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Texas). Surveys were distributed to 4,200 parents, 1,200 superintendents, and 662 board presidents. The surveys measured the attitudes regarding parental involvement, usefulness of parental involvement, most important roles of parental involvement, and the types of parental involvement activities offered by schools. Survey results of both school administrators and parents found that both groups have a strong interest in parental involvement. However, parental involvement was being interpreted in many different ways by parents, teachers, and administrators. Both parents and administrators agreed that parental involvement activities were more traditional and did not provide opportunities for parents to be involved in shared decision-making activities such as hiring, firing, evaluation of school personnel, or school budget decisions. Williams and Chavkin believed there is an opportunity for schools to offer fuller participation of parents in their child's education at both home and school. They offered the following guidelines to improve parental involvement programs:

Administrators need to look beyond traditional ways of working with parents.

School administrators need to be aware that parents are interested in both the traditional and the shared decision making forms of parent involvement.
Administrators need to collaborate with parents to develop a clear statement about the goals of parent involvement in their schools. The statement needs to be based on the fundamental belief that parents are as important to children’s academic success as teachers.

Based on interest of parents, administrators need to make certain that a variety of opportunities are available for parent involvement in the schools.

Administrators should be sensitive to parent’s skill levels, estimates of parent’s time, work schedule, and individual preferences in order to develop the most appropriate parent involvement activities.

Administrators need to help ensure that parents are more fully involved at all levels of the educational system. To facilitate this, administrators should make sure that parents are provided more information, ample opportunities to share insights and concerns and sufficient opportunities for partnership roles of with school staff.
In establishing the framework for parent involvement, administrators will need to view the various types of parent involvement as a developmental sequence from schools’ and parents’ point of view.

Administrators need to make more available the kind of appropriate resources for parent involvement efforts. In particular there should be staff, space and monetary resources identified and allocated for the implementation of effective parent involvement efforts. The provisions of these resources will help emphasize the importance of parent involvement in education and its demonstration to its success. (p. 182)

Williams and Chavkin (1987) concluded that the increasing call for change in education will not be an easy task. The needed change proposed dilemmas for both parents and administrators. Responses to the demand for change have been a mixed bag among school administrators. The research-based practical guidelines provide a starting point for developing and maintaining a partnership with parents through several different types of parent involvement activities.

Variables That Influence Parental Involvement

There are many variables that influence the type of and level of parental involvement. A deeper understanding are of these variables are important to my study because it provides greater insight regarding the motivational factors that influence why
parents become involved as well as factors that may contribute to principals and teachers’ perceptions of the lack of parental involvement.

Although federal educational policy may mandate parental involvement for districts receiving Title I funding and that local districts and individual schools design parent involvement policies and practices, it does not mean parents will actually participate. There are variables that influence both how and why parents may become involved in their children’s education. Studies show there are many variables that influence parental involvement and such variables have been categorized across both psychological and sociological dimensions. Griffith’s (1998) survey of 33,224 parents and 26,904 elementary students in 122 U. S. public elementary schools regarding school structure and social environment to parental involvement in schools revealed a set of sociological and psychological variables both at the individual and the school level that contribute to parent involvement. Several researchers have found that there are motivational factors for parent involvement (Griffith, 2000; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler, & Hoover-Dempsey; 2005).

One highly cited research is by Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005), who developed a multidimensional model based on four psychological contributing factors of parents becoming involved in their children’s education. These variables included (a) parental role construction, or parents’ beliefs about what they should do in the context of their
child's education; (b) parental self-efficacy for helping the child succeed in school, or how much parents believed they could improve children’s school outcomes; (c) parents’ perceptions of general invitations for involvement from the school; and (d) parents’ life contexts such as socioeconomic status, culture, and family structure. The first three psychological aspects are important for my study and will be discussed in more detail. These factors are a set of characteristics that illustrate both behavioral and cognitive dimensions of parental involvement. An examination of these factors by Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) led to the following assertion:

Across the findings and suggestions, there are themes of empowerment for all participants in children’s schooling and all concerned with respecting and enhancing parents’ contributions to children’s school success. With particular reference to our focus here on parents, there are thus strong suggestions that school attention to parents’ personal motivations for involvement, and family life-context variables persistent to involvement can support personal motivation and positive influence on student outcomes. (pp. 123–124)

Walker et al. (2005) revised the Hoover-Dempsey scale model into five categories. The first three categories examine the psychological predictors such as parents’ motivational beliefs, parent perceptions of invitations, and perceived life contexts. The fourth category examines the parents’ involvement forms defined as school-based behaviors and home-based behaviors. Lastly, the researchers explored the
reciprocal relationship between the theory and measurement constructs. This type of scale model provided the opportunity to measure parent involvement along many different types of psychological dimensions. For instance using this multidimensional framework, Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, and Sandler (2007) found that parents’ relationship to teachers and children is a strong motivating factor for parent involvement. In addition, intrapersonal and interpersonal psychological factors such as perception of invitation to involvement from teachers, motivational beliefs, and perceived life contexts were found to be strong predictors of home and school-based involvement as well as self-efficacy and time and energy for involvement. Research findings suggested that understanding the psychological underpinnings of parent involvement is critical in designing and implementing programs, policies, and practices.

In addition to psychological factors, many researchers have examined sociological factors as strong predictors of motivation for parent involvement (Bauch & Goldring, 1995; Fine, 1993; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1992). These factors are often contextual and speak to the characteristics and family structures of parent and child. Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski, and Apostoleris’ (1997) study of a diverse sample of 209 mothers, their third- through fifth-grade children, and 28 teachers across four public elementary schools in the Northeast identified contextual characteristics that included educational status, income level, ethnicity, and marital status. Their examination of parent involvement is an “ecological cross-disciplinary perspective which takes into
account the family context and the behaviors as a key contributor to the way resources are allotted to a child” (p. 539). There is considerable evidence that student achievement is linked with socioeconomic status that includes parent’s influence, education, income, and occupational status (Drummond & Stripek, 2004; Fan, 2001; Lawson, 2003). Other research has examined the relationship between ethnicity, parent involvement, and student achievement (Keith & Lichtman, 1994; Mau, 1997; Yan, 2000). The social arrangements in a family’s life can have critical influence on their level of involvement. The sociological factors can also contribute to the psychological approach that a parent takes in their child’s education. Let us take a deeper look into these characteristics.

*Psychological Characteristics*

Many researchers are not only asking how parents engage but also understanding why parents become involved in their children’s education and how their involvement influences their child’s educational outcomes. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s (1997) model noted that parental involvement is motivated by two beliefs: role construction and parental efficacy. Both of these beliefs promote the premise that the parent has a sense of shared responsibility and that their actions with their child will help them succeed. Gronlick et al.’s (1997) study of parental involvement from an individual, contextual, and institutional perspective concluded that when parents see themselves as efficacious and in the role of a teacher to their child, they are more likely to become involved in their child’s education. They recommended that cultural factors such as parents’ ideas about
how to teach their children should be factored in efforts to increase parental involvement. This is an important factor when dealing with low-income parents who may lack social and civic capacity as well empowerment in community and with institutions.

Involvement is more than just an activity. It is a set of relationships that help to shape the parental involvement experience. How parents see themselves in relationship to schools as well as their role in the home is very important to their ongoing involvement. Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Jones, and Reed (2002) identified three major categories that are very important to understanding parent role construction: (a) parent-focused, (b) school-focused, and (c) partnership-focused role construction. Parent-focused construction stresses the parent’s responsibility in the child’s educational outcomes. School-focused role construction emphasizes the school or teacher’s responsibility to successfully educate children. Lastly, partnership-role construction is the belief that parent and teacher share the responsibility to educate children.

Another important psychological factor is parent’s sense of efficacy and refers to their perceived level of effectiveness in helping their children in school (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). In addition, Drummond and Stripek’s (2004) study investigated whether economically disadvantaged parents from diverse ethnic backgrounds believe it is their responsibility to be involved in their children’s schooling and found that most parents strongly value being a part of their child’s education. This finding contradicts what many schools report as a lack of interest on parents’ part to
become involved in their child’s education. Greenwood and Hickman (1991) asserted that teachers and administrators simply do not know how to involve parents.

The concept of self-efficacy also refers to how well one uses judgments to execute courses of action necessary to deal with potential situations (Bandura, 1992). What a parent believes about themselves translate into the type of behavior they will execute on behalf of their children. Self-efficacy theory suggested that parents make their decisions to become involved based on their perception of what type of outcomes will follow their actions (Bandura, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1992).

Another component of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) model was parents’ perceptions of general invitations for involvement from the school and the child. The perception that parents’ involvement in school is welcomed looks at the invitations, opportunities, and expectation of involvement from both school and child. There is considerable research on the influences of school practices on parent-school involvement. Souto-Manning and Swick (2006) argued that if the norms of a school do not signal the value and importance of parents’ role in school, then parent–teacher isolation can become a standard way to operate. In addition, Epstein (1986) and Epstein and Dauber (1991) found that teacher involvement and teacher’s invitations to parents influenced their involvement. This study argued that it is imperative to “build common understanding about shared goals and common support among teacher, parent and principal so that teachers’ feelings of isolation and separateness from others will decrease
and so that school and family partnerships will increase” (p. 301). Espstein and Dauber’s (1991) research suggested the more positive perceptions of invitations from school personnel will lead to increased involvement from parents, especially those with diverse cultural backgrounds and low-income economic status.

Using a hierarchical model suggested by Gronlick, Benjet, Kurowski, and Apostoleris (1997), Riblatt, Beatty, Cronan, and Ochoa’s (2002) study examined the time spent in direct parental involvement, parents’ perceived beliefs about factors that hinder parent involvement, and beliefs of time spent in their child’s education when sociological and demographic factors are considered. The study participants included 506 parents of children in the San Diego County school system that completed a questionnaire on parent’s perceptions of what facilitated or hindered their involvement in their child’s education. The study looked at how parents’ roles are constructed in a family and institutional context. The study found that there was both a set of institutional and contextual factors that affect parents’ beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions about their involvement. The study found that overall, parents did not see a strong correlation of their involvement in a school-based context. They spent very little time on school-based general issues (3%) and only about 5% of their time on school-specific issues. However, the study did reveal that parents see their role more closely linked to child-focused activities. Most parents see their role in their child’s education being more home-based. These parents prefer investing their social capital at home by spending more time helping
with homework and supervising the educational attainment of their child at home, with the expectation that such involvement will increase their child’s success in school.

Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, and Sandler (2007) examined parental involvement across several of the variables including parent’s motivational beliefs, perceptions of invitation, and perceived life contexts as it relates to parent involvement. Surveys were administered to 853 parents of fifth- through sixth-grade students enrolled in an ethnically diverse metropolitan school system in the mid-Southern United States. Multiple hierarchical regressions were conducted to test the power of the model constructs to predict parents’ home-based and school-based involvement. The variables included psychological motivators—role activity belief and parental self-efficacy, invitations for involvement from teacher and child, life context—skills/knowledge and time/energy; and involvement behaviors—school based and home based. Variables such as parental role activity beliefs, parental self-efficacy, specific invitations from a child, and parental perceptions of time and energy all explained significant amounts of variance. However, general invitations from school, teacher invitations, and self-perceived skills and knowledge were not significant predictors of involvement. Specifically, parents’ home-based involvement was predicted by perceptions of specific child invitations, self-efficacy beliefs, and self-perceived time and energy for involvement. Self-efficacy was a strong positive predictor for home-based involvement, but a small negative predictor for school-based involvement. These variables remained
significant even when family status variables such as parent’s income and educational level were added in to the data analyses.

*Sociological Characteristics*

There are several sociological variables that may influence parents’ involvement (Fuller & Olsen, 1998). Studies have shown that the lack of parental involvement may stem from family characteristics including low family income, level of education, family structure, and cultural and language barriers (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Eccles & Harold, 1993). Barriers to involvement that may exist for low-income parents include logistical limitations such as lack of childcare, time, energy, and transportation (Wanat, 1997). Many families want to see their children succeed in school; however, not all families may have the resources and opportunities to be involved.

Family socioeconomic status has often been a variable of interest in studies of parental involvement, and the results have been mixed (Fan & Chen, 2001). For example, one study suggested that parents of higher socioeconomic status are more involved in their child’s education than parents of lower socioeconomic status (Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996). Another study showed that there is no correlation between socioeconomic status and parental involvement (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992).

Although findings may be mixed, some studies have shown correlation between parent involvement and socioeconomic status. A study by Weissberg, Kasprow, and Fendrich (1999) involving 1,025 urban kindergarten through third-grade children for 3
consecutive years found that intercorrelations among minority status, lunch subsidy, and family structure were difficult to interpret with other variables. However, when each one of these variables was examined separately, they each correlated significantly with parent involvement and school performance variables. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1987) conducted a study of 66 elementary schools with participating principals and teachers. The sample included eight school districts in a mid-Southern state serving urban, suburban, and rural populations. The study examined parent involvement related to variables such as school socioeconomic status, teacher degree level, grade level, class size, teacher efficacy, principal perception of teacher efficacy, and instructional coordination. The study found that school socioeconomic status had significant correlation with parent volunteers and perceptions of parent support. Moreover, schools with higher average socioeconomic status reported more parents as volunteers in the schools.

Another study that examined the relationship between employment and family involvement of elementary school children for low-income mothers found that although challenges existed for parent involvement, mothers who worked and attend school part time were more involved in their child’s schooling than low-income mothers who worked or attended school full time (Weiss et al., 2003). Lareau (1987) also suggested that the amount of non-work time that parents can invest in their child’s education can affect the degree of parent behavior and parental involvement. However, family–school interactions
are almost always designed to evaluate the parent behaviors and not the school’s response to these sociological contexts.

Sui-Chu and Willms’ (1996) study drawn from a sample of 1,052 public and private schools from the NELS data set of eighth-grade students showed a statistically significant positive relationship between parental involvement and socioeconomic status. However, the researchers noted that the effect sizes were relatively small and it depended on the type of parental involvement being examined. Family socioeconomic status had no relationship on the level of home supervision. In addition, there was a moderate relationship to the other three dimensions of involvement—home discussion, school communication, and school participation.

Jeyne’s (2007) study found that socioeconomic status does have an effect on parent involvement. This coincided with past research that socioeconomic status correlates with parent involvement. However, the researcher noted that there are other causal factors beyond socioeconomic status that influence parent involvement. These factors need to be taken into account to effectively understand the relationship between parental family structure and socioeconomic status.

Some researchers have argued that such findings indicate that socioeconomic status variables are not as important as contextual processes that motivate parents’ involvement, such as school invitations to involvement and parents’ social networks (e.g., Sheldon, 2003). Research by Smock and McCormick (1995) focused on parent
involvement in homework and school, based on a random sample of 322 households with one or more children attending the urban public schools. The authors could not determine that employment status, race, income, parent’s level of education, or marital status was significantly related to parent involvement. Fine (1993) contended that socioeconomic status impacted the way the educational system perceives and accepts parental involvement: low-income minority parents are perceived as “needing containment” and high-socioeconomic parents are the elite and controlling group. Chavkin (1989) pointed out that parents from lower income status want to be involved just as much as other parents. They are not only interested in supporting their children at home but also want to participate fully in school activities and decision making.

Perceptions of Parental Involvement

As Fan and Chen (2001) suggested, parent involvement has differing theoretical perspectives of involvement. For years, the impact of parental involvement on education has been studied, and though there are differences among some researchers, most concluded that parental involvement plays a pivotal role in the education of students. There is a growing body of research that suggest when parents and school personnel work together it can lead to increased student achievement (Ferris, 1992; Riblatt, Beatty, Cronan, & Ochoa, 2002). Moreover, researchers believe that perceptions held by teachers and principals can affect the level of parental involvement in their child’s education both at school and at home (Anfara & Brown, 2003; Smerekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001; Turney
& Kao, 2009). Policy and school reform efforts that promote more involvement from parents and community comes with assumptions and implications for teachers and principals (Leithwood & Prestine, 2002). Even though both teachers and principals believe that a child’s academic success is important, perceptions on how and to what degree parents should be involved varies. This is important to know because my study will examine the trend of principals’ and teachers’ perceptions regarding parental involvement. By having a deeper understanding of principals’ and teachers’ perceptions of parents and their involvement with their child’s academic success, I will be able to better illustrate the effect that principals’ and teachers’ perceptions may have on parental involvement.

Teachers’ Perceptions

Teachers play a crucial role in the education of our nation’s children. Their attitudes, beliefs, and actions toward parental involvement have been found to be a critical factor of parental involvement programs (Addi-Raccha & Arviv-Elyashiv, 2008; Griffith, 1998; Lawson, 2003; Watkins, 1997). Teachers’ perceptions of parents and their involvement are developed by history, culture, and school practices (Lazar & Slosad, 1999). The perceptions that teachers hold about parents and how parents should be involved can help or hinder parental involvement.

Qualitative research conducted by Barge and Loges (2003) found that teachers’ perception of how parents should be involved falls into one of four themes, (a)
participation in the child’s school and home life, (b) communications with teachers, (c) child supervision, and (d) support of school enacted discipline.

Several studies have revealed that the perceptions of teachers regarding parent involvement in school and their child’s education play a critical role in school–home partnerships (Becher, 1986; DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2005; Epstein & Becker, 1982; Izzo & Weissberg, 1999). Dauber and Epstein’s (1993) quantitative study of 177 teachers found the following regarding teachers’ perception of parental involvement:

1. The individual teacher is a key factor but not the only factor in building strong school programs.

2. Programs and practices were stronger in schools where teachers perceived that they, their colleagues, and parents all felt strongly about the importance of parent involvement.

3. Teachers were more assertive about what they wanted from parents than what they wanted to do for parents. Almost all teachers reported that they expected parents to fulfill responsibilities ranging from teaching their children to behave to knowing what children are expected to know each year to helping their children with homework. However, there were few programs that teachers implemented to help parents attain these skills.

4. Teachers agreed that parent involvement is important for student success and teacher effectiveness. (p. 55)
In Lawson's (2003) ethnographic study, 12 teachers and 13 parents were interviewed at the Garfield Elementary School—an ethnically diverse, low-income Midwestern community on their perceptions of parental involvement. The results of Lawson's study revealed that teachers had the perception that parents of Garfield Elementary are not interested in their children's education and schooling. Although teachers and parents were child focused, their frames of reference continued to put them at odds with one another. Teachers articulated a school-centric frame in which teachers believed that because they were trained professionals, their values and opinions should govern issues surrounding children's education and schooling. However, parent responses reflected a community-centric perspective that promoted their theories of involvement from the context of culture and their world views. In addition, because teachers felt parents were not invested in their children's education, their approach to parental involvement shaped and reinforced a deficit model and assumptions about parents' beliefs and behaviors.

Research conducted by DePlanty, Coulter-Kern, and Dechane (2007) with 22 teachers and other staff found that teacher's perceptions regarding parental involvement focused on home involvement by citing the need for parents to ensure that students completed their homework was one of the important themes. When asked what type of involvement was most important, teachers and faculty in this study indicated that parent involvement at home is far more important than school or community involvement.
Gordon and Louis (2009) surveyed 157 principals and 4,491 teachers and interviewed stakeholders from 18 school districts and 36 schools across the country to examine how teachers and principals can better organize their efforts to increase stakeholder involvement as a way to increase student achievement. A part of this study examined the parent–teacher shared leadership and teachers’ perceptions of parental involvement. The study found the highest correlation between those teachers who perceive having more influence on decision making and practice shared leadership believe that parents should also be more involved and have influence on school improvement efforts. In addition, the study found when using building-level math achievement as an outcome, teachers’ shared leadership variables and teachers’ perceptions of parent influence were positively and significantly associated with student math achievement.

Izzo, Weissberg, Kasprov, and Fendrich’s (1999) longitudinal study obtained information of parental involvement and school performance for 1,205 urban, kindergarten through third-grade children for 3 consecutive years. Teachers were asked to complete questionnaires in the following areas of parental involvement: (a) frequency of parent–teacher contact, (b) quality of parent–teacher interactions, (c) participation in educational activities at home, and (d) participation in school activities. Teachers who reported having frequent contact with parents (two or more), being satisfied with those contacts, having a constructive working relationship with parents, and knowing that
parents engaged with their child in educational activities in the home found that second-
and third-grade students on average achieved on reading and math placing them at 63rd
and 48th percentiles. This study also found a strong positive correlation between the
number of contacts and teachers’ perception of quality parent–teacher interactions. This
finding may suggest that schools should focus attention on promoting more constructive
interactions between parents and teachers.

Hughes, Gleason, and Zhang (2005) examined the association among child
demographic variables, teacher perceptions of parent–teacher and student–teacher
relationship quality, and teacher perceptions of children’s academic abilities across an
ethnically diverse sample of 607 at-risk first-grade students. The researchers developed a
teacher-report home–school relationship questionnaire to obtain information regarding
parental involvement in education. Measures for the instrument were adopted from
Parent–Teacher Involvement Questionnaire—Teacher-Report and the Joining Scale of
the Parent–Teacher Relationship Scale. There were two exploratory factors used: (a)
alliance—I can talk to and be heard by this parent and (b) general parent
involvement—frequency of parent asking questions or making suggestions about their
child’s education. The study showed that teachers’ perceptions of parental involvement
were positively associated with teachers’ perceptions of the child’s ability. In other
words, when teachers viewed their relationship with parents as less positive, they rated
children as less academically capable. It is also important to note that teachers reported
higher relationship quality with Hispanic and White parents relative to African American parents.

A quantitative study conducted by Barnyak and Mc Nelley (2009) examined the practices and beliefs of administrators and teachers of parental involvement across an urban school district in Pennsylvania. The study adapted the Parent Involvement Inventory published by the Illinois State Board of Education in 1994. The instrument asked administrators and teachers to provide information regarding family involvement practices on a range of areas such as teacher-coach, supporter-volunteer, communicator, learner, advocate-decision maker, and home-school-community partners. The study revealed that both administrators and teachers believed that parents should be involved in the education of their children both at school and at home. The study further indicated that school staff indicated positive attitudes toward school and parent partnerships. However, there was a mismatch between what principals and teachers believed and what they practiced. For example, teachers and principals agreed and/or strongly agreed that they should be accessible to parents during prep time, after school, before school, by appointment, and by e-mail. However, results on the practice of these activities were negatively associated.

Teacher efficacy has been investigated by researchers as being a critical variable affecting teachers’ perceptions of parent involvement. Teacher efficacy refers to a teacher’s own beliefs and attitude about the effectiveness of their teaching. Teacher
efficacy has been defined as "the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the
capacity to affect student performance" (Berman, McLaughlin, Bass, Pauly, & Zellman,
schools in eight school districts across large mid-Southern state. Questionnaires were
distributed to 66 principals and 1,003 teachers to examine the hypothesis that varying
levels of parental involvement would be related to variations of school qualities. The
results of this study discussed the complementary role of parent–teacher interactions and
the implications for increasing productive interconnections. In this study, teacher efficacy
was significantly correlated with perceptions of parental support. The study described
teacher efficacy related to four types of parental involvement practices: (a) conferences,
(b) parent volunteers, (c) parents as tutors, and (d) teacher perception regarding support
of parents. An Epstein and Dauber (1991) study of 171 teachers in eight inner-city
elementary and middle schools that examined the connection between parent involvement
programs and teachers' attitudes and practices found that perceptions of efficacy held by
teachers influence the strength of parent involvement programs. The schools with more
confident teachers reported more involvement from parents. Their conclusion was the
schools with more efficacious teachers use proactive involvement strategies to reach
parents.
Principals’ Perceptions of Parental Involvement

School principals have the enormous responsibility of making sure that the “school unit” is achieving the ultimate goal of educating our children. It is up to principals to draw on necessary skills, knowledge, and resources in order to produce children who are able to achieve academic success. With federal policy such as the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act that requires parental involvement in education, it is the ultimate responsibility of the school principal to create an environment that links families and schools working in partnership to improve the academic outcomes of students. There is a growing body of research that argues the role of the principal is critical in successful parent involvement programs as well as points to the significant correlation between principal leadership and the quantity and quality of parental involvement programs (Chavkin & Williams, 1989; Gordon & Louis, 2009).

Flynn and Nolan’s (2008) study of 144 principals of private, public, and parochial schools in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, New York investigated principals’ perceptions of teacher–parent communication and collaboration and the principals’ role in facilitating these relationships. The research revealed that more than 80% of principals thought parents’ feeling overwhelmed with daily responsibilities as a primary reason for lack of their involvement in their child’s education. Other principal perceptions revealed in the study included parents not understanding the importance of their role and the perception that many parents harbor preexisting negative feelings about school. Principals also
shared perceptions regarding the lack of parental involvement that dealt with the ineffectiveness of teachers. This includes teachers’ lack of confidence and skill, teachers’ feeling parents may threaten their authority, and teachers’ lack of understanding the critical role parents play in a child’s education. The researchers recommended that increasing parent involvement starts with the principal promoting a school climate that support strategies to (a) invite parents into classroom activities and onto decision-making committees; (b) provide frequent information to parents regarding school policy, student progress, and school programs; (c) provide workshops for parents and better understanding the parents’ needs; and (d) create family support programs that go beyond the need of the student to offer assistance to parents (i.e., health issues, GED, and literacy).

There are many perspectives on what should be the role of a principal in educating students. One school of thought is that principals should be only concerned with instruction and seen as a master teacher only involved in improving academic instruction (Danley & Burch, 1978; Edmonds, 1979). Others believe that principals should be more concerned with providing coordination among classroom teachers, understanding the needs to the external environment (parents and community), and being the link between the external environment and the school (Anfara & Brown, 2003; Bredsen 1985). Anfara and Brown’s (2003) study pointed to multiple roles of a principal including an instructional leader, external bridge builder, and resource coordinator.
Expanding the role of the principal leadership and linking effective principal leadership to the activity of parent involvement in schools have been a source of concentration since the 1980s. With federal educational initiatives such as NCLB, the leadership of initiating and maintaining parent and family connections is becoming increasingly important. Strategies to increase parent involvement in urban schools across the country has been challenging for school principals.

Leech and Fulton’s (2008) study surveyed 1,841 urban school teachers to explore the relationship of teachers’ perceptions of the leadership behaviors of secondary principals and their perceptions of the level of shared decision making. The leadership behaviors were based on Kouzes and Posner’s (1997) Leadership Practice Inventory and the Shared Educational Decisions Making Survey–Revised developed by Ferrara (1994). The research revealed 34 significant relationships between the leadership behaviors of the principal and level of shared decision making. The strongest relationship was found between challenging the process and the level of shared decision making in policy development. This study found implications on two supporting structures that involved inclusion of multiple stakeholders—communications and staff development. The study concluded that higher levels of shared decision making by principals led to communication and information sharing with parents and community stakeholders.

Griffith’s (2000) study filled an empirical gap of principals’ behaviors on parent involvement. The study analyzed survey data from principals about their behaviors and
the relation of their behavior to survey data collected from parents regarding their involvement in their child’s academic achievement. The study collected data from 78 principals and 13,768 parents of 82 urban elementary, middle, and high schools across seven geographical areas. Behavioral roles of principals were based on Beck and Murphy’s (1993) set of principal behaviors and roles. These include the following:

1. Master Teacher: Concerned with instructional content.
2. Administrative Agent: Concerned with curriculum, instruction and student achievement.
3. Gamesmen: Concerned with being a bridge between school environment and external environment.
4. Maintenance Manager: Concerned with programming, planning and operations.
5. Missionary: Concerned with meeting the social needs of students, staff and parents.

Results suggested that principals who utilized the gamesmen role were more effective in parents’ perceptions regarding being more informed and feeling more empowered by the school. Results showed that principals’ perceptions of utilizing the master teacher role were associated with parents being more empowered, helping with their children’s homework, PTA attendance, and parents being more informed. Principals who perceived themselves in the missionary role were associated with parents’
perceptions of positive school climate and empowerment. Principals who associate themselves with the administrative role were associated with parent perceptions of being informed, a positive school climate, and parents helping with homework.

Mechanisms for School-Based Parental Involvement

There is an intuitive appeal to the idea that parent involvement has a positive impact on students’ academic achievement. For decades researchers have tried to link parental involvement to successful student outcomes. Decades of research point to the numerous benefits of parent involvement for children, parents and the community (Epstein, 2001; Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2007; Lee & Bowen, 2006). Studies of parent involvement illustrated that there are many variables that link parent involvement and student achievement. Many studies have shown positive and significant effects of parent involvement on both academic and behavioral outcomes of children (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2005; Watkins, 1997). Such information is important to know for my study because the outcome that I am examining is school academic achievement, which is directly linked to students being able to reach academic achievement and grade-level proficiency.

Fan and Chen (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of the quantitative literature about the relationship between parent achievement and students’ academic achievement. Two types of meta-analyses were conducted. The first analysis included correlation coefficients between parental involvement and student achievement. The second analysis
took into account the issue of study effects. Because the studies had multiple effect sizes, they were averaged and the average effect size was used in Fan and Chen’s analysis. In addition, many of the studies included in Fan and Chen’s meta-analysis also included different indicators of students’ academic achievement that range from global indicators such as school GPA to standardized test scores to specific academic areas such as math grades. They found that the measurable effect of parental involvement on students’ achievement may be different depending on the achievement measure. Their review led them to assert:

Researchers who plan to examine the relationship between parental involvement and students’ academic achievement should pay special attention to the operational definition and measurement of parental involvement and should carefully document such definition and measurement. If possible, different dimensions of parent involvement should be measured separately, instead of being summed up into a general composite. Also in the future studies, researchers should carefully consider how academic achievement can be measured most appropriately. (p. 17)

Fan and Chen’s review revealed some basic influences on parent involvement. Their findings included the following:

• Overall parental involvement and students’ academic achievement are positively related.
• There are considerable inconsistencies between parent involvement and students’ academic achievement in specific academic subject (e.g. math, science, or social studies).

• There is a high positive correlation between parent involvement and student achievement when the overall measurement is broad and general (e.g., GPA).

• Parent supervision at home does not have a strong relationship with student academic success.

• Parent’s aspiration and expectation for children’s educational achievement appeared to have the strongest relationship with students’ academic achievement.

Izzo, Weissberg, Kasprow, and Fendrich (1999) examined ways that parent involvement relates to children’s social and academic achievement in school. The study assessed parent involvement, classroom behavior, and academic achievement through a 3-year longitudinal design. Teachers provided information about parent involvement and school performance for urban children kindergarten through third grade. The study found different levels of association between school performance and each one of the parental involvement variables. The Teacher-Parent Survey asked teachers to report on four parental involvement areas: (a) number of contacts with parents, (b) quality of interactions with parents, (c) teachers’ perceptions of parent participation in school activities, and (d) teachers’ perceptions of parent participation with child at home. The
Teacher–Child Rating Scale examined class grades and achievement test scores. Although there is an inherent limitation of the study in that participating teachers could easily bias their assessment of parents, the study revealed some noteworthy results. For instance, as the child got older, teachers recognized a decline in parent–teacher interactions but no significant change in home-based involvement. In addition, the home-based parent involvement predicted academic achievement significantly stronger than other parent involvement variables. Teacher perceptions of strong relationships with parents also strongly correlated school performance. Another strong predictor of academic success was the quality of parent–teacher interactions.

Hill and Tyson (2009) noted that there has been a growing body of research focused on parent involvement in education during the middle school years. The researchers conducted a meta-analysis of existing research on parental involvement in middle schools to determine what type of parent involvement is positively associated with the academic success of middle school students. The authors limited their review of the literature to published studies between 1985 and 2006. This review generated 50 research reports that talked about the different types of parental involvement (both home-based and school-based) and the achievement outcomes on middle school students. They found that there is a positive correlation between general parental involvement and student achievement. However, a deeper analysis of the data revealed certain types of parental involvement that were strong predictors. For instance, the strongest predictor of
student achievement was academic socialization. Academic socialization refers to parents' communication of their expectations and aspirations for their children. It also involves planning for the child's future, discussing strategies for learning with children, and linking what they are learning in school with students' other interests and goals. School-based activities also had a positive correlation but not as strong as academic socialization. These school-based activities include helping teachers with classroom preparation, fundraising, or parent committee work. Interestingly, their findings for other types of home-based involvement were mixed. In some instances activities like monitoring and checking homework was shown to both help and hinder achievement (Cooper, 1989, 2007). This meta-analysis found that there was a negative effect of such activities on student involvement and noted this could be due to an infringement on a student's autonomy.

Other researchers such as Stewart (2008) examined the extent to which individual-level and school structural variables are predictors of academic achievement among a sample of 10th grade high school students. The study looked at individual-level characteristics such as student effort, peer associations, and parental school involvement. School structural characteristics included three dimensions of school climate—school culture, school organizational structure, and school social milieu. Other important characteristics examined include physical location (e.g., urban, rural, and suburban) as well as socioeconomic status of the school's student body. This multilevel analysis found
that parent–child discussions were significantly associated with academic achievement. However, for high school students, the relationship between parental school involvement and students’ academic achievement was not substantiated.

Jeynes’ (2007) study focused on students’ academic school achievement of both middle school and high school grades 6th-12th and its relationship to parent involvement. This meta-analysis study examined 52 quantitative studies that assessed urban secondary school achievement and parent involvement. The study examined the characteristics of parent involvement across four areas: (a) the effects of parental involvement on the educational attainment of urban students, (b) whether parental involvement programs affect student academic achievement, (c) specific aspects of parental involvement that help urban children, and (d) whether the relationship between parental involvement and educational outcomes hold true across racial and gender groups. The units of measures for academic achievement included standardized test scores and grades. Parental involvement variables included the following:

- **General parental involvement** included the overall measure of parental involvement, as defined by the researchers of a particular study.

- **Specific parental involvement** included a specific measure of parental involvement, as distinguished from other measures of parental involvement used in the study.
• *Parental expectation* was the degree to which a student’s parents maintained high expectations of the student’s ability to achieve at high levels.

• *Attendance and participation* was whether and how frequently parents attend and participate in school functions and activities.

• *Communication* was the extent to which parents and their children communicated about school activities and reported a high level of communication overall.

• *Homework* was the extent to which parents checked their children’s homework before the child handed it in to his or her teacher.

• *Parental style* was the extent to which a parent demonstrated a supportive and helpful parenting approach. (p. 89)

The overall results of this study indicated that parental involvement does have a positive impact on student academic achievement. One critical finding of this study was that parental involvement is associated with higher academic achievement for racial minority students. Another pattern that emerged from the study is parental involvement, such as parental style and expectations, had a more significant impact on student educational outcomes than more concrete aspects such as household rules, and parental participation in school meetings, functions, and events.

In a study conducted by Hill and Craft (2003), a correlation was found between African American parents and their involvement in their child’s education. For instance,
an increase in math performance and the ability to complete classroom assignments were found to be correlated with parent involvement activities that included volunteering in the classroom and sending materials to the school. The authors concluded that involvement of parents provided them with information about skills that increased their ability to assist their children in their academic performance.

In addition to parental involvement increasing the individual students’ academic performance, researchers have also examined the benefits parent involvement has on the schools. Pena (2000) found that inner-city schools that invite and are open to parent involvement outperform those schools that do not have these types of programs. Mark Warren (2005) contended that urban schools will improve only when it is linked to school–community partnerships and greater parent involvement. The author identified a conceptual framework that promoted social capital and relational power theories through comprehensive case studies. The study found that models such as community schools promoted and improved student learning through a family engagement model that used the school to bring holistic services to children and families. The study found several mechanisms through which school–community partnerships can lead to improved outcomes for children. In addition, building social capital among educators, parents, and community leaders expand the capacities of schools in the following ways:

- Increased support parents give at home
- Involved parent and community support into the school and classroom
• Improved teaching by increasing understanding of children and family needs
• Created coordinated action by teachers, parents, and community members for holistic child development
• Fostered accountability to an organized and informed stakeholder group of parents and community members.

Research indicated that parent involvement can bring widespread benefits to schools as they seek to meet state academic accountability requirements, improve school environment, and meet federal policy objectives.

Parental Involvement In Key School Decisions

Since the 1970s, there have been several efforts of school reform across the country to improve school performance. However it was not until the mid 1980s with the release of The National Commission on Excellence in Education 1983 Report: A Nation at Risk that reform efforts started to turn the focus toward standardized testing, merit pay for educators, and more strenuous graduation requirements. NCLB (2001) has put even more emphasis on improved student outcomes and school accountability (Talley & Keedy, 2006). Many schools across the country have adopted and implemented reform efforts to help improve school educational accountability and outcomes. These reform efforts mechanisms vary in their structure, approach, and design. Although some of these models are highly centralized and promote a top-down approach with school administrators and educators in charge, many others are highly decentralized that utilize more inclusive
practices that involve teachers, parents, and community members (Borman, Hewes, et al., 2003). The more centralized approach is more commonly known as site-based management or school-based management councils. These councils are structures that embody processes for principals to work collaboratively with school employees, students, parents, and community in making decisions that affect the school. This review will focus on those decentralized models that include parents in school management issues. This will be important to better understand because my study will examine school based governance mechanisms that involve parents in key school decisions and if parents' involvement is correlated with schools meeting their adequate yearly progress.

**Characteristics of Governance Models**

In January 2002, The U.S. Department of Education combined the Comprehensive School Reform Program that provides funding for site-based reform and 2001 No Child Left Behind Act under the same legislation. This legislation is a critical component of NCLB that supports scientifically based approach school reform (Borman et al., 2003). The U.S. Department of Education (2002) defines comprehensive school reform on 11 components:

1. Employs proven methods for student learning, teaching, and school management that are founded on scientifically based research and effective practices and have been replicated in schools;
2. Integrates instruction, assessment, classroom management, professional development, parental involvement and school management;

3. Provides high-quality and continuous teacher and staff professional development;

4. Includes measurable goals for student academic achievement and established benchmarks for achieving those goals;

5. Is supported by teachers, principals, administrators, and other staff throughout the school;

6. Provides support for teachers, principals, administrators, and other school staff by creating shared leadership and a broad base of responsibility for reform efforts;

7. Provides for meaningful involvement of parents and the local community in planning, implementing, and evaluating school improvement activities;

8. Uses high-quality external technical support assistance from an entity that has experience and expertise in school-wide reform and improvement, which may include an institution of higher education;

9. Includes a plan for the annual evaluation of the implementation of the school reforms and the student results achieved;
10. Identifies the available federal, state, local, and private financial and other resources that schools can use to coordinate services that support and sustain the school reform effort; and

11. Meets one of the following requirements: Either the program has been found, through scientifically based research, to significantly improve the academic achievement of participating students; or strong evidence has shown that the program will significantly improve the academic achievement of participating children.

Overall, site-based management councils are mechanisms that provide the opportunity and access for parents to become involved in decision making regarding key school issues. The governance models are generally decentralized and democratic in nature. The councils are formal structures that include school administrators, teachers, parents, and other community members (Malen & Ogawa, 1988). The premise of these type models is that decision-making authority is shared between the school professional and other stakeholders (Wholsetter, Smyer, & Mohrman, 1994). “By altering decision making relationships, site-based management councils could make schools more responsive to their clients and constituents, more receptive to innovation, and more deserving of public support” (Wholsetter, Smyer, & Mohrman, 1994, p. 251).

Researchers have identified three types of site-based management models that are prevalent in the current school reform movement (Murphy & Beck, 1995). These include
(a) administrative control: operates of belief that if fiscal responsibility is increased to the school administrator, students will benefit; (b) professional control: guided by the assumption that those on the front lines better understand what needs to be done to improve student outcomes—teachers are critically involved in the visioning, design, and implementation of the reform process; and (c) community–parent control: allows parents and community members to be an integral part of decision-making at all levels. Membership is balanced between school and staff.

Researchers have also identified key elements of a successful governance model that promotes decentralization and shared decision making within the school: (a) vision focused on teaching and learning that is coordinated with student performance standards; (b) decision-making authority conducive to influencing the teaching and learning; (c) power distributed throughout the school; (d) development of teacher knowledge and skills oriented toward school change, professional learning, and shared knowledge; (e) mechanisms for collecting and communicating information related to school priorities; (f) monetary and nonmonetary rewards to acknowledge progress toward goals; (g) shared school leadership among administrators and teachers; (h) creating an environment for positive interpersonal relationships between students, employees, parents, and other community members; and (i) resources from outside the schools (Brown, 1991, p. 12; Talley & Keddy, 2006). Many of these site-based mechanisms seek to improve the
relationship between teachers and administrators in an effort to improve school outcomes.

In addition, parent and community involvement is a cornerstone of these models.

*Parental Involvement in School Governance*

Many researchers have examined school-based governance models and found that parental involvement is an important component (Cook et al., 1999; Desimone, Finn-Stevenson, & Henrich, 2000; Shatkin & Gershberg, 2007). A study conducted by Newmann and Wahlage (1995) compiled 5 years of data from more than 1,500 schools that incorporated some form of site-based management as an approach to school reform. Their study found that authentic pedagogy, professional development and parental involvement were needed for genuine reform to take place in schools. In a study of 29 comprehensive school reform models across the country, 21% were found to have a parental involvement component (Borman et al., 2003). Other well-known and adopted school reform models such as Comer’s School Development Program and Success for All, integrate parents as a major player in reform efforts (Borman et al., 2003; Cook et al., 1999). For example, The Comer School Development Model focused on K–12 school reform and grounded in principals of child, adolescent and adult development incorporates Parent Teams who work in conjunction with school personnel to develop activities that involve parents in the school’s social as well as academic programs (Cook et al., 1999). Success for All utilizes family support teams who work with parents and community members to help address issues that are outlined in the reform design.
(Borman et al., 2010). The other model, the Talent Development High School, is a comprehensive reform initiative developed to help transform the structure and student achievement of large high schools in urban districts. This model breaks down the isolation experienced by parents and school and provides parental involvement in the shaping of their child’s educational experience for career and college readiness (Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 2004). Talley’s and Keddy’s (2006) case studies of three schools in Kentucky’s urban school district that were implementing shared decision making school-based management councils concluded there were four factors that made this council effective:

1. Council collaboration with committees created networks webbing the entire school and enabled “bottom-up” problem solving by staff and parents;
2. Principals facilitation of decision making through power sharing with all council members;
3. Focus on student achievement through the use of assessment data; and
4. Promotion of staff collective accountability for student achievement. (p. 441-445)

There are various educational reform models that put an emphasis on parental involvement. The emphasis on parental involvement is grounded in research findings that support the arguments that parental involvement plays an important role in school success. It is most effective in schools when parents have positive relationships with
teachers and administrators, and they understand and support the mission of the school (Goldring & Shapira, 1996).

**School-Based Council Parental Involvement and School Outcomes**

The studies of parental involvement in school reform models and its effects on school achievement have been somewhat mixed and inconclusive. There have been studies that have found that students who were in reform schools do no better than students who are not a part of reform efforts (Borman et al., 2003; Cook et al., 1999). For instance, Borman, et al. (2003) noted that although parental involvement in school governance may play a significant role to help the school grow as an institution, it does not have strong association with student achievement. Other studies have shown some improvement in student achievement (Haynes & Emmons, 1997; Mac Iver, et al., 2007). However, many studies document that the gains that have been made are not enough and many site-based management reform efforts have fallen short of their expectations. Leithwood and Minzies (1998) investigated 11 studies that reported the effects of their reform. Only 3 of out of the 11 studies reported improved test scores, achievement patterns, and higher achievement expectations.

Mac Iver’s et al. (2007) study of the effects of the Talent Development High School Model at one urban high school noted that student outcomes had improved but at a slow rate. The study showed that over a 10-year period, attendance rates were slowly increasing among students and while academic gains were being made, the school was
still unable to meet their state-mandated improvement goals. Improvement of student academic achievement and its association with site-based management is still weak and lacks understanding in the variability of effectiveness. Borman et al. (2003) blame this in part on the differences in implementation from model to model and from school to school. The researchers went on to further note that the ways in which comprehensive school reform models are implemented are more important than knowing if the developer required implementation. "We contend that knowing more about these largely unmeasured and unreported differences in implementation, across both schools and comprehensive school reform models, would also enrich our understanding of the variability in the CSR effects" (p. 167).

Decision-Making Areas in Site-Based Management

There are several key decision-making areas in site-based management that parents may be involved particularly in the areas of school management, instructional strategies, and student achievement (Malen & Ogawa, 1988). School management includes areas such as school budgeting, school policies, evaluating teachers, and hiring school personnel. Instructional strategies encompass establishing curriculum and professional development for teachers and administrators. And student achievement includes setting performance standards and goals for students (Schools and Staffing Survey, 2003). This is important information to know for my study because I will
examine if parents being involved in key school matters make a difference with schools meeting their academic yearly progress.

A survey conducted by the New Teacher Center and the National Education Association (NEA, 2008) identified school management issues as a priority for school leadership and reform efforts. Although the survey was administered to teachers across the United States, the findings are applicable to inclusive School-Based Management models that involve parents in areas of school management. The survey revealed the following:

1. Teachers’ working conditions are linked to students’ learning conditions, so schools must provide optimal conditions that will benefit both students and staff. These include safe and modern school facilities, fair compensation and benefits for personnel, adequate and sustained funding, sufficient time for planning, community support, and effective and sufficient instructional materials.

2. Developing new skills and learning innovative ways of doing things is essential so that school environments will be safe, flexible, challenging, and responsive to the needs of multicultural populations. (pp. 2–3)

Issues such as large class sizes, school climate, and teaching time must be tackled in a way that opens up collaboration, team work, and innovation for teachers,
students, and parents. The survey also addressed opportunities to improve instructional strategies that involved the following:

1. The school work day and work year must be designed to provide teachers with time for collaboration as well as time for professional development that is tied to the teaching and learning process.

2. Using student achievement data to guide improvements is critical to managing the curriculum in ways that promote student learning. (pp. 2–3)

Curriculum and professional development should be driven by data and analysis that shows the gaps as well as areas for opportunity, growth, and innovation that lead to increased student achievement.

Finally, student achievement is the ultimate outcome of any school reform effort (David, 1994). School-based management models attempt to share power with school personnel, parents, and community to create conditions that will lead to continuous growth and improved school–community relationships (Shatkin & Gershberg, 2007).

Survey findings from the New Teacher Center (NEA, 2008) found that school personnel are interested when school leadership allows them to play a more integral part in student achievement approaches. The findings suggest the following:

1. Successful principals need to develop a comprehensive understanding of school and classroom practices that contribute to high student achievement in order to influence the work of teachers. (p. 3).
Whatever the School-based management model implemented at a school—administrative control, professional control, or parent–community control—it will take skilled school leadership to raise school standards, teacher quality, and hold schools accountable for results. It will also be imperative that education reformers continue to address issues regarding connections between what research says, what educators practice, and what is approaches might be most appropriate for schools (NEA, 2008, p. 4).

Chapter II Summary

Research shows that defining parental involvement is neither easy nor consistent. It has become a catch-all term for many types of activities and behaviors both in schools and in the home. Because researchers measure different types of outcomes and utilize different variables of measurement, it makes the definition of parental involvement a complex phenomenon. Although there may be multiple definitions of parent involvement, the research implies that the parents’ resources and the way they are utilized at home or at school are instrumental in the success of children. Parent involvement has been inconsistently defined and operationalized as behaviors, activities, and goals. As researchers further examine and define parent involvement, it will be important that policymakers and educators understand the assumptions of the socially constructed parent involvement policies and programs. Inconsistencies with the definition of parental involvement, lack of standard units of measurement, and variability in the types of parental involvement and its effects on student and school achievement continue to
plague the field of parental involvement research. The literature reveals the need to provide a more consistent definition and parental involvement as well as units of measurement. The literature also illustrates how the definition of parental involvement has evolved overtime to more connections and partnerships between school and family.

The theoretical constructs of parental involvement play a critical role in parent involvement programs, policies, and practices. When schools do not recognize issues of empowerment, equity, and capital cultural, boundaries and divisions between families and schools are reinforced. Lawson (2003) believed that much of the research on parent involvement falls unto the continuum from parents having little control or power to make decisions about their involvement in school-based activities to parents serving on decision-making school councils. The literature reveals that many parental involvement programs do not include parents as equal partners and decision makers. Institutional practices perpetuate the inequities and disparities that that have long plagued the U.S. educational system. Overcoming these barriers will not be easy, but they are necessary in order for schools to increase parent involvement.

The literature also points to the multiplicity of types of parent involvement. The literature does promote a widely accepted way to categorize parent involvement activities as either home-based or school-based. Although particular aspects of these models can help parents, teachers, and principals guide children toward academic success, researchers are quick to point out that these models can be improved in order to address
the sociological contexts of families. These studies also show the complexity of the systems and environments in which parent involvement is implemented. The review of the literature reveals the importance of overlapping school-based and home-based parental involvement activities in order to create stronger partnerships between school and home.

There are many assumptions and perceptions that are widely held about variables that affect parent involvement. These variables are both psychological and sociological. Factors such as parent beliefs and perceptions of role construction, efficacy, education level, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity could affect how and why parents become involved with their child’s education. Parents and teachers need to understand the importance of parent role construction and efficacy and how parent involvement activities can address these barriers. Many researchers’ findings suggest there needs to be a deeper understanding of parents’ perceptions, motivations, and barriers to parent involvement. Furthermore, there needs to be a systemic shift in the way schools involve parents to be more parent-centered instead of school-centered (Lazar & Solstad, 1999). A clearer understanding of cultural norms, beliefs, and values can play a valuable role in increasing the level and quality of parental involvement programs. Teachers and administrators will need to overcome assumptions that they hold about low-income and minority parents. Teachers must find a way to build partnerships that allow parents to define their role, function, and type of involvement that will work best for them.
The perceptions of teachers and principals regarding parent involvement can hinder or encourage parents. The literature shows that many teachers hold a traditional view on how parents should become involved. Teachers’ and principals’ values and approaches define how a child is educated. In addition, the literature suggests that teacher efficacy is a strong factor of teachers’ perceptions regarding parental involvement. The higher the teacher efficacy the higher levels of parental involvement. This factor was found to be a strong predictor of teachers’ perceptions of parental involvement. The literature also reveals the importance of principal leadership in executing and supporting strong and effective parental involvement programs. In addition, studies show that principals’ perceptions of parent involvement are linked to a set of leadership and behavioral roles. Those roles that were considered to be empowering, engaging, and externally focused correlated with stronger parental involvement.

There are a number of parent involvement activities that predict improved student achievement. Many studies show a strong correlation between parental involvement and student academic and behavioral outcomes; however it is important to note that successful types of parent involvement activities are dependent on the age and grade level of the child. Elementary school age achievement is linked to a parent volunteering or attending classroom activities, whereas older children respond better to activities at home such as nurturing the students’ educational aspirations. Other studies pointed to parents’ communication about their children’s education and the parents’ aspirations as strong
predictors of student achievement. In addition, home-based parent involvement was strongly associated with student academic success. Another factor to point out is that researchers found that there are different indicators used to assess student academic achievement. These include global indicators such as GPA as well as more specific indicators such as science or math grades.

Lastly, school-based models for school reform that involves parents in shared decision-making structures result in mixed findings regarding improved academic for students and schools. The literature findings regarding models such as site-based councils note that some councils and the implementation of their school reform efforts have helped schools to meet achievement goals, whereas other have fallen short. The research attributes some of this to different implementation processes at different schools, the difference in school leadership, the lack of consistency in how parents are involved and the lack of uniform reporting. Although site-based councils have gained wide popularity as a mechanism of comprehensive school reform, researchers have noted that in many cases the reform is slow and academic gains among students are not realized in a short timeframe. Although parent work through site-based councils to provide input on key school matters such as school budgets, policies, and curriculum, some researchers argue that this type of involvement does not have direct implication for the student’s academic success even though it may help to improve the conditions of the school overall.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter offers a detailed description of the research design, justification of its use, secondary data set and sample, and data analysis techniques utilized. The goal of this study is to investigate whether teacher and principal perceptions regarding parental involvement, mechanisms for parental involvement, and the level of parental involvement in schools are associated with whether schools meet their state mandated school accountability requirement. The specific research questions include the following:

1. What is the trend of principals’ perceptions regarding the lack of parent involvement from 1990, 1993, 1999, to 2003, and does this trend differ for schools in various census regions, at different levels, and with various percentages of free and reduced-price lunch eligible students?

2. What is the trend of teachers’ perceptions regarding the lack of parent involvement from 1990, 1993, 1999, to 2003, and does this trend differ for schools in various census regions, at different levels, and with various percentages of free and reduced-price lunch eligible students?

3. What was the level of parental decision-making power on key school matters in 2003, and does the level of parent’s decision-making power differ for
schools in various census regions, at different levels, and with various percentages of free and reduced-price lunch eligible students?

4. What were the mechanisms for parental involvement in daily school activities in 2003, and do these mechanisms differ for schools in various census regions, at different levels, and with various percentages of free and reduced-price lunch eligible students?

5. To what extent are the mechanisms and level of parental involvement in schools associated with whether or not schools meet the accountability requirement mandated by their state, after controlling for school level and school demographic factors?

Research Design

I use a quantitative approach utilizing secondary data for this study. The research questions developed for this study seek to examine the association of parental involvement with schools meeting their state mandated accountability requirements. Because my research questions are descriptive and I seek to find the association or relationship between variables, Creswell (2004) would classify this study as a multivariate design. Parent involvement will be examined through (a) trend analysis of principals' and teachers' perceptions regarding the lack of parental involvement, and if their attitudes are associated with parental involvement; (b) the level of parent's decision-making power on key school policy matters and how much parents are involved
on these issues; (c) the mechanisms, regarding parent involvement in school-based activities; and (d) if mechanisms and levels of parent involvement combined predict schools meeting their accountability requirements considering the effect of variables such as census region, school level, and free and reduced-price lunch eligible students.

My quantitative approach uses a multivariate model. Creswell (1994) defined this approach as one that looks at the pattern of relationship between several different variables at the same time. This quantitative approach compares groups such as principal and teacher perceptions regarding the lack of parental involvement as well as examines the interrelationships among variables such as the mechanism and level of parent involvement in schools. This quantitative model allows me to examine whether subgroups can be distinguished along linear combinations of a set of variables.

Secondary Data, Sample, and Instrumentation

My study uses existing national data collected by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education. This type of data is called secondary data. Secondary data is defined as data gathered and analyzed by other researchers (Rudestam & Newton, 2007). There are inherent advantages of using secondary data including data quality, costs associated with data collection, and time-efficiency (p. 251).

More specifically the data was taken from the 1990–2003 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS). The data was collected from over 50,000 participants via school
questionnaire, teacher questionnaire, principal questionnaire, and school district
questionnaire. Surveys were sent out to private religious schools, charter schools, and
regular public schools at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels. I focus
on regular public schools. My interests for this study on public schools draws from my
experience and work in public schools in large urban/suburban areas on issues of parental
involvement.

The sampling frame for this study comes from the Common Core of Data (CCD)
file. The CCD is a universal file that includes all public elementary and secondary
schools in the United States. The critical design objective for SASS was to provide
estimates of school characteristics nationwide, elementary, and secondary levels at both
public and private schools and school level by states. The public school survey
participants for each survey year were based on the CCD file. Because I am interested in
regular public schools, the SASS sample I chose excluded schools operated by the
Department of Defense or those that offered only kindergarten, prekindergarten, or adult
education. After deleting duplicate schools, CCD became the sampling frame for SASS.
Based on CCD file, schools districts were surveyed first, then its teachers, and then its
principals. The achieved sample size and response rate for various components of the
survey over the years are depicted in Table 1.

The U. S. Census Bureau conducted the data collection and data processing.

Schools are the primary sampling unit in SASS, and public schools were selected to be
representative at the state and national levels. Once schools were chosen for the survey, school districts associated with the selected schools’ and their principals and some teachers were included in the survey. The sample subsets for the SASS 1990–2003 were weighted to provide relevant estimates with the public school sample weighted to produce accurate state and national estimates for districts, schools, principals, and teachers. Weighting procedures serve three distinct purposes: to take account of the probability a school will be selected, to reduce any bias that could result from a nonresponse, and to make use of information available from external sources to improve the ability of the sample estimates to predict (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2004).

Instrumentation

The instrument utilized for the SASS given in 1990–2003 is a set of questionnaires designed to be given primarily to principals and teachers. These detailed questionnaires are designed to measure policy issues that include teacher shortage and demand characteristics of elementary and secondary teachers, teacher workplace conditions, characteristics of principals, and school programs and policies.

The School Questionnaires were filled out by school principals. The purpose of the school survey was to collect information about schools such as policies, school enrollment characteristics, staffing patterns, school reform, school and student
Table 1

1990–2003 SASS Sample Size and Response Rates for Public Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>9,050*</td>
<td>96.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>8,970</td>
<td>95.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>46,710</td>
<td>90.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>9,150</td>
<td>96.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>9,530</td>
<td>92.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>53,030</td>
<td>88.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>9,900</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>9,890</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>56,350</td>
<td>83.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>10,200</td>
<td>82.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>10,200</td>
<td>80.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>52,480</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a All sample sizes and degrees of freedom in this dissertation were rounded to the nearest 10 to meet the requirements for clearance.

Performance and professional development. The sections of the school survey relevant to this study include schools and students' performance reports.

The Principal Questionnaires asked for information about the age, sex, race/ethnicity, salary, experience, training, benefits, opinions, and attitudes of the school principals. The questionnaire included objective (e.g., number of years teaching
experience) and subjective (e.g., rating the seriousness of school problems) questions.

The data from these questionnaires were intended to provide insights into the problems principals view as serious, their qualifications, their perceptions of parent involvement, and their influence on school policies. The section of the principal survey pertinent to this study asked principals for their views regarding how goals are set for the school, barriers to high-performing schools, and characteristics of parent involvement.

The Teacher Questionnaires collected information from teachers regarding certification and training, professional development, working conditions, decision making, attitude, and school climate. The original intent of the data was to permit analysis of factors associated with movement out of and into the teaching profession. However, the data invite analysis of a variety of topics suggested by school policy and reform such as parent involvement. The section of the teacher survey pertinent to this study asked teachers about their attitudes and perceptions regarding the lack of parent involvement.

Research Procedures

The U.S. Census Bureau collected the data for SASS 1990–2003. Data collection began by sending letters to sampled schools and districts in August and September. School questionnaires were mailed in October and the reminder postcard was sent a few weeks later. Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) was used to follow up with nonresponding teachers and principals. The U.S. Census Bureau performed the data
processing with the completed surveys. Each questionnaire was coded for whether it contained a completed interview, a respondent refused to complete it, a school district merged with another school district, or a school district closed. Questionnaires were then sorted as interviews, noninterviews, or out of scope. A computer pre-edit program checked the interviews for predictable errors and made corrections. After these pre-edit corrections were made, the questionnaire was given a range check, a consistency edit, and a blank edit. The coding, sorting, and editing process allowed a final determination of whether the questionnaire was eligible for the survey, that is, whether there were enough data for the questionnaire to classify as an interview.

SASS used four methods to impute values for questionnaire items that respondents did not answer.

1. They used data from other similar items on the questionnaire.

2. They extracted data from a related component of SASS.

3. They extracted data from the sample frame (PSS of CCD).

4. They extracted data from the record for a sample case with similar characteristics.

SASS conducted re-interviews of about 10% of all schools and principals in the sample. Questionnaires were sent 3 or 4 weeks after the first questionnaire. CATI re-interviews took place 1 or 2 weeks later. The results of these re-interviews were
analyzed taking to account item inconsistency (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2004).

Variables and Measurement Scales

Variables used in my study, as well as other measurement scales, are reported in Table 2. For this study, census regions are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau and shown in Table 3.
Table 2

*Variables and Measurement Scale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Measurement Scale</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Categorical</td>
<td>1 = 1990, 2 = 1993, 3 = 1999, 4 = 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Categorical</td>
<td>1 = Northeast, 2 = Midwest, 3 = West, 4 = South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School level</td>
<td>Categorical</td>
<td>1 = Elementary, 2 = Middle, 3 = High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free and reduced-price lunch</td>
<td>Categorical</td>
<td>1 = 0–4%, 2 = 5–19%, 3 = 20–49%, 4 = 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of parent involvement</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>4-point scale from 1 (<em>not a problem</em>) to 4 (<em>serious problem</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent involvement in major key decision areas</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>4-point scale from 1 (<em>no influence</em>) to 4 (<em>major influence</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing curriculum</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring new full-time teachers</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting discipline policy</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciding how budget spent</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determining content of in-service programs</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating teachers</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanisms for parent involvement</td>
<td>Categorical</td>
<td>1 = yes, 0 = no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open house</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent–teacher conferences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special subject area events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent education workshops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written contract between school and parent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent involved in instructional issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent involved in governance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether the school passed the accountability test</td>
<td>Categorical</td>
<td>1 = yes, 0 = no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

**U.S. Census Bureau Census Regions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Region</th>
<th>States Included in Census Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas, Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Analysis**

My data analysis was guided by the central purposes of this study: (a) investigate whether the mechanisms for parent involvement and the level of parent involvement in schools are associated with whether schools meet the state mandated school accountability requirement, (b) investigate the trend of principal and teacher perceptions on the issue of the lack of parent involvement in schools, and (c) examine associations between parent involvement, principal and teacher perceptions, mechanisms for involvement, and schools
meeting their eligibility requirements. I used data analysis methods for the following questions:

*Research Question 1*

What is the trend of principals’ perceptions regarding the lack of parent involvement from 1990, 1993, 1999, to 2003, and does this trend differ for schools in various census regions, at different levels, and with various percentages of free and reduced-price lunch eligible students?

I first conducted a descriptive analysis by computing means of the principal perceptions across the three years. The means calculation provides the central tendency or average of the trend of principals’ perceptions on the issue of the lack of parent involvement. I then conducted an F-test to see whether there are significant differences across years. In order to examine if the trend changes for various census regions, different school levels, and various levels of free and reduced-price lunch, I conducted a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) treating one of three as an independent variable and “year” as the other independent variable. The ANOVA test shows the interactional effect between one of the three variables on one hand and the variable of year on the other hand. I focused on multiple variables in the principal survey that gathers data on the perception of parent influence on school activities and find the average for all schools for each year and plot them over the years. I then disaggregated by census region, school level, and free and reduced-price lunch level.
Research Question 2

What is the trend of teachers’ perceptions regarding the lack of parent involvement from 1990, 1993, 1999, to 2003, and does this trend differ for schools in various census regions, at different levels, and with various percentages of free and reduced-price lunch eligible students?

The data analysis conducted for this question was a descriptive analysis by computing means of the teacher perceptions across the years. The means calculation provides the central tendency or average of the trend of teacher’s perceptions on the issue of the lack of parent involvement. I then conducted an $F$-test to see whether there are significant differences in the variance of the means across years. In order to examine if the trend changes for various census regions, different school levels and various levels of free and reduced-price lunch levels, I conducted a two-way ANOVA treating one of three as an independent variable and “year” as the other independent variable. The ANOVA test shows the interactional effect between one of the three variables on one hand and the variable of year on the other hand. I focused on multiple items in the teacher survey that gathers data on the perception of parent’s influence on school activities and find the average for all schools for each year and plot them over the years. I then disaggregated by census region, school level, and free and reduced-price lunch level.
Research Question 3

What was the level of parental decision-making power on key school matters in 2003, and does the level of parents' decision-making power differ for schools in various census regions, at different levels, and with various percentages of free and reduced-price lunch eligible students?

In order to conduct this analysis, I looked into the principal survey and focus on those items that detail how much influence parents have on these issues and find the average for all schools and then disaggregate by census region, school level, and free and reduced-price lunch level. I provide a descriptive table that includes the means for the following items: setting performance standards for students, establishing curriculum, determining the content of in-service professional development programs, evaluating teachers, hiring new full-time teachers, setting discipline policy, and deciding how school budget will be spent. I then conducted three separate discriminate function analysis for (a) census regions, (b) school levels, and (c) free and reduced-price lunch levels. The discriminant function analysis is a multivariate technique that reveals whether the subgroup within a variable—that is, census, school levels, or free or reduced-price lunch levels—could be reliably distinguished along certain dimensions. For example, the discriminant analysis inquired into whether schools in four census regions can be distinguished along linear combinations of items on parents' influence on key school matters. Discriminant function analyses ask whether the variables could form reliable
dimensions to distinguish the groups. The maximum number of functions is one less the level in that particular variable. Each one of the three variables has multiple levels. Census region has four levels, which means it could have a maximum of three significant functions. School level has three levels that could result in two significant functions, whereas lunch rate has four levels that would result in three significant functions.

Research Question 4

What were the mechanisms for parental involvement in school matters in 2003 and do these mechanisms differ for schools in various census regions, at different levels, and with various percentages of free and reduced-price lunch eligible students?

My analyses began with a descriptive statistic that was a frequency table of “yes” for all of the items regarding schools offering mechanisms for parent involvement in school matters. I then conducted chi-squares tests with each of the three variables (census region, school level, and free and reduced-price lunch rate) as independent variables and the availability of the mechanisms as dependent variables. I conducted three separate discriminant function analyses for (a) census regions, (b) school levels, and (c) free and reduced-price lunch levels. The discriminant function analysis is a multivariate technique that reveals whether the three groups—census, school levels, and lunch levels—could be reliably distinguished along the combination of availability of mechanisms. For example, the discriminant analysis will inquire into whether mechanisms for parent involvement can be distinguished along linear combinations of items regarding the availability of
mechanisms for parent involvement in key school matters. Discriminant function analyses ask whether the variables could form reliable dimensions to distinguish the groups. The maximum number of functions is one less the level in that particular variable. Each one of the three variables has multiple levels. Census region has four levels, which means it could have a maximum of three significant functions. School level has three levels, which means it could have two significant functions, and lunch rate has four levels that would result in three significant functions.

Research Question 5

To what extent are the mechanisms and level of parental involvement in schools associated with whether or not schools meet the accountability requirement mandated by the state, after controlling for school level and school demographic factors?

I used data from the 2003 principal data to conduct the analyses. For this question I conducted a logistic regression. The goal of logistic regression is to correctly predict the categories of outcome of individual cases using a parsimonious model. There are two main uses of logistic regression. The first is the prediction of group membership. It calculates the probability of success over the probability of failure. The second use is to provide knowledge of the relationship and strengths among the variable. I used logistic regression to predict a categorical dependent variable on the basis of continuous and/or categorical independent variable and to determine the percentage of variance in the dependent variable.
explained by the independent variable, rank the relative importance of the independent variable, assess interaction effects, and understand the impact of covariates.

When I conducted this analysis, whether schools met the accountability requirement became the outcome or dependent variable. Mechanisms for parent involvement and level of parent involvement became independent variables, and census regions, school level, and free or reduced-price lunch level became control variables. The dependent variable was re-coded as meeting or not meeting the accountability requirement. I used both the independent variables and control variables to predict whether a school passed the accountability requirements, rank ordered the importance of the independent variables as a predictor of the dependent variable and its variance, assessed the relative importance of the independent variables, and determined the impact of the control variables. Table 4 provides a summary of the type of quantitative analyses conducted for each question.

Chapter III Summary

My study investigated (a) the perception of the lack of parent involvement and (b) whether the mechanisms for parent involvement and the level of parent involvement in schools were associated with whether schools met the state mandated accountability requirement.
Table 4

Summary of Analyses Conducted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Quantitative Analyses Conducted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Question 1</td>
<td>Descriptive analysis; two-way ANOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question 2</td>
<td>Descriptive analysis; two-way ANOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question 3</td>
<td>Descriptive analysis; discriminant function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question 4</td>
<td>Descriptive analysis; discriminant function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question 5</td>
<td>Logistic regression</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among others, my research questions inquired into the association between parent involvement characteristics and schools meeting student achievement and state accountability requirements. Item responses for the 1990–2003 SASS teacher, principals, and public school questionnaires were selected as indicators for parent involvement characteristics. Discriminant function analysis was used to inquire into whether subgroups within each one of three variables—census, school levels, and free or reduced-price lunch levels—could be reliably distinguished along certain dimensions. Discriminant function analysis is a multivariate technique that parsimoniously reveals whether subgroups can be distinguished along linear combinations of a set of variables. Logistical regression was used to predict whether schools meeting the state accountability requirement could be predicted by the level and mechanism of parent involvement. The
following chapter reports the results of each research question that examined parent involvement and school academic success.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In this chapter I present the findings of the quantitative analyses of the study. The central purpose of the study was to investigate whether the trend of principals’ and teachers’ perceptions regarding parental involvement, mechanisms for parental involvement, and the level of parental involvement in key school matters are associated with whether schools meet their state mandated accountability requirement. As discussed in Chapter 3, the study used national survey data collected by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) through the School and Staffing Survey (SASS) from 1990 to 2003. Research questions 1 and 2 were addressed by using descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations. Both principals’ and teachers’ perceptions of the lack of parental involvement were rated using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not a serious problem) to 4 (a serious problem).

Results for Research Question 1

What is the trend of principals’ perceptions regarding the lack of parent involvement from 1990, 1993, 1999, to 2003, and does this trend differ for schools in various census regions, at different levels, and with various percentages of free and reduced-price lunch eligible students?
As shown in Table 5, the trend of principals' perceptions of the lack of parental involvement for years 1990–2003 showed that over the years parental involvement was perceived to be less of a serious problem. In 1990, principals' perceptions of parental involvement had a mean of 2.39 on a 4-point scale with increasing seriousness. However, by 2003 perceptions of the lack of parental involvement had become less of a serious problem with a lower mean of 2.29.

For the trend of principals' perceptions of lack of parental involvement, an ANOVA was performed to search for significant differences between principals' perceptions for different years. The results found there were statistically significant differences between the years on the perception of the lack of parental involvement ($F = 22.0, df = 3, p < 0.001$).

After the significant ANOVA, I conducted a series of Scheffe's post-hoc tests to inquire into which years differed from each other. Between 1990 and 2003 there was a statistically significant change ($p < 0.001$); the perception of the lack of parental involvement was perceived as becoming less of a serious problem from 1990 ($M = 2.39$) to 2003 ($M = 2.29$).
Table 5

*Principals’ Perceptions of Parental Involvement by Years 1990–2003*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>9,060</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>.974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>9,100</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>.974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>8,520</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>.939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>8,130</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>.962</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Lack of parental involvement measured on a 4-point scale from 1=not a problem to 4=a serious problem.

As shown in Table 6, the trend of principals’ perceptions of the lack of parental involvement from 1990–2003 across the four different census regions—Northeast, Midwest, South, and West—showed that overall principals’ perceptions of parental involvement had become less of a serious problem. For the Northeast region, in 1990, the mean of principals’ perceptions of the lack of parental involvement was 2.18. However, by 2003 principals’ perceptions of the lack of parental involvement had become less of a serious problem ($M = 2.09$), although the decrease was small.
Table 6

*Principals’ Perceptions of the Lack of Parental Involvement Across Census Regions (1990–2003)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>1993</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>.980</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>.971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>.980</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>.919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>.960</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>.987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>.985</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>.984</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Lack of parental involvement measured on a 4-point scale from 1=not a problem to 4=a serious problem.

For the Midwest region, in 1990, principals’ perceptions of the lack of parental involvement had a mean of 2.32. However, by 2003 the trend of principals’ perceptions of the lack of parental involvement was seen as becoming less of a serious problem with a mean of 2.23.

For the trend of principals’ perceptions of lack of parental involvement, an ANOVA was performed to search for significant differences between principals’ perceptions for different years in the Midwest region. The results found there were statistically significant differences between the years on the perception of the lack of parental involvement for the Midwest region ($F = 8, df = 3, p < 0.001$).
After the significant ANOVA, I conducted a series of Scheffe’s post-hoc tests to inquire into which years differed from each other. Between 1990 and 2003, there was a statistically significant change ($p < 0.005$); the perception of the lack of parental involvement was perceived as becoming less of a serious problem among principals in the Midwest from 1990 ($M = 2.32$) to 2003 ($M = 2.23$).

For the South region, in 1990, the mean of principals’ perceptions of the lack of parental involvement was 2.53. However, by 2003, principals perceived the lack of parental involvement as becoming less of a serious problem, with a mean of 2.41.

For the trend of principals’ perceptions of lack of parental involvement, an ANOVA was performed to search for significant differences between principals’ perceptions across different years in the South region. The results found there were statistically significant differences between the years on the perception of the lack of parental involvement for the South region ($F = 8, df = 3, p < 0.001$).

After the significant ANOVA, I conducted a series of Scheffe’s post-hoc tests to inquire into which years differed from each other. Between 1990 and 2003, there was a statistically significant change ($p < 0.001$); lack of parental involvement was perceived as becoming less of a serious problem among principals in the South from 1990 ($M = 2.53$) to 2003 ($M = 2.41$).

For the West region, in 1990, the mean of principals’ perceptions of the lack of parental involvement was 2.46. However, by 2003 the mean of principals’ perceptions of
the lack of parental involvement was 2.33. Therefore, lack of parental involvement was seen as becoming less of a serious problem over the years.

For the trend of principals’ perceptions of lack of parental involvement, an ANOVA was performed to search for significant differences between principals’ perceptions for different years across the West region. The results found there were statistically significant differences between the years on the perception of the lack of parental involvement for the South region ($F = 14, df = 3, p < 0.001$).

After the significant ANOVA, I conducted a series of Scheffe’s post-hoc tests to inquire into which years differed from each other. For years 1990 to 2003, there was a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.001$); the perception of the lack of parental involvement was perceived as becoming less of a serious problem among principals in the West from 1990 ($M = 2.46$) to 2003 ($M = 2.33$).

As shown in Table 7, the trend of principals’ perceptions of the lack of parental involvement from 1990–2003 across level of school both elementary and secondary showed that overall principals’ perceptions of parental involvement was becoming less of a serious problem. For the elementary level, in 1990, the mean of principals’ perceptions of the lack of parental involvement was 2.27. However, by 2003, the mean of principals’ perceptions of the lack of parental involvement was 2.16. Therefore, lack of parental involvement was seen as becoming less of a serious problem over the years.
Table 7

Principals’ Perceptions of Lack of Parental Involvement for Years 1990–2003 Across School Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>1993</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>.969</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>.953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>.923</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>.945</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Lack of parental involvement measured on a 4-point scale from 1=not a problem to 4=a serious problem.

For the trend of principals’ perceptions of lack of parental involvement, an ANOVA was performed to search for significant differences between principals’ perceptions for different years across elementary school level. The results found there were statistically significant differences between the years on the perception of the lack of parental involvement for the elementary school level ($F = 20, df = 3$, $p < 0.001$).

After the significant ANOVA, I conducted a series of Scheffe’s post-hoc tests to inquire into which years differed from each other. For years 1990 to 2003, there was a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.001$); the perception of the lack of parental involvement was perceived as becoming less of a serious problem among principals at the elementary school level from 1990 ($M = 2.27$) to 2003 ($M = 2.16$).
For the secondary level, in 1990, the mean of principals’ perceptions of the lack of parental involvement was 2.66. However, by 2003, the mean of principals’ perceptions of the lack of parental involvement was 2.59. Therefore, lack of parental involvement was seen as becoming less of a serious problem over the years.

For the trend of principals’ perceptions of lack of parental involvement, an ANOVA was performed to search for significant differences between principals’ perceptions for different years across the secondary school level. The results found there were not statistically significant differences between the years on the perception of the lack of parental involvement for the secondary school level.

After the significant ANOVA, I conducted a series of Scheffe’s post-hoc tests to inquire into which years differed from each other. For years 1990 to 2003 there was not a statistically significant difference across secondary school level.

As shown in Table 8, the trend of principals’ perceptions of the lack of parental involvement for years 1990–2003 across minority student level showed that over the years parental involvement was perceived to less a serious problem. For minority student level 0–4%, in 1990, principals’ perceptions of parental involvement had a mean of 2.20. However, by 2003 perceptions of the lack of parental involvement is becoming less of a serious problem with a mean of 2.01.

For the trend of principals’ perceptions of lack of parental involvement, an ANOVA was performed to search for significant differences between principals’
perceptions for different years across schools minority student level 0–4%. The results found there were statistically significant differences between the years on the perception of the lack of parental involvement for minority student level 0–4%

\(F = 10, \text{df} = 3, p < 0.001\).

Table 8

*Principals’ Perceptions of Lack of Parental Involvement for Years 1990–2003 Across Minority Student Level*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Level</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>1993</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(M)</td>
<td>(SD)</td>
<td>(M)</td>
<td>(SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–4%</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>.918</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>.896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5–19%</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>.918</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>.931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–49%</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>.949</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>.955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% above</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>.938</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>.986</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Lack of parental involvement measured on a 4-point scale from 1=not a problem to 4=a serious problem.

After the significant ANOVA, I conducted a series of Scheffe’s post-hoc tests to inquire into which years differed from each other. For years 1990 to 2003 there was a statistically significant difference \(p < 0.001\); the perception of the lack of parental involvement was perceived as becoming less of a serious problem for minority school level 0–4% from 1990 \(M = 2.20\) to 2003 \(M = 2.01\).
For minority student level 5–19%, in 1990, principals’ perception of parental involvement had a mean of 2.14. However, by 2003 the perception of the lack of parental involvement was becoming less of a serious problem with a mean of 1.97.

For the trend of principals’ perceptions of lack of parental involvement, an ANOVA was performed to search for significant differences between principals’ perceptions for different years across schools minority student level 5–19%. The results found there were statistically significant differences between the years on the perception of the lack of parental involvement for minority student level 5–19% ($F = 12$, $df = 3$, $p < 0.001$).

After the significant ANOVA, I conducted a series of Scheffe’s post-hoc tests to inquire into which years differed from each other. For years 1990 to 2003 there was a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.001$); the perception of the lack of parental involvement was perceived as becoming less of a serious problem for minority school level 5–19% from 1990 ($M = 2.14$) to 2003 ($M = 1.97$).

For minority student level 20–49%, in 1990, principals’ perception of parental involvement had a mean of 2.45. However, by 2003 the perception of the lack of parental involvement was becoming less of a serious problem with a mean of 2.22.

For the trend of principals’ perceptions of lack of parental involvement, an ANOVA was performed to search for significant differences between principals’ perceptions for different years across schools minority student level 20–49%. The results
found there were statistically significant differences between the years on the perception of the lack of parental involvement for minority student level 20–49% 

\( (F = 19, df = 3, p < 0.001) \).

After the significant ANOVA, I conducted a series of Scheffe’s post-hoc tests to inquire into which years differed from each other. For 1990 to 2003 there was a statistically significant difference \((p < 0.001)\); the perception of the lack of parental involvement was perceived as becoming less of a serious problem for minority school level 20–49% from 1990 \((M = 2.45)\) to 2003 \((M = 2.22)\).

For minority student level 50% and above, in 1990, principals’ perception of parental involvement had a mean of \((M = 2.89)\). However, by 2003 perception of the lack of parental involvement was becoming less of a serious problem with a mean of 2.67.

For the trend of principals’ perceptions of lack of parental involvement, an ANOVA was performed to search for significant differences between principals’ perceptions for different years across minority student level 50% and above. The results found there were statistically significant differences between the years on the perception of the lack of parental involvement for minority student level 50% and above \((F = 23, df = 3, p < 0.001)\).

After the significant ANOVA, I conducted a series of Scheffe’s post-hoc tests to inquire into which years differed from each other. For years 1990 to 2003 there was a statistically significant difference \((p < 0.001)\); the perception of the lack of parental
involvement was perceived as becoming less of a serious problem for minority school level 50% and above from 1990 ($M = 2.89$) to 2003 ($M = 2.67$).

Results for Research Question 2

What is the trend of teachers’ perceptions regarding the lack of parental involvement from 1990, 1993, 1999, to 2003, and does this trend differ for schools in various census regions, at different levels, and with various percentages of free and reduced-price lunch eligible students?

As shown in Table 9, the trend of teachers’ perceptions of the lack of parental involvement for years 1990–2003 revealed that over the years parental involvement is perceived to be less of a serious problem. In 1990, teachers’ perceptions of parental involvement had a mean of 2.72. By 2003, perceptions of the lack of parental involvement are becoming less of a serious problem with a lower mean of 2.62.

For the trend of teachers’ perceptions of lack of parental involvement, an ANOVA was performed to search for significant differences between teachers’ perceptions for different years. The results found there were statistically significant differences between the years on the teachers’ perception of the lack of parental involvement ($F = 223, df = 3, p < 0.001$).
Table 9

*Teachers’ Perceptions of Lack of Parental Involvement for Years 1990–2003*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>46,710</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>.983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>47,110</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>.982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>42,090</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>.986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>43,240</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>.968</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Lack of parental involvement measured on a 4-point scale from 1=not a problem to 4=a serious problem.

After the significant ANOVA, I conducted a series of Scheffe’s post-hoc tests to inquire into which years differed from each other. Between 1990 and 2003, there was a statistically significant change ($p < 0.001$); lack of parental involvement was perceived as becoming less of a serious problem from 1990 ($M = 2.72$) to 2003 ($M = 2.62$).

As shown in Table 10, the trend of teachers’ perceptions of the lack of parental involvement from 1990 to 2003 across the four different census regions—Northeast, Midwest, South, and West—showed that overall teachers’ perceptions of parental involvement was becoming less of a serious problem. For the Northwest region, in 1990, teachers’ perceptions of the lack of parental involvement had a mean of 2.56. However,
by 2003 the lack of parental involvement was seen as becoming less of a serious problem with a mean of 2.54.

### Table 10

_Teachers' Perceptions of Lack of Parental Involvement for Years 1990–2003 Across Census Regions_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>1993</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
<td><strong>SD</strong></td>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
<td><strong>SD</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>1.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>0.951</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>0.939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>0.976</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>0.987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>0.991</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>0.987</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Lack of parental involvement measured on a 4-point scale from 1=not a problem to 4=a serious problem.*

For the trend of teachers' perceptions of lack of parental involvement, an ANOVA was performed to search for significant differences between teachers' perceptions across years in the Northeast region. The results found there were statistically significant differences between the years on the perception of the lack of parental involvement ($F = 30, df = 3, p < 0.001$) in the Northeast region.

After the significant ANOVA, I conducted a series of Scheffe's post-hoc tests to inquire into which years differed from each other. Between 1990 and 2003, there was a
statistically significant change; lack of parental involvement in the Northeast was perceived as less of a serious issue from 1990 ($M = 2.56$) to 2003 ($M = 2.54$).

For the Midwest region, in 1990, teachers’ perceptions of the lack of parental involvement had a mean of 2.67. However, by 2003, teachers’ perception of the lack of parental involvement was seen as becoming less of a serious problem with a mean of 2.53.

For the trend of teachers’ perceptions of lack of parental involvement, an ANOVA was performed to search for significant differences between teachers’ perceptions for different years across the Midwest region. The results found there were statistically significant differences between the years on the perception of the lack of parental involvement for the Midwest region ($F = 92$, $df = 3$, $p < 0.001$).

After the significant ANOVA, I conducted a series of Scheffe’s post-hoc tests to inquire into which years differed from each other. For years 1990 to 2003 there was a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.005$); lack of parental involvement was perceived as becoming less of a serious problem among principals in the Midwest from 1990 ($M = 2.67$) to 2003 ($M = 2.53$).

For the South region, in 1990, teachers’ perception of lack of parental involvement had a mean of 2.83. However, by 2003, principals’ perception of the lack of parental involvement was seen as becoming less of a serious problem with a mean of 2.72.
For the trend of teachers' perceptions of lack of parental involvement, an ANOVA was performed to search for significant differences between teachers' perceptions for different years for the South region. The results found there were statistically significant differences between the years on the perception of the lack of parental involvement for the South region \((F = 87, df = 3, p < 0.001)\).

After the significant ANOVA, I conducted a series of Scheffe's post-hoc tests to inquire into which years differed from each other. For years 1990 to 2003 there was a statistically significant difference \((p < 0.001)\); the perception of the lack of parental involvement was perceived by teachers as becoming less of a serious problem in the South from 1990 \((M = 2.83)\) to 2003 \((M = 2.72)\).

For the West region, in 1990, teachers' perceptions of lack of parental involvement had a mean of 2.77. However, by 2003, teachers' perception of lack of parental involvement was seen as becoming less of a serious problem with a mean of 2.64.

For the trend of teachers' perceptions of lack of parental involvement, an ANOVA was performed to search for significant differences between principals' perceptions for different years across the West region. The results found there were statistically significant differences between the years on the perception of the lack of parental involvement for the South region \((F = 44, df = 3, p < 0.001)\).
After the significant ANOVA, I conducted a series of Scheffe’s post-hoc tests to inquire into which years differed from each other. For years 1990 to 2003, there was a statistically significant difference \( p < 0.001 \); the perception of the lack of parental involvement was perceived as becoming less of a serious problem among principals in the West from 1990 \( (M = 2.77) \) to 2003 \( (M = 2.64) \).

As shown in Table 11, the trend of teachers’ perceptions of the lack of parental involvement from 1990–2003 across level of school both elementary and secondary showed that overall principals’ perceptions of parental involvement was becoming less of a serious problem. For the elementary level, in 1990, principals’ perceptions of lack of parental involvement had a mean of 2.57. However, by 2003, principals’ perception of lack of parental involvement was seen as becoming less of a serious problem with a mean of 2.47.

Table 11

*Teachers’ Perceptions of Lack of Parental Involvement for Years 1990–2003 Across School Level*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>1993</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( M )</td>
<td>( SD )</td>
<td>( M )</td>
<td>( SD )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>1.008</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>1.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>0.912</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>0.905</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Lack of parental involvement measured on a 4-point scale from 1=not a problem to 4=a serious problem.
For the trend of teachers’ perceptions of lack of parental involvement, an ANOVA was performed to search for significant differences between principals’ perceptions for different years across elementary school level. The results found there were statistically significant differences between the years on the perception of the lack of parental involvement for the elementary school level ($F = 62, df = 3, p < .001$).

After the significant ANOVA, I conducted a series of Scheffe’s post-hoc tests to inquire into which years differed from each other. For years 1990 to 2003, there was a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.001$); the perception of the lack of parental involvement was perceived as becoming less of a serious problem by teachers at the elementary school level from 1990 ($M = 2.57$) to 2003 ($M = 2.47$).

For the secondary level, in 1990, teachers’ perception of lack of parental involvement had a mean of 2.92. However, by 2003, principals’ perception of lack of parental involvement was seen as becoming less of a serious problem with a mean of 2.79.

For the trend of principals’ perceptions of lack of parental involvement, an ANOVA was performed to search for significant differences between teachers’ perceptions for different years across the secondary school level. The results found there were statistically significant differences between the years on the perception of the lack
of parental involvement for the secondary school level ($F = 233, df = 3, p < 0.001$).

After the significant ANOVA, I conducted a series of Scheffe’s post-hoc tests to inquire into which years differed from each other. For years 1990 to 2003 there was a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.001$); the perception of the lack of parental involvement was perceived as becoming less of a serious problem by teachers at the secondary school level from 1990 ($M = 2.92$) to 2003 ($M = 2.79$).

As shown in Table 12, the trend of teachers’ perceptions of the lack of parental involvement for years 1990–2003 across minority student level showed that over the years, parental involvement was perceived to less a serious problem. For minority student level 0–4%, in 1990, teachers’ perception of lack of parental involvement had a mean of 2.51. However, by 2003, perception of the lack of parental involvement was becoming less of a serious problem with a mean of 2.41.

For the trend of teachers’ perceptions of lack of parental involvement, an ANOVA was performed to search for significant differences between teachers’ perceptions for different years across schools minority student level 0–4%. The results found there were statistically significant differences between the years on the perception of the lack of parental involvement for minority student level 0–4% ($F = 71, df = 3, p < 0.001$).
Table 12

Teachers’ Perceptions of Lack of Parental Involvement for Years 1990–2003 Across Minority Student Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Level</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>1993</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–4%</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>.925</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>.939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5–19%</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>.959</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>.976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–49%</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>.959</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>.954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% above</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.909</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>.881</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Lack of parental involvement measured on a 4-point scale from 1=not a problem to 4=a serious problem.

After the significant ANOVA, I conducted a series of Scheffe’s post-hoc tests to inquire into which years differed from each other. For years 1990 to 2003 there was a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.001$); the perception of the lack of parental involvement by teachers was perceived as becoming less of a serious problem for minority school level 0–4% from 1990 ($M = 2.51$) to 2003 ($M = 2.41$).

For minority student level 5–19%, in 1990, teachers’ perception of lack of parental involvement had a mean of 2.45. However, by 2003, perception of lack of parental involvement was becoming less of a serious problem with a mean of 2.28.
For the trend of teachers' perceptions of lack of parental involvement, an ANOVA was performed to search for significant differences between teachers' perceptions for different years across schools minority student level 5–19%. The results found there are statistically significant differences between the years on the perception of the lack of parental involvement for minority student level 5–19%

\(F = 95, \text{df} = 3, p < 0.001\).

After the significant ANOVA, I conducted a series of Scheffe’s post-hoc tests to inquire into which years differed from each other. For years 1990 to 2003 there was a statistically significant difference \((p < 0.001)\); the perception of the lack of parental involvement was perceived by teachers as becoming less of a serious problem for minority school level 5–19% from 1990 \((M = 2.51)\) to 2003 \((M = 2.41)\).

For minority student level 20–49%, in 1990, teachers' perception of parental involvement had a mean of 2.80. However, by 2003, perception of lack of parental involvement was becoming less of a serious problem with a mean of 2.57.

For the trend of teachers' perceptions of lack of parental involvement, an ANOVA was performed to search for significant differences between teachers' perceptions for different years across schools minority student level 20–49%. The results found there were statistically significant differences between the years on the perception of the lack of parental involvement for minority student level 20–49%

\(F = 208, \text{df} = 3, p < 0.001\).
After the significant ANOVA, I conducted a series of Scheffe’s post-hoc tests to inquire into which years differed from each other. For 1990 to 2003 there was a statistically significant difference \((p < 0.001)\); the perception of the lack of parental involvement was perceived by teachers as becoming less of a serious problem for minority school level 20–49% from 1990 \((M = 2.80)\) to 2003 \((M = 2.57)\).

For minority student level 50% and above, in 1990, teachers’ perception of parental involvement had a mean of \((M = 3.19)\). However, by 2003, perception of lack of parental involvement was becoming less of a serious problem with a mean of 2.95.

For the trend of teachers’ perceptions of lack of parental involvement, an ANOVA was performed to search for significant differences between teachers’ perceptions for different years across minority student level 50% and above. The results found there were statistically significant differences between the years on the perception of the lack of parental involvement for minority student level 50% and above \((F = 231, df = 3, p < 0.001)\).

After the significant ANOVA, I conducted a series of Scheffe’s post-hoc tests to inquire into which years differed from each other. For years 1990 to 2003 there was a statistically significant difference \((p < 0.001)\); the perception of the lack of parental involvement was perceived by teachers as becoming less of a serious problem for minority school level 50% and above from 1990 \((M = 3.19)\) to 2003 \((M = 2.95)\).
Results for Research Question 3

What was the level of parental influence on key school matters in 2007–2008?

Did the level of parent influence differ for schools in various census regions, at different levels, and with various percentages of minority students?

In order to conduct this analysis, I looked into the principal survey conducted in 2007–2008 and focused on those items that detail how much influence parent association had, according to principals’ perspectives, on key school decision-making areas, which included (a) setting performance standards for students of this school, (b) establishing curriculum at this school, (c) determining the content of in-service professional development programs for teachers of this school, (d) evaluating teachers of this school, (e) hiring new full-time teachers of this school, (f) setting discipline policy at this school, (g) deciding how your school budget will be spent. All of these items were rated on a 4-point scale with increasing influence, ranging from 1 (no influence) to 4 (major influence).

I first conducted descriptive analyses by providing means and standard deviations for each of the above items. I conducted three separate discriminant function analysis for (a) census regions, (b) school levels, and (c) minority student levels. The discriminant function analysis is a multivariate technique that reveals whether the subgroup within a variable—that is, census, school levels, or percentage of minority students—could be reliably distinguished along certain dimensions. For example, my discriminant analysis inquired into whether schools in four census regions could be distinguished along linear
combinations of items on parents’ influence on key school matters. Discriminant function
analyses ask whether the variables could form reliable dimensions to distinguish the
groups. The maximum number of functions is one less than the level in that particular
variable. Each of the three variables has multiple levels. Census region has four levels,
which means it could have a maximum of three significant functions. School level has
three levels that could result in a maximum of two significant functions, whereas
percentage of minority students has four levels, which would result in a maximum of three
significant functions.

*Level of parental involvement in key school decision matters.* The means and
standard deviations for parental involvement in key school decision matters are displayed
in Table 13. The results were based on a scale ranging from 1 (*no influence*) to 4 (*major
influence*). Generally speaking, parental involvement appeared to be low given that all
means were less than 2.5 on the 4-point scale. In three areas, the means were above 2.0,
including 2.35 for setting performance standards, 2.17 for setting disciplinary policy, and
2.14 for establishing curriculum. For the rest of the four areas, means were less than 2.0,
with the lowest being 1.49 for evaluating teachers. In summary, the level of parental
involvement appeared to be relatively low and vary for different decision-making areas.
The overall pattern of parental involvement in key school decision matters appeared to be
consistent with daily observations.
Table 13

*Level of Parental Involvement in Key School Decision Matters*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting performance standards</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing curriculum</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciding professional development program</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating teachers</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring teachers</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting discipline policy</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciding spending</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Level of parental involvement on key school decisions is measured on a 4-point scale from 1=no influence to 4=major influence.

*Does parental involvement in school decisions differ for census regions?* The results for the foregoing question was presented in Table 14, in which I presented the means for the various groups and the univariate $F$ test, the item to function correlation, and the group centroids for the subgroup.

The results in Table 14 on regional differences in parental involvement indicated that there were three significant discriminant functions to distinguish four groups on parental influence on school decisions, with the first discriminant function having the
following statistics: $\chi^2(21) = 590.3, p < .001, R_c = 0.23$. An examination of group centroids and item-to-function correlations indicated that the first function separated Northeast and Midwest from West and, to a less extent, South. In order to present a concise picture for the discriminant function analyses, I used 0.4 as the cut-off score for the item to function correlation for interpreting the results. The first discriminant function suggested that parents in the West ($M = 2.13$) and South ($M = 1.93$) were perceived to have more influence on spending the school budget than their counterparts in the Northeast ($M = 1.78$) and Midwest ($M = 1.66$).

The second discriminant function was also statistically significant: $\chi^2(12) = 233.3, p < .001, R_c = 0.18$. An examination of group centroids and item-to-function correlations indicated that the second function separated South from Northeast, West, and Midwest.
Table 14
Does Parental Influence on School Decisions Differ for Census Regions? Results of Discriminant Function Analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision domains</th>
<th>Northeast M</th>
<th>Northeast SD</th>
<th>Midwest M</th>
<th>Midwest SD</th>
<th>South M</th>
<th>South SD</th>
<th>West M</th>
<th>West SD</th>
<th>Univariate F</th>
<th>Item to function 1 correlation</th>
<th>Item to function 2 correlation</th>
<th>Item to function 3 correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standards</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>19.1***</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>5.5**</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development program</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>22.0***</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating teachers</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>17.5***</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring teachers</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>8.5***</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline policy</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>11.3***</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>97.0***</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group centroids

Northeast -0.14 -0.18 0.14
Midwest -0.28 -0.09 -0.08
South 0.02 0.24 0.02
West 0.39 -0.14 -0.03

** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

Note. Level of parental involvement on key school decisions is measured on a 4-point scale from 1=no influence to 4=major influence.
The second discriminant function suggested that parents in the South had more power than their counterparts in the Northeast, West, and Midwest in (a) setting performance standards, (b) deciding the content for professional development programs, and (c) evaluating teachers. It appears that parents in the South have more influence in the aligned work from setting performance standards to deciding the content for professional development programs and to evaluating teachers.

The third discriminant function was statistically significant: $\chi^2(5) = 33.5, p < .001, R_c = 0.07$. An examination of group centroids and item-to-function correlations indicated that the third function separated Northeast and South from Midwest and West. The third discriminant function suggested that parents in the Northeast and South had more power than their counterparts in the Midwest and West in (a) setting performance standards and (b) hiring full-time teachers. Overall, the discriminant function analysis in this section indicated that there were, indeed, regional differences in parental influence on various dimensions of school decisions.

*Does parental involvement in school decisions differ for various school levels?*

For this study, school levels are defined by National Center for Education Statistics as elementary, combined, and secondary schools, with combined schools containing both elementary and secondary grades. The results in Table 15 on parental involvement at various schools levels indicated that there were two significant discriminant functions to distinguish the three groups on parental influence on school decisions, with the first
discriminant function having the following statistics: $\chi^2(14) = 114.3, p < .001, R_c = 0.12$.

An examination of group centroids and item-to-function correlations indicated that the first function separated elementary schools from the combined school and the secondary school. The first discriminant function suggested that parents in the elementary school were perceived to have more influence on (a) spending and (b) disciplinary policy than their counterparts in the combined school and in the secondary school. Elementary parents were more involved in these two areas.

In this section, I inquired into whether there were differences in parental involvement at various schools levels. The results demonstrated that parents in the elementary and combined schools essentially had more influence on almost every aspect of school decisions than their counterparts at the secondary level, a finding that is consistent with daily observations.

*Does parental involvement in school decisions differ for schools with various levels of minority enrollment?* The results in Table 16 on parental involvement in schools with various levels of minority enrolment indicated that there were two significant discriminant functions to distinguish the four groups in parental influence on school decisions, with the first discriminant function having the following statistics: $\chi^2(21) = 334.0, p < .001, R_c = 0.21$. 
Table 15

Does Parental Influence on School Decisions Differ for School Level? Results of Discriminant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision domains</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Combined</th>
<th>Univariate</th>
<th>Item to function 1 correlation</th>
<th>Item to function 2 correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>$F$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development program</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating teachers</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring teachers</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline policy</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group centroids</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001.

Note. Level of parental involvement on key school decisions is measured on a 4-point scale from 1=no influence to 4=major influence.
An examination of group centroids and item-to-function correlations indicated that the first function separated parents in schools with 50% or more minority enrollment from three other kinds of schools that had lower levels of minority enrollment. Parents in schools with 50% or more minority enrollment were perceived to have higher involvement in essentially all school decisions. This is an interesting phenomenon because the results were based on principals’ perceptions rather than direct measures of parental involvement. It would be interesting to know whether this was due to the artifact of the school improvement process by which failing schools are mandated to get parents more involved, or it was indeed that parents of schools with 50% or more minority enrollment are actually more involved.

The second discriminant function was also statistically significant: $\chi^2(12) = 53.4$, $p < .001$, $R_c = 0.08$. An examination of group centroids and item-to-function correlations indicated that the second function separated the schools with less than 5% and 50% or more minority enrollment from schools with 5 to 49% minority enrollment. The second function indicated that parents in schools with less than 5% and 50% or more minority enrollment were perceived to have more involvement in (a) determining the content of in-service professional development programs for teachers of this school and (b) hiring new full-time teacher of this school than their counterparts in schools with 5% to 49% minority enrollment.
Table 16
Does Parental Influence on School Decisions Differ for School With Various Levels of Minority Students? Results of Discriminant Function Analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision domains</th>
<th>&lt; 5% M</th>
<th>&lt; 5% SD</th>
<th>5%-19% M</th>
<th>5%-19% SD</th>
<th>20%-49% M</th>
<th>20%-49% SD</th>
<th>50% or more M</th>
<th>50% or more SD</th>
<th>Univariate F</th>
<th>Item to function 1 correlation</th>
<th>Item to function 2 correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting performance standards</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>26.0***</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing curriculum</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>15.4***</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciding professional development program</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>36.2***</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating teachers</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>33.1***</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring teachers</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>29.8***</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting discipline policy</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>36.9***</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciding spending</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>80.7***</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group centroids</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 5%</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%-19%</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%-49%</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% or more</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p < 0.001.  

Note. Level of parental involvement on key school decisions is measured on a 4-point scale from 1=no influence to 4=major influence.
In this section, I inquired into whether there were differences in parental involvement in schools with various levels of minority enrollment. The dominant pattern is that parents in schools with 50% or more minority enrollment were perceived to have higher involvement in essentially all school decisions. Readers are reminded that this finding was based on principals’ perspective. It would be interesting to know whether this dominant pattern is an artifact of policies that mandate more parental involvement for failing schools.

Results for Research Question 4

What was the availability of parental involvement in 2003–2004 and did the availability of these mechanisms differ for schools in various census regions, at different levels, and with various percentages of free and reduced-price lunch eligible students?

My analyses first begin with a descriptive statistic that is a frequency table of “yes” for all of the items regarding schools offering mechanisms for parent involvement in school matters. I conducted chi-squares tests with each of the three variables (census region, school level, and free and reduced-price lunch rate) as independent variables and the availability of the mechanisms as dependent variables. I conducted chi-square tests because I wanted to determine if a bivariate relationship existed between the availability of the mechanisms across each independent variable. The use of chi-square is to determine if the existence of a relationship can be inferred between two categorical variables and its statistical significance. I also conducted the Cramer’s $V$ analysis because I wanted to measure the strength of the relationship between the two variables.

I used data from the 2003–2004 principal survey to conduct the analyses for this research question. The reason that I used 2003–2004 rather than 2007–2008 data was that
there were more items on mechanisms for parental involvement in the 2003–2004 survey than in the 2007–2008 one. The variables on the availability of the mechanisms for parental involvement were rated on a binary basis, with 1 indicating yes and 0 indicating no. The variables on mechanisms for parental involvement included the following: (a) parent educational workshops or courses; (b) written contract between the school and parent; (c) opportunities for parents to volunteer in the school on a regular basis; (d) staff member assigned to work on parental involvement; (e) a log of parental involvement maintained by parent or staff; (f) reliable system of communication with parent; (g) services to support parent participation, such as providing childcare or transportation; (h) parent drop-in center or lounge; (i) requirement that teachers send information home to parents explaining students' lessons; (j) requirement that teachers provide suggestions for activities that parents can do at home with their child; and (k) requirement that teachers create homework assignments that involve parents.

The results in Figure 2 on the frequency of mechanisms being offered for parental involvement revealed that overall schools are more likely to offer reliable system of communications with parents (94%), opportunities to volunteer in school on a regular basis (87%), maintain a log of parental involvement (66%), parental educational workshops/courses (56%), and written contract between parent and school (53%). Schools are less likely to offer sending home information explaining students' lessons (50%), a staff member assigned to work on parental involvement (49%), activities for parents at home (40%), services to support parental participation (33%), homework assignments that involve parents (23%), and a parent drop-in center/lounge (19%).
Principals Who Reported Their Schools Had the Following Mechanisms of Parental Involvement in 2003-04

- Reliable system of communication with parent
- Opportunities for parents to volunteer in the school on a regular basis
- Log of parental involvement maintained by parent or staff
- Parent educational workshops or courses
- Written contract between the school and parent
- Requirement teachers send information home explaining students' lessons
- Staff member assigned to work on parental involvement

Figure 2. Percentage of Principals Who Reported Their Schools had the Following Mechanisms of Parental Involvement in 2003–2004.

Note. Availability of mechanisms of parental involvement is measured on a categorical scale with 1=yes; 0=no

I conducted three sets of separate chi-square and Cramer’s V analyses on the availability of mechanisms for parental involvement in school matters for (a) minority level, (b) school level, and (c) census regions. The results in Table 17 show in terms of providing parental involvement mechanisms that there appears to be a statistically significant difference across all but one of the mechanisms offered at various levels of minority enrollment. For example, in terms of providing educational workshops or courses, there appears to be a statistically significant difference among the schools with various levels of minority enrollment ($\chi^2 = 3.20, p = 0.00$). However, the effect size as indicated by Cramer’s V (.20) is small. Schools with 50% or greater minority enrollment have a much higher likelihood of providing educational workshops for parents (67.6%) than schools that have 0–4% of minority enrollment (40.9%). As a matter of fact, the
likelihood of providing educational workshops for parents increases with the increase in levels of minority of enrollment. The same can be inferred for the other parental mechanisms. There is a linear pattern that appears to show with the increase in minority enrollment level there is an increase in the likelihood of the parental mechanisms offered. In addition, the Cramer’s $V$ effect sizes appear to be small to moderate. However, only for the communication with parent mechanism, there did not appear to be a statistically significant difference ($\chi^2 = 6.99, p = .072$).

Table 17

*A Comparison of Schools With Various Levels of Minority Enrollment in Terms of the Likelihood of Providing Parental Involvement Mechanisms*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanism</th>
<th>0–4%</th>
<th>5–19%</th>
<th>20–49%</th>
<th>50% or more</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>Cramer’s $V$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational workshops/courses</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>558</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract between school and parent</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer in the school</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>901</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>878</td>
<td>871</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff member work on parental involvement</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>659</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log of parental involvement</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with parent</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>927</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>938</td>
<td>6.99</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services to support parent participation</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent center or lounge</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send information home explaining lessons</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggest activities for parents at home</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework that involves parents</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note* Availability of mechanisms of parental involvement is measured on a categorical scale with 1=yes; 0=no

The results in Table 18 show in terms of providing parental involvement mechanisms there appears to be a statistically significant difference across all of the mechanisms offered at various school levels. For example, in terms of providing
educational workshops or courses, there appears to be a statistically significant difference among across the various school levels ($\chi^2 = 5.23, p = 0.00$). However, the effect size as indicated by Cramer’s $V$ (.025) is small. However, schools at the elementary level have a much higher likelihood of providing educational workshop for parents (64%) than schools at the secondary (37.3%) or combined (56.%) levels. As a matter of fact, the likelihood of providing educational workshops for parents are higher at the elementary level compared to the secondary and combined levels. The same can be inferred for all other parental mechanisms. There is a linear pattern that appears to show with the increase in school level there is a decrease parental involvement mechanisms offered. In addition, the Cramer’s $V$ effect sizes appear to be small to moderate, ranging from .06 to .35.

The results in Table 19 show in terms of providing parental involvement mechanisms there appears to be a statistically significant difference across all of the mechanisms offered at various census regions. Compared to the other regions, the Northwest region appeared to rank highest in communications with parents (96%; $\chi^2 = 3.42, p = 0.00$) and lowest in homework assignments that involve parents (19%; $\chi^2 = 9.45, p = 0.00$). Compared to other regions, the Midwest region did not appear to rank highest in any areas but lowest in parent drop in center (14%; $\chi^2 = 7.72, p = 0.00$).

Compared to other regions, the South region appeared to rank highest in log of parental involvement maintained (81%; $\chi^2 = 4.89, p = 0.00$) and lowest in services to support parent participation (30%; $\chi^2 = 5.76, p = 0.00$). Compared to other regions the West region ranked highest in volunteer in school (92%; $\chi^2 = 3.42, p = 0.00$). However, the effect size as indicated by Cramer’s $V$ was small ranging from .06 to .24 across school census regions.
Table 18

A Comparison of School Levels in Terms of the Likelihood of Providing Parental Involvement Mechanisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanism</th>
<th>Elem.</th>
<th>Sec.</th>
<th>Comb.</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>Cramer's $V$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational workshops/courses</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract between school and parent</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer in the school</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>10.18</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff member work on parental involvement</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log of parental involvement</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>5.68</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with parent</td>
<td>97.3</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services to support parent participation</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent center or lounge</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send information home explaining lessons</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggest activities for parents at home</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework that involves parents</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Elem. = Elementary; Sec. = Secondary; Comb. = Combined.

Note. Availability of mechanisms of parental involvement is measured on a categorical scale with 1=yes; 0=no

The analyses showed that the availability of parental involvement mechanisms does differ across census regions, different school levels, and with various percentages of minority enrollment. I found that there are a handful mechanisms that principals perceive are made available more than other mechanisms. The dominant pattern showed that principals perceived that the availability of these mechanisms was made more available for 50% or more minority enrollment. It would be interesting to know if parents perceived the same type of availability.
Table 19

*A Comparison of Schools Census Regions in Terms of the Likelihood of Providing Parental Involvement Mechanisms*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanism</th>
<th>NE</th>
<th>MW</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>West</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>( \chi^2 )</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Cramer’s V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational workshops/courses</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract between school and parent</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer in the school</td>
<td>82.0</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>89.1</td>
<td>91.4</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>8.51</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff member work on parental involvement</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log of parental involvement</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>55.1</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with parent</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>95.5</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services to support parent participation</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent center or lounge</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>7.72</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send information home explaining lessons</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggest activities for parents at home</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework that involves parents</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>9.45</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* NE = Northeast; MW = Midwest.

*Note.* Availability of mechanisms of parental involvement is measured on a categorical scale with 1=yes; 0=no.

Results for Research Question 5

*Research Questions 5. To what extent are the mechanisms and level of parental involvement in key school matters associated with whether or not schools meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), after controlling for school level and school demographic factors?*
Research Questions 5.1. To what extent is the availability of mechanisms of parental involvement associated with whether or not schools meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), after controlling for school level and school demographic factors?

I used data from the 2003–2004 principal survey to conduct the analyses. The reason that I used 2003–2004 rather than 2007–2008 data was that there were more items on mechanisms for parental involvement in the 2003–2004 survey than in the 2007–2008 one. The analyses I conducted for this question was a logistic regression because the outcome measure—whether the school made all accountability measures—was a binary variable. The goal of logistic regression is to correctly predict the categories of outcome of individual cases using a parsimonious model. There are two main uses of logistic regression. The first is the prediction of group membership. It calculates the probability of success over the probability of failure. The second use is to provide knowledge of the relationship and strengths among the variable. Logistic regression could be used to predict a binary dependent variable on the basis of continuous and/or categorical independent variables and to determine the percentage of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variable, rank the relative importance of the independent variable, assess interactional effects, and understand the impact of covariates.

In conducting this logistic regression analysis, whether school made all accountability measures in 2003–2004 was the outcome or dependent variable whereas mechanisms of parental involvement were independent variables of interest, and school level and student demographics were treated as control variables. The outcome measure was coded 1 for “making all accountability measures” and 0 for “not making all accountability measures.” The variables on the availability of mechanisms for parental involvement...
involvement were also rated on a binary basis, with 1 indicating “yes” and 0 indicating “no.” The variables on mechanisms of parental involvement included the following: (a) parent educational workshops or courses; (b) written contract between the school and parent; (c) opportunities for parents to volunteer in the school on a regular basis; (d) staff member assigned to work on parental involvement; (e) a log of parental involvement maintained by parent or staff; (f) reliable system of communication with parent; (g) services to support parent participation, such as providing childcare or transportation; (h) parent drop in center or lounge; (i) requirement that teachers send information home to parents explaining students lessons; (j) requirement that teachers provide suggestions for activities that parents can do at home with their child; and (k) requirement that teachers create homework assignments that involve parents. Among the variables for control, school level was a three-level categorical variable and both percentages of minority students and students on free and reduced-price lunch were continuous variables, ranging from 0 to 100.

All variables were entered simultaneously. The model appeared to be able to predict whether the school made all accountability measures in 2003–2004, with \( \chi^2 = 646, \ df = 15, \ p < 0.001 \), Cox and Snell \( R^2 = 0.09 \) and Negelkerke \( R^2 = 0.12 \). The model correctly predicted 63.4% of the cases. The results of the logistic regression in relation to the role of the predictors are displayed in Table 20.
Table 20

*Results of Logistic Regression with Accountability Measures as the Outcome Measure, Availability of Parental Involvement Mechanisms as Predictors, and School Level and Student Demographics as Control Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanism</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ele. vs combined</td>
<td>.399</td>
<td>.108</td>
<td>13.558</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sec. vs combine</td>
<td>-.192</td>
<td>.115</td>
<td>2.806</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.094</td>
<td>.825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% minority in enrollment</td>
<td>-.008</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>91.054</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% free/reduced-price lunch</td>
<td>-.013</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>152.794</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent workshops</td>
<td>.255</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>20.370</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written contract with parents</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>3.150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>1.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer in school</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>.082</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.775</td>
<td>1.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff member work on parent involvement</td>
<td>-.034</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>.332</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.565</td>
<td>.967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log of parental involvement</td>
<td>.120</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>3.718</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>1.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with parent</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.112</td>
<td>.129</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.720</td>
<td>1.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services to support parent participation</td>
<td>-.017</td>
<td>.056</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.768</td>
<td>.984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent center or lounge</td>
<td>-.150</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>4.753</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send information home explaining lessons</td>
<td>-.050</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>.719</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.396</td>
<td>.952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggest activities for parents at home</td>
<td>.181</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>7.305</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>1.199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework assignment involve parents</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.073</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.972</td>
<td>1.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.523</td>
<td>.149</td>
<td>12.331</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.687</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Availability of mechanisms of parental involvement is measured on a categorical scale with 1=yes; 0=no
Because my interest is on the availability of mechanisms of parental involvement, I interpret only the variables related to the mechanisms of parental involvement. The coefficients for the control variables also made sense. For example, higher percentages of minority student in school and percentages of students on free and reduced-price lunch were associated with significantly decreased probability of meeting all accountability measures.

Using the typical 0.05 as the cut-off point for p value, among the variables on mechanisms for parental involvement the following three variables—(a) parent/guardian education workshops or courses, (b) a parent drop-in center or lounge, and (c) requirement that teachers provide suggestions for activities that parents can do at home with their child—were statistically significant predictors for whether schools met all accountability measures. Two other variables are marginally statistically significant, with (a) a log of parent participation maintained by parents or staff at p = 0.05 and (b) a written contract between the school and parent/guardians at p = 0.07. However, the following variables were not statistically significant predictors: (a) opportunities for parents to volunteer in the school on a regular basis; (b) staff member assigned to work on parental involvement; (c) reliable system of communication with parent; (d) services to support parent participation, such as providing childcare or transportation; (e) requirement that teachers send information home to parents explaining students lessons; and (f) a requirement that teachers create homework assignments that involve parents/guardians.

For the three statistically significant predictors, the results indicated that (a) the availability of the mechanism of “parent/guardian education workshops or courses”
increased the school's odds ratio of meeting all accountability measures by 29.1%; (b) the availability of the mechanism of "requirement that teachers provide suggestions for activities that parents can do at home with their child" increased the school's odds ratio of meeting all accountability measures by 19.9%; however, the availability of the mechanism of "a parent drop-in center or lounge" decreased the school's odds ratio of meeting all accountability measures by 14.1%.

For the two marginally statistically significant variables, the results indicated that the availability of the mechanism of "a log of parent participation maintained by parents or staff" increased the school's odds ratio of meeting all accountability measures by 12.7%. The availability of the mechanism of "a written contract between the school and parent/guardians" increased the school's odds ratio of meeting all accountability measures by 10.0%.

Research Questions 5.2. To what extent is the level of parental involvement associated with whether or not schools meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), after controlling for school level and school demographic factors?

In conducting this logistic regression analysis, whether school made all accountability measures in 2003–2004 was the outcome or dependent variable, levels of parental involvement in key school matters were independent variables of interest, and school level and student demographics were treated as control variables (see Table 21). The outcome measure was coded as 1 indicating "making all accountability measures" and coded as 0 indicating "not making all accountability measures." The variables on level of parental involvement were rated on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (no influence) to 4 (major influence). The variables on level of parental involvement included
the following: (a) setting performance standards, (b) establishing curriculum, (c) deciding professional development program, (d) evaluating teachers, (e) hiring teachers, (f) setting discipline policy, and (g) deciding spending. Among the variables for control, school level was a three-level categorical variable and both percentages of minority students and students on free and reduced-price lunch were continuous variables, ranging from 0 to 100.

All variables were entered simultaneously. The model appeared to be able to predict whether the school made all accountability measures in 2003–2004, with $\chi^2 = 498.884, df = 11, p < 0.001$, Cox and Snell $R^2 = 0.065$ and Negelkerke $R^2 = 0.096$. The model correctly predicted 75.4% of the cases. The results of the logistic regression in relation to the role of the predictors are displayed in Table 21.

Since my interest was on the availability of parental involvement on key school matters, I interpret only the variables related to the availability of parental involvement in key school matters. The coefficients for the control variables also made sense. For example, higher percentages of minority students in school and higher percentages of students on free or reduced-price lunch were associated with significantly decreased probability of meeting all accountability measures.

Using the typical 0.05 as the cut-off point for the $p$ value, among the variables on parental involvement, the logistic regression analyses in this section indicated that the following variables were significant predictors for whether school made AYP: (a) setting performance standards for students of this school, (b) evaluating teachers of this school, and (c) deciding how school budget will be spent. For the three statistically significant predictors, the results indicated that (a) when parental association’s level of involvement
in “setting performance standards for students of this school” increased by one unit on a 4-point scale, the odds ratio for the school to meet all accountability measures would increase by 9.5%; (b) when parental association’s level of involvement in “evaluating teachers of this school” increased by one unit on a 4-point scale, the odds ratio for the school to meet all accountability measures increased by 12.4%. However, when parental association’s level of involvement in in “deciding how your school budget will be spent” increased by one unit on a 4-point scale, the odds ratio for the school to meet all accountability measures would decrease by 12.4%. It appears that parental involvement in key school matters could be a double-edged sword—parental involvement in key school matters could both help and hurt schools depending on the areas in which they are involved. Parental involvement in “setting performance standards for students of this school” and “evaluating teachers of this school” appear to be productive and are associated with significantly increasing the schools’ likelihood to meet all accountability measures. However, parental involvement in “deciding how your school budget will be spent” appears to be counterproductive and is associated with significantly deceasing the schools’ likelihood to meet all accountability measures. Table 22 summarizes the findings for the logistic regression analysis.
Table 21

Results of Logistic Regression With Accountability Measures as the Outcome Measure, the Level of Parental Involvement as Predictors, and School Level and Student Demographics as Control Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variables of interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting performance standards</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>1.095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing curriculum</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciding professional development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>program</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating teachers</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>10.85</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring teachers</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>1.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting discipline policy</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciding spending</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.932</td>
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<tr>
<td>Variables for control purpose</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of minority student in school</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>176.16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of students on free or reduced-price lunch</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>22.04</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary vs. combined</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.103</td>
<td>29.99</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary vs. combined</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>0.111</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.829</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 22

*Summary of Findings For Logistic Regression Analysis For Parental Involvement in Key School Decisions and Mechanisms for Parental Involvement as a Predictor of Schools Meeting Adequate Yearly Progress*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanisms</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/guardian workshops</td>
<td>Strong Positive Predictor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggest activities for parents at home with child</td>
<td>Strong Positive Predictor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A log of parent participation maintained by parents</td>
<td>Marginal Positive Predictor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A written contract between school and guardian</td>
<td>Marginal Positive Predictor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent drop-in-center or lounge</td>
<td>Strong Negative Predictor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer in school</td>
<td>Not a Predictor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff member work on parent involvement</td>
<td>Not a Predictor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications with parents</td>
<td>Not a Predictor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services to support parent participation</td>
<td>Not a Predictor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send information home explaining lesson</td>
<td>Not a Predictor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework assignment involve parents</td>
<td>Not a Predictor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Levels of Involvement in Key School Decisions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting school performance standards</td>
<td>Strong Positive Predictor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating teachers</td>
<td>Strong Positive Predictor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciding how your school budget will be spent</td>
<td>Strong Negative Predictor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing curriculum</td>
<td>Not a Predictor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciding professional development programs</td>
<td>Not a Predictor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring teachers</td>
<td>Not a Predictor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting discipline policy</td>
<td>Not a Predictor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

The significant findings of my study are discussed in this chapter. First, I summarize the findings related to the five research questions presented in chapter one. I examine the findings, connect them to the existing literature, and explore the implications of this study. In the remainder of this chapter I make recommendations for further research.

The central purpose of this study was two-fold: (a) to examine the perceptions of lack of parental involvement by teachers and principals over the years, and (b) to investigate the availability of mechanism of parental involvement and level of involvement in key school decisions and if the availability of mechanism of parental involvement and level of involvement are associated with schools successfully meeting their Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP) mandates. My overall research goal was to examine whether, and if so, to what extent parental involvement is associated with student academic success. I conducted a quantitative study to investigate the difference parental involvement makes on AYP attainment with controls for school levels, percentages of free and reduced-price lunch eligible students, and percentage of minority students.

Principals’ and Teachers’ Perceptions: Parents Becoming More Involved

As described in chapter four, the findings related to Research Questions 1 and 2, the perceptions of the lack of parental involvement for both principals and teachers seemed to become less of a serious issue between years 1990–2003. The pattern was
consistent for various census regions, different school levels, and schools with various percentages of minority enrollment.

Overall it appeared that parents were perceived to become increasingly involved from 1990–2003. These findings are consistent with the literature that shows an increase in schools developing and implementing more robust parental involvement policies and models to support the No Child Left Behind mandates. These mandates require that schools receiving Title 1 funding should develop with parents a school–parent compact that outlines how parents, school staff, and students will share responsibility for improving student achievement (Appleseed, 2010). Principals’ and teachers’ perceptions of more and more parents becoming involved over the last decade could be a result of efforts they have put in place to better engage parents.

An examination of the patterns of perception revealed consistency across census regions, school levels, and various percentages of minority enrollment. The findings for census regions found overall both principals and teachers perceived that parents were becoming more involved in the education of their children. The increase in parental involvement as perceived by principals and teachers was statistically significant between 1990 and 2003 for schools in the South, West, and Midwest. This dramatic shift in principals’ and teachers’ perceptions could be due to the accountability movement that was stressed during the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act. In addition, there are particular regional characteristics that are associated with parental involvement levels. For instance, a study of parental involvement in urban schools found that parents got more involved and started improved communications with schools when principals showed genuine concern and care about their children’s needs, challenges, and conditions
(McDermott & Rothenburg, 2000). Researchers have also found that parental involvement programs for urban communities may work somewhat differently for rural communities. Herzberg and Pittman (1995) found that rural residents place a higher value on their schools by seeing them as a central focus of community life. School administrators in the South have played a direct role in piloting a number of parent–school partnerships specifically designed for rural communities such as Even Start and Teacher–Parent Partnership for Enhancement of School Success.

When examining principals’ and teachers’ perceptions of level of parental involvement across the school levels from 1990–2003, the findings revealed a statistically significant increase between 1990 and 2003 in parental involvement for schools at all school levels. Although parental involvement is more prevalent at the elementary school level versus the middle and high school levels, the statistically significant increase in parental involvement between 1990 and 2003 was demonstrated at both the elementary and secondary levels.

Lastly, a comparison of principal and teacher perceptions of parental involvement across various levels of minority enrollment showed that both principals and teachers perceived parents becoming more involved between 1990 and 2003 for schools with all four levels of minority levels, and the increase was particularly noticeable for schools with minority levels of 20%–40% and 50% and above. One contributing factor to this finding could be the intentional concentration that schools receiving Title I funding must put on parental involvement practices, approaches, and policies, which tend to have higher levels of minority enrollment (Wrightslaw, 2006).
Influence of Parental Involvement in SchoolGovernances Issues

Although the mean scores for Research Question 3 were low overall for principals’ perceptions of the level of parental involvement in key school decisions, the scores showed that some areas such as setting performance standards, setting disciplinary policy, and establishing curriculum were ranked among the highest. My study also found that the level of parental involvement varies for census region, school levels, and schools with different levels of minority students.

When comparing the findings across various census regions, the discriminant function analysis results showed that the South was statistically significantly different across more areas of parental involvement in key school decisions than the Northeast, Midwest, and West. The first discriminant function suggested that parents in the West and South were perceived to have more influence on spending the school budget than their counterparts in the Northeast and Midwest. The second discriminant function suggested that parents in the South had more power than their counterparts in the Northeast, West, and Midwest in (a) setting performance standards, (b) deciding the content for professional development programs, and (c) evaluating teachers. It appears that parents in the South are more involved in key school decisions. One contributing factor to this phenomenon could be the culture of the Civil Rights movement that emerged out of the South. Because of the dual education system that dominated the south (separate but equal), many poor children and Black children were not attaining high educational levels. Because of the overt racism in the South, many parents’ voices were shut out of the educational system. The Civil Rights movement had a strong focus on educational equity for children and parents (Collins & Margo, 2006). In addition, some
studies have found that parental involvement levels are higher in rural communities than urban (Sun, Hobbs, & Elder, 1994). Many of the studies that find high levels of parental involvement in the South contribute this phenomenon to factors such as smaller class sizes, the school seen as a community hub for community affairs, and more opportunity for individual attention to student and parent (Educational Partnerships, Inc., 2009). It is also important to point out that the findings suggest principals in the Midwest did not perceive their parents having high level of influence in key school decisions in comparison to schools in other regions of the country.

There were also statistically significant findings for parental involvement in key school decisions across various school levels as perceived by principals. Findings from the discriminate function analysis showed that at the elementary level, parents had more influence on school governance issues of (a) spending on the school budget and (b) setting disciplinary policy. The results also indicated that parents in combined schools (essentially the schools that have had both elementary and middle grades) were perceived to have more influence in the following area: (a) setting performance standards for students, (b) establish curriculum at school, (c) determining the content of in-service professional development programs for teachers, (d) evaluating teachers, (e) hiring new full-time teachers, and (f) setting disciplinary policy. The findings at both the elementary and the combined school levels are consistent with the areas of focus that many national school reform and school-based management efforts have promoted over the last 8 years coinciding with the mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act (Talley & Keedy, 2006). The major focus of this legislation was on elementary and middle school performance with an emphasis on children in Grades 3 through 8 (Reschovsky & Imazeki, 2003). This
also included strong emphasis on parental and community engagement as an approach to narrowing the achievement gap of low-performing schools. Leithwood and Menzies (1998) attributed the difference of parental involvement in school-based governance models at different school levels to such variations as the historical context of the way a school does business, nature of the student population, community perception of an effective school model, and the superintendent’s vision.

Lastly, the discriminate function analysis for parental involvement in key school decisions across different levels of minority enrollment indicated that schools with 50% or more minority enrollment were perceived by principals to have more parental involvement across essentially all school governance issues. Because these findings are based on principals’ perspectives, it is important to consider have to consider that this finding may be an artifact of the No Child Left Behind policies or principals’ zeal to report higher levels of parental involvement in order to meet those mandates. However, there is research that discusses the proliferation school-based management councils across the country (Allen & Mintrom, 2010; Borman et al., 2003). With greater attention toward comprehensive school reform, the growth of evidence-based evaluation, and private funding, school-based management models have expanded (Borman et al., 2003).

Availability of Parental Involvement Mechanisms

The availability of daily parental involvement mechanisms was a key area of focus for this study. Principals’ perceptions on the availability of these mechanisms revealed findings that related to critical areas made available to parents. For Research Question 4, I used quantitative statistics to first rank the frequency of parental involvement mechanisms being offered and then determine if a relationship existed
between the availability of mechanisms and each independent variable. Overall, the findings revealed that the availability of communications with parents, opportunities to volunteer on a regular basis, maintain a log of parental involvement, parental educational workshops/courses, and written contracts between parents and schools were being made more available than other parental involvement mechanisms. However, the availability of these mechanisms did differ for schools with different levels of minority enrollment, different school levels, and census regions.

When examining the findings of the availability of parental involvement mechanisms across various levels of minority enrollment, principals’ perceptions revealed that schools with 50% or more minority students are more likely to provide almost every type of parental involvement mechanism. Again, this finding was consistent with the expectations and mandates of NCLB that required schools to make available parental involvement mechanisms to low-performing schools and those low-performing schools tended to have higher levels of minority enrollment. Some studies noted that the mandates and policies of NCLB build on nationwide systematic reform efforts that have been underway in minority and low-performing schools (Fusarelli, 2004).

Consistent with earlier findings, when comparing availability of parental involvement mechanisms across school levels, the elementary school was more likely to offer more opportunities for parental involvement. This is in line with studies that suggest that parental involvement is the highest during a child’s elementary school years. Researchers have found that parents sometimes believe that they cannot help with harder subjects and adolescents desire to become more autonomous (Hill & Taylor, 2003). However, this does not mean that parents are not concerned with the academic progress
of their adolescent children. Several studies found that parents' home-based activities, conversations, and encouragement about their child’s academic aspirations are associated with academic success of adolescents (Davidson & Cardemil, 2009; Hill & Taylor, 2003; Jeynes, 2003). Similar to earlier findings, when comparing mechanisms across census regions, again the South region was more likely to offer almost every type of parental involvement mechanism.

Parental Involvement Factors Impacting Adequate Yearly Progress

There were significant findings related to schools meeting AYP that emerged from Research Question 5. The question examined the association between parental involvement mechanisms and level of parental involvement in key school decisions and schools meeting AYP. The parental involvement mechanisms that were positively associated with schools meeting AYP were (a) parent/guardian workshops and (b) requirement that teachers provide suggestions for activities parents can do at home with their child. However, “a parent drop-in center or lounge” was found to be negatively associated with schools meeting AYP. The findings for level of parental involvement in key school decisions showed that three variables are associated with schools meeting AYP—(a) setting performance standards for students, (b) evaluating teachers, and (c) deciding how school budget is spent. Among them the level of parental involvement in “setting performance standards for students of this school” and “evaluating teachers of this school” appeared to be productive and were associated with significantly increasing the school’s likelihood to meet all accountability measures. However, parental involvement in “deciding how your school budget will be spent” appeared to be
counterproductive and was associated with significantly deceasing the school’s likelihood to meet all accountability measures.

The findings on availability seemed to suggest that some frequently offered mechanisms for parental involvement were not associated with meeting with AYP. Conversely, some less frequently offered mechanisms were associated with meeting AYP. For example, in the findings for Research Question 4, requirements such as “requirement that teachers provide suggestions for activities that parents can do at home with their child” was not one of the mechanisms frequently offered across census regions, school levels, or various levels of minority enrollment. However, “requirement that teachers provide suggestions for activities that parents can do at home with their child” was found in Research Question 5 to be positively associated with meeting AYP. There seems to be a mismatch of parental involvement mechanisms that were being more frequently offered in schools and those that actually made a difference in student achievement. This supports the argument of many critics of NCLB that asserts parental involvement mandates do not give roadmaps or understanding of those activities that directly impact student achievement (Parent Education Network, 2007)

Another interesting finding from the study was that parental involvement could be a double-edged sword. The analyses indicated that the availability of “a parent drop-in center or lounge” was found to be negatively associated with schools meeting AYP; parental involvement in “deciding how your school budget will be spent” appeared to be negatively associated with the schools’ likelihood to meet all accountability measures. Therefore, not all forms of parental involvement will improve the schools’ likelihood to meet accountability measures.
Recommendations for Future Research

There are several areas for future research that have been generated from the results of this study. A study can be conducted to further understand the trends of perceptions of principals and teachers regarding parental involvement and what factors are associated with those patterns of perceptions. I speculated that the change in perceptions could be an artifact of the national No Child Left Behind and other policies that mandated parental involvement are an integral part of narrowing the achievement gap and increasing school achievement. Further research could examine if areas such as current educational policy, school and community culture, teacher training/education on parental involvement, and the predominance of socioeconomic status and family structures are associated with the perceptions of principals and teachers. Future data collected by the National Center for Educational Statistics could include items on the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) that explore these factors in order for researchers to more closely examine their association with perceptions held by principals and teachers.

In addition, further research on parental involvement in schools could focus on clearer measurements of parents' actual interactions with schools. The results of my study found that the availability of “a log of parent participation maintained by parents or staff” had a marginally statistically significant, positive association with schools meeting AYP. Moving forward, survey items on SASS could include additional inquiry into the number of times that parents engage in these activities as perceived by school staff based on the information obtained by the parental participation log. This type of quantitative data could possible yield better results in understanding the types and frequency of parental involvement in schools needed to impact student and school achievement. I
would also suggest that additional information should be collected on perceptions that principals and teachers have regarding home-based parental involvement activities such as assisting in homework, reading to children, and conversations about educational aspirations for their children. These measures would enrich findings for successful parental involvement.

A third area of future research could focus on isolation of each individual parental involvement activity for both mechanisms and key decisions that was associated with schools meeting AYP. Because my research findings were able to identify specific types of parental involvement mechanisms that were associated with schools achieving academic success, it would be critical to better understand why these specific activities yield stronger positive results for schools. Further research could test models of parental involvement that incorporate those activities from my study to understand the relationship and how they link to overall theoretical frameworks and models of parental involvement. I believe the findings from my study will provide the opportunity for researchers to further test the how, why, quality of involvement and needed conditions of parental involvement around a specific set of activities that have shown to have unique impact on student and school achievement.

The fourth area of future research could be done on those areas that were not strongly associated with schools meeting AYP and why they do not strongly link to school success. Out of the 11 mechanisms that were made available, only 5 were either statistically significant or marginally significant associated with schools meeting AYP. Likewise, out of the seven key school decisions that parents have influence on, only two were positively associated with schools meeting AYP. This means that there are a
handful of activities that schools are directing time and resources toward that are not strongly associated with the ultimate goal of achieving student and school success. It would be important to understand why these particular mechanisms are not associated with school success and what schools might need to do differently.

The fifth area of research could focus on findings that segment across census regions, school levels, and various levels of minority enrollment. Across each one of these independent variables, there were distinct and significant findings. Further studies could apply my findings to both local and national samples that go deeper into diverse racial and cultural backgrounds; specified socioeconomic status; urban, rural, and suburban locales; and specific grade levels.

Finally, an additional area of research could focus on more evidence-based studies that examine the perceptions, actual interactions, and realities from the parents' point of view. Many of the research studies cited examined the perceptions of parental involvement from the school personnel lens. I did not find many national quantitative or qualitative studies that measured the perceptions of parents regarding quality parental involvement programs at school, the types of interactions that are actually taking place both at school and at home, and the quality of relationships between parents and teachers. There is the opportunity to build stronger research models that includes the voice of the parents.

Implications for Parental Involvement

There are a number of implications that have emerged from the results and discussion sections of this study. They are grounded in current research. The fact that principals and teachers perceive that parents are becoming more and more involved in
parental involvement activities demonstrates a shift in perceptions from more than a decade ago. This change in perceptions can be leveraged to build stronger school-and family-centered partnerships. Because principals’ and teachers’ attitudes and beliefs may be shifting, there exist a prime opportunity for school district administrators and school personnel to come together and find ways to further demystify the deficit lens of parents that many researchers have found both principals and teachers possess (Griffith, 2000; Jeynes, 2007; Lawson, 2003). In addition this may allow parental involvement programs to push past the patterns of program design that reinforce racial, ethnic, and class biases.

The results of this study also provide clear implications for policy design among policymakers, educational reformers, parent advocates, and school administrators and personnel. For both mechanisms offered to parents and governance models that are designed to involve parents in key school decisions, there is the opportunity to build on these findings to craft stronger parental involvement programs that have direct impact on student achievement and school success. Recommendations such as the ones offered by the Public Education Network (2007) will begin to leverage policy change opportunities that better ground parental involvement practices in evidence-based research, practices, and models. They included (a) keep the parental involvement policy provisions of Section 1118, but build upon and strengthen the provisions, to include an annual evaluation with parents of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy in improving the academic quality of the schools served under this part and identifying barriers to greater participation by parents; (b) develop capacity at the national and state level to assist local school districts in implementing the current NCLB parental involvement requirements; (c) coordinate national research related to field-based
and evidence-based models of effective parental involvement practices; (d) establish benchmarks in collaboration with local school districts and advocacy and community groups—once these benchmarks are established, evidenced-based progress evaluations should be reported to the public; (e) include parents and the community in developing a statewide system (as well as one at the district level) of information related to the state accountability system; (f) work with colleges and universities to develop a course in parent and community involvement that is a requirement for all undergraduate education students seeking teaching certification; (g) ensure that schools provide training for parents and community members on leadership and effective involvement with schools—maximize access to training, offer it at schools or at additional sites that are convenient to the community, and on a website; (h) develop a set of survey questions each year that could stand alone or be incorporated into existing local school system survey instruments to assess the effectiveness of parent and community involvement policies and practices; and (i) local school systems must factor parent and family involvement into the annual performance evaluations of school administrators and staff.

Another implication of my study is the strong case my findings make for the U.S. Department of Education, state departments of education, local school districts, and parents/community to take a look at the resources that are being deployed for parental involvement activities and determine if there is an opportunity to redirect resources to those activities and models that are showing promising evidence of directly impacting student achievement and school success. As my study indicated, some forms of parental involvement are not related to schools’ AYP status and still some forms of parental involvement are even negatively related to schools’ AYP status. Therefore, it is very
important to direct more resources to those forms of parental involvement that are associated with the school meeting AYP status.

Conclusion

This study provides insights and adds to the debate that focuses on parental involvement and whether it makes a difference in achieving students' and schools' academic success. There is a critical need to better define the overlapping definitions, concepts, measurements, and the quality of parental involvement programs, especially those that are targeted to low-performing and predominantly minority schools. A critical component to improving parental involvement programs is to provide a clearer understanding of activities that are directly impacting student achievement. This requires an intentional effort to understand a complex set of actors—parent, teacher, principal, student, and community—and a dynamic set of forces—social, economic, political, and cultural.

The focus on the trend of perceptions of parental involvement by principals and teachers revealed that there may be a shift in the how principals and teachers perceive parents' involvement in their child's education. The findings of this study revealed that their perceptions are more parents are becoming engaged in their children's education. This trend also held true across census regions, school levels, and schools with various percentages of minority enrollment. Although this is a promising shift from previous research that shows principals and teachers viewing parents from a deficit lens, more can be done to understand the quality of these relationships between school and parents and specific activities that directly impact students at different school levels.
There has been much debate regarding parental involvement in school governance issues and if it has an impact on improving the academic achievement of children and schools. The research and findings have been uneven citing there are differences between the structure of these models that yield both positive and negative results. However, my findings revealed that within these school-based governance models, there are a few parental involvement activities that were strongly associated with schools meeting their AYP. In addition, findings also revealed there are indeed differences in parental influence on various key school decisions areas along the dimensions of census region, school level, and schools with various levels of minority enrollment. These findings point out the fact that some contextual factors are indeed associated with the phenomenon of parental involvement.

In reviewing the availability of parental involvement mechanisms and whether those mechanisms differed across independent variables of census regions, school levels, and schools with various percentages of minority enrollment, the study revealed statistically significant differences. Parental involvement activities such as reliable systems of communication, opportunities to volunteer in school, log of parental involvement, parental educational workshops, and written contract between parent and school were the highest ranked. In addition, all of these mechanisms were statistically significant across all independent variables except for “communication with parent” across various level of minority enrollment. However, there were activities that were made more available than others such as volunteer in school, communication with parent, and education workshops/courses for parents. Overall, the findings showed that school
administrators perceived that they are making available activities for parents to become more involved in their children’s education.

Lastly, a critical focus of this study was to determine to what extent are the availability of parental involvement mechanisms and level of parental involvement in key school decisions associated with schools meeting their yearly adequate progress. The findings indicated that both parental involvement mechanisms and level of involvement in key school decision activities are strongly associated with schools meeting AYP. This is after controlling for school level and school demographic factors. The findings suggested that that there are no more than a handful of activities that are strongly associated with schools meeting AYP. This may suggest that although policy requires and schools offer numerous parental involvement activities, there may be only a few that need to be ascribed to in order to achieve student and school achievement.

Findings from this study add to the existing research base focused on the importance of parental involvement in their child’s education. Findings from this quantitative analysis provide information for further research, theory, practice, and policy regarding parental involvement. It also provides direction for future strategies to advance needed improvement for parental involvement programs, with more targeted improvement in those parental involvement areas that are associated schools’ meeting their AYP.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


http://www.sedl.org/cgi-bin/mysql/picbib-output.


Appendix A

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board Letter
Date: December 13, 2010

To: Jianping Shen, Principal Investigator
    Alandra Washington, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 10-12-10

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project titled "A National Study of Parental Involvement: Its Trend, Status, and Effect on School Success" has been approved under the exempt category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: December 13, 2011