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PATERNAL INVOLVEMENT IN TITLE 1 SCHOOLS:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF FATHERS' PERSPECTIVES

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Federal educational legislation has mandated a variety of parent involvement initiatives to encourage and support parents of Title 1 schools as partners in their children's education. The current literature identifies that parent-school partnerships are represented largely by mothers and not fathers.

The purpose of this qualitative research was to examine how fathers were involved in their children's education both at home and at school and ways to encourage their participation. In particular, this study focused on home-school partnerships of ten fathers whose children were attending a Title 1 school.

The findings indicated that fathers are involved in numerous home learning practices and school directed activities. They felt strongly about their responsibility to be positively involved in their children's education. According to these fathers, their interests have not been represented when schools plan parent involvement programs and activities.

Recommendations from the study indicated schools could benefit from collecting information from fathers to determine ways to engage them and improve their levels of school participation. Furthermore, the study highlighted the need for school leaders, educators and parent organizations to create a culture that acknowledges and values the skills and experiences that fathers can bring into the educational learning environment.

This dissertation is dedicated to the friendship and memory of Diane Piech. Her passion for parent involvement encouraged me to pursue this research and I will be forever grateful to her. Diane began this journey with me, critiquing draft after draft and providing me with supportive feedback. She died before I reached this important milestone.

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“We don’t accomplish anything in this world alone... and what ever happens is a result of the whole tapestry of one’s life and the weaving of individual threads from one to another that creates something.”

Honorable Sandra Day O’Connor

Associate Justice

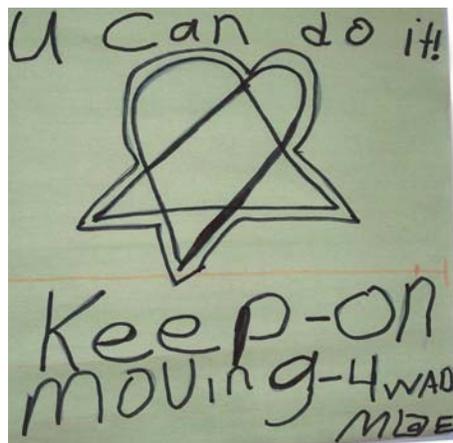
United States Supreme Court

It is unlikely that this “tapestry” would have been completed if it had not been for the individual threads that influenced this project. Michael, for not only being my brother,

but who is also the most intelligent friend and a model of someone who always is serving others. Thank you for cheering me on with congratulatory phone calls and emails throughout this educational journey. Your belief in me continues to spark my ambition.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to the Study

Introduction and Background

Our public education system has historically encouraged parents to guide their children's school experiences to make the most of their educational success both at home and at school (Baker & Stevenson, 1986; Chavkin & Williams, 1995; Epstein, 1985b; 1995; Henderson & Berla, 1994). Research and scholarship demonstrates that parent-school partnerships have a major influence on their children's achievements in school and throughout life (Chavkin & Williams, 1995; Cotton & Wikelund, 2001; Epstein, 2001; Epstein & Voorhis, 2001; Henderson & Berla, 1994). However, upon closer examination, the research indicates that parent-school partnerships are represented largely by mothers. Fathers in the educational process are often uninvolved, minimizing the success of children in the educational process.

The current literature identifies that mothers generally assume the responsibility for their children's educational activities in and out of school. Compared to mothers, fathers are not identified as active participants in their children's education. Existing research provides evidence that fathers are more involved in the area of caregiving (Nord, 1998; Parke, 1995). If schools have not engaged fathers as partners in home-school relationships, then how are fathers involved in their children's educational practices and activities at home and at school? This question is important in light of the research's underrepresentation of fathers in the home-school educational process. Secondly, fathers as

parents are an important factor in the academic success of students. Their participation might indirectly improve student achievement. Schools would benefit from a study on paternal involvement in the education of children to identify educational practices and resources to encourage paternal involvement and reveal ways to include fathers as more engaged partners in the various areas of home-school partnerships.

The purpose of this study was to examine how fathers were involved in their children's education both at home and at school and ways to encourage paternal participation in schools. In particular, this study focused on home-school partnerships of fathers whose children were attending a Title I school. This study concludes with promising involvement practices and suggestions for schools to engage fathers that have the potential to positively affect student achievement and school success. This next section discusses the impact of parent involvement in their children's education and to the learning community.

The importance of parent involvement. A better understanding of father involvement in schools is important in part because the value of achieving a balance between student success and parent involvement cannot be dismissed. Many researchers have found that there is a strong relationship between the two that needs to be taken seriously by the educational community.

Parent involvement impacts student success. A substantial review of the literature identifies at least three reasons why parent involvement is important. First, student achievement is likely to increase within all age groups when parents are involved (Baker &

Soden, 1998; Catsambis, 1998; Desimone, 1999; Epstein, 1985a; 1991; United States Department of Education [USDE], 1994). Students may exhibit higher grades and test scores, better attendance and consistently complete their homework (Haynes & Comer, 1996; Henderson & Berla, 1994; USDE, 1994). Second, parent involvement is closely related to higher student graduation rates which in turn may result in greater student enrollment in post secondary education (Henderson & Berla, 1994; Henderson & Mapp, 2002) and constructive employment later in life (Lueder, 2000).

There is additional evidence that when parents support their children's education, students display more confident emotional and social behaviors. Furthermore, students are more likely to exhibit positive feelings of self worth (Gestwicki, 2000; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory [SEDL], 2000), decreased feelings of anxiety, enhanced classroom attention and reduced discipline referrals and school suspensions (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Patrikakou, Weissberg, Redding, & Walberg, 2005; Sheldon & Epstein, 2002; SEDL, 2000). Parent involvement not only impacts student success but educators and other members of the learning community.

Benefits of parent involvement to the school community. Parent-school partnerships not only impact the development, well-being and academic achievements of the child but positively influence the school community (Chavkin & Williams, 1995; Constantino, 2003; Epstein, 2001; Epstein & Voorhis, 2001; Lueder, 2000; Marzano, 2007). Teachers experience fewer discipline problems and school administrators discover the value of increased family and community support (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997;

Lueder, 2000; Marzano, 2007). The benefits for schools intensify when mothers and fathers clearly understand school curricula, school discipline and the vision and mission statements of the school (David, 1998; Epstein & Voorhis, 2001).

Furthermore, school administrators report that parent involvement enhances social relationships between the school and the home, improves attitudes and encourages collaboration between educators and parents (Braatz & Putnam, 1996; Taylor, Clayton, & Rowley, 2004). These enhanced relationships also bring greater parent engagement to school sponsored programs and activities (Lueder, 2000; Swan, 2003). Similarly, parents are compensated for their involvement in their children's education.

Parent involvement brings rewards to parents. The rewards for parents are feelings of ownership, belonging, and inclusion towards the school. More importantly, the empowerment of parent involvement brings opportunities for parents to shape decisions that enhance their child's chances for achievement and success (David, 1998; Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001; Lueder, 2000).

Researcher Ken Tye (2000) summarized the significance of parent involvement when he stated, "Excluding parents would be antithetical to our American values of citizen involvement in the public sphere of which certainly includes the public schools" (p. 109). Yet, in the practice of home-school partnerships, research suggests that fathers have been excluded (Nord, Brimhall, & West, 1997; Pruett, 2000). Their opinions have not been as aggressively recruited or valued as equal partners in the educational process.

Although educational legislation has mandated parent initiatives and schools have implemented opportunities for parents, the literature leaves a gap as to why fathers in Title I schools are less involved in their children's education. In order to understand why more fathers are not involved in the school process, specifically, Title I programs, it is important to historically review the developments and trends of Title I legislation as it pertains to involving parents in home-school relationships.

Historical trends of parent involvement in Title I programs. Parent involvement has not always been a pressing educational issue. Serious attention to parent involvement began to appear about 40 years ago, when the Federal government recognized the importance of parent involvement and Title I legislation arrived on the scene enforcing parent initiatives.

Federal laws begin to involve parents. As early as 1965, federal laws have recognized that parents should have a voice in the educational process. Current legislation, "No Child Left Behind ([NCLB], 2001) and Title I" (USDE, 2001b), provides numerous provisions for parents and schools to form relationships, stressing the expectation that parent involvement is critical to student achievement and to the success of every school. The government's intent is to communicate a vision, purpose and expectations of the Title I program, linking parent involvement to whole school reform as well as to higher levels of student achievement. Setting the stage for parent involvement, legislative objectives included a definition for the roles of parents in the educational process.

Title I defines parent involvement. For the first time in the history of educational legislation, Title I has a specific statutory definition for precise roles parents can assume within the various practices of home-school partnerships. The statute defines parent involvement as “the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities” (USDE, 2001b, p. 3). Title I sets the standards for “capacity building” partnerships, requiring schools to support parents as full partners through meaningful communication, mutual respect, joint decision making, and shared accountability (USDE, 2001b). These federal mandates provide financial assistance to support school initiatives to engage parents.

Federal dollars fund parent initiatives. Furthermore, school districts and schools receiving Title I money must include parents in the development and evaluation of Title I programs (USDE, 2001b). By attaching federal funding to parent-school initiatives, Congress has emphasized positive links between effective parent-school relationships and student success.

The Federal law fosters the expectation that in order to increase student achievement, schools must encourage and welcome parents into the school environment, provide home-school practices to parents, listen and learn about their strengths, the needs of their cultures, and annually meet with parents to evaluate school practices. The intent of the law is that mothers and fathers participate, but the accepted reality of involvement is initiated and maintained by mothers (Lawson, 2003; Marsiglio, 1995; Nord et al., 1997; Parke, 1995; Pruett, 2000). A lack of information on paternal involvement may stem from

the fact that the field of paternal involvement is still in the early stages of development, slowly gathering attention in the last three decades. More is known, however, about paternal engagement in childrearing practices than home-school practices.

Searching for paternal representation in the home environment. In the process of guiding a child's education experiences, both parents can help create positive student outcomes. Through the years, mothers were recognized as the involved parent at all levels and only in the last three decades have studies documented fathers sharing more parenting responsibilities in the home.

Research emphasizes mothers more than fathers. In examining parent responses on their involvement in their children's education, mothers' responses predominantly represented home-school partnerships. Researchers have provided extensive data supporting the benefits of home-school partnership, yet, the majority of parent involvement studies identified participants to be mothers (Fagan & Barnett, 2003; Marsiglio, 1995; Parke, 1995).

Although research questions about and for fathers were included in studies and questionnaires, mothers, not fathers, traditionally provided the information for the father, children and school (Amato, 1994; Shepard & Carlson, 2003). Consequently, a review of the literature identifies a lack of direct information from fathers on their involvement in their children's lives.

A father's perspective may not have been recognized because historically, it was not until the early 1980's, when fathers began to receive recognition as primary caregivers

for their children. From local levels to federal levels, an awareness to involve fathers in their children's care began to surface. Compared to mothers, fathers were not identified as active participants in their children's education; however, the literature established fathers were assuming additional responsibilities in the general care of their children.

Paternal involvement increases in children's lives. Since the 1980's, the growth of paternal involvement was moving ahead in many directions. Realizing the sudden interest in paternal involvement in children's lives, policymakers, researchers and paternal organizations recognized not only did fathers need to be involved, they desired to be involved in order to prepare their children for the future (Larossa, 1997; Parke, 1996).

Fatherhood receives national attention. The significance of fatherhood was taking shape across the country. Policy makers issued guidelines to connect fathers with programs, policies and research. Similarly, national organizations whose primary goal was to educate the public about the problems of father absence, now encouraged our nation to address the needs of fathers and identify ways to strengthen their relationships with their children (Meyers, 1993). The National Fatherhood Initiative (2000) was in the vanguard with their "three-e formula to educate, equip, and energize fathers" (p. 8). A realization to help fathers reconceptualize their role as dads and assume more responsibilities in their families' lives began to emerge. A public awareness was growing to support paternal involvement. Similarly, researchers verified the importance of paternal relationships by classifying parent roles and childcare responsibilities.

Researchers classify paternal relationships. Researchers extended our knowledge on the types of paternal-child relationships and the nature and characteristics of those connections. In 1986, Lamb identified a three part typology for involved fatherhood: interaction, accessibility and responsibility. Researchers credited Lamb's typology as the foundation for the different types of paternal relationships. Since then, a number of scholars have continued to expand their understanding by which paternal involvement influences child development outcomes (Amato, 1998; Bruce & Fox, 1997).

Paternal responsibilities grow. Current research provides evidence that fathers are assuming more responsibility and becoming more involved in their children's lives (Nord, 1998; Nord et al., 1997; Parke, 1995; Rane & McBride, 2000). For example, fathers are participating in childcare responsibilities such as changing diapers and feeding the baby. Fathers are also attending more leisurely events (e.g., attending the child's sports events, camp outings) with their children (Nord, 1998; Nord et al.; Parke, 1995; Rane & McBride, 2000). However, their involvement in specific home and school educational activities, remains, substantially less than that of mothers (Fagan & Barnett, 2003; Marsiglio, 1995; Parke, 1995). The benefits from paternal involvement send a strong message to school leaders and educators that father participation in home-school partnerships is important.

Fathers make a difference. Father involvement is an essential ingredient necessary for the success of students, schools and fathers. A review of the literature examining the impact of paternal involvement on the social, emotional and cognitive development of children, discovered significant and positive associations between paternal engagement and

the child's overall well-being (Amato & Rivera, 1999; Lamb, 1997; Pleck, 1997; Rohner & Veneziano, 2001).

Similarly, paternal involvement has synergistic effects that relate to positive rewards for schools (Epstein, 2001; Frieman, 1998; Frieman & Berkley, 2002) and communities (Davis, 1987; Eggebeen & Koester, 2001; Lewis & Henderson, 1997). Involved fathers are also recipients of positive benefits, experiencing more confidence, higher self esteem and better relationships with their sons and daughters (Clark, 2005).

Research has identified there is a need for paternal participation in the educational life of children documenting that (a) fathers are important (Epstein, 1996; Nord, 1998; Popenoe, 1996), (b) desire to be active participants (Lamb, 1986), and (c) would like more responsibility to enjoy and nurture their children (Pruett, 2000). However, numerous barriers may prevent fathers from participating in their children's lives. Although the obstacles that prevent fathers from participating in the educational process are less known, the research clearly identifies barriers facing fathers in childrearing practices.

Barriers to paternal involvement. The empirical data speaks to multiple barriers that prevent fathers from engaging in home-family relationships. Some of the factors that influence the levels and aspects of paternal involvement include economic and work issues (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Parke, 1996), lack of family time (Daly, 1993; Hill, 2001), characteristics of the child which include age, gender, grade level and academic performance (Amato, 1994; Marsiglio, 1995; Parke, 1996), the relationship with a child's mother (Fagan & Barnett, 2003; McBride & Rane, 1997), cultural challenges (Arias &

Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Gonzales, 1996) and socio-economic constraints (Amato, 1994; Griffith, 1998; Menning, 2002; Useem, 1990).

Although the above barriers may limit a father's participation, research has not explored the perspectives of fathers themselves. Research reveals important insights on barriers to parent involvement in schools (Green, 2006; Mosley & Thompson, 1995; Nord, 1998; Pruett, 2000; Sylvester & Reich, 2002); however, the extent to which these barriers may apply to father involvement remains unclear. Similarly, in practice, schools are not involving fathers at the school or district level.

Personal experience with paternal involvement. With the advent of federal attention to parent involvement, the expectation of school leaders to involve a child's mother and father sets a high bar. However, at the local level, the school district; the practical realities reflect some of the research findings.

Parent involvement at the building level. My own experience in a K-8 district is a reflection of the research. Mothers were expected to be the primary providers of parent involvement. In my role as a principal, I observed mothers volunteering in and outside of the building and assisting with evening family reading or math activities.

As a classroom teacher, my behaviors and expectations belied my casual acceptance of mothers being the providers of reading to their children, signing student planners, attending parent conferences and volunteering in and outside of the school. Mothers were as much a part of my classroom as the students. Fathers, as I expected, were involved when

there was a student behavior issue, otherwise, I seldom saw fathers participating in the school environment nor did I think to encourage their participation.

Parent involvement at the district level. As a former school superintendent, I strongly advocated for the involvement of parents in the learning process both at home and at school and found that mothers served on school committees, attended school referendum meetings and supported school missions in the community. In contrast, I found that fathers participated at the board level. However, the majority of board members consisted of women. Even at that level, men primarily served on financial (e.g., budget, employment, building) committees and women represented curriculum and student discipline committees. Consequently, I agree with the researchers that parent involvement primarily has focused on mothers because my own behaviors and expectations confirmed it.

Personal experiences aligned with research data. Regrettably, when I look back on my attempts to involve parents in the educational process, mothers more frequently responded than fathers. I believed as many others that fathers were truly “the hidden parent.” In theory, parent involvement means both parents, yet, in practice, mothers remain the principal partner in home-school partnerships. In order to support paternal involvement, educators must find ways to engage in more meaningful discourse with fathers.

Summary. There is a commitment to establish reciprocal connections between parents and schools both in local school practice and under the guise of Federal requirements. Yet, the literature reveals mothers remain the principal partner in building and developing home-school partnerships. Research suggests that fathers are an important

factor in the academic success of students. Looking at the components that would identify factors that deter a father's engagement and understand a father's decision to participate is critical in order to increase their involvement during the child's school years.

Additional research is needed to explore the types of educational involvement, the support and the resources that would unlock rich opportunities for paternal home and school partnerships, and possibly increase student success. Until then, home-school partnerships are primarily represented by mothers and not fathers.

Problem Statement

Educational research and legislation have recognized home-school partnerships as an essential element in student outcomes, school success, increased community participation and positive rewards for both mothers and fathers. Yet, the majority of fathers are invisible and voiceless from within our schools (Epstein & Sanders, 2006). Title I program requirements specify a parent component to include parents "as full partners" (USDE, 2001b, p. 3), however, current educational research indicates that even under Federal law, fathers are missing from Title I schools. Furthermore, Title I schools receive additional funding to meet their students' needs and to realize the connection of parent support to student achievement and student outcomes. However, in practice, schools have not engaged fathers as partners in home-school relationships.

Specifically, there is a void in the extant literature and empirical data in three areas. First, the literature is limited on the types of educational involvement practices of fathers both at home and at school; research has not explored the perspectives of fathers

themselves, specifically fathers of children attending Title I schools. Second, much of the data collected on paternal involvement has been reported by mothers or children and not by fathers (Nord, 1998; Parke, 1995). Finally, there is an empirical gap on the specific types of school and home learning activities that would promote and maintain partnerships between fathers and schools (Dougherty, Kouneski, & Erickson, 1998; Green, 2003; Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb, 2000; Nord et al., 1997; USDE, 1998).

Purpose of the Study

In an attempt to build on the existing literature, this qualitative study examined the various types of involvement practices that fathers in Title I schools pursued in their children's education both at home and at school. Furthermore, this study identified specific factors that influenced and/or challenged their ability to participate in their children's education. Additionally, this study revealed suggestions and recommendations from fathers on ways to improve home-school partnerships at Title I schools.

Research Questions

Three research questions guided and addressed this study's purpose which concerns researchers, educational leaders, parent organizations, and parents in determining the inclusion of fathers in home-school partnerships.

1. How are fathers in Title I schools involved in their children's education?
2. How are fathers in Title I schools involved in their children's schools?
3. How do fathers in Title I schools perceive schools can improve their involvement in their children's education?

Significance

The information gathered from this study on paternal involvement in the education of children added new knowledge to home-school partnerships for school administrators, educators, and parent-school advocates. The findings might help schools identify educational practices and resources to encourage paternal involvement and reveal ways to include fathers as more engaged partners in various areas of parent involvement. These areas may include: (a) paternal involvement in school districts and school policies, (b) identifying preferred communicative strategies that will engage fathers in meaningful two-way communication, (c) including fathers on school committees, (d) linking paternal involvement efforts to student learning (e.g., math nights for fathers and students), and/or (e) identifying authentic paternal home-school training or activities.

Schools might use the above information and strategies to develop programs to improve the participation of fathers in both home and school learning. Hopefully, as other research suggests, this participation will indirectly improve student achievement or attendance, reduce in-school violence, and enhance graduation rates and social relationships. Finally, and most importantly, I hope that the future faces and the voices of parents will represent both mothers and fathers equitably as they collaborate and participate in the various roles of home-school partnerships.

Study Overview

This qualitative study interviewed a school of ten fathers whose children were enrolled in a Title I school. Through the collection of qualitative data, I will provide answers to the research questions as presented in this chapter.

Limitations

Like all research, this study had several limitations. First, the data collected represents interviews from just fathers. I am not collecting data from mothers or children regarding their perceptions of father involvement. Paternal behaviors and experiences may reveal different ideas than their espoused ones or their children. Similarly, data collected from school personnel such as superintendents, principals, and educators might add another perspective to the dimension of paternal involvement.

Second, the data collected consists solely of face-to-face interviews. Surveys would allow for a larger sampling of the population. However, I would be unable to capture fathers' feelings, suggestions and stories that would offer suggestions on strategies to encourage their participation (Merriam, 1998). Finally, all of the interviews with the fathers were conducted by a female. Fathers interviewed may express themselves more freely if a man was conducting the study (Schwalbe & Wolkomir, 2003). However, with certain procedures in place, the fathers seemed to be less threatened and more comfortable to respond in a way that made the interview successful. Ultimately, this study contributed to an increased understanding of ways schools can enhance paternal involvement; nonetheless, these limitations should not be overlooked.

Delimitations

There were several delimitations that should be considered when interpreting the results of this study. I elected to study fathers whose children were enrolled in Title I schools. Additionally, low-income fathers' perceptions were expressed. Fathers of a higher socioeconomic status could reveal a different set of responses. Next, this study focused on one public elementary school. I was not exploring private schools, preschools or high schools. The findings of this study consisted of one pre-kindergarten through 8th grade elementary suburban school outside of Chicago. Results do not necessarily apply to childcare centers, preschools, or high schools from rural or urban counties. Last, the types of parent involvement practices and activities identified by the fathers may not be applicable for the participation of all fathers or the engagement of mothers. Paternal opportunities, practices and resources identified may not transfer to other schools because of educational policies, funding, program restrictions or the structure of home-school activities.

Study Assumptions

This study encompassed two assumptions. First, schools might consider exploring ways to increase paternal levels of involvement in home-school partnerships. The influx of statistics of children living with fathers supports the need for a strong presence of fathers in the educational process. Additionally, the literature suggests students may value their education more, perform better in school and less likely to be suspended or expelled from school (Carlson, 2003; Clark, 2005; Nord et al., 1997).

Second, schools might benefit from investigating the preferences and needs of fathers as parents in order to increase their participation in educational practices and activities at home and at school. If schools desire to improve student achievement, educators need to identify the supports and barriers that would encourage paternal engagement in home-school partnerships. The more schools support and involve fathers to help their children in school and outside of school, the better the chances for children to succeed academically in life (Shumow, 2001).

Definition of Terms

In order to ensure clarity and a common understanding, the following terms are defined: parent, father, parent involvement, father involvement, home-school partnership, Title I school and disadvantaged. Although these terms are defined in the text of the study, it is important to highlight their meanings as they apply to this research.

1. Parent-This term includes a legal guardian or other person standing in loco parentis such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives or a person who is legally responsible for the child's welfare (Elementary and Secondary Act [EASA], 1994). The parent has the primary responsibility for the child's educational, social-emotional development and over all well-being and success (USDE, 2004). For the purpose of this paper, the term parent will represent a father or mother.
2. Father-This term that can represent a child's biological father. The term father can also include male father-figures (e.g., stepfather, grandparent, uncle, designated guardian) who have the primary responsibility (alongside potential mother or female influences) for the child's educational, social-emotional development and over all well-being and success.
3. Parent involvement-This term is defined as participating in communication or activities related to the education of children at specific locations: the home, the school (Christenson, Rounds, & Gorney, 1992) or the community (Comer & Haynes, 1991). For the purpose of this study, the term education refers to the

involvement of the parents in numerous ways. At home the term refers to all aspects of parenting (e.g., impacting cognitive, social and emotional development of children). This term also includes providing for the welfare of the child. At school, the term includes volunteering on committees, attending school sponsored events and/or school (e.g., teacher, administration), parent and student collaboration. Parent involvement in the community might include participation in religious organizations or engagement in community activities such as park district activities.

4. Father involvement-This term represents the behaviors of fathers in the education of their children both at home (e.g., reviewing homework, reading, family trips to museums) and at school (e.g., attending conferences, serving on councils, attending school events). Behaviors may include interactions and practices with the child (e.g., playing with the child) and/or provide for the child such as financial support for household expenses or school expenditures. The father might also offer experiences (e.g., tutoring, vacations, enrichment opportunities) for the child to be successful both at home and at school.
5. Home-school partnership-“A collaborative relationship between the home and the school designed primarily to produce positive educational and social effects on the child, while being mutually beneficial to all parties involved” (Lueder, 2000, p. 30).
6. Title I Schools-Schools with an enrollment of at least 50% of students receiving free or reduced price lunches are qualified for federal funds to improve students’ achievement in reading and math (Improving America’s School Act [IASA], 1994).
7. Disadvantaged-Under Title I law, this term refers to low-income and minority children (Title I, 2001b). For the purpose of this study, the term will include class, race, and ethnicity.

The following section provides a review of the relevant research on parent involvement in home-school relationships. With such a large monetary investment in parent involvement programs and parent inclusion in policies and legislative initiatives, a review of the literature on parent home-school partnerships is warranted. Next, the methodology is described and the characteristics of the fathers in the sample are discussed

before moving onto the results of the research findings. The different types of learning activities fathers are engaged in at home are explored followed by the challenges fathers face participating in their children's education. In addition, the various types of general and school directed activities fathers participate in is investigated followed by the examination of paternal communication in schools. Suggestions are then offered by fathers on ways to increase paternal involvement in schools. The final section provides a discussion of the overall findings and the implications of the study for future research.

Chapter 2

Review of Research and Relevant Literature

Introduction

The first section of this chapter reviews literature on the benefits of involving mothers and fathers in home-school partnerships in greater detail than provided in the introduction. The next section will explore parent involvement from the perspective of Title I programs. Third, definitions for the terms parent involvement and father are briefly included. Then, this section examines advocacy efforts from the federal government and national and state organizations to include fathers followed by a discussion on the limited studies of fathers' participation in educational practices. The review will then delineate and critique the elements of home-school parent involvement practices as described through Joyce Epstein's *Six Types of Parent Involvement* framework. The final section of Chapter 2 summarizes and draws conclusions from the literature review.

The Benefits of Involving Parents in Home-School Partnerships

Researchers have identified that parent involvement is essential to the educational achievement of the child (Baker & Soden, 1998; Chavkin & Williams, 1995; Desimone, 1999; Epstein, 1989; 1991; Epstein et al., 2002; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Jeynes, 2005; Young & Westernoff, 1996). The benefits of parent involvement in their children's education are well documented in the literature (Baker & Soden, 1998; Epstein, 1989, 1991).

Benefits derived from general parent involvement. The literature strongly suggests that student achievement is improved when parents participate in the school process (Baker & Soden, 1998; Chavkin & Williams, 1995; Henderson & Berla, 1994). Although the benefits for parent involvement are primarily for the educational success of the student, a review of the literature indicates numerous benefits to all stakeholders when parent involvement is increased and supported through home-school partnerships.

Parent involvement brings positive benefits to students. Examining the impact of parent involvement on the social, emotional and cognitive development of children, the literature suggests significant and positive associations between parent engagement and the overall well-being of children (Amato & Rivera, 1999; Lamb, 1997; Pleck, 1997; Rohner & Veneziano, 2001). Children reap the benefits when they see their mothers and fathers involved in their education.

Henderson and Berla's (1994) research concluded that families' involvement contributed significantly to student achievement from preschool to high school. Students will value their education, perform better in school, participate in extra curricular activities and on the other hand, they are less likely to repeat a grade, be suspended or expelled from school (Carlson, 2005; Clark, 2005; Nord et al., 1997). Henderson and Berla (1994) further concluded that when educators collaborate and work with parents to support student learning, children will likely succeed not only in school but throughout their life. The benefit of home-school participation also extends to parents as well.

Benefits to parents. Participation in their children's education may lead to parents furthering their own formal education (Haynes & Comer, 1996). Additionally, there is an increased understanding of the school curricula, school policy and school initiatives (SEDL, 2001). As a result of their increased participation and education, parents are likely to develop more confidence, higher self esteem, encourage positive relationships with their children and learn more about themselves as parents (Baker & Soden, 1998; Chavkin & Williams, 1995; Epstein, 1989, 1991; Haynes & Comer, 1996). Similarly, the involvement of parents brings an abundance of rewards to schools and educators.

Benefits to the school community. Parent involvement has synergistic effects that relate to positive rewards for the school community (Constantino, 2003; Epstein, 2001; Fagan & Iglesia, 1999; Frieman, 1998; Frieman & Berkley, 2002; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994). Teachers experience improved morale, fewer discipline problems, higher expectations of students, and less stereotyping of families (Epstein, 1985b; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

In fact, the evidence shows that administrators receive fewer family complaints, increased parent communication, additional family and community support and improved student and parent relationships (Constantino, 2003; Marzano, 2007). Furthermore, schools benefit from enhanced social relationships, better attitudes and relationships between teachers and parents, reduction of in-school violence and greater parent participation in school programs and activities (Braatz & Putnam, 1996; Lueder, 2000; Swan, 2003; Taylor et al., 2004).

A review of the literature documents significant student outcomes based on parent involvement but they do not separate the data from the responses of the fathers and mothers' responses. Much of the research on parent involvement appears to be based on mothers reporting the data which is not representative of the fathers' views. Given the substantial literature that argues for the importance of parents to be involved in home-school partnerships, research on paternal involvement might benefit from investigating home-school partnerships directly from fathers. It is important to bear in mind that men and women might have different attitudes, experiences and perspectives regarding involvement in their children's education. Although researchers have not yet sought out paternal perspectives on involvement, the federal government has found ways to support the general participation of parents.

The rationale for involving parents in Title I educational programs. Over the past forty years, despite challenges and barriers, federal educational legislation has continuously given credence to the importance of parent involvement in their children's education (Chrispeels, 1991; D'Angelo & Adler, 1991; Epstein, 1985b; 1996). This section will begin with a review of Title I educational programs that encourage the contributions of parents in home-school partnerships. Title I legislation was the cornerstone for all federally funded programs to consistently involve parents. Additional reauthorizations required procedures to embrace and involve parents in Title I programs in order to bridge the achievement gap that existed for economically and disadvantaged children.

Although this section does not specifically identify the involvement of fathers in the Title I process, it does address the general involvement of parents in their children's schooling. In order to understand the landscape of paternal involvement in education, it is important to present a brief historical review of the developments of Title I legislation as it pertains to the general involvement of parents in home-school relationships. This section will conclude with a federal definition on parent involvement.

The birth of Title I. In 1965, Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Act (1965), one of the largest federal funded programs in the history of public education. Under the umbrella of this historical legislation, Title I originated to give parents a strong presence through home-school partnerships.

Title I schools were defined as having a minimum level of poverty and funding which was specifically tied to school improvements to benefit at-risk students and their parents. This federal program allowed school funding to target low-income children regarding special educational services (Lyons & Gooden, 2001; Stickney & Plunkett, 1982; Timar, 1994). By making parent involvement a component of this federal law, the government indicated that involved parents, particularly low-income parents were, “ a viable solution to educational inequities” (Johnson, 1997, p. 1759). Through the next three decades, parents, educators, parent advocates and organizations supporting the education of children continued to prompt policymakers to give parents a preeminent voice based upon the legislation.

Government initiatives for parent involvement increases. Title I student enrollment was increasing and schools required additional funding to support parent programs. At the federal level, officials adjusted their dollars to accommodate the growing numbers but in practice, parent programs were not growing as fast.

Title I numbers steadily grow. The 1994 reauthorization of Title I legislation, decreased the poverty level requirement of eligible schools from 75% of children living in poverty to 50% (IASA). That adjustment allowed additional poverty identified schools to become eligible for schoolwide Title I services. The number of Title I programs grew from 1,200 in 1996 to 9,000 during 1997-1998 (USDE, 2003).

By this time, Title I was serving close to 13 million students from preschool age to high school (Hoffman, 2007). Similarly, federal funding for Title I rose from \$7.9 billion in fiscal year 2000 to \$12.7 billion in fiscal year 2006 (Hoffman, 2007), placing overall funding for all educational programs at 13 billion for the year 2007 (Hoffman, 2007). In addition, Title I amendments again heavily weighed in favor of low-income and minority parents. Recognizing the large percentage of students that were low-income, legislators were forceful in leveling the playing field for those students' parents to support their children's education.

New program requirements included parents' participation in district and school decision-making roles, and policy and school improvement plans. Sadly, the growing number of students did not increase the number of parent-school partnership programs. Schools searched for additional funds to support the growing enrollment of Title I students;

however, additional federal funding was attached to school districts' parent involvement programs.

Federal dollars stipulate parent involvement programs. In 1994, for the first time, Title I parent accountability was tied to funding for school districts. The law stipulated that local education agencies receiving over \$500,000 annually in Title I funds had to reserve at least 1% for family literacy, parent training and other parent involvement programs (USDE, 2001b, p. 16). By attaching federal funding to parent-school initiatives, Congress for the first time emphasized the importance of positive links between parent-school relationships and student success, and policy makers were willing to support this concept through school funding. Local school administrators were forced to include parents in the development and revision of Title I school improvement plans and parent-school involvement policies.

It is important to have financial accountability in delivering school district parent programs. However, could the ideas and energy to involve parents from the government mandates and school initiatives be the reasons why parents are not as involved? School staff may have good intentions on how to “fix the parent problem” but are they listening to the needs and priorities of parents. In order to develop effective home-school relationships, schools might benefit from understanding the perspectives of parents.

School governance is at the heart of Title I. All subsequent amendments endorsed the involvement of low socio-economic parents in the planning, operation and evaluation of Title I programs through shared governance (McDonnell, 2005; Peterson, Rabe, & Wong,

1991). According to educational legislation, parents would be included as partners. This bold government directive for parents to participate in advisory roles at their school districts generated diverse opinions and reactions to this mandate.

Educational leaders and parent advocates favored the establishment of governance roles for parents, but contended parent training first had to be established in the areas of school operation, finance and educational law (Johnson, 1997). Yet, other advocates believed school governance should remain at the building level (McLaughlin & Shields, 1987). Despite the federal education requirements for schools to involve parents, paternal involvement was not fostered with any vigor.

Legislative intent to involve low socio-economic parents in all aspects of school governance is to be commended, but could parents of Title 1 schools be more involved if given a choice on their preferences of school involvement practices? As the impact of educational legislation and policies increased, federal initiatives required timelier parent communication and involvement; however, in practice, the parent component was not seriously addressed.

The impact of Title I through No Child Left Behind. The beginning of the 21st century brought about many educational reforms. No Child Left Behind legislation proposed new rights and options for schools to help parents guide their children's education. Title I under NCLB (2001) maintained several parent involvement components under the original legislation and strengthened other core features in favor of low-income

and minority parents, stressing the huge stake both mothers and fathers had in home-school partnerships.

In 2001, NCLB (2001) was signed into law proposing to close achievement gaps and aiming for 100 percent student proficiency by 2014. No Child Left Behind (2001) stipulated stronger provisions to link parent involvement to school reforms and higher levels of student achievement. Among the many new founded responsibilities, schools were required to inform parents on school achievement status, school improvement activities, school choice, and supplementary services.

No Child Left Behind (2001) presented parents with new rights and options that offered important insight into their children's education (e.g., professional qualifications of children's teachers, tutoring services to underachieving students). Through this legislation, parents were ensured they had the "information they need to make well-informed choices for their children, more effectively share responsibility with their children's schools, and help their schools develop effective and successful academic programs" (USDE, 2001b, p. 1). This was essential because of the rapid expansion of Title I services.

Lawmakers endorse capacity building and support for parents. Federal provisions mandated educational institutions to "build the schools and parents' capacity for stronger parental involvement" (USDE, 2001b, p. 11). Parental involvement under Title I (USDE, 2001b) stressed the importance of parents' participation in four areas:

1. parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning (p. 3),
2. parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school (p. 3),

3. parents are full partners in their child's education and included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child (p. 3), and
4. [schools] shall ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the parents in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand (p. 4).

Given the legislation that accompanies NCLB (2001), the roles of parents and specifically fathers must be considered. Title I personnel often view parent involvement in terms of attendance at formal meetings or parent conferences. This may be partly due to the interpretation and receipt of federal funding of mandates for parent involvement. Schools may also interpret the roles of parents as decision-makers and advocates differently. Little attention is given to the role of parents as active partners in their children's education. This discussion on the role of parents as active partners gives weight to the argument that schools need to listen to parents individually and separate of one another. Fathers and mothers may construct their roles differently with regards to home-school relationships.

NCLB includes requirements to honor the parent component and to communicate with parents about their students' achievement and their school success. Yet, most parents are on their own to figure out how to become involved in home-school relationships. This lack of direction is further guided by Title I's recently defined statue of parent roles in the educational process.

A unified definition for the inclusion of parents. For the first time in history, under NCLB (2001), the government provided a specific statutory definition for precise roles parents can assume within the various practices of home-school partnerships. The statute

defines parent involvement as “the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities: (USDE, 2004, p. 3).

This national definition, however, remains unclear, leaving the concept of meaningful communications at the discretion of parents, to interpret in their own way the goals of the school, and educators, to implement school practices as they see fit. This may originate from a lack of common understanding about the meaning of parent involvement across the field of education (USDE, 1998).

Defining parent involvement. The field of education has struggled to define parent involvement. Although the Federal government recently legislated a definition, in practice, there still lacks consensus and confusion. Without a universal definition, the meaning of general parent involvement continues to be discussed and debated. Similarly, the meaning of father involvement in the education process reveals information that is fragmented and isolated, whereas the literature is much clearer on father roles in home-family relationships. Therefore, it is significant to investigate the definition and roles of fathers in childrearing practices. In order to accomplish this, the next section will examine the many differences among the labels and meanings of “general” parent involvement. It will clarify the researchers’ identification of the term father and concludes with the classification of paternal roles in child caring responsibilities.

The many terms of parent involvement. A voluminous review of parental involvement does not reveal one definition consistently used in the professional literature

(Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Epstein, 1996) or in educational practices (Simmons, 2001). In the field of education, the synonyms used for parent involvement (e.g., home-school relationships, home-school collaboration, family-school-community relationships, instructional partnerships, school connections) are used in the literature interchangeably to describe the relationship between parents, schools and educational programs (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Epstein, 1995; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; SEDL, 2001; Swapp, 1993).

More recently, terms such as school-family partnership have been introduced into the literature, recognizing all entities as equals (Epstein, 2001; Patrikakou, et al., 2005). Although the meaning of this particular term encompassed and validated the influence of all family members and their community and cultural contributions on a child's positive educational outcomes (Sanders, Allen-Jones, & Abel, 2002), still in theory, the term does not succeed in defining parent involvement.

Labels: Location or involvement. Such differences among the labels and meanings of the term “parent involvement” make it difficult for researchers to understand, compare and measure the levels and types of parent involvement. For some researchers, parent participation is defined as educational activities at specific locations: the school, the home (Christenson, Rounds, & Gorney, 1992) or the community (Comer & Haynes, 1991). Still others base parent involvement on the purpose of the involvement: academics, behaviors, events, policy, and curriculum (Comer & Haynes, 1991).

Several different schools of thought failed to reach a common understanding about the meaning of parent involvement across the field of education. The meaning of home-

school partnerships continues to be debated. However, for the involvement of fathers, the debate is more diverse as paternal involvement is still in the early stages of research.

Definitions and clarity as the field of paternal involvement grows. In the 1980's, schools were operating on different sets of assumptions regarding general parent involvement and focusing less on father involvement. Paternal involvement was not a predominant expectation. Only in the last thirty years, has there been growing awareness for fathers to assume responsibility in childrearing practices and the education of their children. Researchers at this point had not offered a definition of paternal involvement in education but offered numerous meanings behind the term father (Marsiglio, 1995; McBride, 1990; Palkovitz, 1997; Pleck, 1997).

The many terms of paternal involvement. Researchers acknowledge the variety of synonyms for the term father but remained challenged on defining their roles in the process of education. The term father is broadly labeled to include father, stepfather, grandfather, uncle and primary caretaker among others. In addition, the term father was looked at in two parts depending on the research: a) biological and b) social (Coley 1998; 2001). The latter term refers to the changing nature of the father's role (e.g., divorced, stepfather, cohabitation, unmarried, non-custodial) but as society changed, new terms such as co-parenting for extended families arose (e.g., unwed, separated, divorced) (Swapp, 1993).

Additionally, through the years, the general public defined fathers by their traditional roles in the workplace and by how much personal income they earned (Schoenfield, 1996; Siebold, 1995). Researchers even went so far as to invent new words

such as fatherwork and fatherhood (Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997). The term “hidden” father (Parke, 1996) was also articulated to describe a father’s lack of involvement in home-family relationships.

Michael Lamb in 1986 was one of the first researchers to define a father’s involvement as active engagement in children’s lives. Concurrent with Lamb’s definition, other researchers sought to clarify his statement of meaning. Researchers in the social science field became more interested in the role of the father in partnering in the raising of their children. Dowd (2000) examined how fathers could overcome their own lack of positive father/son experiences and be a positive role model to their children.

As clarification of the meaning of paternal involvement became clearer, a vast variety of different approaches and classification systems appeared. Schools and parents were still left to develop their own ways to interpret how paternal involvement would look and sound like. For the purpose of this paper, I offer my own definition of the term father and father involvement.

Personal definition. Although theorists and researchers have defined paternal involvement through their own eyes and through the lens of their research, I define father as an evolving term that involves male father figures (e.g., father, stepparent, grandfather, uncle, designated guardian) who have the primary responsibility (alongside potential mother or female influences) for the child’s educational, social-emotional development and over all well-being and success.

The term father involvement represents the behaviors of fathers in the education of their children both at home (e.g., reviewing homework, reading, family trips to museums) and at school (e.g., attending conferences, serving on councils, attending school events). Behaviors may include interactions and practices with the child (e.g., playing with the child) and/or provide for the child such as financial support for household expenses or school expenditures. The father might also offer experiences (e.g., tutoring, vacations, enrichment opportunities) for the child to be successful both at home and at school.

Researchers continued to define fathers in child rearing practices. As the impact of educational legislation and policies increased, federal support and national groups recognized the need to include more fathers in education.

Awareness for paternal involvement in all fields. Parallel to the growth of federal legislation was the attention and support for paternal involvement from the Clinton White House administration. This next section will examine how the federal supports promoted father involvement initiatives. In addition, this section will identify national and local levels of organizational assistance to encourage paternal participation in their children's home and school lives. Last, this section will discuss the limited research regarding fathers in the educational process.

Federal support for paternal involvement. In 1995, President Clinton issued a memorandum requesting executive departments and federal agencies to specifically include fathers in programs, policies and research practices (Clinton, 1995). The President noted that fathers had a “unique and irreplaceable role” in the lives of their children (p. 3).

Federal agencies initiated the first step to work together to develop guidelines for promoting responsible fatherhood. For example, the Department of Health and Human Services ([USDHHS], 2004) promoted the contributions of fathers in the following areas: (a) the child's education, (b) the cultural and ethnic participation of fathers, and (c) the various definitions of fatherhood.

This sudden surge of interest in paternal involvement prompted Congress to ratify legislation titled, "The National Fatherhood Act" (2001). This legislation validated the importance of fathers and encouraged paternal involvement because emerging research initiated public awareness that fathers desired and needed to be involved, in order to successfully prepare their children for the future (LaRossa, 1997; Parke, 1996).

As the impact of legislation and agency policies increased, national groups recognized the need for society to represent more fathers in the overall development of their children. In a short period of time, organizations to support fathers sprung up around the nation seeking ways to reconnect and strengthen their relationships with their children (Meyers, 1993).

Organizational support for paternal involvement. Organizations separately promoted their own responsible fatherhood initiatives. For example, the Fatherhood Project argued for specific gender approaches and stressed the importance of personal and cultural changes (Levine & Pitt, 1995). The Promise Keepers, a national men's Christian political organization, praised the importance of gender differences and the need for men to lead, be the head of their families, and reassert traditional roles of leadership in their communities

(Farrell, 2001). Additionally, the National Fatherhood Institute claimed every home needed a responsible, committed and loving father (Carroad, 1994). These national organizations extended their presence to individual states sending a strong message to hear the voices of fathers as they assumed more responsibility in their children's lives.

Illinois fathers' response. Locally, Illinois citizens responded to the call and founded Illinois Fatherhood Initiative ([IFI]) was in 1997. This organization addressed the increasing problem of fathers' absences from the family structure. This not-for-profit agency reported over one million children lived without a father in their home (IFI, 2007). Armed with statistics of demographics of absent fathers, this organization cited depression, aggressive behaviors, and psychological problems as damaging effects to some children who lived without fathers in their lives. Their advocacy efforts contributed to the Illinois legislature passing the *Council on Responsible Fatherhood Act* (Public Act 093-0437) in 2003. In addition to public service announcements, the Illinois Fatherhood Initiative continued to develop a network of resources to assist fathers in the areas of education, health, and the workplace (2007).

Position statements from these and other organizations increased the public's awareness regarding the need for paternal involvement in children's lives. In addition to political platforms, there was an overwhelming tide of publications, books, reports and articles on the subject of fathers and, instantaneously, the number of websites dedicated to the importance of fathers in children's lives increased significantly (Clark, 2005; USDHHS, 2004). This sudden attention of paternal involvement was moved in many

directions, especially for the paternal caregiving field but, in the educational field, a father's involvement was relatively stagnant.

Less research has been devoted to the actual engagement of fathers in the school process. The first invitation by the educational system for father involvement comes from the efforts of preschool educators drawing more fathers into their children's education. This next section will explore the actual involvement of preschool fathers and conclude with a study on the attendance levels of fathers at school sponsored events.

Fathers share responsibilities in the education process. As previously mentioned, the earliest research related to paternal involvement comes from the early childhood field (Green 2003; Levine, Murphy, & Wilson, 1993). Through innovative programming, fathers were enticed to attend educational sessions on a variety of topics such as planning for a child's future, how to become a better parent, health issues or how to read to your child (Fagan, 2000; Fagan & Iglesia, 1999; Green, 2003; Levine, 1993; McBride & Rane, 1997). It is true that fathers had the opportunities to become engaged in a variety of preschool activities but the research identifies these activities were school directed and not based on the preferences of fathers. Communication was still one sided without consultation from both parents.

Although these efforts were created in the form of picnics, family reading nights, holiday parties and other events, past research consisted of quantitative data, counting the physical presence of parents, sorted by roles of who attended and who did not attend. No

insights were gained as to the reasons for involvement or nor was there any input solicited directly from the parents.

Parent attendance verified through quantitative research. Nord and his colleagues (1997) comprehensive research went to great lengths to measure the physical presences of both parents in a variety of school related activities. Because of the breadth of this study (e.g., 16,000 surveys), Nord was able to analyze not only fathers' attendance, but also the types of fathers who attended, such as single fathers, non-resident fathers and absent fathers. Also, the different involvement practices could be tied to the types of fathers (e.g., 32% of the non-resident fathers were less likely to participate in any school related activity, 48% of single fathers with children were likely to be involved). This research also found fathers of two parent families were relatively uninvolved. Only 27% of the fathers in two parent families were highly involved in their children's schools compared to the 56% of the mothers in two parent families. When these fathers did attend, they were more likely to attend classroom events, school activities or general school meetings than parent-teacher conferences or volunteering.

Nord's research was one of the first to document the physical presence of elementary school fathers at school sponsored events. These findings might be the basis for future, deeper discussions regarding paternal participation. For example, if the data demonstrated that fathers are more comfortable attending band concerts or sports activities and not parent-teacher conferences or volunteering, what do schools need to do to correct this imbalance. Currently, it is unclear from this body of research why fathers preferred and

attended one school activity over another. Although researchers have not sought out paternal perspectives on involvement in the educational process, schools are able to assess the reasons for participation of general parent involvement through an analysis of a variety of home-school practices.

Examining the elements of home-school parent involvement. The field of education uses an assortment of home-school practices to assess parent involvement. For the purpose of this study, Joyce Epstein's *Six Types of Parent Involvement* framework will be reviewed because this conceptual framework was initially used as a beginning point of reference to describe the types of home-school practices fathers experience. Epstein's framework is widely used and considered to be the most comprehensive framework available for parent involvement activities. Although this particular framework has not been studied with fathers or low-income or minority fathers, specifically, I have examined the issue of diversity as it applied to fathers whose children attend a Title I school.

The organization of Epstein's framework. The framework involves six components. Each section will be described separately in terms of definition, practices and resources, challenges and summaries. Other research and scholarship were incorporated into this framework. The following literature review will delineate what is known and not known about father involvement within each of these components and therefore, specify the literature gap my research sought to address. This section will conclude with criticisms and the limitations of Epstein's framework.

Joyce Epstein's framework: Six types of parent involvement. Epstein's framework has become the foundation for much research on parent involvement and was adopted by the National Parent Teacher Association ([NPTA], 2000) as their organization's national standards for family involvement. This framework consists of six types of parent-school practices (Epstein, 1987; 1995; 2001). Schools use this framework to choose from the components for the following reasons: (a) meet the varied needs and goals of their organization and parents, (b) improve student learning and (c) support parent involvement (Brandt, 1989; Epstein, 1987; 1995; Jeynes, 2005; Patrikakou, et. al., 2005).

Parenting component. Educators understand that parents are the child's first and most important teacher. This component provides families with parenting and child-rearing skills to accomplish this important role. This component also incorporates home conditions that support children as students at each grade level and helps schools in understanding their children (Epstein, 1995).

Practices and resources. Support from the home is critical to student success (Shumow, 2001). School practices that involve parents may include workshops or meetings on parent and child rearing at different age and grade levels. Family programs to assist families with health, nutrition, and other services provide parents with resources they may need. Parent education and other training (e.g., GED, family literacy) help parents learn about parenting skills, child development or the school curriculum, promoting home-school partnerships and student achievement (Constantino, 2003; Primavera, 2000). In addition to parenting practices, resources can assist parents in supporting children as students.

Parenting resources can assist parents in gaining greater knowledge of the characteristics of child development stages and encourage parents to have more self confidence in their parenting abilities (NPTA, 2000). Resources that schools might offer to parents include: (a) letters to parents on study tips prior to state examinations, (b) a library center housing parenting literature, (c) newsletters that include articles on home environments that support learning (NPTA, 2000) or (d) parent centers or parent coordinators.

Parents may also contribute to this component. When schools work with parents directly they may discover parent needs and receive information on family backgrounds to assist them in communicating and designing programs to meet their needs. However, when designing parent training workshops or home visits, educators would benefit from understanding obstacles parents may face to prevent their active engagement in their children's education.

Challenges to parenting. Barriers that exist within the parenting component are: (a) lack of knowledge of curricula and school policies, (b) lack of knowledge on how to involve themselves in home-school partnerships (Lareau, 1987; USDE, 2001; USDHHS, 2004), (c) low literacy levels and (d) socioeconomic status of parents. The above barriers might be in the form of parents themselves or unintentional actions on behalf of schools to parents.

First, studies on parent involvement acknowledged many parents have difficulty navigating the school system (Lareau, 1987; USDHHS, 2000). For example, parents might

be intimidated by new and unfamiliar course content and their responses to overwhelming situations may be to do nothing (Lamb, 1997; USDE, 2000). Along the same lines, parents may be unfamiliar with Title I policies and school regulations. According to Title I rulings, schools must hold an annual meeting to describe the school program and to explain parents' rights as mandated by Title 1 regulations (IASA, 1994); however, parents do not always (a) attend Title I meetings (USDE, 1994), (b) request additional information to understand schoolwide programs and (c) offer suggestions or take part in decisions. Yet, schools unconsciously, may not initiate outreach efforts to educate parents on school curricula or school policies increasing the barriers mothers and fathers may face in their role as a parent.

For example, numerous schools do not have a parent involvement policy in place to identify parenting roles (Kessler-Sklar & Baker, 2000). Additionally, schools fail to offer orientation or informational sessions throughout the year to keep parents informed on school policies or curricula topics (Fredericks & Rasiniski, 1990). Although schools inadvertently discourage parents from participating in the parenting component, there are other impediments such as low literacy levels that may inhibit the involvement of parents.

Low literacy levels of parents may impact their parenting engagement in Title I school programs. Some parents cannot read or are functionally illiterate. Unfortunately, low literacy regardless of race and for all groups of parents is still too common in our society. In 2003, almost 25% of Americans (e.g., 45 million persons) who spoke English as

their first language had the lowest level of literacy skills in reading, writing, and functioning in the English language (National Institute for Literacy, 2006).

Furthermore, written information (e.g., handbooks, newsletters) supplied by schools to parents throughout the school year are often at higher reading levels diminishing the ability of parents to communicate with their children or to participate in school activities (National Institute for Literacy, 2006). Tied clearly to these low literacy levels is the socio-economic status of the parents which may impact parent involvement.

A substantial review of the literature indicates that parents who are less involved in their children's education tend to be from poorer social classes (Calabrese, 1990; Griffith, 1998; Williams and Chavkin, 1989) or as the Federal government identifies as parents of Title I schools. It is difficult to accept the overall conclusion that Title I parents are less involved. The field of education would benefit from new research on the ways fathers of Title I schools are involved in their children's education both at home and at school. Perhaps, after understanding their perspectives and challenges to parent participation, nontraditional involvement practices engaged by low socio-economic parents would be revealed and schools could develop effective home-school relationships from the lens of the father or mother and not the school.

Furthermore, a challenge for schools under this component is providing information to all families who want it or who need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school. Schools may have difficulty making sure that all information for and from families is clear, useable and linked to children's success in school.

Parenting conclusion. The most important support a child can receive comes from both parents. Parenting practices, resources and challenges have been identified for general parent involvement. Educators, however, have not identified the abilities and needs from the perspectives of fathers. In order to develop high quality parent programs and educational practices to improve student learning, school personnel would benefit from asking fathers how they are involved in the area of parenting. Fathers have yet to be asked what roles they would like to play in the area of parenting and what challenges they face to support their children's learning.

Fathers might benefit from parenting information but the types of information that dads might find usable and linked to their children's success has yet to be identified by them. Similarly, schools have offered workshops on parenting activities but as of yet have not targeted activities based on what fathers could utilize to encourage their participation in home-school practices. Although parents primarily bear the responsibility for this component, the next component involves parents working with their schools to increase student achievement and school success.

Learning at home component. Epstein's second component addresses learning activities in the home advocating that "parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning" (USDE, 2001b). Depending on the curriculum, the home environment and needs of the student and parent, this component varies considerably from home to home, school to school and district to district (Epstein, 1995).

Practices and resources. This component provides information and ideas for parents about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions and planning (Phi Delta Kappa, 1995). Activities might include taking a child to the library, visiting a museum, spending time on readiness skills or other literacy practices. Parents can build social experiences, academic skills and develop enrichment opportunities for their children in the home but practices and resources from the school might encourage richer learning experiences (Epstein & Salinas, 2004).

One area schools may provide under this component is the provision for a parent coordinator or a home visit trainer. Parent trainers can offer interventions to assist all groups of parents. For example, through a home visit parent training program, Lopez and Cole (1999) studied 5 Puerto Rican parents of kindergarteners, investigating whether parents after home visits could implement home intervention strategies to address student academic readiness needs. Regardless of a parent's own education experiences or skills, the results suggested parent supports improved student learning both in the home and at school. Not all schools can meet the expenses of parent trainers but school resources can offer other that are affordable to support learning at home.

Resources to assist parents in home learning activities may include: (a) educational videos suggesting reading strategies to assist children, (b) school news articles on understanding assessment and grading procedures, (c) brochures on how to turn family museum trips into learning activities or (d) homework that requires students to discuss and interact with their parents (NPTA, 2000). The opportunity for parents to be involved in

home literacy practices is essential; however, numerous reasons may discourage mothers and fathers from participating in educational practices at home (Amato, 1994; Marsiglio, 1995; Parke, 1996).

Challenges to learning at home. Schools have not always invited parents into the process of helping their children learn at home. For example, national data from the National Household Education Survey (Chandler, Vaden-Kiernan, & Westat, 1996) examined home-school involvement practices. Questions about learning at home components were divided into two practices: a) how well did schools provide workshops, materials, or advice about how to help child learn at home and b) how well did schools provide information to parents to help children with their homework. Parents reported students' progress through report cards as the number one practice schools did "very well" (100%), compared to the learning at home component of which only 38 % of parents reported schools assisted them with practices about how to help their children learn at home.

In a similar study, Ingram (Ingram, Wolfe, & Lieberman, 2007) examined parent involvement practices in high achieving schools serving low-income minority populations. Surveyed parent responses indicated higher parent involvement in the form of supervision and assistance to their children with learning activities in and outside of the home (e.g., library visits, trips to the zoo). Academic involvement opportunities such as how frequently parents spoke with the child's teacher received a much lower involvement response from

parents (p. 492). According to these parents surveyed, home learning activities warranted their involvement and support over academic information and school events.

Both of the above studies failed to evaluate two issues (a) if the information supplied by the school filled a void in learning at home activities and (b) how useful this information was regarding parents being more successful in helping their children with academic subjects such as homework. Although learning at home is an essential component for parents, both of the above studies reported learning at home activities and information for parents as “satisfactory”. Parents preferred information on home activities that would engage their children but educators seemed unsure as to which types of assistance would be most helpful and appropriate to parents.

Last, educators have not voluntarily specified learning-at-home activities. Teachers stated the development of home learning materials and implementation of this component as time consuming for them leaving this activity not found in many schools (Dauber & Epstein, 1989), even though educators recognize the positive relationship of home literacy practices to student achievement.

Learning at home conclusion. The above research on learning at home practices did not differentiate among gender or culture. Furthermore, the research findings did not offer explanations behind the reported parents’ reasons but the findings for the role of fathers stress the fact that schools are unable to achieve a balance in learning at home partnerships.

It is critical to understand which learning at home practices will help parents, specifically fathers, advance their children's academic skills and develop positive student outcomes. However, researchers have not been as diligent in understanding the reasons why fathers are not as involved in home learning practices. Additionally, schools have not identified practices that would assist fathers in knowing how to support, encourage, and help their children as a student. Similarly, schools do not always develop an overview of their instructional program which would provide both parents with an idea of what the child is learning in each subject or grade level. It is questionable which types of curriculum related activities (e.g., homework, classroom activities, overall curriculum decisions) fathers would prefer participating in to guide their children's learning. This gap of paternal involvement in home learning also holds true for volunteer opportunities in schools.

Volunteering Component. This component recruits and organizes parents' help and support (Phi Delta Kappan, 1995). This is one area where schools might take time to know parents and identify meaningful interactions and involvement thru volunteering (Baker, 1996).

Practices and resources. Volunteering activities might include parents reading to groups of students, organizing school related fundraisers, answering phones in the school office or acting as chaperones for field trips, dances, and other school sponsored events. Schools might include parent patrols or other activities to aid safety and operation of school programs (Phi Delta Kappan, 1995).

Administrators might conduct surveys identifying parents' interests, talents, and availability in order to match a volunteer's resources with classroom and school needs (Epstein, 1995). As cited earlier, preschool educators supported parent volunteer activities such as helping in the classroom, visiting school centers to discuss jobs and hobbies, supplementing curriculum activities and chaperoning field trips. In order to provide the above experiences, specific types of practices are usually in place such as parent volunteer training classes or workshops, program orientation and supervision to assist parents in their volunteering experiences.

Resources for volunteers might include: (a) a tour of the building, (b) introductions to school staff, (c) copy of school policies and procedures and (d) forms of recognition for their commitment and services (NPTA, 2000). Offering practices and resources to parents could make the difference in creating a successful volunteer program. Sometimes, unintentionally, the failure of schools to account for accommodations that would assist parents in volunteering opportunities reinforces the barriers to volunteering (Fredericks & Rasinski, 1990).

Challenges to volunteering. Schools face the challenge of having too few volunteers. Epstein identifies three specific barriers that have been identified to prevent parents from participating in this component: time, opportunities and finances.

First, an obvious barrier to volunteering is time. Time is of the essence for employed mothers and fathers. Long working hours, the pressure of staying employed and other work related responsibilities can exclude parents from volunteering during the school

day (Families & Work Institute, 1994; Pruett, 2000; Sylvester, & Reich, 2002; USDHHS, 2000). For working parents a school's hours of operation may limit parent accessibility. Schools usually work within the hours of 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. and assume the time brackets for parents to volunteer will fit a parent's schedule as well as the school's agenda (Nord et al., 1997; Epstein, 1995; USDE, 1997).

Second, volunteering has the benefit of being short term (Henderson & Berla, 1994; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). For example, schools will limit parent volunteering to chaperoning a few classroom trips a year or long term such as supervising lunch or recess duties for the length of the school year.

Third, school districts are limited to the amount of funding to initiate and expand volunteer initiatives. Financial restrictions prevent schools from providing the necessary resources to support parent volunteer training programs. Resources such as space, materials and staff time to assist parents are often lacking in schools (Fredericks & Rasiniski, 1990; Williams & Chavkin, 1989). Increased insurance premiums to cover volunteer activities or janitorial wages to pay for clean up costs of program activities, do not always match the benefits volunteers bring to students and schools as far as finances are concerned.

Volunteer conclusion. When parents volunteer, parents and schools reap benefits that come in few other ways. This component provides opportunities for parents to participate in their own unique way (Epstein, 1992); however, schools do not always recruit volunteers widely so that *all families* know that their time and talents are welcomed (Phi

Delta Kappan, 1995). The literature lacks representation of volunteer opportunities as related to fathers.

Fathers have yet to be asked to identify their talents, interests and availability to better coordinate volunteer resources with those that exist within the school and among the school faculty. In order to develop effective volunteer involvement opportunities, schools would benefit from investigating what preferred types of volunteer activities fathers would attend and participate in to support their children's learning. The challenge that remains for schools is to identify what volunteering means to support children's learning or development in any way, at any place, and at any time, not just during the school day and at the school building. Empowering fathers to engage in volunteer positions could be a stepping stone to decision making and advocacy roles within the school district and the school building.

Decision-making component. Epstein (1992) defines this component as a type of involvement that includes parents sharing in school decisions, governance and advocacy reforms as well as developing parents as leaders and representatives. Marzano (2003) offers the definition of schools establishing specific practices that allow parents to be full partners in key school decisions (p. 48). Both definitions involve parents in decisions which can result in schools being more "responsive and equitable" to mothers, fathers and children (NPTA, 2000, p. 109).

Three decades of Title I regulations have mandated this aspect of parent involvement. The belief in this educational law has been that schools would be more

effective if parents governed alongside school officials in the development and assessment of Title I programs. This component is required in the governance and advocacy reforms through parent organizations (NPTA, 2000), school councils, school committees or site based management teams (Epstein, 1995; NPTA, 2000). Through the years, federal provisions have suggested an array of practices and resources to include parents and schools in decision-making roles.

Practices and resources. Schools receiving Title I funds must provide materials and training such as workshops on leadership skills, board training, and school finance to support a partnership between the home and the school (USDE, 1994). In order to empower parents in roles of governance, Title I initiatives specify the inclusion and training of parents in the development and revision of school improvement plans, parent-school policies and home-school compacts. Schools are also required to inform parents about school achievement status, school improvement activities, school choice and supplementary services (e.g., after school tutoring). All of these initiatives assist parents to make better decisions to guide their children's learning.

The above practices and resources are open to parents to participate in some form of decision-making. Federal laws have stipulated stronger provisions to link parent advocacy roles to school reform and higher levels of student achievement, but in practice, school leaders are still not offering meaningful opportunities to include parents in shared governance roles (Fuller & Olsen, 1998; Johnson, 1997).

Challenges to decision-making. The data speaks to several barriers that prevent parents from participating in decision-making roles. Three specific obstacles limiting decision-making opportunities for parents are: (a) schools have not involved parents to the expectation of the Federal government, (b) inconsistent roles in parent-school policy development, and (c) lack of equal partnership in home-school compacts.

The first challenge to decision-making is the lack of inclusion of parents by school officials. Historically, schools have made decisions in isolation of parents for many reasons. School leaders claimed to have listened to the voices of parents but disregarded any attempt to share governance roles (Bermudez, 1993; McLaughlin & Shields, 1987; Moles, 1993). Reasons cited were lack of time, staff resources, funding and increased program reporting demands (Fuller & Olsen, 1998; Johnson, 1997).

Similarly, other administrators made no attempt to include parents in roles of advocacy citing the following reasons: (a) afraid their decisions would be unpopular, (b) face parent disapproval (c) frightened by loss of control or power and/or (d) fearful of an extensive inquiry by the media or other divergent philosophies (Carey, Lewis, Farris, & West, 1998; NPTA, 2000; USDE, 1998). Not all schools leave parents out of the picture; however, the different language of school policies on parent decision making roles varied greatly among schools limiting parents' involvement.

The second barrier identified the inconsistencies of parents' roles in the development of Title I parent-school policies. Schools are required to include parents when developing parent involvement policies, but in practice, parents are not always actively

solicited (Appleseed Foundation, 2005; USDE, 1996). Further, when parents are invited to participate in the process, they are asked to review selected policies that tend to be of less importance compared to other school related policies developed behind closed doors (Carey et al., 1998; USDE, 1996). For example, these “other types” of policies might include parents reviewing topics such as parent activities, discipline policies and procedures, library materials, health related topics (e.g., drug, alcohol abuse), and the design of special curriculum (e.g., holiday presentations) programs. Research studies also have identified schools are less willing to involve parents in long term activities such as advocacy roles.

Kessler-Sklar and Baker (2000) analyzed school districts’ adoption of parent involvement policies and the development of subsequent programs. The authors surveyed 200 superintendents representing 4,073 schools, of which many schools districts were receiving Title I funds. The authors identified over half (73%) of the school districts reporting developed policy language on parents in decision making roles; however in practice, parents were not attending school meetings or their involvement pertained to less important governance activities.

In open-ended questions from the above study, school administrators reported efforts to solicit parents to participate in decision-making long term opportunities such as serving on Title I school improvement or Title I advisory committees. The response of Title I parents’ attendance, however, was extremely low. The authors hypothesized that barriers may have prevented Title I parents from participating in decision-making roles and these

same barriers were not applicable to non-Title I schools. Although the authors did not specifically identify barriers, this must be true because 72% of the schools in the study involved parents in school councils, yet, only 12% of the schools involved Title I parents on advisory committees. Even though annual Title I advisory committees are district and school requirements, more than half of the Title I schools stated they did not have advisory committees in place.

In contrast, another school survey carried out by Carey, Lewis, Farris, and West (1998) of 900 principals, discovered the higher the minority enrollment (50% or more), the more likely parents were involved in advisory or policy councils and the administrators valued their input on school decisions. Similarly, school administrators invited parents' opinions on parent involvement activities, discipline policies unimportant curriculum instruction. The above study acknowledged that overall curriculum decisions, selection of books and allocation of funds were given less consideration by parents willing to serve in this role.

The above two conflicting research findings may rest on the efforts of administrators, availability of funding for Title I schools and the ability of parents to find time to attend and serve as decision-makers. Parents are not fulfilling advocacy positions or sharing decision-making roles as intended by policy makers. This includes the development of home-school compacts and the shared responsibility for high student performance.

Schools may have ignored parents in parent-school policies but home-school compacts emerged as a very specific mandate that required strong advocacy roles for

parents. Compacts were defined as a written agreement between the school and the parents of children participating in Title I programs. This agreement identified shared responsibilities to parents, school staff, and students that worked to improve student academic achievement (USDE, 1997); however, the equal partnership of compacts was not really fifty-fifty.

Some educators and parents believed compacts were in the best interests of public education (D'Agnostino, Berman, Hedges, & Wong, 1998; USDE, 1994) and recognized the mutual responsibilities of the school, parents and students (Cochran & Dean, 1991). However, at least one-quarter of Title I schools were discovered not to have implemented parent-school compacts (USDE, 1994). Divergent views from the research literature claimed four reasons against the use of compacts (Carey et al., 1998; Cochran & Dean, 1991; Crozier, 1999; Nakagawa, 2000; USDE, 1994): (a) schools ineffectively employed compacts, (b) the agreements' lack of accountability measures, (c) compact responsibilities are not equally divided between the school and home, and (d) schools benefited from compacts more than families.

The strongest critic against the design and use of home-school compacts was researcher Kathryn Nakagawa. In her review of home-school compacts, Nakagawa (2000) argued on behalf of parents. The essence of her arguments reported that compacts were not viewed as joint, collaborative partnerships. The author continued to explain that compacts did not generate examples of parent involvement which were responsible for increasing student achievement. Schools, she claimed, were in the position to minimize parent

advocacy and participation and control the way parents interacted with administrators and teachers. Shared compacts excluded any assessment of school or educators' practices and parents had no bargaining power with compacts. If schools did not educate school children adequately, compacts offered no feasible solution for parents (Crozier, 1999; Nakagawa, 2000).

Many could take issue with Nakagawa's argument, but basically, compacts do not contribute to equal partnerships, leaving the balance of power with schools. Furthermore, the decisions for responsibility of the implementation and management of the compact resided with the parent, specifically, the mother. The heart of these home-school compacts should have shared governance, participation, on-going dialogue and a meaningful way to assess the contents, but regrettably, this was not the case for most parents. Furthermore, much of the research on compacts was not gender based, resulting in a gap of information on how single parents or different family constellations responded to shared participation in the development of compacts.

Decision-making conclusion. All of the federal pieces were in place to form alliances with parents; yet, the local implementation, management and evaluation of these decision-making initiatives were left to the individual school district and school building. The increasing stream of federal rules and regulations, pinpointed the importance of equality in partnerships and stressed the significance of empowering parents in decision-making roles, yet, fathers are not consistent recipients of decision-making roles (Johnson, 1997).

Three decades of Federal parent involvement policies have not moved fathers, mothers and schools any closer to equal partners regarding advocacy roles and decisions that affect parents, schools and students. Yet, in their everyday life, men make personal and work decisions that benefit their families, themselves and their work environment. Schools might benefit from exploring how men's decision-making skills are already in place and can be transferred to involve them in educational decision-making.

Also, schools need to capitalize on the support mechanisms of how the fathers' experiences and talents could build on their participation in advocacy roles. Additionally, school personnel are unsure what types of communication, agendas and meetings would encourage, train and support paternal participation in decision-making roles. Schools must find ways to include parent leaders (e.g., fathers and mothers) from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and other groups in the school decision-making process.

Furthermore, home-school compacts are federally mandated; however, the extent to which fathers are aware and using these documents is uncertain. Similarly, without the perspectives of fathers, it is unsure what types of school policies could enlist fathers in ways that value their input as full partners in their children's schooling. Another area where men can transfer their skills to benefit their children and schools is through businesses and community-based organizations.

Collaborating with the community component. This component coordinates resources and social services between parents, students, and schools with local businesses, government agencies, faith-based organizations, youth-serving groups and other

community organizations to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development (Epstein, 1995; USDE, 1994; 2007). It is especially vital to Title I schools in linking needy families to these resources so as to strengthen home-school relationships and improve student achievement (USDE, 1994).

Practices and resources. This component is disseminated to parents and neighborhood residents in numerous ways. Many communities offer wrap around services such as free dental checkups and physical examinations to students. In other schools, public agencies support school curricula providing after school student tutoring and homework assistance. Additionally, schools can offer their buildings to their community after school hours for meetings, usage of their gym facilities after school and on weekends or loan tables and chairs to community residents. There are already an abundance of community resources (e.g., clothes and school donations, extra curricular programs, social services) in place; however, there are common barriers that might prevent home-school community partnerships from developing (Green, 2006; Nord, 1998; Pruett, 2000).

Challenges to collaborating with the community. Businesses and community-based organizations can be invaluable in helping schools connect with their parents (USDE, 2007); however, Epstein found three distinct challenges that could stand in the way of a cooperative school-community relationship. First, barriers for businesses and communities might arise when schools and communities do not understand individual partnership problems. For example, businesses may not understand the tax structure schools are required to work under or the weak state revenues and slow disbursements to schools.

Second, they may be unwilling to share their needs, resources or make adjustments to better school-community communication (Thompson, 2000). In these difficult economic times, businesses may not be in the position to fund or offer resources to schools. The last barrier has the potential to isolate schools from community-based organizations.

Community-based organizations attract children and their parents but are often disconnected from schools (USDE, 2000). These programs operate in school neighborhoods but they miss broader opportunities to unite parents with their schools such as connecting with cultural groups, government agencies, religious institutions and other organizations. It should be noted that the above barriers can sometimes be further divided along racial, class, and ethnic lines to engage school and community residents (Fuller, & Olsen, 2003). Schools do not always assure equity of opportunities for students and parents to participate in community programs or to obtain services.

Collaboration with the community conclusion. When schools and communities work together, both are strengthened in collaborative ways and make gains that outpace what either entity could accomplish on its own. For students and their families, there is a need for additional collaborative community services (e.g. healthcare, food pantries, tutoring services) in these times; however, fathers are less involved in this component.

Schools have yet to find ways to publicize to the community that men are important explaining the benefits of including fathers as part of the learning community. Community organizations such as Rotary, Kiwanis or the Lions Club have a large male contingent; however, school bulletins and web pages identify the services and involvement of mothers

more than fathers. Fathers have yet to be asked what practices or skills used in the above service organizations could be transferable to schools to promote the participation of fathers in the school process.

Schools can play a role in building the social capital of families by helping to connect them with external agencies and service organizations. However, community programs should not only be rated by low or high social or economic qualities, but by strengths and talents to support students, parents, and schools. Community and school organizations would benefit from asking fathers about their talents and strengths in order to offer opportunities to encourage more paternal involvement in their children's education. If schools desire fathers to have the knowledge and use of local resources for their families to increase skills or to obtain needed services, then schools have to communicate with fathers in order to understand these types of required family support services, adult learning opportunities or contributions fathers can make. Without two-way communication in place, none of this can be achieved.

Communication component. The most important feature in any partnership is communication. I believe that this component is the foundation for the entire framework because successful home-school and school-home relationships are based on meaningful two-way communication.

Whether written, visual or auditory, Title I legislation stresses communication between parents and schools as "two-way and meaningful" (USDE, 2001b, p. 1). In order for student learning and achievement to increase and communication to be valuable, it is

vital that communication be two-way and be shareable (USDE, 1997; Williams & Chavkin, 1989).

When parents and schools communicate effectively, positive relationships develop, problems are more easily solved, volunteering is promoted, and student learning and achievement increases to call for the doors of parent involvement to open (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Dauber & Epstein, 1989; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Effective communication occurs through a variety of practices and resources.

Practices and resources. Research shows that communication is considered interactive, both school-to-home and home-to-school (Christenson, Rounds, & Gorney, 1992; Epstein, 1995). Schools consider communication to be of two types: a) general communication or b) child centered information (Epstein, 1995). General communication resources consist of classroom, school or district news, school calendars, parent meeting notices and local news or radio station broadcasts (NPTA, 2000). Child centered information includes grade notification, progress reports, homework assignments, parent-teacher meetings, home visits from educators, or behavior notices and is inclusive of much more (Epstein, 1995).

Similarly, technology has great potential as a school support to enhance relationships between the home and school (Constantino, 2003). Homework hotlines, voice-mail, school and classroom websites and on-line textbooks are examples of parents and schools using technology to stay informed and involved in the school lives of their children. This component offers numerous resources and supports but some barriers may

prevent communication from being two-way and meaningful (Fagan & Barnett, 2003; Nord, 1998).

Challenges of communication. Numerous barriers may prevent parents from collaborative communication practices in home-school relationships. A review of the literature identifies four barriers that inhibit two-way open communication: (a) parents unable to use technology to communicate, (b) mothers limiting paternal communication, (c) assumptions and practices on behalf of schools regarding communication and (d) lack of unified communication standards for building capacity and parent involvement.

First, schools have increased their usage of technology as an interactional form of communication for parents. Computer programs have been found to attract and increase the amount of parent engagement both at school and at home (Sanders, Epstein, & Connors-Tadros, 1999). However, research has documented that low-income families have less access to technology than families with higher incomes (USDE, 1994).

Students in higher social economic brackets are taking advantage of online curriculum supported materials and resources (e.g., parent activities, math problem-based games, supplementary reading materials), while lower income families are missing out on educational opportunities to reinforce student learning and support home literacy. These students miss out on these scheduled educational opportunities to reinforce student learning, support home literacy and most importantly, their parents are not involved in Title I initiatives as mandated by the Federal government to support student achievement.

Although school information can be increased through technology, mother and fathers may not be receiving the same information.

The next obstacle represents mothers limiting their communication to fathers about their children's schooling. As discussed earlier, mothers play a major role in promoting or limiting a father's involvement on school issues and this includes school communication (DeLuccie, 1995; Fagan & Barnett, 2003; Marsiglio, 1995; Nord, 1998). For example, throughout the school year, parents receive school calendars, school breakfast and lunch menus, school newsletters and community program information. Once the school information reaches the home, mothers are usually the parent that reads, responds, or signs the various documents. It is at this point, mothers can communicate the information and encourage paternal participation or limit their involvement by not conveying school information (DeLuccie, 1995; Fagan & Barnett, 2003; Marsiglio, 1995). For separated, divorced or unmarried fathers, remaining informed and knowledgeable of school practices and procedures can be an especially challenging two-way task (Fagan & Barnett, 2003; Marsiglio, 1995).

Non-resident fathers may be additionally barred from viewing school related information more than married fathers (Marsiglio, 1991; Thompson, 1998). Social science researchers refer to this barrier as "gatekeeping." This term is used after a break in a relationship from a child's mother. Fathers may attempt to continue their bond with their children; however, mothers may be less inclined to want a father's involvement and

sometimes go to extreme measures to monitor, evaluate and protect their “turf” (Marsiglio, 1991; Thompson, 1998).

According to William Farrell (2001), mothers want to “gatekeep” or control the “when [paternal involvement] and criticize the father’s parenting style if she is not in agreement with the father’s decisions” (p. 105). In many cases, mothers may be the sole decision-maker encouraging a father’s participation in a class event or discouraging them from attending a school activity (Palm, 1993). Without regular and clear information of notices, memos, programs and other communications these fathers’ involvement may be handicapped.

The third barrier encompasses assumptions and practices of school personnel. For example, the literature suggests school personnel stereotype mothers as the only caregivers for their children (Levine et al., 1997). For fathers, research indicates staff lacked the motivation to involve fathers believing the concept was ideal but not doable (Powell, 1995). Both mothers and fathers bring valuable knowledge, skills and talent to school systems; however, research suggests school personnel form their own negative expectations of parents be they the mother or the father.

For example, a study by Handel (1999) explored one school’s family reading program. Lower income African-American parents were trained by teachers on how to read books to their children. At the onset of the program, teachers informally assessed parents of the study as “illiterate”. According to Handel, “The prevailing mindset appeared to be that parents learn from schools; there was less attention to developing the reciprocal

relationship in which schools and school personnel might learn from families and parents be considered resources for the school” (p. 119).

The final challenge identifies a lack of clarity in communicating capacity and parent support. Title I law mandates capacity building and parent support to be accomplished in numerous ways (e.g., parent involvement policies, notification of parent programs, meetings), however, even though federal legislation stresses developing a variety of capacity building strategies, there is not a unified written definition how to communicate these strategies. Other forms of educational legislation (e.g., NCLB, Reading First, Individual Disabilities Education Act, Response to Intervention) require the same elements but are also unclear as to communicate capacity building and how schools are to communicate support to parents (Mellard & Johnson, 2008).

Communication conclusion. Communication is the true foundation of a solid partnership. Parents desire to become informed about their child’s education, yet, parents and specifically fathers, face numerous communication challenges on all levels that impact their involvement in their children’s educational lives. With that in mind, school leaders might benefit from future research identifying fathers’ preferred home-school communication usage. Currently, many of the educational practices existing do not assist fathers at the many different levels of communication. The research is limited in identifying what types of practices fathers perceive as improving communication in home-school partnerships.

Additionally, many schools use the title room mother instead of room parent (USDE, 2000a). It is questionable how fathers interpret the word ‘parent’ in the school context. Do fathers believe the invitations schools extend to them as parents are for mothers only? In order to employ effective forms of communication to encourage father participation, schools need to explore the diversity and use of communications with fathers. This not only includes the form of communication but considering fathers who do not speak English well, do not read well, or need large type.

Furthermore, communication about student progress and school programs might benefit fathers if communication means are not just two-way, but three-way, and many-way channels of communication that connect fathers to schools, students, and the community. This next section discusses some of the criticisms and limitations of Epstein’s framework for parent involvement.

Critics voice their concerns against Epstein’s framework. Epstein’s model is one of the most widely used frameworks for parent involvement activities. There are pros and cons of this model that need to be examined.

Support for Epstein’s framework. Epstein’s framework has become the foundation for soliciting parent support with educators, school reformers and researchers (Baker, 1996). States such as Wisconsin, Michigan, Oregon, Colorado and Indiana have adopted Epstein’s framework in their handbooks as a guide for successful parent involvement practices. Epstein’s identified practices are advocated by policymakers, educators and

researchers as the driving force behind children and school success (Baker, 1996; Epstein, 1992; 1995). However, every healthy framework has its critics and welcomes suggestions.

Critics of Epstein's work. First, some researchers argue it is unclear if parent involvement alone equals student success (Baker & Soden, 1998; Downey, 2002). Second, research disputes the framework's home-school activities identifying these components are too narrowly focused on cognition and academic achievements, neglecting the effects of parent involvement on children's emotional and social behaviors (Domina, 2005; McNeal, 1999).

Third, critics argue the framework focuses on negative practices and activities that benefit a parent's own agenda and reinforce social class inequities (Casanova, 1996). For example, parents with higher economic status support their children's education indirectly and behind the scenes (McGrath & Kuriloff, 1999). Researchers suggested that low socio-economic parents do not have the same social capital (e.g., economics, educational training, social skills) opportunities, information and resources and may limit their ability to make the best decisions for their children (Auerbach, 2001; 2007; Lareau & Shumar, 1996; Olivos, 2003). This may be true but to date, researchers have not examined the types of information and resources that parents base their educational decisions on.

Fourth, and foremost, NCLB required educators' attention to involving immigrant parents in the school process and researchers claim Epstein's model does not lend itself to the racial and ethnic diversity of school families. Home-school partnerships do not represent Title I demographics. Nationally, ethnic demographics of Title I students are as

follows: 35% White, non-Hispanic, 27% African-American, 31% Hispanic, 3% Asian or Pacific Islander, and 2% American Indian or Alaskan Native (Title I, Part A, Fact Sheet, 2002).

Although Goldenberg (Goldenberg, & Gallimore, 1995) advocates on behalf of Epstein, that diversity is not a separate category, that Epstein reaches out to culturally diverse families through the model's involvement practices to overcome language and cultural barriers. Researcher Susan Auerbach, however, argues Epstein's model "fails to account for the needs and experience of many parents of color and/or low-income" (Auerbach, 2007, p. 253). Clearly, there is a fundamental need to focus on diversity in Title I schools.

Epstein's framework in theory offers practices deemed important to home-school partnerships. However, Title I programs address the issue of poverty and poverty is linked to class, race and ethnicity. Therefore, in my research study, it is important to explore and understand the diversity of paternal involvement and to examine the available opportunities, educational practices and challenges fathers encounter because of economics or cultural factors.

Researchers suggest that different social classes, linguistic and ethnic groups have different ways of interacting with schools (Fuller, & Olsen, 2003). Therefore, it is equally important to examine fathers' perceptions about school programs and strategies that could be developed and implemented to promote the inclusion of all groups of fathers.

Non-traditional parent involvement. Research validates that culturally diverse groups of parents value the importance of an education (Faltis, 2001; Lopez, 2001), just not in the traditional manner Epstein promotes. Researcher Lopez identifies that English language learners ([ELL]) parents view their role and relationship in schools differently. He refers to the lack of parent involvement as the “transmission of social cultural values” (2001, p. 430). An illustration of this definition identified migrant Latino families whose children consistently maintained high levels of academic achievement; yet, their parents were not participants in the traditional home-school partnerships. These families frequently reminded their children of the significance of an education and the limited employment opportunities if their children did not value and pursue an education (Lopez, 2001). These parents viewed immigration as an investment in their children’s education and future financial achievements (Lopez, 2001; Sua’rez & Orozco, 1991).

Educational support for minority families. Studies identified the fact that culturally disadvantaged parents need opportunities to learn, communicate and interact on topics of public education, school community, parent-school roles and parental rights (Chrispeels & Gonzales, 2004; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001). Supports for culturally diverse parents come in the form of (a) translating written materials into the native language of parents, (b) English language classes for parents, and (c) the presence of language translators at school meetings or events. Furthermore, when schools make the effort to translate materials, particularly in languages other than Spanish, they are eliminating one more barrier culturally diverse parents face.

Culturally diverse challenges. The literature identifies three specific barriers for culturally diverse parents that may retard their engagement in home-school partnerships: (a) language, (b) cultural expectations, and (c) lack of school welcome. These obstacles can prevent their active participation in their children's educational experiences (Chavkin & Gonzales, 1995).

First, schools primarily communicate with parents by written materials. For parents who speak little or no English, language is a major barrier to communication between school and home. If these materials are written in English only, or at a high level of English, then many language minority parents will not be able to read the school information (USDHHS, 2003). Even in cases where schools are able to provide home-school coordinators or liaisons to assist parents with language obstacles and to help parents express their concerns with school issues, language minority parents may have limited education in their native countries (Chavkin & Gonzales, 1995; Finders & Lewis, 1994; USDHHS, 2003). The next barrier parents face is cultural expectations.

School educators and staff members may perceive that culturally diverse parents are not interested in or do not care about their children's education. For example, language minority parents may come from cultures where parents are not expected to take an active role in their children's educational experiences, or where the role that parents take is very different from the role expected in public school systems (Chavkin & Gonzales, 1995; USDHHS, 2003, p. 1). The perception of the classroom might be different in some cultures. In many cultures children are responsible for their own learning in a traditional teacher-

fronted classroom (Fuller & Olsen, 1998). Interactive, collaborative classrooms with student-directed learning, while common in the United States, may be foreign to many cultures. Additionally, programs such as special education and ESL do not often provide a clear understanding to parents of the supports they provide to the enrolled students. The final barrier exists within the schools' atmosphere and the accommodation of culturally diverse families.

Some schools do not provide an atmosphere that immigrant parents perceive as welcoming. This may be due to school personnel who lack cultural sensitivity, do not speak the parents' native language or are overworked (USDHHS, 2003). Therefore, it is important to understand how fathers perceive Title I schools are welcoming groups of fathers who are disadvantaged under Title I law. Parent involvement is a perennial struggle for schools but for disadvantaged parents under Title I law, the meaning of parent involvement might present an uneasiness and lack of participation in their children's education both at home and at school.

In sum. Not only does society struggle with understanding cultural differences but schools struggle to become culturally sensitive. Addressing parent diversity is central to building effective home-school relationships. Language barriers prevent parents from communicating about their children and learning from educators about the best way to assist their children.

Research has focused on the barriers of parents of different cultures; however, very little is known about what compels minority and low-income fathers to embrace the

schools' specific practices, programs and educational initiatives of paternal involvement. What types of supports, practices and programs would minority and low-income fathers prefer? Schools have not drawn on the strengths of disadvantaged fathers in the school process. What suggestions, concerns and ideas do these diverse groups of fathers have to improve schools? In my study, I explored "if and how" one Title I school breeches the walls of disadvantaged fathers because this contributes to capacity building regardless of economics and/or culture.

Conclusion

Research findings over the past four decades have paid more attention to the role of fathers as caregivers. However, the literature is less informative about the actual dynamics of paternal involvement opportunities in home-school partnerships. Most efforts to involve parents seem aimed at those whose presence is most visible in the school community: mothers and parents of higher social economic brackets.

It is also more important to parents, specifically fathers of low-income status and culturally diverse groups of fathers that they are represented and included in home-school partnerships. Federal education legislation has mandated a variety of parent involvement initiatives to encourage and support low-income and minority groups; however, in practice, their presence is not as visible or validated.

Title I provisions support educationally, disadvantaged, low-income and minority students and parents requiring the involvement of Title I parents in the planning, operation and evaluation of these programs, but in practice, the inclusion of parents has yet to be

realized. Although the government's intent was to emphasize collaborative home-school partnerships, program assurances and program accountability measures are not enforced and the full inclusion of parents is not encouraged. Less is known about fathers' attitudes, school practices, and home involvement that would be successful in engaging fathers in home-school partnerships.

These concerns facing fathers begin long before their children enter school and provide challenges for them across the life span of the child. The social and culture problems along with the realities of economic requirements may play a role in the nature and level of paternal involvement. A review of the literature further identifies limited information received directly from men; mothers or children reporting on paternal activities instead of fathers. Quantitative studies versus qualitative studies where in-depth interviews and deeper discussion could retrieve personal information about conditions, experiences, and beliefs from paternal sampling are absent. Missing these perspectives from fathers, specifically Title I fathers, fragments the validity of information and questions to the reliability of its accurateness.

This chapter has summarized a review of the research and relevant literature of what is currently known of father involvement in their children's education. The literature provides a foundation for my research study on general parent involvement. Many researchers have shown that there is a strong relationship between student success and parent involvement. Numerous existing studies examined parent involvement but offered evidence of home-school practices from the perspectives of the mother, child or school.

The belief is that parent involvement has been traditionally carried out by mothers and that a child's education is the mother's responsibility. By focusing on mothers only, the research overlooks the ways fathers engage in their children's education.

There is growing support nationwide through legislation and organizations seeking ways for fathers to reconnect and strengthen their relationships with their children. Although current research validates the importance of fathers and their changing roles, dialogue among school leaders on developing the best approaches to ensure their educational involvement at home and school has yet to be discussed. In contrast, educators have paid serious attention to Title 1 legislation that has enforced general parent initiatives.

A key goal of much of the educational legislation and policies is to help parents become involved in their children's academic lives. The focus of such efforts, as well as much of the extant research, has generally been on increasing the extent of parents' involvement. The field of education has identified an array of home-school components (e.g., parenting, learning at home, volunteering, decision-making, collaborating with the community, communication) to assess parent involvement. Research studies have critiqued these home-school elements in terms of general parent involvement practices, resources and challenges. What is missing from the literature is research that examines the participation of fathers in home-school practices.

My study builds upon the current literature by exploring the factors that deter a father's engagement and offering an understanding of the reasons behind their involvement in home-school partnerships. Additionally, researchers have long assumed that low-income

parents do not participate in parent involvement programs. Furthermore, the experiences of fathers whose children attend Title 1 schools are not validated in the literature. My research study gives a voice to the fathers whose children are attending Title 1 schools and add their personal experiences to the existing body of literature.

Paternal needs and resources within the home-school relations cannot be met by school leaders until they become known. Therefore, it is important that future data be collected directly from fathers in the form of qualitative studies, exploring and developing a better understanding of a father's situation, attitudes and needs that will involve these hard to reach but not forgotten groups of fathers in home-school partnerships. The next chapter will describe the methodology and the characteristics of the participants sampled.

Chapter 3

Research Design

Introduction

This section will review the methods used in this study to answer the research questions presented in this chapter. The following topics will be covered: research questions, research design, data collection procedures, data analysis, ethical concerns and research findings. The rationale for this section is to identify the involvement practices and the interaction of fathers in their children's education.

Research Purpose

While four decades of Title I legislation required parent involvement, research states fathers remain less involved in home school partnerships than mothers. The review of literature has revealed a gap in the field of education; the exclusion of paternal involvement in the educational process.

Through the collection of qualitative data, I collected data to understand why fathers, specifically fathers of students attending Title I schools, do not participate in home-school partnerships. In addition, I will describe which home-school opportunities would be meaningful to encourage their future involvement, attendance, participation and continuous support. Furthermore, I will describe the process of how the data which included ten face-to-face interviews with fathers was collected.

As noted in Chapter 1 of this study, the following research questions drove the methodology of this design: (a) How are fathers in Title I schools involved in their

children's education?, (b) How are fathers in Title I schools involved with their children's school?, and (c) How do fathers in Title I schools perceive schools can improve their involvement in their children's education?

The above questions were answered through interview sessions with fathers of students enrolled in Title I schools. By using in depth interviews, fathers engaged in a deeper discussion which provided a better understanding of paternal conditions, experiences, and beliefs.

Qualitative Research Design

My research employed a qualitative study which enabled me to address parent involvement from the perspective of fathers of children enrolled in Title I schools. According to Payne and Payne (2004), a qualitative study emphasizes the importance of "seeking out and interpreting the meanings that people bring to their own actions" (p.174-175). Additionally, Merriam (1998) advocates that qualitative research concentrates on "discovery, insight and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offering the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base to the practice of education" (p. 3). As a qualitative researcher, my role was to explicate the many levels of paternal involvement and come to understand their interactions, attitudes and characteristics as they apply to their involvement in their children's education.

The present literature identifies fathers as the "hidden parent" in the educational process because fathers often feel as their presence would not be missed or valued in the school process (Lamb, 1986; Nord, 1998; Park, 1995). A qualitative design was selected to:

(a) capture paternal voices, feelings, actions and suggestions of their involvement in their children's school lives (Denzin & Lincoln, Eds., 2003), (b) collaborate the stories of fathers to confirm or improve on the most appropriate strategies to solicit paternal participation, and (c) offer suggestions to school leaders and educators as to ways to involve fathers not only in school activities but home learning activities too.

Methods Introduction

This investigative research design included procedures to collect, analyze, and interpret the data according to units of analyses as well as a plan to make sense of the data and to apply a set of measures for understanding the meanings of the interviews (Creswell, 2003; Krathwohl, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Next, this section will also identify types of problems within each interview and identify the common themes among the groups (Miles & Huberman, 1994). My task was not to generalize beyond this study but to understand the complexity of the problem studied, which is, to understand the reasons behind a lack of paternal involvement in the Title I educational process.

Further, this study illustrated two viewpoints. First, the primary point of view will be from the perspectives of fathers of Title I students. Second, this study will identify the lessons learned from studying the fathers interviewed (Miles & Huberman, 1994) that related to their participation in their children's education.

Data Collection Procedures

Suzuki and colleagues (Suzuki, Ahluwalia, Kwong Arora, & Mattis, 2007) use the proverb, "The pond you fish in determines the fish you can catch as a reminder of the

sources from which we draw and the tools that we employ in data collection determine the data we produce, the meanings that we craft from those data, and the knowledge claims we make” (p. 296). Therefore, this section will proceed with two sources of information to be collected and the procedures utilized to uncover the reasons behind the various forms of paternal involvement in the educational process.

The primary source of data came from fathers in the form of face-to-face interviews. Since I was interested in understanding the relationships of fathers’ perceptions of their involvement at home and school, interviews were an essential tool to collect this information.

Finally, reflective comments were gathered in the form of a journal as the final form of information. This journal recorded my perceptions during the research study to facilitate my understanding of the meaning of paternal involvement as it pertained to educational practices. The above data was accumulated for the purpose of answering the research questions as stated in Chapter 1. In addition, I will conclude with my responsibility to take into account social factors that will mediate how the questions were asked and answered.

Paternal interviews. My reasons for using one-to-one interviews, the selection of study subjects and other supplementary procedures will be reviewed in this section. This section will also identify the criterion for selecting the school district. Last, this part will discuss methods to recruit potential study subjects and conclude with interviewee questions.

Rationale for interviews. As a method of inquiry, face-to-face interviews were used to explore and understand the experiences of fathers and the meanings fathers made of those experiences (Seidman, 2006). According to Kvale (1996), “Interviewing is a craft: It does not follow content and context-free rules of method, but rests on the judgments of a qualified researcher” (p.105). A paternal sampling was used in this study.

Sample selection. My sample population was fathers whose children were enrolled in a Title I school. Prior to discussing the selection of fathers for the face-to-face interviews, the identification of the school will be discussed.

Selection of school. The only criterion for the selection of a school was that the school was classified by federal law as a Title I school. The individual school would have over 50% of the students eligible for free or reduced-priced lunches. A list of Title I schools was retrieved from the Illinois School Board of Education website (2008). Since geographic proximity and access were factors in the selection process for the participating school system, the site was selected based on this researcher’s ability to gain access to them for research purposes.

School demographics. An elementary school serving approximately 1,100 students from prek-8 grade was selected for this study. By federal law, the State of Illinois classified the targeted school as a Title 1 school. Eighty-three percent of the students were economically disadvantaged. The targeted school identified 80% of their students eligible for free or reduced lunches.

The racial and ethnic make-up of the student body is: (a) White 2.2 %, (b) Hispanic 28.7%, and (c) African-American 68.9%. Other demographic information included a mobility rate of 26.8% and an average attendance rate of 94%.

After the school was selected, I met with the district superintendent and received written permission (see Appendix A) to conduct a study in the school district. Additionally, the superintendent was provided with a written description (see Appendix B) of the project. The next procedure was to identify fathers willing to participate in this research study.

Purposeful sampling. In qualitative studies, purposeful sampling is used to select individuals that will richly inform the researcher regarding the focus of the research study (Haverkamp & Young, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Additionally, this form of sampling helped me gain access to fathers' experiences, actions and feelings regarding their participation or lack of participation in their children's school lives (Merriam, 2002). Therefore, two forms of sampling were used to identify fathers who were willing to participate in the interviews: (a) a letter sent home to families and (b) snowball sampling (Patton, 1990).

First, a letter was sent home to 600 families asking for paternal participation in this study. Appendix C represents the letter to students' fathers from the participating school in the study. It should also be noted that I have worked in a variety of positions (e.g., substitute, literacy coach, acting vice-principal) in the selected school and I addressed my employment in the introduction of the letter. A response form (see Appendix D) was included identifying participant contact information and their level of involvement in their

children's education rated by a Likert scale. A self addressed envelope for participants to mail back response forms to the researcher was also included.

Two weeks after the initial mailings, I had received four responses. A set of procedures was followed when calling the potential participants. First, each father was telephoned to confirm their permission to be interviewed. Second, a telephone script was used with participants (See Appendix E). The topic of paternal involvement was identified and the importance of their participation and opinions were emphasized.

Last, a follow up letter was sent to each father who agreed to participate thanking them for their involvement and confirming their appointment. Fathers were also reminded of the starting time by telephone contact 24 hours prior to the interviews. As I did not receive enough responses, snowball sampling (Patton, 1990) was used to recruit the intended number of participants.

Snowball sampling. Snowball sampling, also known as chain referral and referential sampling, was used to identify members of a group not otherwise visible (Patton, 1990). I personally contacted nine grade level teachers to generate a list of names of fathers who might be willing to talk with me about their participation in their children's education both at home and at school. Each teacher identified two to four names for a list of twenty-two names. A separate telephone script was used to contact the above fathers (see Appendix F) generating three more fathers willing to be interviewed. The Parent-Teacher Association's Board President was also contacted and I was able to secure three more fathers. Additionally, three response forms were received four weeks after the initial

mailing. Having already met my target of ten fathers, I contacted those fathers and informed them they would be used as a substitute if any fathers were unable to participate in the research study. This next section will discuss questions used in the interviews.

Face to face interview questions. Some of the interview questions for participants (see Appendix G) were drawn from Joyce Epstein's framework. This framework provided a theoretical foundation on which much of the empirical research on parent involvement in schools is based. The home-school partnership framework consists of the following six components: (a) parenting, (b) learning at home, (c) communication, (d) volunteering, (e) decision-making, and (f) collaborating with the community. Additionally, interview questions were semi-structured to explore the reasons behind paternal involvement at home and at school and to identify ways fathers perceived improving schools to engage more fathers.

Probing questions after each query further explored the responses of fathers. After each query, probing questions were asked of the fathers. These questions explored specific parent involvement topics to help uncover their views, but otherwise, I respected how fathers framed and structured their responses (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 101).

The researcher attempted to minimize any barriers that would impede the interviewer and the interviewees from establishing a level of trust which would enhance participants' feeling and aid in sharing their thoughts and feelings, whether positive or negative. I believed rapport was easily established because participants were cooperative

and most fathers gave interesting and lengthy descriptions of their experiences. All of the fathers expressed a range of emotions as they answered questions.

Fathers laughed when they shared stories about their sons and daughters and became serious when they discussed their children's future. Questions concerning the Parent-Teacher Association ([P.T.A.]) brought an array of body language. Fathers rolled their eyes, leaned back in their chairs, threw their hands up as if in disgust of what they believed to be an "all women" organization or laughed, "It's a big joke." Sensitive topics (e.g., marital status, child abuse, lack of time spent with family) brought tears from three fathers. With those fathers, I stopped the tape recording and offered to wait; yet, they wanted to continue the interview, sharing very personal details about their life with the interviewer. One father brought his wife to the interview. It was at times difficult to encourage him to expand on his experiences. It seemed as if he assumed I did not trust his story and he would continuously point to his wife and say, "Ask her, she will agree with me." However, his wife did not speak English.

Participants were informed prior and before the interview, the purpose of the interview, what I was studying and how the data would be used. All participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity and reminded that they were able to decline to answer any of the questions I asked during the interview or end the interview at any time.

Pilot interview. One father interview was used as the only pilot interview to validate the interviewing design. This test ensured the research instrument was clear enough to the interviewees and to correct any problems that arose from the interview. As a

result of the interview and feedback from my advisor, minor changes (e.g., eliminated questions) were made to the instrument. The feedback gave me the opportunity to improve the data collection tool. Additionally, there were numerous other strategies used during the interview process.

Logistics for face-to-face interviews. The ten fathers were given two choices for interview locations during school hours: (a) the targeted school district and (b) the community park district. Both of the above facilities had agreed to a private room for the interviews. Four fathers selected the school district and three fathers chose the park district for interview locations. Three fathers requested their interviews be held at night due to their work schedules. Although three community libraries, a nature museum and the local high school were contacted, none of the facilities had available space at night for the interviews.

A local business near the school district had an office available. Two of the fathers knew of the nearby company and welcomed the convenience of the location. Their interview sessions were held in the evening at the business. All of the locations had receptionists but I felt it was important to wait outside and greet the fathers. For interviews held at the school district, fathers were brought in through another door to avoid the main office area. I tried to be flexible enough to accommodate all of the fathers' requests. I believed the above procedures encouraged a comfortable interviewing relationship and ensured better data.

The last study subject was a stay-at-home dad and did not have access to a vehicle. Per his request, the interview was held in his home. Since his request was accommodated, I

believe this father was more relaxed. Throughout the interview, our conversations were interrupted as he retrieved a school newsletter or showed me pictures of his family. I am certain that by meeting the participants' needs regarding the interview location, the interviews produced better data.

The interviews lasted from 45-90 minutes. When each interview ended I thanked the fathers but six of the dads wanted to continue talking. One father proudly continued his conversation regarding his immigration to America. Another father asked my age. When he realized we were close in age, he confirmed that he could go back to school too. Another father asked if he could tell me one more story about his middle child. He stated he had spoken about his youngest and oldest but not his middle child. The seven remaining fathers seemed grateful that they had established a new contact at their child's school. For example, one father stated, "Now, I will know a friendly face with a name who can help me at school." Another father explained, "Instead of me coming to the door [and asking] can you give this to my daughter or something like that, I can come in and talk, I know one (father pointed to interviewer) person now."

Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for review. An extra recorder was used as a back up in case of equipment malfunction.

Additionally, individual participant forms were used to "facilitate communication, confirmation of appointments and follow-up" after the introduction of each contact (Seidman, 2006, p. 49). This contact form contained basic information on all participants (see Appendix I). Following the face-to-face interviews, a written transcript draft of what

each participant stated was returned to them for verification and accuracy. This procedure ensured validity in this qualitative study. After verification of the transcripts, fathers received a financial gift card as a thank you for their participation in this research study.

Financial enticement to recruit fathers. Research participants were offered a \$20.00 gift card as a financial incentive to gain and retain their cooperation and to thank them for taking time out of their schedules to help me. Incentives are not always necessary to obtain a subject's participation (Stewart et al., 2007); however, financial incentives encouraged some of the fathers to participate in this study.

Participants had a choice between three gift cards (e.g., gas, grocery, Visa credit card). Seven fathers requested a Visa credit card and two fathers asked for a gas credit card. The last father requested his card be given to a family from the targeted school district. A grocery card was forwarded to a family struggling with health and financial problems.

Reflective notes. Reflective notes were part of the final phase of the data collection procedures. Reflective notes are an essential vehicle to the analysis of the research data (Krathwohl, 1998).

Journaling through the research process. I utilized a field journal consisting of records of my thoughts and descriptions of fathers. The purpose of my reflective notes was to “illustrate settings, explain what happened, recall conversations and include other interaction in a description as close to the experience as possible” (Krathwohl, 1998, p. 266). These notes provided useful information about nonverbal behavior during the

interviews. For example, I wrote, Father A became emotional and fought back tears as he described the impact his separation from his wife had on his child.

Additionally, these notes pushed my thinking by continually asking two significant questions: (a) What am I learning from the interviews and the other forms of data (in terms of answering my research questions)? And, (b) How does this interview differ from the last interview (Richards, 2005, p. 60)? For instance, one father stated, “I have no idea what they’re teaching in each class. As far as myself, we are able to make sure he is prepared at every level.” My reflective remarks consisted of the following comments: (a) Four other fathers claimed they did not know what their children were learning in class-is this a pattern?, (b) Is this an expectation that the school does not communicate the curriculum to fathers?, and (c) How is this father able to prepare his child for the next level if he is unaware of the current curriculum?

Notes were kept at all times, at all stages of the study and I drafted the notes as soon after the interview session as possible to preserve the details. Similarly, reflective notes facilitated my understanding of the meaning of paternal involvement as it pertained to the education process. For example, one father said, “I cannot spend as much time as I can with them as you can see there’s too many of them. I didn’t have time to do nothing with them. My [work] schedule wouldn’t allow me to do it.” My notes documented his body language; lowering his head and a changing tone in his voice. I began to understand the fathers’ lived experiences as I listened to them balance their work schedules, household chores, family needs and school obligations.

Data Analysis Procedures

Qualitative data analysis was a constant method of comparison between the collection of information and the analysis of the data (Miles and Huberman, 1994). According to Kvale (2009), the level and value of qualitative analysis relies on the “craftsmanship” of the researcher in the mastery of tools (e.g., coding, questions) for analysis (p. 196). The next section will describe in four parts, the “tools” used to analyze the data collected. The first part was a brief overview of the organization and preparation of data. Next, the use of coding will be discussed, followed by the many layers of analysis to be conducted. Then, validity concerns will be examined, identifying procedures that verify the research project’s conclusions. Finally, ethical considerations of the research design will be discussed.

Organizing and preparing the data. The early steps of analysis were used to organize and prepare the data for the many layers of analysis. Forms to manage the data, prepare the transcripts, write-ups through field notes and memos, and initial coding were additional aides in sorting and processing the information.

Contact form. A contact form (see Appendix J) was completed as an immediate overall summary of the main points after each interview. In addition to summarizing the meetings, this form assisted in the analysis procedure by: (a) asking additional questions about the concerns discussed or topics missed, (b) allowed for additional planning for the next interview and (c) identified potential codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 54). The next step of data preparation was to edit the transcripts.

Editing the transcripts. I reviewed and edited the transcriptions. It was important to ensure the data was accurate from all accounts (e.g., searching for inaccuracies, misinterpretations, incomplete sentences). I continuously immersed myself in the data throughout the research process (e.g., interviewing, transcribing interviews, listening to the tapes, reading and rereading transcripts). It was equally important to write in my field journal as I revisited the data. The examination of the data provided a vehicle to “tease out” recurring patterns or themes as discussed in the transcriptions that were pertinent to the research questions.

Memos. Once the information had been collected, reduced and portions eliminated, the next step was to review my observations and create memos for the purpose of clarifying details of the setting until a deeper focus of the study emerged. Memos were used to help me think, reflect and “make deeper and more conceptually coherent sense” of the dialogue (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 72). All of the above procedures were managed through the use of NVivo software. Similarly, I was able to create notes and memos through the software and link selected content to specific portions of the transcripts.

The above steps prepared the data for analysis of the interviews and the responses of the participants. The next step identified and recorded the codes for the purpose of analyzing the sources of data.

Coding. This procedure allowed for the identifying and organizing of the interview experiences. The data was categorized by sorting and revisiting of information for data analysis and for the reduction of data into themes and emerging patterns. Emerging

concepts arose as data was reanalyzed. Explanations for linking concepts and making comparisons evolved as the systematic process clarified and changed between the layers. The revisiting of the data helped me look at different perspectives and ask a variety of complex questions of the same text.

Prior to my fieldwork, I created a preliminary inventory of codes as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 59). Codes or labels were used for “assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information” compiled during the collection of data (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56). Codes help organize the material into “chunks” of words, sentences, phrases and at times, paragraphs before bringing meaning to those chunks (Richards, 2005). All of the codes were then assigned to the research questions.

There were three identified types of codes based on the research questions. The first code identified the educational practices that fathers believed they participated in at home and at school. The second code addressed challenges citing obstacles that fathers believed to exist in preventing their involvement in the educational process. The third code consisted of suggestions and recommendations by fathers on ways to improve school practices to support paternal involvement (see Appendix L for a coding sample). Furthermore, I coded participants’ race and ethnicity to determine if there were similarities or differences in paternal perceptions and/or life experiences. The themes were then coded and transferred to a matrix on the NVivo program. The identified data was then entered in the form of “thick” descriptions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

The strength of a qualitative study is “seeking out and interpreting the meanings that people bring to their own actions” (Payne & Payne, 2004, p.174-175), therefore, my inclusion of text on the matrices employed “thick” descriptions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Changes were made during the course of the data analysis and I maintained a log of my reasons and decisions for making any necessary adjustments before, during and after data collection.

Validation. In this section I explore the standards that verify the quality of my conclusions reached. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), validity in qualitative studies involves the truthfulness of the research findings. In order to ensure the accuracy of my findings, I followed a set of strategies identified by Creswell (2003) to determine if my results were trustworthy: (a) triangulation, (b) member-checking, (c) thick descriptions, (d) research bias, (e) negative or discrepant information and (f) peer-debriefing.

Triangulation. Miles and Huberman (1994) refer to triangulation as a “way of life”, that is, “if you self-consciously set out to collect and double-check findings, using multiple sources and modes of evidence, the verification process will largely be built into the data-collection as you go” (p. 274). My main source of data was the participants’ interviews. In order to build a solid rationale for the themes, I maintained a reflective journal, wrote memos and kept notes of the observed behaviors of the fathers during the interviews. I also remained cognizant of the benefits and threats to participants offering differing answers. This includes the possibility of the participants forgetting the facts or even intentionally

providing false information. This threat was minimized by offering follow-up questions to point out contradictions. The next strategy involved member-checking.

Member-checking. This strategy assures the data and interpretations are accurately portrayed. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), the process of submitting drafts of what each participant said and returning the document back to the participants for verification is one form of validation for qualitative research. Participants in my study were asked to review their respective transcriptions and determine whether they felt the statements were accurate. Six out of ten fathers agreed to review their transcriptions. A follow up session was asked of each participant to identify inconsistencies or questions that arose from the transcribed interview. All participants declined and noted no discrepancies. The next strategy employed was the use of rich, thick descriptions to convey the findings.

Use of descriptions. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), there is a need to review the context for descriptions that are *thick* (e.g., rich, meaningful). In order to uncover the “rich” descriptions, I transcribed exactly what each participant said. Furthermore, these researchers advise asking the following two questions: “Do the findings of the study make sense?” and “Do we have an authentic picture of what we are looking at?” (p. 279). Therefore, I continuously questioned if the findings were credible to the people I interviewed and to the readers of this research study. The next strategy sheds light on the researcher’s biases that they may bring to the study.

Research bias. There are two types of biases to be considered when drawing conclusions. The first bias to consider originates from the background of the researcher. As

a teacher and administrator for over fifteen years, I examined how my background and perspectives may affect the data collection and the analysis of the data. Additionally, I have reflected on how my own personal involvement at the participants' school might affect the outcome of the study. However, Patton (2002) defends the efforts of the qualitative researcher to become close to "the people and circumstances there to capture what is happening" (p. 48). He offers the example of "Piaget's closeness to his children" (p. 49) defending that the "closeness does not make bias and loss of perspective inevitable: distance is no guarantee of objectivity" (p. 49). Thus, I do not believe my personal involvement at the participants' school affected the accuracy of the research findings.

Furthermore, there was a need to eliminate the biases that could exist within the research study itself. There were several steps taken to eliminate the biases and ensure the accuracy of my findings. First, all my methods and procedures were described in detail. Other researchers should be able to follow the sequence of how my data was collected, processed, condensed, displayed, and they should be able to construct how my analysis was reached (Creswell, 2003; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Next, this verification trail ensured that my record keeping methods of procedures and changes in my research design were objective. Changes were made during the course of the data analysis and I maintained a log of my reasons and decisions for making any necessary adjustments before, during and after data collections. Third, the data will be retained and available for reanalysis by others. This next section discusses the need to check for negative information to assure the accuracy of the study's findings.

Negative or discrepant information. It is important to present negative information that runs counter to the themes of the research study (Creswell, 2003). The question to be asked to assist this process was, “Could there be an explanation of the results other than the conclusion reached?” (Miles & Huberman, 2004, p. 279). As part of the process, I reviewed the data until I felt one strong source of evidence was reached.

Secondly, some of the participants’ perspectives did not merge into one theme; therefore it was important to discuss these initial conclusions. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), “You are not searching for one perspective, eliminating the other participants’ beliefs, but for the best of several different accounts” (p. 274). The last strategy Creswell (2003) recommends to enhance the accuracy of the research findings is peer debriefing.

Peer debriefing. This process involves locating a person or peer debriefer to review and ask questions about the qualitative study so that the findings can be reproduced by people other than the researcher (Creswell, 2003, p. 196). Throughout the research analysis, I had a colleague read and check the results of the study. This colleague reviewed the coding schemes, the classification of the data as well as my findings to determine if they would draw the same conclusions. The final section will discuss ethical concerns related to this research project.

Ethical Considerations

Seidman (2006) states, “Interviewers and participants are never equal” (p. 109). In order to strive for equity in the interview process, there should be a balance on my part to

be aware of the topics of social injustice and at the same time work to build a trusting relationship with participants. This section identifies the ethical choices made in the analysis of this research study. Furthermore, the issue of confidentiality with study subjects will be addressed.

Ethical Concerns Throughout the Study. Potential ethical concerns were examined from the onset of the project to the final report. According to Kvale (2009), there are numerous ethical topics to be considered: (a) thematizing, (b) designing, (c) interview situation, (d) transcription, and (e) analysis. What follows is a brief description of Kvale's issues and what steps I implemented to address these ethical topics in my research study.

Thematizing and designing. Thematizing addressed the purpose of the study; that there will be improvement to the situation studied. I have received approval from the Institutional Review Board that this study follows the ethical guidelines of the University and the purpose of this project was for the improvement of home-school partnerships. The term designing refers to participants' consent and securing confidentiality. The school district and fathers agreeing to participate in this study were assured that the study and findings remain confidential. Confidentiality was also reviewed in consent forms (Appendix N) participants signed prior to the interviews commencing. Written permission was secured from each participant in this research study.

Interview situation. The interview situation consisted of the personal consequences of the interaction between the participants and researcher that need to be taken into

account. The rights, dignity, privacy, and sensitivities of fathers were respected throughout this research study.

The interview sessions were moderated in a way that I was sensitive to the needs of all of the participants, developing a trusting and comfortable relationship and keeping in mind at all times that I was asking much of my participants. I felt it was necessary to develop a trusting and comfortable relationship. For example, several of the fathers became very emotional as they unveiled their stories. During one interview, I stopped the session and offered the father Kleenex. He apologized but continued to cry. I then asked him if he wanted to be alone for a moment. He left the room and returned after a few minutes to finish the interview.

Throughout the study, I kept in mind the importance of politeness, time schedules, openly discussed the purpose and procedures of the study and as a qualitative researcher was genuinely interested in their lives. It was important as well to be sensitive to the topics of race, gender and not to respond negatively to their perceptions or beliefs. Although fathers seemed relaxed as they openly discussed race and gender, for one father there was a moment of silence as he waited for my approval regarding his personal opinion on a specific issue. This father was raising his daughter alone and explained why it was important for him to be involved in her life:

I see a lot of kids getting into some things that they shouldn't get into, the gender, not knowing they think this is the right thing, another woman kissing another woman or having six or four babies before you're married, having sex before you get married because the world is saying its ok (long pause).

This father paused for a few seconds as he looked at me and waited. I nodded and asked him to continue. I believe a rapport and trust were already established as he continued his conversation.

Transcription and analysis. Kvale (2009) stresses the importance of protecting the identities of the participants in written transcriptions. All identifying information was omitted from records, tapes and transcripts. Additionally, original records (e.g., contact sheets, consent forms, audiotapes, written transcripts) are secured in a file cabinet accessed only by the researcher. This chapter focused on the research design for this study. Chapter 4 will examine the responses of the ten fathers interviewed.

Chapter 4

Research Findings

Introduction

Chapter four will report the responses of ten fathers whose children attend a Title 1 school. The first section begins with background information and demographics of the fathers. The second section summarizes participants' responses to one probe question completed prior to their interview asking fathers to rate their level of involvement in their children's education. Each of the next three sections will address the interviewees' responses and will report themes that arise from the discussion of those findings. Specifically, section three reports the findings of question one: How are fathers of children in Title 1 schools involved in their children's education? Section four answers the next question: How are fathers involved in their children's education? The next section answers the final question: How do fathers in Title 1 schools perceive schools can improve their involvement in their children's education? The sixth section will identify challenges to paternal involvement in their children's education. Last, this section will conclude with the issue of diversity as it relates to race/ethnicity, gender and organizational culture.

Demographics of Participants Interviewed

Ten fathers were interviewed. Two fathers identified themselves as Hispanic, seven fathers stated they were African-Americans and one father said he was White. Five of the fathers were married, three divorced (e.g., two fathers were remarried, one father was single), one father was beginning divorce proceedings and one father was living with his

girlfriend. Two of the married fathers had step-children. Two of the divorced fathers had sole custody of their children. The father living with his girlfriend had two children with her and he also fathered two other children from previous relationships. His one daughter lives in Maryland and another teenager resided in Indiana. The group of fathers included a grandfather with two adult children and eight grandchildren. Although this grandfather and his wife had a home in Chicago, they would spend weeks at a time living with his son and his family (e.g., daughter-in-law, seven grandchildren). Currently, he lives with his daughter, her husband and their one child. He explained his daughter was diagnosed with cancer and together with his wife they are caring for both his daughter and granddaughter.

The ages of all of the children ranged from two years old to adults. Excluding stepchildren, adult children and grandchildren, three children were enrolled in preschool or day care. Seven children attended the primary grades. Four children were enrolled in middle school and seven children attended high school. One child attended community college while another child started training for a career in cosmetology. Two of the students were enrolled in special education.

The majority of the fathers were employed. Two fathers were retired, one stay-at-home father was working on his on-line associate's degree and the remaining fathers were employed full-time (e.g., program administrator, educator, custodian, factory worker, doorman, paint technician, police officer).

All of the fathers resided in the school district. With the exception of one father residing in his home for 50 years and another father 14 years, the remaining fathers have lived in the district approximately four years (see Appendix L).

Summary of Participants' Responses to Probe Question

To obtain a starting point for understanding fathers' overall perception of their involvement, prior to the interview, fathers were required to use a Likert Scale of 1-6 to rate their degree of participation in their child's education. The range of responses was from four to six. There were six fathers who rated themselves a six, two rated themselves a five and two rated themselves a four. The results of the probe indicated a need to look deeper into what factors contributed to the development of the participants' perceptions of what constituted effective fathers and how those fathers were involved in the educational process.

Paternal responses showed that six of the fathers confidently gave themselves a six. One father responded, "I'll say a six because I participate in mostly everything she do or I know about what's happening."

The two fathers who gave themselves a five were differentiated by the length of their responses. One father stated, "Because I am deeply involved in my child's education" while the other father explained, ". . . I do not want to give high marks because I know I'm not suppose to be a wonderful perfect father. . . So I thought maybe there are still things I could do but have not done yet."

The other two fathers gave themselves a four. The first father stated that “. . . because I don’t spend much time with them because of my work.” The second father said, “. . . I try to participate in all extracurricular activities and pretty much involved in his homework at home as well as I show up at school and talk to his teachers in regards to his progress and how is everything working out with him.”

Research Findings Related to Research Question One: How are Fathers in Title 1 Schools Involved in Their Children’s Education?

This section will address the paternal philosophies that fathers have developed and how these philosophies have shaped their perceptions of themselves as paternal role models. Furthermore, it will discuss the fathers’ respective paternal perceptions as a parent followed by a discussion of the educational and non-educational directed practices fathers employ as a means of being involved in their child’s education.

Fundamental to this section are the external and internal factors that have contributed to each individual participant’s personal history as a father. Their perceptions and experiences over time have shaped their concept of what it means to be a father and what it means to be an involved father. Each father’s response to this question is a window into how that father has arrived at his understanding of what it means to be a father, the traits or skills needed to be a father and an involved father at that. While developing and honing these skills, fathers encountered educational and non educational practices from external sources that impacted their perceptions of what it is to be a father and thus an involved father.

Paternal philosophies on fathering. From the analysis of the interviews, three aspects of their respective paternal philosophies emerged: educational, social and religious values. The participants in this study taught, demonstrated and role modeled these distinct values.

Educational values. Ten fathers mentioned the importance of participating in their children's education. Fathers proudly spoke up when discussing the value of an education for their children whether it was at the primary or college level. An educational statement from one father who did not finish high school indicated that he felt it was important to remind his children that education was their "ticket to their future for everything." Even in situations where children were not meeting their father's academic expectations, they sought outside educational assistance to help their children succeed. A father explained his rationale for searching for a tutor to bring up his daughter's grade point average:

Later on when she grows up, she's not gonna know how to comprehend, might not know how to read, not gonna know anything. So, that's why I want to be involved. How can I, if I can help her, I'm gonna get some help, gonna get some resources and that's very important.

Additionally, there was frequent mention of rewarding children for good grades, "because when they do good things you have to show them that they can be rewarded for it and [rewards] will give them a greater determination to go forward with it." All of the fathers rewarded their children for improving school grades.

The importance of an education and attending higher education was communicated by all fathers interviewed. It was not enough for fathers to endorse schooling and learning

but these fathers felt it was equally important to participate and remain involved in their children's education.

Social values. Fathers described a set of social values that they sought to role model for their children and in turn, expected their children to live by. Their responses can be divided into two categories: (a) character building values and (b) the value of supporting their community.

Character building values that fathers most frequently cited were respect, kindness, honesty and responsibility. All ten fathers believed it was necessary to instill these traits early on but realized that life long parental guidance was crucial. As one father insisted, "It's just simple manners like common courtesy and respect with everybody. If you teach that at a young age and insist upon it, you won't have any problems as they get older." Repeated phrases such as "preparing my children to leave the home", "be an independent person", "take care of themselves" and "take care of other people" emphasized paternal perceptions that their own behavior, things they said and did as fathers, had a significant impact on their children's development to be productive citizens.

Another theme associated with the category of character building values was the use of computers, specifically, access and exposure to the Internet. These fathers felt the various forms of media via the Internet negatively impacted the values that they were attempting to instill as part of their children's education. All of the fathers reported they had computers in their homes. Fathers cited their fears about their children's access to computers and the dangers of the Internet that come with Web sites such as My Space.

Another father shook his head back and forth and said, “They can find anything about anybody.” According to the fathers’ responses, these types of Web sites portrayed values that were not aligned with the fathers’ attitudes such as not respecting boundaries and living by a set of rules even if they have not agreed to them.

Fathers perceived the formation of solid character qualities would naturally lead their children to participate in community based activities. Fathers expressed their desire for their children to help the less fortunate, to look beyond themselves. Five of the fathers believed in the value of community involvement and modeled this value by volunteering themselves in their community without their children through campaigning, working elections, volunteering for a Big Brother-Little Brother program and working in soup kitchens during the holidays identifying the fact that they needed to “walk the talk” and model this value for their children. This indicates the fathers’ belief in role modeling this value for their children.

Religious values. The influence of religious affiliation, attendance and participation was cited by fathers as one type of home-based educational practice. For the majority of fathers, the importance of participating in religious practices with people of similar values, norms and expectations positively impacted their children’ education. Eight fathers described ways that their respective religious values were practiced individually or in the form of group practices. Six of these fathers actively practiced and served their church in some capacity. All of these fathers included their children in their religious practices. One father explained:

I let him [his son] know the Christian values. I'm a Christian. We go to church every Sunday. Sometimes there is Bible class if we find the time. He's [son] in a . . . House program of the Family Christian Center . . . , that's where I worship.

Two of the six fathers served their church in governance roles (e.g., Chairman of the Board, Deacon) and half of the fathers served their church in a volunteer role, "Activities that we just started for men, it's called Organization Man to Man at our church" and "Like if they have fundraisers or sometimes they sell dinners to raise money for the church." Additionally, one father perceived himself as not religious but spiritual, "I am not extremely religious. I am not an extremist in any way. I'm spiritual, I read."

Furthermore, another father embraced his faith but stated his job prevented him from attending many of the services. Although this father could not attend weekly church services, it was important that his children were involved in their faith and continued their religious education. While the majority of fathers practiced the faith of their choice, two fathers were non-responsive to this area.

The traditional belief is that mothers carry out the majority of the responsibilities for the children's educational activities outside of school. In contrast, these fathers confirmed by the interviews themselves that they were very much involved. Paternal conversations focused on encouraging their children to set and pursue goals. These fathers strongly made known the value of education and the beliefs that if their children work hard, they will benefit from their efforts. Furthermore, fathers taught and demonstrated the importance of education which provided their children with the knowledge and attitudes for their experiences at school to be beneficial.

Clearly, the data brought out the idea that fathers take responsibility of instructing the values of education and leading by example as very important to their children's overall development into productive citizens. Their philosophies on educational, social and religious values give insight how parenting practices should be respected and used to improve parenting programs. When the separate views of the fathers, administrators, teachers, and the researchers are combined, the resulting perspectives can be used to improve parent involvement and impact student achievement.

The influence of role models. Another theme that surfaced from paternal conversations was the influence of their parents as role models. As they shared their home learning involvement practices, it was evident their style of parenting and types of participation were influenced by their parents and other role models. From analysis of the fathers' responses, two distinct aspects of role models were uncovered that related to this research question: (a) parents as positive or negative role models, and (b) the influence of other role models.

Parents as role models. Eight fathers recognized that their own parents influenced the father they had become and provided examples of how their parents' role modeled direction for their own involvement in their children's education. They recounted the valuable experiences their parents had passed on to them. As one father remarked, ". . . because I am deeply involved in education and my parents were deeply involved, I teach her what my parents taught me." Another father commented, "Granted we were a big

family and they [father's parents] always strive to give us a better life, better education and a better everything.”

Even their parents' examples as hard workers who did not give up easily, became the bedrock of these fathers' need to continue being effective role models for their children. One dad recounted this value, “The value of hard work, my father could achieve what he achieved, he didn't have the silver spoon, he didn't have that but through hard work to achieve all you can achieve. I learned that from him.”

Not all the participants recounted their parents as positive role models. For two fathers, memories evoked parents not being directly involved or supportive of their needs. The first father sadly recalled stories of how he and his brother had to fend for themselves as latchkey kids and he did not want the same for his child. Similarly, the second father recounted his parents' divorce when he was 13, their lack of involvement in his education and his desire to “give them [his children] what I would liked to have . . . and to model my behavior a little differently as far as raising my children.”

Although two fathers expressed negative role models for parents, eight of the fathers identified their parents as positive role models. Based on their parent role modeling, fathers referenced their preferences or dislikes of their parents' parenting skills along with their abilities and expectations of their own fathering skills.

The influence of other role models. In contrast, not every father followed their mother or father's parenting style. For four other fathers, the role of being a parent was

shaped by people other than their parents. One father revealed how his parenting practices were shaped by the Marine Corps:

I got everything I know from the marine core, how I dress, how I walk, how I talk, my inner reaction with people. I mean the marine core was my life. The core taught me to, to analyze situations, you know, go through strategically and put it in order and that's what I'm doing with my children, putting them in order. On the other hand, another father cited movies and television had helped him to

understand his role as a father and parent. He was influenced by fatherly television personalities that represented his race. As he explained:

I watched all those programs with Bill Cosby. He was really trying to help the African-American community because he's from that root. He knows what the problems are but he still feels that the fathers are still not present in their children's business and they [fathers] don't like it.

A single father described how women at his church role modeled appropriate female behaviors for his daughter:

She's [father's daughter] a part of the church that we go to, they [women in the church] see the role that I play and they chip in, they encourage her, they talk to her, things like [to] be ladylike. All the ladies in the church, my age, they talk to her, they encourage her, they tell her how great a dad that she have, he loves you, so don't take those things for granted.

Furthermore, three fathers found their inspiration as an effective father from other sources and used those as a platform for being involved with their children. As the sources of inspiration and subsequent values were varied, they were categorized into paternal responsibility and a variety of child rearing practices. For example, parenting classes, television, and books all provided positive messages on how to be an effective parent. Despite the fact that two fathers did not view their parents as role models, the majority of fathers viewed their parents as positive role models and embraced those values.

The review of the literature pointed to the significance of fatherhood that was taking shape across the country. In a time when men's roles are changing, there is still a need for a point of comparison. Men are looking to other men for role standards. The findings of this study are consistent with the literature that fathers are searching for ways to meet their parenting needs and identify practices to strengthen their relationships with their children.

In this study, fathers identified factors that they felt influenced their involvement. They constructed a role for themselves by observing and listening to their parents and other role models. Therefore, why is it that a father does not look to their school system for advice and guidance in the areas of parenting and parent involvement? School would benefit from discussions with fathers on ways to increase home-school relations. The interests of fathers, if considered, could be beneficial to planning and improving parenting program activities.

Paternal responsibilities as a parent. When probed about their specific role as parents, different beliefs were brought forward by fathers. These beliefs can be categorized as: (a) paternal responsibility as a role model and (b) variety of child rearing practices.

Paternal responsibility as a role model. It was very evident from the interviews that fathers strongly felt it was their responsibility to be involved with their children and not the responsibility of someone else. It was equally important to all of them for their children to view them as positive role models. One father expressed his efforts as a paternal role model, "It is so important for me, for the child to actually see the significance of what

a positive male role model does which means you go to work, you provide for your family, you interact with your kids.”

Another father felt it was also equally vital as exhibited by the following statement:

I am able to be a positive role and direct them towards things that are not negative. When it comes to involvement, in the Black community, I think being there is one of the most significant things and being a visual role model is so significant for them [father’s children].

Equally important to all of the fathers was that in their children’s eyes they were viewed as a positive role model. It is significant that all ten fathers felt strongly about their responsibility to be positively involved in their children’s lives. Although they demonstrated their responsibilities in different ways, their role as a father was not taken lightly.

Child rearing practices. From the interview responses on home learning involvement practices, two sub themes emerged. The first theme was related to fathers raising children. Five of the ten fathers suggested parenting their daughters differently from their sons. Three of the fathers stated they kept a “tighter grip on their girls.” Their primary concern was for the safety of their daughters.

Also, three fathers who had more than one child related how they learned from raising their oldest. Two of the fathers (e.g., one remarried, one living with girlfriend) who started a second family stated the same thing, “You know, you’d been there . . . a lot of things is not trial and error because you’ve experience it.” Divorced fathers identified the same fact. “I am definitely raising them differently than I did in the beginning with my first

two kids.” Perhaps, one father summoned up his feeling for everyone when he said, “I wish I had the time to spend with all of my kids but unfortunately it didn’t happen.”

For a father raising his own son and a stepson, he recounted his parenting responsibilities were a special challenge for him as he made an effort to include the stepson’s biological father:

There is a significant difference between raising the two. . . . Where as you want to make sure to participate in activities [with the stepson] as well. So there is a balance I try to strike in regards to making sure my older son’s biological dad is actively participating in his life and all of his activities as well.

The second theme focused on the division of responsibilities among the six married couples. According to these fathers, if their spouse worked a night shift or attended night classes, it was assumed that the husband would manage more of the family responsibilities and household chores. One father recounted he is the one home who feeds his daughter because “the mother works as a nurse and that takes most of her hours.” These fathers did not seem to mind their share of duties as one father reflected, “A lot of responsibilities do fall on me and I do not have a problem with that. I try to keep a balance.”

The stay-at-home dad acknowledged that his partner “works as a dental assistant so she was able to carry the load for the family for that [financial responsibilities].” According to this father, he was now obligated to be more involved with his children, “I did my little diaper changing. . . I get them up at 7:10 every morning. Sometimes they don’t want to get up, gotta get them dressed, brush her [daughter’s] hair. . . [and] walk them down [to the bus at the corner].

A father separated from his wife recounted how they shared homework duties, checking their child's homework on the night the child was with them. They also divided transportation duties identifying which parent was responsible for driving their child to and from school. A single father relied on family relatives for baby sitting and helping out with household chores when needed. A sixth father, while married, stated that his job prevented him from helping at home.

The picture that emerges from my findings is that fathers share responsibilities in relation to raising their children and household tasks. People and educators may still use the term "parenting" but they are actually referring to the behaviors of mothers. These findings dispute the traditional belief that mothers are primarily responsible for the child's education. The fathers in this study are engaging in their own behaviors at home. These fathers strongly acknowledged their responsibility to be an involved role model to positively produce changes in the lives of their children.

My findings corroborate previous research that fathers are assuming more responsibility within their families. These fathers have a common understanding by which paternal involvement influences the development of their children. All of the fathers shared an awareness of their own parenting skills and married fathers acknowledged they shared the parenting role with their spouses.

Paternal home learning practices. All ten of the fathers described involvement practices that occurred both inside and outside the home. Their responses fell into the following categories: (a) educationally directed home learning practices, and (b) non-

academic home learning practices. Educational activities engaged both the father and the child to improve the child's achievement in school. Non-educational practices are defined as activities that are intended to formally or informally develop their children's respective talents, interests, and strengths.

Educationally directed home learning activities. All ten fathers described a variety of educational home learning activities. Fathers identified activities as follows: reading with their children at home, instructing their children on finances (e.g., opening a checking account, initiating an allowance), and educational learning through computer programs. Three of the fathers cited specific use of their home computer for educational software. One father explained the software programs he used with his two younger sons, "I got him on, . . . Mavis Beacon, typing. . . He's learning Spanish now. He's following Rosetta Stone pretty good."

More than half of the fathers related that they were aware of their children's favorite genres (e.g., science fiction, comics, sports, poetry, fairy tales) as a result of taking them to the library and read to their children or listened while their children read. For the younger children, fathers took their children there to read additional books while older children were taken to the library to pursue educational assignments. With the exception of one Hispanic father, the other nine fathers cited they were involved in a variety of reading practices.

Non-academic home learning activities. All of the fathers participated in non-academic home learning activities. These activities can be classified into the following

categories: (a) local activities, (b) park district programs, (c) outside events, (d) family events, (e) father's employment, (f) religious and charitable events, and (g) family time.

All of the fathers took advantage of local "neighborhood" festivals such as carnivals and parades. Fathers identified visiting the mall, the grocery store and movie theatres as local activities. Beaches and parks were also popular activities for the fathers and their families. Additionally, participating in a variety of local sports activities (e.g., ice and roller skating, bowling, baseball, soccer, football) was common. Fathers described these activities as ways of spending "important", "valuable" and "enjoyable" time with their children.

Fathers listed park district programs as another type of involvement practice they participated with their children. With the exception of two Hispanic fathers, the other eight fathers cited they enrolled their children in a variety of recreational programs at the community park district. Fathers identified programs such as soccer, football, karate, swim lessons and baseball programs.

The third category pertained to activities fathers participated in outside their neighborhood. Seven fathers listed museums, plays and sight seeing attractions such as Great America, Navy Pier, and Sear's Tower. Beyond Chicago, six fathers described family vacations at Wisconsin Dells, Florida, Missouri and Mexico as ways of building memories and bonding with their children.

Family gatherings were an additional form of paternal engagement outside the school. These family events were described as ways of celebrating family milestones and

traditions such as birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays. Seven fathers identified family events as a learning practice outside the home.

For many fathers, bringing their children to work was another type of home learning activity. Six of the employed fathers brought their children to their jobs for the purpose of meeting their co-workers. As a category for this study, this activity was classified as non-academic because fathers were not teaching children a vocational skill or assisting their child in a classroom assignment.

Religious and charitable events emerged as another home based learning activity. As an extension of the fathers' religious and social values, they became involved in religious and charitable works. Six fathers stated they attended church with their children. Five of these fathers also described their church related activities such as choir, Bible study, and religious classes. Three fathers reported volunteering in their communities (e.g., helping at homeless shelter, fundraising, soup kitchens) as an extension of their religious beliefs.

Of all the practices, family times (e.g., eating with their children, watching television together, singing, creating arts and craft projects, cooking, playing board games and computer games) were the most pervasive. One father described this practice with his two children:

We play games, Sorry [board game]. She has a little Princess Bingo and my son has his DVD games. I play Barbie with her, wrestle with him and play DVD games with my son. A lot of girly things with her. I am involved with the kids with the computer.

From the data, the fathers identified numerous types of educationally related home learning practices; however, non-academic directed practices encompassed the most time. The greatest type of involvement for fathers did not have a price tag attached. Local activities, parks, beaches and family time rated a 100% attendance and participation by all of the fathers.

Non-local events which required a purchase of some kind were participated less by fathers. The stay-at-home dad had the least participation. He was not represented in four of the categories (e.g., church, family events, park district programs, non-local events). This could be attributed to family finances and the availability of only one car which his girlfriend used to drive to work. The other fathers noted attending all or at least 75-80% of the activities. All of these fathers perceived their involvement with their children as having a direct impact on their children's education and the success of their children in the future.

Challenges to Paternal Involvement at Home. To better understand fathers' involvement in their children's education, it is helpful to also understand some of the challenges that directly and indirectly influenced their involvement. All ten fathers identified conditions and circumstances that limited their involvement in educationally related home learning practices. The most prevalent paternal challenges identified were: (a) health, (b) finances, (c) employment, and (d) family dynamics. Employment and family dynamics were classified as major barriers while health and finances were considered minor barriers.

Health. Two fathers cited health problems as a challenge which prevented them from fulfilling their parenting responsibilities and impacting their involvement with learning activities at home. One father suffered a stroke and retired from his job. A relative took over the parenting role until he was in good health again. Another father survived open heart surgery. While recovering from his surgery he was unable to care for his daughter for a long period of time and required assistance himself from other family members.

A final example came from a father who, although healthy, became a care-giver to his daughter who was diagnosed with cancer. He explained his daughter required round the clock assistance and support from the immediate family.

Finances. Three fathers specifically reported finances as a substantial barrier standing in their way of providing more educational learning opportunities. In the same way, two other fathers had to eliminate family vacations due to financial concerns. One father explained that due to his decision to be a stay-at-home dad, he constantly worried about money. For the last year, his girlfriend took their car to work while the children walked or took public transportation. He stated this limited his ability to attend educational activities or learning events in the community. The remaining fathers noted finances were always a worry but not a primary obstacle to providing home learning opportunities for their children.

Employment. A more serious issue to paternal involvement was employment. All but three fathers were employed in some capacity and stated their jobs and subsequent

hours worked prevented them from spending more time with their children. One of the fathers explained his frustration with the lack of time he had for his own children:

When I was raising my son I was never there. I was working and then from work, you know, not there. It was time. Sometimes I didn't see my son for two or three days because I worked for Illinois EPA and sometimes we set to go out to Springfield for various reasons. I'd stay down there for a couple of days or I'd go to Carbondale for schooling, classes, for like I had two or three baby sitters on call if an emergency happen or they [work] needed me.

A single father raising his daughter, shared problems he encountered working nights while still trying to be a dad:

I'm working nights too and I need some rest too cause I'd be up with her [daughter] all day and fix her dinner, make sure she get out to school and then I had to get some sleep too. I try to get some sleep and then I leave out about 10:30.

Other fathers' comments included, "I didn't have time to spend with them while they were growing up, that was because of my work schedule" or "I am with him as much as my job will allow." Their statements revealed their frustrations for the long hours spent at work and consequently, less hours involved in their children's education.

One final example came from a father who contrasted the large amount of involvement with his youngest child to the little amount of time he spent with his four older children when they were the same age. When asked if his job stopped him from spending more time at home, he responded, "Big time. I did enjoy his baby steps and all that. I got to see all that when I couldn't do that with the other kids. I wish I had the time to spend with all the rest of my kids but unfortunately it didn't happen."

Work and long hours were major obstacles for seven of the fathers wanting to be more involved with their children. However, all fathers reported family relationships and family dynamics impacted their parenting role in a significant manner.

Family dynamics. All of the fathers described the various components of family problems that impacted their children. As fathers reported their stressful experiences with family situations, their stories echoed pain and frustration. Specific family concerns (e.g., separation, marriage, remarriage, role as a caregiver, step-children, abused children, emotional adjustments of children in new family configurations) that emerged resulted in distinct family imprints. A few examples are provided.

As a single dad raising two children, this father recalled how he worked seven days a week and relied on babysitters to watch his children. He described his family circumstances of his two children exposed to cocaine before they were born and his oldest son sexually molested. He continued to share his need for some family support; however, his extended family did not encourage him to develop his own parenting responsibilities.

Fathers also identified the impact separation, divorce and remarriage had on their children and themselves. As an example, one father noted the confusion for his children as they went back and forth between schools because as parents they could not agree on their children's education. Speaking with frustration, he recalled his past experience between private and public school enrollments:

. . . back and forth in between grades they went to, I insisted on private, she insisted on public. I would always have them back into private where I went to and they started off and then she would move or take them to another school district and then I'd get them and put them back into the private school system.

Unlike the above father's confusion, another father was in the middle of a separation from his wife. Emotionally he described the stress and frustration their marital problems had on his daughter.

So, that's (pause) our (pause) big thing right now, you, we're working with that [separation]. I'm sorry (tears and Kleenex is offered). But, you, sometimes, kids be rebelling, you can't, you have to really work with your child in situations like that, you can't like force things. She went to summer school because she started falling behind. But that was when her mother, you know (pause), had met this guy and all that, so, sometime it effect a child. We have to balance it out.

Along the same lines, another dad used the word balance to describe his family configuration and the blending of family members. After being married for many years, his wife found her daughter she had given up for adoption at birth. Over night his family grew (e.g., stepdaughter, five grandchildren). He speaks of balancing the new families and the importance of their own son fitting in amidst this significant change.

Another participant, sensitive to growing up without a father is currently trying to reconcile with his teenage daughter who lives nearby. He stressed the need to maintain a balance with his first child, while raising his two younger children with his girlfriend.

These fathers added insightful information about the challenges that impacted their involvement with their children's education at home. The last and most significant parenting challenge for all of the fathers interviewed was family dynamics.

Family dynamics was discussed by fathers as not only the primary challenge but also as the most compelling obstacle to them as they searched to find a balance in their daily parenting routines and their involvement in their children's education at home.

Balance was a recurring theme in the language of fathers as they searched to replace the imbalance and find a delicate balance among their own family situations. The problem that emerged from family relations were marital issues, the complexity of new family configurations and the anguish of not meeting their own children's emotional, physical and education needs.

Ten fathers were interviewed to ascertain their involvement in their children's education, specifically their participation outside of the school. From the paternal responses, specifically related to the connections of home learning involvement, a core set of values emerged that impacted their children's education. Many of the beliefs and values the fathers embraced as the foundation for their involvement in their children's education developed from the influences of role models. Furthermore, all of the fathers felt strongly about their responsibility to be positively involved in their children's education. The fathers perceived themselves participating more in non-academic activities than educational activities.

The rationale cited in the literature is that families from Title 1 schools tend to be less involved. However, not all parents from Title 1 schools are uninvolved. My data indicated that fathers are taking an active role in their children's education at home. Fathers articulated a range of educational activities they participated in that would benefit their children's development. This study found no significant difference between parents' involvement in their children's home activities in terms of their social class, ethnicity or race. It may also be because of the nature of the sample; only ten fathers interviewed. The

findings of this study revealed that fathers have accumulated from their paternal parenting experiences knowledge, skills and practices that are essential to their involvement in their children's education outside of school.

Schools tend to initiate the activities for parenting practices without considering the activities that may already be in place at home. These findings suggest a new direction for enlisting and supporting fathers in our schools' educational programming. This new data provides school staff with an understanding of what is already established and provided at home. School leaders now have a starting point to learn from fathers' home learning practices and design practical strategies to align school parenting initiatives and effectively engage fathers. The next section will discuss paternal involvement in their children's schools.

Research Findings Related to Research Question Two: How are Fathers in Title 1 Schools Involved in Their Children's Schools?

This section discusses the findings of question two: How are fathers in Title 1 schools involved in their children's education? The section begins with a discussion of paternal involvement in school activities. Next, paternal communication with schools will be discussed. The last section will identify reasons for father involvement followed by paternal challenges to school involvement.

Paternal involvement in school activities. This section describes the activities fathers participate in at school. The activities are divided into five sections: (a) general activities, (b) parent-teacher association events, (c) school directed activities, (d) homework and (e) school meetings.

General activities. All of the fathers were connected with their children's school but in different ways. Fathers with older children showed up at extra curricular activities such as band, track or cheerleading while fathers of younger children attended school activities such as family reading nights and classroom events (e.g., multi-cultural day). School plays, recognition ceremonies (e.g., honor roll, student of the month), assemblies, grandparents' day and open house nights were ways fathers reported being involved in their children's schools. With the exception of family reading nights, in which four fathers attended, the above activities had either two or three fathers attending school events.

Fathers identified volunteering at their school as another form of involvement. One hundred percent of the fathers responded that they volunteered in some capacity at some time during the school year. However, the number one preferred paternal involvement practice was chaperoning class field trips. Eight fathers described their experiences as chaperones for their children's classrooms, "We went to a zoo, we had a lot of fun, we did, I enjoyed it" and "We went to the Apple Farm, the Children's Museum, oh, I love field trips" and "We went to the farm. It was [a] pretty wild deal. They showed us how cows were being born." By their statements, it was evident dads enjoyed their children's classroom fieldtrips.

The next two fathers shared additional examples of school volunteering; however, their experiences were not at their current children's schools. Through the years, one father had his children enrolled in both private and public schools and this father volunteered at both schools. He also served on a Local School Council, presented at Career Days,

volunteered as a security guard and implemented a walking patrol. Another father related how he filmed school plays for parents and volunteered as a lifeguard at his daughter's private school.

Parent-teacher association attendance and support. Parent-Teacher Association meetings were not well attended or supported by these fathers. Three fathers reported they had paid their membership dues but did not attend meetings. Of these three fathers that did belong, one had only recently joined, the second father's wife attended in place of her husband and the third father, due to transportation problems, had not attended any of the meetings. No additional reasons were offered by other fathers regarding their lack of attendance at P.T.A functions.

Of the seven non-member fathers, four of these fathers attended or supported P.T.A. sponsored activities or meetings for different reasons. One father stated, "A couple of times I came and they were honoring students, they come and get their awards and I wanted to see that." Another father did not attend P.T.A. meetings but donated his time because the board president asked him, "So, I met the president and they asked me if I would be interested in volunteering for the carnival. So, I volunteered." The other two fathers participated in fundraising activities (e.g., selling candy, selling sweatshirts) and supported the organization through monetary donations or purchases such as buying gifts for teacher appreciation day or Easter baskets for prizes for the students. The remaining three fathers were uninvolved because of work schedules, a lack of knowledge about the goals and activities of the P.T.A. or no desire to become a member.

School directed activities. Another traditional way fathers were involved in their children's school was through parent-teacher conferences. These school directed activities elicited attendance and support by all of the fathers. Of the six fathers who were married, three of them stated they attended the conferences with their spouses usually in the evening. One of these fathers stated he had to take off time from work to attend parent-teacher conferences because his wife did not speak English and a translator was not always available. The married grandfather stated he was asked to attend his grandchildren's conferences when their own parents were unable to attend. Two other married fathers attended the conferences alone due to their spouses' work schedules. As one married father stated, "It just depends who is available to attend." Although not married, one father and his girlfriend, the mother of his children, expressed attending evening conferences together.

A divorced father attended his children's conferences alone. He stated his ex-wife did not show up for any of the parent-teacher conferences. The recently separated father stated he attended all of his daughter's conferences and his soon-to-be-ex-wife always joined him. Finally, for the father who has custody of his child, he responded that he was present at all of the conferences and usually arrived early in the day because he worked the night shift.

Half of the fathers commented on their experiences with parent-teacher conferences while the other five fathers had no comments other than they attended the conferences. Two fathers proudly announced teachers informed them they did not have to show up for conferences because of their children's academic and behavior success. As one father

stated, “Every time I go see his teachers, they’re like, I don’t need to see you, you’ve got like the greatest kid I have in here.” A third father stated he attended the conferences to find out about his child’s “weaknesses and strengths.” For two of the five remaining fathers, their experiences were not as engaging or meaningful.

The recently separated father’s experiences at parent-teacher conferences were also “confusing” and “uncomfortable” for him especially when his soon-to-be-ex-wife’s boyfriend showed up for the school meetings. Per this father, the teacher confused the boyfriend for the father:

. . . by him being there and all that, she [teacher] kept getting it [who was the father] confused. Are you the father? . . . I’m sitting here, you know, but he [boyfriend] just wanted to be involved in everything. . . . I don’t feel good about it but there was nothing I could do about it.”

On the other hand, another father described his first conference as a learning process:

The first time was kind of a mouthful because I was standing right next to my wife while the teacher was talking. I was listening. I was kind of looking around the room. I was trying to get use to the atmosphere [son’s classroom] where he’s at. I want to see where his time out is and where are all these distractions that I’m always hearing he’s doing. The second time, I just started asking a lot of questions. It may have been my fault the first time.

An overwhelming majority of fathers related satisfying experiences with parent-teacher conferences. Per these fathers, teachers engaged them in discussion regarding their children’s academic strengths, classroom behavior and areas of improvement. Additionally, all of the married fathers stated teachers addressed their spouses and them equally at parent-teacher conferences.

Homework. The majority of fathers identified homework as a way of helping their children with school directed assignments. With the exception of one father, nine fathers responded to being involved with their children's homework. Although fathers did not identify the amount of time devoted to homework involvement, it seemed from their statements they frequently assisted their children. The following comments give testimony to this finding:

I am always there for him. I help him with his homework just to help him a lot.

I try to participate in all extracurricular activities and pretty much involved in his homework at home.

Homework, we are very involved.

So, I do everything with them . . . study, homework.

I spend time with 'em [the children]. I do all the homework with the baby.

I help her out with the homework in that area [math].

But I try to involve myself with her homework, with her school work. . . . but sometimes the school things like homework can sure take up more time.

Fathers of both primary and middle school students helped their children with homework in a variety of ways. Fathers of younger children "corrected words as I listened to him read" and reviewed "weekly spelling words." One father admitted, "I'm proofing it, going over the green light, red light, yellow light thing everyday, drilling too." On the other hand, fathers of older children were less directly involved in daily assignments. A father of an older student related that his child required less direct assistance and more review of homework assignments, "Typically he brings his studies home. We go over the work with him. He does it. I check it and make sure it's ok." The separated father stated homework

was a shared responsibility between the both of them, “. . . I’ll check it [homework] or when her mother comes home from work . . . her mother go over with it, check her homework and makes sure every thing is ready for the next day.”

As children became older, they preferred not to have their fathers checking their homework. For example, one father described how his older daughter no longer requested or needed his assistance:

When she was younger like, let’s say from kindergarten or preschool all the way up till fourth grade, she needed my help. But now she is like, when I look over her shoulder she’ll say, why you looking over my shoulder? I’ll say, do you need any help? She’ll ask me, do you know parallels? I’ll say, yes, I know parallels and my daughter will say, well I do too (laughter)! You know I don’t feel as needed but I’m glad because her learning process is evolving.

Only one father stated he was not actively involved with his children’s homework. He expressed some unique barriers in assisting his children with their homework. First, his job prevented him from being at home to help with the daily school assignments during evening hours. He recounted that he was able to help the youngest child but did not have that same experience with the other four children:

I do help him with his homework here and there, not that often. I have to talk with him sometimes because my other kids keep reminding me that I baby him too much. I spent too much time with him when I didn’t have time to spend with them while they were growing up. That was because of my work schedule.

Second, his wife does not read or speak English and she was unable to help the younger children. He explained that his older children were responsible for working with the younger children to complete their homework assignments.

Seven of the fathers discussed homework routines when children arrived home from school. Fathers stressed their children did their homework immediately upon arriving home from school or for older children later in the evening:

Our routine is as soon as we get in, she's finishing off with whatever she didn't do at work [school] and I tend to want to get right into it because she's anxious to do things and I try to let her know, school work is first, let's do this first and then we can do the activities.

Typically he brings his studies home. We go over the work with him. He does it. I check it and make sure it is ok.

The first thing I ask when they come in the door, got homework? Yes. So, like I said, sometimes I will make them do it right away, you know, on nice days or a lot of kids are out playing, I'll let them slide or go outside for a little bit but I know when homework is in the house (laughter) by the time they walk in the door.

An eighth father sent his daughter to a tutoring program to help her with her homework and school assignments, "I sent her to Sylvan because her grade point was slow and I wanted to get it [grades] up. . . . Then I want to work on getting her out of those special education classes." Another father stated his daughter was struggling in math and worked with her to succeed, "Now, she's just a C student in math but three or four years ago, she was an F student, she didn't know her multiplication tables." He continued discussing his expectation for his child next year, "It's paying off. Now, she's just an average student. Now, next year, I'm looking for her to excel to become a B student. Each year I look for improvement."

One final example came from a father describing how his involvement helped his daughter improve in reading and math:

She's a 7th grader and she was reading like a 5th grade. At first I thought she wasn't putting effort into it. I was right because like I said ever since she started getting the extra help I've seen the changes. Her reading got better, her math is doing better, it's not good but it's doing a lot better.

The value of doing and completing homework was apparent from paternal involvement and the routines that had been put in place for their respective children. These fathers not only supported the classroom teacher but they felt it was equally important to participate and remain involved in this aspect of their children's education.

School meetings. Other school directed meetings or conferences initiated by staff personnel relayed specific types of information to the parents. Two types of meetings fathers identified were: (a) IEP scheduled meetings and (b) student behavior conferences with classroom teachers.

Two fathers attended annual IEP meetings. One father raising his daughter alone stated he had participated in IEP meetings for the past five years. Another father explained his wife originally attended his daughter's IEP conferences because an interpreter was promised by school personnel. However, the translator was an employee of the school and kept leaving the meeting for other school obligations. After a few meetings without a translator, the father stated he had to take time off from work to discuss his daughter's academic progress.

In addition to special education meetings, parent conferences were requested by classroom teachers to discuss students' behavior. Eight fathers stated that through the years, they had attended conferences with teachers regarding their children's behavior in

the classroom, in the lunchroom or on the bus. Consider the grandfather who for years attended discipline conferences for his grandchildren:

I had to come up here a few times for different children. You usually have a problem child and it usually spread out with another problem child but when you got seven grandchildren, some one gonna be at one time or another [in a fight]. . . it was only one time it [fighting] was actually in school, most of the time it's [fighting] on the way home.

Although two fathers did not attend school meetings, they communicated about school problems in another way. One father was unable to attend meetings because of "not having a car". He communicated with the classroom teacher through telephone calls, "I couldn't come to the school for meetings, I got a couple of calls during the year, my son, he gets a little talkative. The teacher asked me to talk to him and calm him down."

For another father, work prevented him from attending most of the meetings with classroom teachers; however, he stated it was not always easy to take off from work and his wife could not attend because of the language barrier, "Then at my work they [school] always call me if something goes wrong. . . . They call me and I got to be there. . . .

Fathers were asked if they also attended meetings with classroom teachers regarding academic instruction. With the exception of parent-teacher conferences, all of the fathers did not remember attending individual meetings regarding specific student learning problems.

Furthermore, fathers were questioned if they had received school information about Title 1 meetings or attended a Title 1 meeting. None of the fathers remembered receiving

information or attending Title 1 meetings. Similarly, all of the fathers were unaware of Title 1 home-school compacts.

Overall, the results point to fathers participating in a variety of school practices that ensure their children's chances of success in the school system. The level and range of school involvement activities compared to the home learning activities is less. Fathers are involved more at home. The fathers in this study have constructed their own role in home-school partnerships but they have not received the guidance and direction from their children's schools.

The data indicated schools tend to direct paternal involvement practices and not solicit input from fathers. By initiating the activities, schools dominate the parent-school relationships, placing fathers in a position to attend and conform to school practices such as school assemblies, parent-teacher conferences and student behavior meetings. This research validates the experiences of fathers and schools might benefit from building upon their knowledge and practices.

Paternal communication with schools. Fathers reported a variety of written and oral types of communication that they received from their children's school. Although it's assumed that communication is a two-way activity, the fathers in this study cited the school primarily conducted one-way communication. This section will explore two methods that fathers reported school personnel most frequently utilized to inform them: (a) written communication, and (b) telephone communication. A miscellaneous category termed (c) communication describes other types of school information that emerged from paternal

responses. The final part of this section discusses fathers' preferred types of school communication.

Written communication. Fathers preferred two types of written communication: (a) school newsletters and (b) student quarterly academic reports. All ten fathers confirmed they received and read the school's monthly newsletters. They identified a variety of informative items from this source: breakfast and lunch menus, monthly school activities, student of the month and P.T.A events. They felt it was valuable as a means to keep them aware of important school activities. One father commented, "I like to stay informed and see what's going on in school" while another father stated, "It keep[s] me posted on everything, student of the month and I read all that."

One father did not receive a newsletter from the school. Instead, he would pick up the newsletters from his ex-wife, make a copy of the document at the public library and return the original to his ex-wife. He went to all of this trouble because he felt it was important for him to stay in touch with the school, "I need to know what's really going on because I'm the one really taking her back and forth to school."

Since the newsletters enclosed a calendar of activities, five fathers claimed the newsletters were on their refrigerator as a constant reference. Two of the fathers stated they started placing their calendars on the refrigerators after they failed to remember the school had a late start day. One father related his experience:

I check it [the calendar], this may sound crazy but I had an incident where I didn't know it was a late start and didn't inform the driver. I'm ashamed for this person. I'm the type of person that likes to keep things in order . . . the calendars that come up now I put on my refrigerator. I use to think that was just the hideout sight, to

have a refrigerator full of papers but now the majority of it is either artwork or something from school. So, I'm learning, gotta bend a little bit, I like to stay informed and see what's going on.

For another father, he had to translate the monthly newspaper for his wife, "We read it, I mean I read it and then I will tell her what's going on since it's mainly in English, she doesn't read English."

Fathers also commented on student academic reports that were sent home to parents quarterly. One father found these reports helpful to working with his child. He explained:

They send the reports home. You have to sign it, to show that you've seen it. And if I've seen it as a parent, I have to do something about it. Then I have to put in the report that I'm doing something about it. Then I will see results.

All of the fathers expressed positive sentiments on the contents of the school's written communication to help them stay involved. "So, far it's good, very helpful and I think it's good" were some comments expressed by the participants.

Telephone communication. The school also used the telephone to communicate with fathers for three purposes: (a) calls from staff to inform fathers of student behavior, (b) automated phone calls reminding fathers of general school events, and (c) a Homework Hotline for parents to check on classroom assignments. These ten fathers perceived the telephone calls received from staff personnel (e.g., administrators, teachers, nurses) were to inform them of problems solely relevant to their children's behavior performance.

Next, the school used automated telephone messages to inform parents of general school messages or school events. Fathers stated these automated messages were related to

“weather is bad”, “ISAT testing and assembly times”, and “there was a guy walking around the school and they sent some kind of [telephone] warning.”

Last, the school provided an automated telephone system for a homework hotline. Teachers would leave daily assignments on the hotline and parents were able to check daily class and homework assignments. Of the ten fathers, six of the fathers knew of the system but did not utilize the service. Four of the six fathers stated they called the classroom number several times but homework recordings were not up to date. The remaining four fathers had no knowledge of this school service.

Miscellaneous communication. From the interviews, other forms of communication emerged to increase paternal engagement in schools. The types of communication were: (a) student folders, (b) bulletin boards, and (c) notice of student recognition events. These fathers reported the above forms of communication supported them in being involved with their children.

Fathers of younger children relied on weekly folders to inform them of student academics, behavior concerns and school events. According to these fathers, school folders provided facts on the students’ classroom activities, knowledge of the curriculum and knowledge of how their child was progressing in school.

Second, bulletin boards around the school provided current information for one father. He relied on the outside board for school news, “I picked up a lot of information from just the bulletin board out front. It lists the different occasions, what’s happening. All you have to do is basically just look at it.” From the bulletin board located in the school

foyer, he discovered dates for board meetings and general parent notices. He also viewed the P.T.A. bulletin board (e.g., future meetings, guest speakers) located in the main hallway.

The school had instituted a “Student of the Month” program for grades 5-8 and “Tiger Tokens” for grades 1-4, a reward system for student behavior. Every month, selected students received a certificate for behavior success and those students were acknowledged at student assemblies. The majority of the fathers commented on receiving this information. Some fathers also received written notice of their child’s accomplishments and made the following remarks, “She got 5 tiger tokens but she hasn’t made that Student of the Month yet but we’re striving for that”, “My little guy was Student of the Month,” or “When my son initially came to school, the first year they were handing out Tiger Tokens and what he did was, he saved up his Tiger Tokens and he had a breakfast with the Principal.”

The school also sends parents written notice when their child achieved honor roll. Five of the fathers seemed appreciative with this type of communication. Their comments included, “They stayed on honor roll and good at perfect attendance.” and “When my freshman girl use to be here, I use to be here, like just about every month because she was an honor [student].”

Nine fathers stated it was important to receive these types of written communication to maintain their involvement (e.g., attend recognition ceremonies) at school and support

their children's education. The remaining father was nonresponsive to his opinion regarding student recognition awards.

Communication preferences. The majority of the fathers did not have a preference on how to receive information. Six fathers could not decide on the method of communication they preferred from the school. Three fathers stated they preferred telephone calls and one father selected mail as his choice of communication methods.

Reasons behind their preferences are provided in the examples below:

It would have to be US mail, if you want me to come to your place, then you invite me.

I prefer a phone call because there is something about hearing a person tell me something as to me reading, because I don't know the attitude behind the words on the paper. I want to know what kind of person my child is with the majority of the day, if it be the teachers or whatever.

Mail is good; it's something half copied for later on [when] I may need it. But sometimes phone, you may forget what the hell was that now. What she'd want with the meeting? But if it's on paper, it's something to carry, you know, time after time.

All of the fathers do not depend on their children's backpack as a source of delivery of school information. One father summoned his frustration, "Most of the time when they send stuff home with the students, we will find it three or four days later in their book bag. That's not really a good way."

Although, fathers relied on a variety of these types of communication to stay involved in their schools, they also mentioned their preferences for emails. Three fathers especially cited this as a helpful form of communication; however, the school had yet to initiate the process.

Most fathers did not have a preference on the type of communication used by the school. With the exception of four fathers, who stated a preference, six of the fathers felt the school did a “fine job” communicating school goals and activities through these traditional types of communication (e.g., written, telephone).

Relationships are the foundation of parent involvement in schools. They create connections that can support and improve student achievement. Home-school relations are sustained through two-way communication. This section identified that schools primarily use one-way types of communication to keep fathers informed. This type of communication practice was acceptable to the fathers. It is questionable if the fathers accepted these types of communication because it is the norm.

The data also indicated that the most important piece of communication for fathers was the homework hotline. Fathers were genuinely interested in their children’s grades and school assignments but accessing homework assignments was more difficult for these interested parents. According to the participants, the Homework Hotline telephone system was never in operation. These findings provided further evidence that schools dominate the information. The potential exists for schools to impact student achievement; yet, the fathers in this study were kept out of the loop. To minimize the problem, workshops could be offered to assist school administrators and teachers on the impact of parent communication on student achievement and overall student success.

Reasons for paternal school support and attendance. This next section will discuss the three reasons fathers perceive as to why they are involved in their children’s

school. First, paternal involvement benefits their children. In return, fathers received many benefits from their involvement. Last, paternal levels of involvement in school practices were determined by how effectively fathers perceived school personnel to fulfill their respective responsibilities.

Benefits for children. All ten of the fathers stated that their involvement in their children's school benefitted them in many ways. Two fathers perceived their involvement as Black role models important for the children in their school neighborhoods. These two fathers were aware of children in the community "growing up without a father role" and believed "males just don't be there." One father stated, "These African-American kids need to see more of a male presence."

Additionally, seven fathers stated they could see that their presence at school events was important to their children. The paternal statements regarding their children's emotional response to their father's attendance at school events were, "Ask my son, you could see his smiling face." Another father recounted his child's feelings when he attended Family Reading Night, "I'm here for him. He was so proud to have me listen to him read." One more father added that his school participation was the incentive for his child to stay engaged:

When you're involved it motivates your child. When your child sees you involved in things at the school, that'll make them feel, more effort . . . the child wants you to be involved just like they're involved, that shows them that you really, you know, that push them on their way.

The last father, who raised his child alone, felt his involvement would be more beneficial at the high school level where his daughter would have more responsibilities and require more of his time. Therefore, he had no statement related to this section.

Other fathers were involved because of the school (e.g., academic, behavior) benefits for their children. They recounted numerous telephone calls and conferences with their children's teachers. Also, these face-to-face meetings with their children's teachers increased paternal knowledge of classroom procedures (e.g., homework, discipline) and students' skills for academic performance. For example, one father articulated his partnership with the school when the focus was his child's homework:

I mean they [the school] really begin to feed him information that meets the challenges for his next level. But you know, at the same token it's not entirely up to school. It's just as important for us [wife and father] to participate in his education too. If they're doing division or fractions, we try to implement the next level for him, so that the time he makes it to the next level he will have some knowledge of what it is he is doing.

Another father summarized the importance of his paternal involvement best when he stated, "I want to do it [participate] because I think his education is important. I'm just going to be straight up with you. I think he will do better in school if he knows I'm involved."

Paternal benefits from school involvement. All ten fathers attended a variety of school activities because of the positive feelings these activities provided for them. School assemblies and student recognition programs to honor their children's achievement brought a deep sense of pride to fathers. Other fathers enjoyed the experiences of classroom events such as multicultural day, grandparents' day or chaperoning field trips. Fathers expressed

feelings of “I enjoy the experiences” and “I like being with my kid and having a group of kids to watch.”

One father proudly paraphrased his daughter’s teacher’s comments, “If I had my way, I’d give you a father’s award. You don’t see too many fathers like you do with your child.” These positive comments from staff reinforced their successful paternal involvement. Additional statements from teachers such as “I don’t need to see you, you’ve got the greatest kid I have in here,” or “I have nothing really to say to you, your son is great” bolstered their feelings of pride and confidence.

For the very few fathers that were involved in P.T.A. functions, their reasons behind their participation stemmed from: (a) special programs honoring children’s achievements, (b) family fun, entertainment and food, and (c) providing both written and verbal information fathers valued important to their children’s academic, social and emotional development.

School satisfaction brings paternal support. From the interviews, the fathers were more actively involved when they perceived the school was listening to their needs. Comments such as “great job”, “open door policy”, “very happy with the school”, “address the issues as they come along”, “thankful to staff”, “the school is honest with me”, “it gets a B+ for effort”, “I give it an A-”, “evidently, they must be preparing them pretty decently because they haven’t had any problems going from grammar school to high school and not being prepared” suggested some level of satisfaction with the school.

All of the fathers felt the school was effective but a deeper look into their responses indicated a variety of levels of satisfaction. Five fathers participated more in school activities because of their perceptions of the “tough” job educators have in their profession. One father stated, “Being an educator you have a lot of eyes to look through.” Other fathers were sensitive to class enrollment preferring a smaller class size. Speaking from past experiences, one father recalled his daughter’s classroom in the city, “She had like 30, that’s a whole lot for one teacher . . . you’ll always have two or three that’s gonna act and then nobody’s gonna learn.” Another father offered his sympathy to educators, “I know there’s a lot of pressure on teachers.”

Two fathers expressed appreciation of teacher effectiveness through their statements, “I think the teacher knows her craft and I can see and I can tell that she cares about the kids,” and “I come in and see the teachers’ involvement and teacher preparation in regards to trying to let the kids participate in what ever activities.” Some fathers believed the school’s teachers created a culture of support for paternal involvement. These fathers seemed grateful that teachers had their telephone numbers and called them when problems arose. Furthermore, it was evident from the following statements that fathers trusted their children’s teachers, “They haven’t given me a reason to doubt them as far as learning is concerned” and from a father of a preschool daughter, “I feel comfortable my daughter being there [school] without me being there.”

After school programs seemed to impress the majority of fathers. Extracurricular activities such as art, Power Hour (e.g., after school student assistance program), band,

sports and the computer lab were just a few of the activities fathers supported and attended. Also, student incentives such as student of the month, Tiger Tokens (e.g., tokens awarded for achievement and exchanged for prizes) and dress down days provided positive recognition to their children.

The majority of fathers were satisfied with the safety of the school. Six fathers were impressed with the school's safety procedures when they witnessed crossing guards, staff supervising playgrounds and a police officer monitoring school halls. According to these fathers, the above indicators were a sign that the school was doing a great job in this area.

A welcoming school climate also contributed to four fathers' comfort and satisfaction levels and encouraged them to be involved. Examples such as a hello from staff in the morning, the principal waving from the hallway or a teacher remembering their name increased their desire to be involved at the school level. Furthermore, they valued the diversity of the school population. One father referenced the school to a "hodge-podge of everybody" while another father stated, "It's multi-cultural, Spanish Americans, African America . . . Euro Americans or Caucasian." Still another father discussed his perception of the school's P.T.A., "The Blacks and the Whites came together as a whole and that's what we need, a lot of people don't realize that we need each other, there's no way around it, the only thing we got to do is to work together."

Also, the leadership of staff members was another aspect of the school's climate that fathers appreciated. Two fathers paid tribute to the school principal. One father was impressed by the principal whom he labeled as a father figure. He explained, "The way

Administrator [principal's name] carries [him] self and the concern Administrator have with the kids." He continued to explain why he was comfortable sitting in the outer office and waiting for the principal's morning announcements:

Sometimes it's good to just stop and sit down and listen. I never run in and run out. I'll listen to what the Administrator got to say and he makes a lot of sense and it motivates the child . . . And that's what I like about XXX [name] School, it's doing a great job.

Similarly, the Principal and the maintenance staff's presence at a variety of school events made an impression on another father who compared his school days to his grandchildren's school:

When we's coming up, every function you didn't see the principal. You see this man at every function. I think that's important. I mean, you know, that be the head person, he don't have to show up but he be there. And even the maintenance guy. I think they take their job seriously enough no matter what it is. They might not be there the whole time but they be there, even if there's nothing but a little band meeting. I know they're not getting paid for it but I think that's real good.

Previous research studies suggested that Title 1 parents are uninvolved (Griffith, 1998). The fathers in this study cited a variety of reasons why they were involved in their children's school. In addition to their children's feelings of excitement when they saw their dad at school and their own sense of pride, a father's level of involvement was determined by how effectively they perceived school personnel to fulfill their respective responsibilities.

The findings from this study reported fathers attended school activities when they perceived school personnel effectively fulfilling their respective responsibilities. The data indicated that because fathers supported their children's teachers they were then more

inclined to be involved in their children's school. They trusted their teachers, empathized with the daily classroom demands they experienced and expressed deep appreciation for their professional expertise. However, paternal trust may be one-sided as fathers are missing from school interactions. Schools still defer to mothers for a child's education. An important implication for practice may be to focus on teacher training identifying the reasons behind paternal support in home-school relationships.

Paternal challenges to school involvement. Several emerging themes identified challenges preventing fathers from attending and participating in school activities. Overall, the barriers that most often confronted fathers were the following: (a) school personnel, (b) school procedures, (c) personal finances and employment, and (d) P.T.A.

School personnel. For the majority of the fathers, not knowing school personnel's names presented a challenge to their involvement. Eight of the interviewed fathers stated they did not know the administrators by name (e.g., superintendent, principal, assistant principal). Comments such as "the tall Black guy", "the man that runs the meetings" or the "Black lady, the assistant principal" made it clear fathers knew of administrators' positions but not their names. This created awkwardness and distance when engaging in discussion with administrators. Another father noted the lack of friendliness by an administrator during school, "They don't seem like they are the type of people that you would come up and start a conversation with, like, hi, I'm [daughter's name] father or they're not talking friendly. They're formal, very formal." The majority of fathers cited the school not knowing them. The grandfather noted that when he picked up his preschool grandchild,

teachers did not take time to learn his name and instead, his presence was recognized as, “Grandpa’s here.” These basic gaps in communication contributed to the fathers’ reluctance to enter the school involvement process.

Another related challenge for fathers was the school support staff (e.g., office workers, receptionist). One father was upset by the fact that too many women worked in the school office. He believed men automatically shied away from the office and his solution was for the “school environment to become more masculine.” This belief was also supported by another father, who stated, “There is no-stand out reason now at [name of] School, why should I go over there, they got plenty of women over there. That’s what is representing the school.”

For other fathers, the lack of visibility of staff, especially the school principal, was a concern:

I’ve seen him once and the assistant principal once and they’re not really, well, you know, I’ve been up after school delivering things or coming up to pick my daughter up and I really don’t see them. Maybe their agendas are full.

Three fathers stated they knew of the School Superintendent after having been introduced to him at school events. One of the three fathers stated that after having personally met the Superintendent, he felt more comfortable seeking his assistance on a behavior matter with his child. He stated he was “very impressed how fast he [Superintendent] took action.”

Furthermore, eight fathers stated that after the interview they now had a person (e.g., interviewer) with a name that they could go to for school information. For example,

one father stated, “Now, I will know a friendly face with a name who can help me at school.” Furthermore, it was discovered that many of the fathers were uncomfortable asking support staff for assistance because these fathers lacked direction on where to go for specific information or who to ask when they had a concern. Unwillingly, many of the fathers spoke with the office workers; however, they stated they were uncomfortable. These fathers stated they did not know “these people”. According to them, it was “important to know the person behind the title.” Many of the fathers stated that after “meeting you [interviewer] and seeing you [interviewer] around school” they now felt comfortable asking for help.

School procedures. The majority of the fathers stated accessing school procedures (e.g., school safety, inappropriate student behavior, lack of English Language services, dismissal of preschool students) was a challenge to their involvement. Seven fathers identified classroom and building procedures (e.g., school safety, student discipline, student academic) as concerns and obstacles to their participation in their children’s schools. For example, a school board meeting for one father impacted his support and attendance at future meetings. This father explained that school board members and community residents could not agree on one school issue, “The fighting was so bad, I would not attend again.”

In addition to the fathers’ concerns over the lack of appropriate community behavior and conduct, several fathers questioned why teachers did not notify them when their children failed exams. Another father cited “teachers leaving school [at the end of the day] as fast as the kids” as a disturbing factor.

For the Hispanic father, whose wife did not speak English, his personal involvement was necessary for his children's education. He attended conferences, special education meetings, translated school information sent home and returned all school messages pertaining to his four children. He stated the school did not have information in Spanish and even though few staff spoke Spanish, he felt the continuous stress of having to take time off from his job to handle school business.

One father and a grandfather had a unique issue with their preschool children due to the different school dismissal times. Both fathers arrived at school at 1:30 p.m. to pick up their preschool children; yet, they had to be back at home by 2:30 p.m. for the school bus. The preschoolers' attendance schedule was from 11:30 to 1:30 and this half day schedule prevented one of the fathers from looking for permanent full-time work. The father stated:

We've found ourselves in a jam and that's one of the reasons I didn't look for permanent work this year because somebody had to be here at 1:30 and somebody had to be here at 2:30, finding a full time job was out of the question.

He furthered explained that teachers always requested meetings right after school and he was unable to accommodate them for numerous reasons. First, he stated he was without a car during the day. Second, different children's schedules prevented him meeting with classroom teachers. Last, he was unable to find a sitter for his younger daughter and commented that he did not want "her walking through the forest" with him if he returned to school for a conference. Although all teachers' concerns were handled through telephone conversations, this father believed the teachers perceived him as a non-involved father.

Finances and paternal employment. Personal finances and work schedules presented challenges for the majority of the fathers trying to be more involved in their children school activities. Two fathers stated they were unable to attend school events because of the short notice they received. These fathers received an automated telephone message on the day the event was being held; preventing them from getting release time from their job. Work schedules or childcare problems or in one father's case; church obligations, prevented four fathers from attending the majority of evening activities.

For two fathers, money for school activities was a problem. One father stated:

Money is an issue, that's for sure. Everybody wants money. Everybody goes to the field trips at the same time and they don't tell you in advance. They tell you at the last minute. Sometime I have to go out and borrow money for field trips or just so they can have money in their pockets, etc., or lunch. It's not easy.

P.T.A. concerns. Becoming a member of a totally female dominated organization presented a formidable challenge to the majority of the fathers. Seven of the fathers referenced the parent teacher organization as a women's group that "lacked leadership and management." One father stated, "They want you to be at every meeting, they want you to bring these ideas and everyone wants a title at their little meetings." According to another father, the President of the P.T.A. always called him at the last minute to purchase gifts for the staff and/or children. In addition, the demand to attend meetings on a short notice was a significant irritation; he did not mind the purchases as much as he despised the late notice.

One father admitted he was not P.T.A. material. When asked to explain the meaning behind a P.T. A. dad, he said, "A cookie maker, bake a cake." He also believed the school's P.T.A. was more for women. Laughingly, he stated. "It should be M.T.A., Mother-Teacher

Association and added, “I don’t see myself going in the direction of the P.T.A.” Another father suggested the parent organization needed specific activities and roles for fathers. He stated, “I think when they say parents, they should mean mothers and fathers. I think it is for everyone, the P.T.A. and families but only the wife or mother always deals with the school.” One father was honest when he admitted he did not know what the organization did but claimed the P.T.A. did not attract men to their meetings.

Inclusion is the process of being valued, respected and supported. It’s about focusing on the needs of every individual and ensuring the right conditions are in place for each person to achieve their full potential. In the case of the participants in this study, the above values were not reflected in the school organization which included the P.T.A. These fathers’ testimonials gave support to the fact that they wanted to be recognized and to have an “inside” connection that they could trust to give them accurate details about school information. Although their frequent appearances at school made their faces familiar to school personnel and provided opportunities for face-to-face communication with teachers, fathers still felt unwelcomed and home-school relations were not established.

The current literature supports parent volunteering, leadership roles in decision-making and two-way communication as indicators of an effective parent involvement program impacting student success. The findings of this study suggests parents, especially fathers are not part of the organization’s culture. Specifically, the data indicated that school leaders did not empower fathers to build relationships. Thus, my findings suggest a need

for staff training that promotes partnerships that will increase paternal involvement and participation schoolwide.

Summary. This section addressed research question two: How are fathers involved in their children's schools? All of the fathers participated in their children's school in a variety of ways. Their involvement consisted of a broad range of school activities (e.g., helping with homework, parent-teacher conferences, student recognition programs, field trips). Fathers were less involved with the school's parent-teacher organization and unaware of Title 1 mandates (e.g., school information, school meetings, home-school compacts).

Another type of practice that appeared to increase paternal involvement in schools was two primary school-based forms of communication: written and telephone. The majority of the fathers did not have a communication preference on how to receive information from the school.

From these research findings, all of the fathers were engaged in their children's school events. Fathers offered a variety of reasons why they participated in school activities (e.g., fathers and children benefit, level of school satisfaction). Despite the fact that fathers stated they were involved, fathers identified numerous challenges to their involvement. Paternal challenges were classified into four categories: (a) school personnel, (b) school procedure, (c) personal finances and employment, and (d) P.T.A. Although fathers gave different reasons for their involvement, they supported their children's education and

participated in school directed activities. This next section examines the responses from fathers on ways to increase paternal participation in schools.

Research Findings Related to Research Question Three: How do Fathers in Title 1 Schools Perceive Schools can Improve Their Involvement in Their Children's Education?

This section discusses the findings of research question three: How do fathers in Title 1 schools perceive schools can improve their involvement in their children's education? It will cover the following findings: (a) paternal suggestions of activities schools can provide to increase father involvement with their school, (b) the reasons why fathers are involved in school sponsored activities, (c) the reasons why some men may be uninvolved in their children's schools, and (d) the fathers' perceptions on whether schools are interested in the types of involvements fathers pursue in their children's education both at home and at school.

Increasing paternal involvement in schools. Based on suggestions of the ten fathers, this section identifies ways schools can improve paternal involvement. Fathers separated their ideas and suggestions into three types: (a) activities for fathers only that would increase their personal and parenting knowledge, (b) school sponsored activities that would include father and children participation, and (c) the social networking opportunities provided to fathers to discuss common paternal concerns.

Ways schools can involve fathers. More than half of the fathers suggested ways for schools to increase their involvement. Eight fathers cited specific activities (e.g.,

G.E.D. classes, computer instruction, parenting workshops, homework procedures) that schools could provide to enhance their participation and broaden their personal and parenting skills. For example, one father cited G.E.D. classes so that he and other fathers could complete their high school diplomas, “A class bettering myself . . . I didn’t finish high school. I’ve told myself that I was gonna go back to get a G.E.D. I never got around to it for many reasons.” Moving beyond personal needs, another father suggested parenting classes that would utilize educational movies and videos on parent behavior. As a father with older children, he stated:

I think classes dealing with their teenage children, talking about adolescents’ attitudes, father-son relationship, father-daughter relationship, you see what I’m talking about, a variety of ideas, you just gotta implement them. See, I’m not an educator, so, I don’t know what level, you know, they would think from.

Another father discussed the value of parenting information:

A workshop that would get the fathers together . . . let them decide, maybe some kind of films, maybe show films on what works [with parenting] and what doesn’t work. As a [show a film of a] child whose parents are involved and how the child turned out to be and this is one [film] whose parents didn’t care and this is how they [the child] turned out to be. That alone is enough of a lesson to learn. Sometimes movies, educational videos like that can be very helpful to parents. If you saw them, you’d see the difference between the two [parents] and make a choice. Then you visualize this is what happens if I’m involved, this is what happens if I’m not involved. Ok. Make a choice. It probably can help.

Two of the eight fathers identified computer instruction classes that they felt would be beneficial. They also stated they preferred classes on Internet security and where to find educational websites to assist their children with their school work.

One father inquired about a vocational curriculum. He wanted the school to integrate an awareness of the trades into the curriculum and how fathers could introduce these trade skills to students. He explained:

College ain't meant for everyone. Sometimes a trade is better. If we could get some classes from the school on dealing, on teaching them, every child is not going to be a Michael Jordan, so, let's learn how to work with them.

Another father suggested schools could have fathers instruct some of the classes. He offered to teach students to "learn CPR or first aid" if the school would permit him.

Five fathers expressed a particular interest in workshops related to homework. One father was interested in which "types of methods" he should use for helping his children with homework. He wanted to know the how much time his children should spend on class assignments. More importantly, he felt he needed to know whether or not parents should be involved and the type of resources that should be available for his children to do homework.

Three of the eight fathers provided valuable advice when they stated that schools had to be creative in their efforts to entice fathers to attend school sponsored activities. They believed schools should provide food or beverages if they are asking parents to attend school events. One father related:

Once you get them there, you feed them what you want to feed them. You gotta be flexible, if you want these people, you got to target them. You got to like bait your fish, put the worm on the hook and throw it right there, reel it in, but you have to have the right bait.

The remaining two fathers did not have specific suggestions for schools to increase paternal involvement. Instead, the fathers made non-specific statements, such as, "If they

had programs for fathers or any type of programs on parent involvement, I would like to see those programs, I would be involved in it.”

Social networking opportunities. As the fathers believed that their paternal involvement in schools would increase if opportunities existed for fathers to attend all “dad things” so they could bond and socialize with other fathers. Many fathers related experiences their respective churches provided for them to bond and socialize.

One father commented, “I would have them [schools] try to find an activity that’s steered typically, that is male oriented.” These fathers were searching for “guy” activities. They expressed an interest to meet other fathers and discuss “men issues” such as work and sports. Other fathers’ comments were, “If I can get around other fathers” and “hang tight with fathers” or “try some stuff with fathers and their boys [that] would be nice, especially at the school.” One father’s response seemed to represent the majority of the dads interviewed:

Brothers [men] are not getting together. Women meet once a month and if you had a birthday party or whatever, they were all at your house. If you had a bridal shower, they were there. The guys just didn’t show . . . Getting men to come together for any reason is big... Uh fathers have boys and they see we’re sticking together and working together, outside of just wanting to hang out and be silly. It’s the bond that most guys don’t have. We’ll shoot pool, go play basketball but outside of that, what do we do? We don’t come together for nothing... I think at school I would be more apt to be more involved during the school year and like weekends or during the summer, yet, they [school] got little activities [for women] and I’m not pushing the women to the side, just something for dads, or men to come together, you hang out, light the grills. I don’t mind throwing out the football or do something and then get involved and let our boys see how, wow, that’s cool.

Not only does this statement express the needs of the fathers to be involved for their own sakes but also for how their engagement might embrace both the parent and the child in activities that would strengthen both relationships.

Ways schools can involve both fathers and children in school activities. All ten fathers suggested activities they would participate in if attended with their children. Four fathers suggested father-daughter dances. They previously attended this type of event at church or a park district and desired the school to provide a similar activity. One father stated, “We went to many dances, we got dressed up and the food was great, they even had photographers and everything was nice.” Another father contributed similar ideas, “Bring your dad to school” and “let fathers read to the children’s classes.”

Three fathers felt school activities involving sports were reasons for more fathers and children to be involved together. One father also suggested, “cookouts” or other “small scale gatherings” where fathers could talk with each other and engage in sports with their children. One father proposed school sponsored field trips that are “geared to a father-son type of deal . . . a baseball game, they could get group rates.”

The remaining fathers did not identify a particular school sponsored activity but stated they would attend more school events if the activities revolved around their children. For example, one father wanted to be included in student recognition events and school assemblies. He reflected on the numerous times the school honored children but did not always invite parents to attend. Furthermore, the school did not send home notices which did not give this father ample notification of the events so he could make arrangements to

attend. The other two fathers agreed that the school did not provide a variety of extracurricular activities. Additionally, these fathers stated they would attend school sponsored events if the activity allowed them to “enjoy” or “bond” with their children. This group of fathers could not suggest any particular activities that schools could utilize to support this bonding.

Reasons why fathers are in involved. Fathers were asked the question: Are there any specific reasons why you are involved in your school? The fathers responded with a variety of school sponsored events. Many of these school activities have been previously discussed in this paper. When asked to explore their reasons for being involved their responses fell into three broad categories of reasons why fathers should be involved more.

First, recent public awareness campaigns have emphasized the need for fathers to be involved in their children’s lives. Four of the fathers believed the media played a role in raising their awareness levels regarding the significance of paternal engagement at home and in school. One father remarked, “I think everybody is preaching the importance of having a father in a child’s live more so the last couple of years.” Another father added, “The father’s responsibility is becoming more, has been brought into the light more.” He continued, “There has been more focus on the importance of fathers in kid’s lives and the importance of having a father.”

Television and politicians have also communicated the significance of fathers’ roles in their children’s lives. One father commented, “You know, television, you see it, politicians are talking that way and fathers’ rights, you could see the momentum coming

but what's it going to take to get there, I don't know." There were a few fathers who perceived that the role of the father has not yet fully emerged. "Times have changed but we [fathers] kind of stayed back in the cave man days." On the other hand, another father acknowledged that the new roles of the father are beginning to be shaped:

The common belief would be involving the mother or assuming the mother is going to take care of the school stuff. But I think we're breaking out of that. I think in these last years, fathers, the focus of fathers in their kid's lives is growing. It is important to have a dad in their life.

Also, one father pointed out that as the roles of fathers are developing and schools are relinquishing more responsibilities to the parents, fathers have to step up to greater responsibilities and accountability:

Education is based on the school as well as the house. I mean you can't push everything on the school and expect the school to, well, maybe 40 years ago, the schools were the educators and so many parents were illiterate. But now the schools not wanting full responsibility of educating kids, so, I suggest that's much more important to the parents to be active participants in their kid's education.

Second, is the fact that every child needs a father. Four fathers referred to the media message that children need their fathers and fathers need their children. For these dads, they strongly believed that this message was their reason for attending and being involved in school sponsored events. Four fathers pulled from their past experiences with their churches examples of "dad-kid" activities (e.g., field trips, speakers, holiday events) that they believed were valuable bonding and learning activities. One father questioned why schools couldn't structure similar types of activities that would continue to strengthen those bonds for all fathers. One father reported that his church was a place where he saw single fathers bring their children and participate in their lives. He further noted, "There's a lot of

single fathers that bring their kids to church. These dads can be with their kids and have fun and teach them things.”

In addition, the fathers appreciated the value of children needing their dads especially when the schools provided opportunities for bonding activities. For example, one father explained, “The main thing is just to keep a relationship with your child, they wanna know their father.” Another father shared, “I don’t care who their mother is or who their mother be with, they always wanna know who their dad is.” Still another father added, “Kids want to be with their daddies and if you leave a good impression with your child in their upcoming [upbringing], to do what you’re suppose to as a father, they [children] be better for everyone.

The third and final reason is the importance of student success. Although the fathers, at some level, knew their participation in school activities was critical to their children’s academic success, they could not identify specific events or activities that would contribute to their children’s academic success. They were confident that the schools would know what to provide.

Five fathers admitted their reasons for involvement stemmed from their belief that it was their job to prepare their children for success in school and more importantly in life. They even recognized the significance of finding the time to spend with their children now or “it would be too late” to develop consistent involvement commitments. One father commented that the issue of time as a reason for being or not being involved. He admitted his limited time was a reason that restricted his involvement. Extended family obligations

also fell into this same category. This father stated that if his child was successful in school, than his reasons for involvement did not need to be extensive and that was enough for him.

He elaborated:

He brings home wonderful grades and as long as he's doing well, why mess up something that's not broken, in my opinion. It goes back to he's my child and he's doing great. If you are so concerned about your child then maybe you should be involved more. It might be a selfish reason but maybe I'm selfish with him.

The fathers also identified that early involvement in their child's academic life was a link to student success. As the child's beginning educators, one father mentioned, "You are the first teachers of your child. I know some people do not understand that. There is a need. If they're [the fathers] not fulfilling that need, someone has to let that happen through some kind of education."

As fathers shared their many reasons why they believed in the importance of paternal involvement, they also urged the schools to provide activities and information that could improve and sustain their involvement as well as draw in those fathers that feel alienated from the school process. Their reasons for explaining this gap are insightful and instructive.

Paternal perceptions of why men are uninvolved. All of the fathers shared their perceptions of why they believed fathers might be uninvolved in school activities. First, fathers recognized that more mothers attended school events than fathers. As one father claimed, "I know a lot of moms involved. I don't know how many fathers are involved." Another father acknowledged two school events where he was one of the few fathers present:

Every time school let's out, they have a picnic and I was the only dad there. It's like it was all women. I said, I don't have no problem with women. I'm try[ing] to figure out where's are all the dads, you know, you got all these kids, some [there has to be some] daddies, kinda weird, wow (laughter), I was only, basically every time they have something I'm be the only dad. They had a carnival. I'd be the only dad out there with the carnival.

Next, fathers took into consideration that their counterparts and their home situations were not alike and for these reasons some fathers might not be as involved. Six fathers inferred school participation may not be pursued by every father. One father contributed to that insight, "It's hard to judge, you know, by seeing that the father is not here." Another father supported this line of thinking, "It starts with the home for one thing, you don't know the background of that person, you know, home situation, but basically, nobody's situation is the same."

Another father did not share the same background and context which would explain why he perceived some fathers are uninvolved:

It's just the situation like different strokes for different folks. Someone of them could have money problems that way. What I say, I'm not here to judge nobody like that. You have to call it for what it is, you know, it's a variety of things, lack of money, depression, anything, people go through changes in life . . . There's just a lot of lazy dads, you gotta a lot of dads that don't want to do something . . . because I know.

Fathers seemed very honest in their answers, trying not to judge their peers. Other reasons behind their perceptions for a lack of paternal involvement ranged from divorce, paternal illiteracy, language barriers and personal attitudes. Examples are provided below:

What with 50% divorce rate and stuff like that, males just don't be there.

It's sad but some students don't want their parents involved in the school. They're ashamed of their parents but you have to look at that some parents are drug users,

gang bangers . . . They have to deal with them at home but especially their friends don't need to know what kind of parents they have.

It's possible that some people you know may be lacking. Many parents may not know how to do the schoolwork their children bring home. So, I mean, yes, it's possible not to have the involvement.

I'm pretty sure there are parents out there that have language barriers that as a community . . . the bilingual literature might help. A translator would help.

Furthermore, the fathers reported grandparents were filling in for their sons. Three fathers identified the presence of many grandparents at school. One father reported, "When I drop my kid off at school I see lots of grandparents walking their kids to school."

Another father said, "Just as I've always seen grandmas doing their [parents] job and grandpas . . . These fathers believed grandparents attended schools functions because at their age, retirement brought them the available time to attend school events. Another father felt grandparents assisted fathers who were busy, "It's a shortage of time for dads." According to three fathers, schools may not realize a father's work and family responsibilities, hardly leaving time for them to attend school sponsored activities.

Additionally, fathers perceived that men left the parenting role to women. Five out of the ten fathers agreed that mothers were perceived by numerous people as the more involved parent. These fathers concluded that some men still believed the role of the father as the financial provider and the mother as the caregiver/homemaker. One father explained:

I mean do they [fathers] feel comfortable with coming into the school environment? That is the question. It may be that some man may be male chauvinistic, maybe [they] feel that's what the woman is suppose to do. A woman is suppose to nurture the kids, go to the school and make sure that's every things ok while he works and tries to take care of the house. Maybe that's what some men think.

Another father related his personal experience citing, “In my younger days, I thought cutting the grass, making sure I got home and paying the bills was my level of responsibility and once I was done with that I was done.” He now realized that engaging in school activities was just as much his responsibility as his ex-wife’s. One father perceived younger fathers as hard workers and tired at the end of the day. In his eyes, many men were unable to attend school events or stay long at school activities after working all day. This father continued, “Men are going to stay away from P.T.A. and other school events.” He added by saying that men in their “30 or 40s” will stay away.

Fathers also believed that teachers themselves supported the belief that it was a mother’s place to be involved. For example, one father believed teachers expected a mother’s involvement because of the abundance of moms present at school and school events. He concluded, “A lot of teachers in the school probably assume a woman, you know, they’re geared to let the moms be there.” Another father agreed, “A lot of teachers in the school probably let the moms do stuff.”

Furthermore, three dads felt teachers were partly to blame by not inviting fathers specifically or more insightfully encouraging children to invite their fathers to school sponsored activities. According to one father, “Men are not going to turn down their children.” Another father added, “If you emphasize to the children to try and get their fathers to come, you might get more male adults than kind of get the mothers to ask them to come.” One father stressed:

Have the teachers and the staff emphasize to the children not just mama because [I] see a lot of times they run right to mama and don’t, ok, bring it to daddy. If they

[teachers] can get their fathers and grandfathers involved by kids, you know, that'll go a long way to a guy wanting to come not your wife or your mate asking you to come rather your child or grandchild.

Another father wanted to feel welcomed when he was the only male sitting in his child's classroom. In his words, "Compliment, them [men], welcome them in, make them feel welcome!" An invitation to school events seemed important to fathers. One father stated, "Sometimes people like to be involved, people like invitations . . . but it's like this, if they [teachers] put it out there and they say I'm gonna go see that this is about right here, that's how you get more men involved. Another father agreed when he added, "But you got to meet the people first. You have to physically talk to them."

One father offered one last reason why men may not be involved. He realized funding is required to establish programs and/or policies to involve fathers and sustain a paternal involvement program. He stated:

Economics, money, it takes money, ok, a lot of schools and school districts are not going to spend no money to advertise for these people to come in and stuff like that. We just do what we've been doing. That's age old thinking, this is a new day, a new time, you gotta try a new technique.

One last, but very important finding under this section, explores the schools' blindness to what these fathers are accomplishing with their children both in and outside of school. Although they offered a myriad of ways for schools to involve fathers, they are unsure if their involvement efforts would be recognized or appreciated by schools. For example, one father is uncertain if the school cares about what he has done with his child:

I don't know if they even know my participation in programs. I don't come in and say this is what I'm doing with my child. So, I hope that they would appreciate he's a respectful, he's a good child, he participates in all academics, he's succeeding. So,

I would hope they appreciate that part of it ... If I was telling them that I was educating my child at home [and] if they would do anything differently here at the school or would they continue to teach the same curriculum even though my son would be beyond that particular course of studies. I don't know what impact it would have, if any at all.

Another father agreed with that line of thinking:

Probably. I have no idea even if the school knows what I do with my son. He and I do a lot of stuff together and I think he tells them [teachers] what we do, though I'm not sure. As far as my son who has a father who has impacted [his son's life] and whether it can impact the school, I don't know.

Conversely, another father perceived the school lacked an interest in his involvement, "I don't think so. No, I don't think so. I would say they don't know. They probably assume both parents are working. I'm sure they don't know about my personal life." The last remark comes from a father who perceived a gap in the home-school partnership as he tried to increase his efforts to be involved in his children's education.

The school being involved in our lives is I guess is not as important as us being involved in theirs. So I can see for them to find out about every family and what they did probably constitute[s] a lot of hard work and extra effort and more money.

Summary. In this section, fathers offered suggestions for improving paternal involvement. They strongly spoke out on the types of involvement opportunities they preferred to participate in at school. Fathers desired to socialize with other men. Fathers felt isolated when they attended school sponsored events as the mothers represented the majority of parents. Paternal responses suggested the interests of fathers need to be considered when planning parent involvement activities. Just as schools offer single gender classes for their students, perhaps our educational institutions need to alternate their involvement practices between father only activities and activities that are for mothers and

fathers. The literature is unclear at the moment on the differences between mothers and fathers with regard to parent involvement practices in home-school partnerships. These findings offer a starting point for staff discussions on ways to increase paternal participation at school.

Findings Related to Race, Gender and Organizational Culture

In this study, the racial and ethnic backgrounds varied among the fathers. Two fathers identified themselves as Hispanic, seven fathers stated they were African-American and one father identified himself as White. In my literature review, I critiqued other scholarship for not including diversity in discussions related to paternal involvement. My research findings suggested that many challenges that fathers encountered were because of factors related to race, gender and organizational culture.

This first part of this section examines the racial makeup of the fathers as they were involved in educational activities outside of school. The second part of this section explores the impact of the organizational culture of a Title 1 school on paternal involvement.

Diverse challenges to parent involvement activities. The findings of this study indicated that African-American fathers and the White father participated in more home-based educational activities than the Hispanic fathers. The Hispanic fathers cited several challenges that kept them from participating in these educational and non-academic activities.

It should be noted that the data collected on the types of involvement practices (e.g., attending extracurricular activities, chaperoning field trips, attending parent-teacher

conferences) fathers attended and supported at school did not indicate challenges due to racial makeup. While this may be the case, it is also possible that this finding was due to nature of my questioning or the relatively small number of participants. If I had asked different questions or posed questions in a different manner, respondents may have provided different information.

Hispanic fathers participate in fewer learning activities. All ten of the fathers indicated they were engaged in educational activities to improve their children's achievement. However, the findings suggested that Hispanic fathers were less engaged than their counterparts; White and African-American fathers. The latter group of fathers frequently took their children to the library, whereas transportation and work obligations prevented Hispanic fathers from engaging in this activity. They also cited reading to their children; however, the long hours at work prohibited a Hispanic father from participating in this educational practice.

The findings also found more African-American fathers attended museums, plays and enjoyed vacations with their children. The Hispanic fathers were unable to participate in the above activities due to entrance fees, work obligations and/or lack of transportation. One activity that did not involve money or transportation was the time spent with family members.

Family time was an activity fathers unanimously participated in with their families. This activity included eating and cooking with their children, playing games or working on arts and craft projects. This participation was more positive among the African-American

fathers than the White father and negative for one Hispanic father. This father stated that the long hours on his job allowed him time to engage in only one type of family activity; a computer game called Guitar Hero that he played with his children. It is in such events that fathers would find the opportunity to model and discuss their respective set of values.

More African-Americans involved in faith-based activities. The fathers in this study identified a distinct set of values and philosophy. Although all ten fathers did not display a difference in their educational or social set of values based on race, a pattern was found with respect to their involvement in religious activities. The majority of African-American fathers were more inclined to attend their churches with their children and engage in church related activities. One African-American father identified he was religious but he was not affiliated with a church. The other three fathers (e.g., Hispanic, White) reported they did not attend church on a regular basis or practice a religion.

The results of this study indicate that the majority of fathers are involved in church related activities. Participation in church related activities has provided many of these fathers with experiences (e.g. communication, volunteering, decision-making, collaboration with the community) in the components of home-school partnership. The purpose of this study was to investigate the types of paternal involvement practices. Churches are already enticing fathers to be involved as men and as fathers with their children. These religious institutions are also building on paternal leadership roles within their respective communities. Religious organizations are benefitting from their paternal members' personal and community involvement.

Schools are also in the position to promote parent involvement initiatives; yet, they have not demonstrated this practice. School leaders need to examine the types of involvement practices churches use in their communities. It might benefit schools to have discussions on how fathers might transfer the skills they employ in their various community roles to assist their schools in improving the education of children. Furthermore, school leaders might open the channels of communication with community and religious leaders. These leaders can be important allies and sources of information in reaching fathers that they might not otherwise be able to reach.

The impact of organizational culture on paternal involvement. The organizational culture of this school district influenced paternal involvement. Although the fathers were involved in outside and inside activities, the top-down structure along with the one-way communication process influenced the involvement of these fathers. From an analysis of their responses, it was implied that fathers perceived the school as a self-contained system of social control which for the most part kept them at a distance.

Findings from my study identified that more fathers did not know the administrators' names and perceived the administrators did not know their names. Two fathers knew the principal's name because of their children's misbehavior and the principal calling home with the behavior report. In a way, this places all of the fathers at a great disadvantage because two-way communication does not occur when problems arise.

In this research study, I discovered that the schools did not readily support fathers as one of the primary educators of their children. Activities to support fathers in this

primary role were not apparent such as parent education classes and workshops. This educational system created a gap between the fathers and the school community.

Part of this gap was created by a lack of appreciation for what the fathers were doing for their children by school personnel. The majority of the fathers felt that the school did not recognize all that they had done for their children whether the activities were inside or outside of the school. Two fathers on the other hand, were hesitant to verbalize their needs and concerns because their initial attempts to work with the system concerns were ignored (e.g., kindergartener lost carnival money, homework tutoring for IEP student). Perhaps the Hispanic stay-at-home father said it best, “The school being involved in our lives is, I guess, is not as important as us being involved in theirs.” For one remaining father, his experience was at the opposite end. Because of his position in the police department he knew how to work the system and how to be heard.

Fathers perceive organization as female dominated. Part of the organizational culture that the fathers cited as troublesome was the domination of the school culture by females as per the example of the local P.T.A. Their comments regarding their recruitment and participation in the P.T.A. were almost of a token nature utilizing their skills in a minimal way such as to purchase Easter baskets and other fundraising items. From these fathers’ views, this organization was superficial with fundraising as this was the primary discussion point that occupied their meeting times.

The majority of the fathers expected more goal directed meetings and distinct activities for men but instead, found themselves the lone male in a room full of women. On

the other hand, one father paid his P.T.A. dues but without a car in the evening and no one to watch his younger children, this father rarely attended these parent meetings. For another father, work commitments prevented him from attending these school related evening functions. In addition to a culture that was top-down and female directed, one father identified the difficulty of his participation because home-school communications were not multi-lingual.

Language barriers prevent one family from home-school partnerships. For one Hispanic father, he found his cultural background presented many problems for his wife and family. This father stated he spoke English but was indirectly faced with numerous challenges because his wife did not speak the English language. He identified the stress of continuously handling school business from his job. He also stated he was forced to take valuable time from work to attend IEP meetings or teacher directed meetings as a language interpreter was not available for these meetings. Several times he inquired if the school offered language classes for his Spanish speaking wife and neighbors and he received no answer from the school. According to this father, his wife did not feel as if she belonged to the English speaking school community.

Home-school communication for this father was not only one-way but for his wife and neighbors, communication was a barrier to their school involvement. School information sent home was not translated into their native language. The school's homework hot line and other forms of verbal communication were not multi-lingual and

the school did not provide a home-school coordinator or liaison to assist with language needs. The school did not seem to integrate these parents' concerns into concrete solutions.

Fathers and mothers are a child's only continuous source of guidance throughout their primary and high school years and they search for a broader understanding of child development. Fathers in this study searched for answers to assist their children's success in school. They requested information on homework, computer knowledge and grade level curriculum information. Instead, these fathers found it extremely difficult to navigate their school environment for answers. It appears the culture of the school and the P.T.A. take many steps (e.g., top-down management, female authority, unwelcoming environment, lack of respect to non-speaking families) to bar fathers from becoming involved in their own children's education.

Once again, the question is asked if the environment is school-directed or father-directed. My findings suggest there is a school focus but not a father focus. Schools initiate the activities and dominate the relationships. This study uncovered an important objective for school leaders and educators to understand; that fathers want their support and assistance in order to impact their children's school achievement and overall development.

Summary. The findings from research question one inquired how fathers were involved in their children's education. These findings indicated that all fathers participated in a variety of educational and non-academic activities. The findings also indicated that African-American fathers and the White father participated in more of these activities than the Hispanic fathers.

Research question two which asked fathers how they were involved in activities at their school indentified that all of the fathers attended and supported school related activities. There was no evidence that the racial make-up of the group indicated any variations.

The final research question asked fathers for their suggestions for increasing paternal participation at the school. My findings indicated that the Hispanic fathers were not a part of the school culture and did not have any suggestion on how to involve any other Hispanic fathers. The remaining fathers suggested activities that would strengthen a partnership with other fathers and identify activities dads might enjoy with their children. Chapter 5 will discuss and interpret the findings of each of the three research questions.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Recommendations

Introduction

Chapter 4 reported numerous important findings for understanding paternal involvement in Title 1 schools. This final section reviews the purpose of this study followed by the research questions and a conclusion. Further discussion and interpretation of the findings in Chapter 4 will be presented. Specifically, I will focus on four broad themes: (a) differentiating the needs between fathers and mothers, (b) fathers' perspectives on home-school involvement practices, (c) fathers' recommendations on encouraging fathers to participate at school, and (d) successful home-school relationships require two-way communication. The last section of this chapter offers my recommendations for three areas: practice, research and theory.

Purpose of the Study

In an attempt to build on the existing literature, this qualitative study examined the various types of involvement practices that fathers in a Title I school pursued in their children's education both at home and at school. Furthermore, this study identified specific factors that influenced and/or challenged their ability to participate in their children's education. This study also revealed suggestions and recommendations from fathers on ways to improve home-school partnerships at Title I schools.

Research Questions

Three research questions guided and addressed this study's purpose in determining the impact of paternal involvement in their children's education.

1. How are fathers in Title 1 schools involved in their children's education?
2. How are fathers in Title 1 schools involved in their children's schools?
3. How do fathers in Title 1 schools perceive schools can improve their involvement in their children's education?

Discussion

Educational institutions are in the business to improve student achievement. Through home-school partnerships, school leaders connect parents to support and improve student success. The literature cites the traditional belief that mothers have the overriding responsibility for their children's education. What constitutes the reasons why this belief still exists is unknown in light of the changes of paternal roles in the last twenty years. But interviews with fathers on parent involvement practices suggested there are differences between men and women's' home-school relations and more studies should be conducted to explore the nuances of these relationships.

From a fathers' perspective, my study adds to the knowledge base on parent involvement research. Existing studies that have examined parent involvement have offered only one perspective; the mother (Lamb, 1997; Marsiglio, 1995; Parke, 1995). In contrast, this study offers direct evidence from fathers on ways the school system meets the needs of mothers and not fathers. For example, several fathers felt classroom invitations were meant for the mothers and not fathers. They desired schools to extend invitations to them as

parents and not just the mothers. Furthermore, fathers believed teachers could be more insightful encouraging children to invite their fathers to attend school sponsored activities.

My data indicated that fathers had the same perspectives and feelings regarding P.T.A. experiences. The fathers reported that meetings were primarily led by females and were conducted unlike that of other business type meetings. These fathers identified experiences where the mothers with the best of intentions reported the fathers' views and interests for them. Furthermore, fathers believed the organization's agendas did not accommodate specific activities and roles for them. These findings support a standard school way of thinking that (a) mothers are the principal partners in school buildings, (b) they are responsible for maintaining connections between the home and the school (Fagan & Barnett, 2003; Marsiglio, 1995; Parke, 1995) and (c) schools accommodate the needs of mothers over fathers. Regardless of this standard school way of thinking, these findings revealed that fathers are involved in spite of the schools' focus on mothers.

This study revealed that fathers are engaged and they want to be more involved, indicating a shift in the traditional partnership endorsement and roles of fathers. Furthermore, this study confirms research findings that fathers have different perspectives on parent education (Lamb, 1997; Marsiglio, 1995; Parke, 1995; Pleck, 1997). For example, I did not initially get an accurate picture of one father's perspective because someone else, his wife, answered the pre-interview question on paternal involvement for him.

Prior to the interviews, fathers were asked to rate their level of involvement and return their responses by mail. These responses provided the researcher with an overview of how fathers perceived their involvement in their children's education. A single response struck me as a strong example of how parents' perspectives needs are differentiated. This one father rated himself a four and when I showed him his response, he leaned over and looked at the form in disbelief. He replied, "I didn't circle that, my wife did!" "I would have given myself a much higher number." This indicates a possible need for researchers and educators to actively recruit the fathers' perspective because here is an example of the difference of one spouse's perspective over another. Does this mother view that she is the major player in formally educating her children? What types of involvement practices does she feel her husband participates in to support their children's education? Researchers would benefit from an awareness of paternal needs by listening to fathers' suggestions on involvement practices and strategies to increase their participation in home-school relations.

Researchers and educators might seek out additional fathers' perspectives in order to get a true picture. When schools separate the mothers and fathers' responses to surveys, educators would receive a truer starting point for future home-school partnerships that would be more inclusive to fathers and more beneficial to children. Methodologically, researchers must also move beyond surveying mothers' behaviors and perspectives to in-depth studies of fathers' roles within the context of home-school relations.

Fathers' perspectives of home and school activities. The literature firmly conveys there is an empirical gap on the educational involvement practices of fathers (Green, 2003; USDE, 1998). This study, however, provided a different insight into what ten fathers perceived as meaningful involvement which runs contrary to Lamb and other researchers that state paternal involvement and support from both home and school were missing (Lamb, 1997; Marsiglio, 1995; Parke, 1995; Pleck, 1997).

Paternal involvement with home learning activities. My findings added to previous research identifying the types of involvement practices fathers are engaged in at home. This data indicates that fathers visited the library, shared children's reading preferences, attended church with their children, visited museums and played at the park as valuable ways of developing their children's academic and non-academic knowledge. It was evident through their responses that these fathers across all racial groups were instinctively assessing the needs of their children to find specific activities to engage them and improve their social, emotional and cognitive growth.

This is likely due to the fact that all ten fathers were actively involved in their children's education as far back as they could remember. In light of the popular view that parents of Title 1 schools are uninvolved in home learning activities (Griffin, 1998), such activities as going to the library or playing at the park helped the children of these ten fathers with their formal education.

To date, fathers have not been asked how they can help improve student achievement or how they utilize home and school resources to bridge their children's

home-school learning. Researchers have not begun to systematically determine the fathers' "funds of knowledge" as it relates to the involvement in their children's education.

However; the findings suggest that these ten fathers have a wealth of experiences related to educating their children at home. Furthermore, these fathers are designing their own types of involvement practices and activities outside of the school. School leaders might benefit from understanding home learning practices and finding ways to build upon those practices in the classroom.

Fathers are in attendance at school activities. Historically, schools did not seem interested in recruiting paternal input because the mother's involvement was the commonly accepted measurement for researchers to evaluate parent involvement in the schools (Fagan & Barnett, 2003 Marsiglio, 1995; Parke, 1995). The first researcher to examine paternal involvement at school was conducted by Nord (1997) using attendance as a gauge. Although my study was of a smaller scale, my research findings were different than Nord's in several ways.

First, Nord (1997) used attendance as a critical factor to determining involvement. Marital status was the dividing line. He maintained that the fathers' involvement varied depending upon their marital status such as fewer married fathers attended general activities such as concerts and school plays than unmarried fathers. All of the fathers in my study played an active role in supporting their children's achievement despite their marital status. Separated and divorced fathers attended just as many activities as the married

fathers. In fact, my findings supplemented Nord's research indicating that these fathers even attended parent-teacher conferences.

These fathers attended and supported a variety of school activities to be involved in their children's education. They were improving their children's achievement and student outcomes without the direct benefit of any guidance or collaboration from the school. These ten fathers demonstrated that they were the first teachers for their children, and therefore had a strong influence on their learning. If the conviction is those students will learn more and be more successful in their careers when fathers play an active role in their educational life, then school administrators might include looking deeper into the dynamics of the types of meetings fathers attended.

Also, the research of the 90's indicated that it was parents who came from low socio-economic status that were less involved in their children's education (Calabrese, 1990; Griffith, 1998; Williams and Chavkin, 1989). My findings revealed there was not a lack of parent involvement in school activities, especially from fathers whose children attended Title 1 schools. In fact, all of the fathers were connected with their children's school but in different ways. Fathers with older children showed up at extra curricular activities such as band, track or cheerleading while fathers of younger children attended school activities such as family reading nights and classroom events (e.g., multi-cultural day).

Nord's quantitative research has initiated a closer look into the quantity of paternal involvement. My qualitative research has built upon the types of paternal involvement

practices fathers participated in at school. Both studies have led to viewing fathers in a new light. This is a beginning step to helping school leaders identify educational practices that encourage paternal trust and involvement in the process of schooling.

Fathers' recommendations present challenges. The fathers in this study were invited to suggest ideas and activities that would deepen future paternal involvement partnerships. They desired more activities that are school related and to increase their children's educational outcomes, however, they did not know what to ask for and deferred to the expertise of the school administrators and educators.

Paternal recommendations for encouraging school participation. As to be expected with suggestions comes inherent challenges and questions that need to be respected and addressed in a collaborative manner, engaging both the school and the home. When I probed my fathers to provide specific information and/or ideas on how to involve fathers at school, they responded with global statements such as "I'm really not sure," "leave it up to the school" or "the teacher is the expert".

These statements indicated that the fathers know there are important educational objectives to accomplish in their children's education but they do not have specific suggestions for school involvement because for many years fathers have been on the fringes of involvement in the schools. My findings agree with other researchers' studies on paternal involvement that conclude that minimal participation by fathers was attributed to a) a lack of knowledge of educational laws and b) may not know how to involve themselves in the home-school partnerships (Lareau, 1987; USDHHS, 2000). My data also

pointed to a need for the dissemination of home-school involvement practices so fathers could become an integrated part of the school system.

Fathers suggest ways to increase their involvement. Previous research studies indicated there is an empirical gap on the specific types of school learning activities that would promote and maintain partnerships between fathers and schools (Green, 2003; Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb, 2000; Nord et al., 1997; USDE, 1998). The fathers sampled in my study offered numerous suggestions regarding the types of school learning activities they have experienced outside of school and school sponsored events they would like to attend in the future. First, these fathers suggested activities that would increase their personal and parenting knowledge (e.g., parenting workshops, computer instruction). Second, fathers desired social networking opportunities to discuss common paternal concerns. Last, fathers recommended school sponsored activities such as father-daughter dances or sports related field trips that would include father and children participation.

Fathers as a group seemed to enjoy their volunteer experiences from classroom field trips and suggested more opportunities for them to chaperone. Although long working hours, the pressure of staying employed and other work related responsibilities can exclude some parents from volunteering during the school day (Families & Work Institute, 1994; Pruett, 2000; Sylvester, & Reich, 2002; USDHHS, 2000); this was not the case for these fathers who chaperoned classroom field trips. The research findings discovered that these fathers found time to volunteer to chaperone these classroom field trips. This finding is significant, in that it identifies a highly attended school sponsored activity. Schools might

benefit from examining paternal attendance on classroom field trips and build upon their experiences to attract more fathers.

Contrary to the literature that parents of Title 1 schools are uninvolved (Griffith, 1998), the results of this study show that fathers demonstrated high levels of home and school involvement. The issues surrounding parent involvement as it applies to fathers and student achievement are particularly significant in the context of current federal legislation that mandates “capacity building” partnerships (USDE, 2001b). Although some schools are not including fathers in Title 1 meetings and other home-school practices, fathers have clear suggestions on how schools can increase their participation. Schools could benefit from these fathers’ perspectives and embrace and develop their suggestions into effective home-school practices that might further increase paternal involvement.

Title 1 home-school relationships lack paternal two-way communication.

Over forty-five years, federal legislation has recognized and emphasized the presence and contributions of parents in the home-school partnership, especially low socio-economic parents. Yet, my findings discovered that these ten fathers, from a Title 1 school have not been adequately engaged as partners in home-school relationships.

The importance of two-way communication. The fathers expected two-way communication as an important means for them to be involved with their children’s education. However, for these fathers, descriptions of the school’s communications indicated a one-way top-down communication system. This partnership is unbalanced as

the balance of power resides solely with the Title 1 school personnel and fathers are not invited nor is their input requested.

The literature points to the fact that when parents and schools communicate effectively, positive relationships develop, problems are more easily solved, volunteering is promoted and student learning and achievement increases parent involvement (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002); however, these fathers did not experience these benchmarks.

My findings corroborate the research that communication to parents still remains extremely varied and erratic (USDE, 2002), inefficient and ineffective (Public Education Network, 2007), and hinders the parents' ability to exercise their rights to be involved (Appleseed Foundation, 2005). This was the case for the separated father in my study who picked up all of the school information from his ex-wife, copied the materials and returned the originals back to her because it was the school's practice not to provide copies for non-custodial fathers. Although those were important pieces of information, the material only went from school-to-home leaving no room for the school and the home to connect or ask questions to improve the home-school partnership.

No Child Left Behind (2001) includes strong requirements to communicate with parents about their students' achievement and their school success. Yet, all ten fathers were left on their own to interpret, their children's ISAT (e.g., Illinois Standardized Achievement Test) scores and whether their school made AYP (e.g., adequate yearly progress). For instance, fathers' comments included, "I have no idea what they're teaching

in each class.” “I’ve seen the ISAT stuff, I’ve heard of the high school but I’m not sure of this school.” and “AYP, what’s that? Should I be concerned?” Schools should be in the position to help fathers support their children’s learning goals.

Although the educational legislation requires schools to inform the parents on school achievement status (NCLB, 2001) and ensures the parents have the “information they need to make well-informed choices for their children” (USDE, 2001b, p. 1), all ten of these fathers definitely felt “hidden” when they were asked for suggestions on how to help their school develop effective and successful academic programs. Therefore, for these ten fathers, they have been left out of the school improvement process.

After 45 years, and thousands of dollars for family literacy, parent training and other parent involvement programs (USDE, 2001b; p. 16), there are still ten fathers that are uninvolved, not by choice, but by the decisions and practices of school administrators. Although Henderson and Mapp (2002) suggest that minority and low-income families tend to be strongly involved at home but less involved at school, I found that these ten fathers were equally involved in home-school learning practices that need to be supported and appreciated by school systems. If home-to-school and school-to-home relationships are to be truly successful and meaningful, then these relationships must be two-way.

Recommendations. This study has captured the individual voices of fathers and their involvement practices both inside and outside of school. These experiences may have never been revealed if it was not for my interest to understand why fathers are uninvolved. The very personal information shared will be a step forward to opening up home-school

partnerships to include fathers. This next section offers my recommendations for three areas: theory practice and research.

Recommendations for theory. One of the most widely used frameworks of parent involvement activities for schools, educators, researchers and parent organizations was designed by a prominent education researcher, Joyce Epstein. Her research was one of the first to emerge to create a common language for researchers, educators and parents regarding the meaning of parent involvement (Baker & Soden, 1998). This framework at the district level is used as a measurement to describe and evaluate the local involvement of parents (Comer & Hayes, 1991).

Initially, and throughout the review of literature, I was a believer of Epstein's work. Her work was adopted by the National P.T.A, various State educational departments and was aligned to the NCLB legislation. However, the participants sampled in this study do not collaboratively fit into her framework. The components of her framework are school directed, that is to say, the components are already in place and fathers are not offered a preference of opportunities and activities to engage themselves.

These involvement practices are not supporting the fathers or the goals these fathers have for their children's success. Along the same lines, educators that follow the component "learning at home" such as offering parenting classes or sending instructional materials home without first identifying the needs of the fathers are supporting a school-directed focus; an initiative that does not support the needs of the fathers.

My research further indicates that fathers have been designing their own types of involvement practices outside of the school. Consider the fathers actively involved in their church communities. Over time, these fathers have developed the skills and talents to obtain the needed services for their families. These fathers utilized local resources, business and volunteers to meet the needs of their church community. Schools could benefit from collecting information from fathers to determine innovative ways to engage and improve the levels of school involvement for fathers from all backgrounds.

Epstein's framework stresses the importance of communication but the data from this study strongly suggests that there is a need to separately communicate to both the fathers and the mothers, especially, in the cases of separated or divorced fathers. It is also important to make information from the school available in a variety of formats that can be viewed, heard, or read any time.

Moreover, Epstein's framework does not give attention to involving diverse family configurations as well as the needs of immigrant families. My research concurs with Susan Auerbach's comment that Epstein's framework "fails to account for the needs and experiences of many parents of color and/or low-income" (2007, p. 253). This is highlighted in the data that emerged from the Hispanic father and his non-English speaking wife's experiences. The school system failed to account for their needs and experiences as well as accommodate the language needs of the wife. It excluded their involvement opportunities both at home and at school to advocate and support their children's education.

My final point is that Epstein and her colleagues have not included any information related to fathers in the framework. This omission is critical to schools understanding the role of the father as an involved parent and an involved father. The results of this study show that there are differences between men and women in terms of home-school relations. Furthermore, I would caution the exclusive use of any framework to be the sole structure for developing a parent involvement plan.

Recommendations for practice. This study highlights the need for Title 1 school districts, their administrators, and parent organizations to reevaluate how their home-school partnerships consciously and actively involve fathers. Researchers have evidence of the positive effects of paternal involvement on students' academic achievement (Amato & Rivera, 1999; Nord, 1998; Pleck, 1997; Popenoe, 1996). Some Title 1 schools may already have programs in place for parents but fathers are either marginally involved or not involved with home-school activities. In either case, schools need to create a culture that acknowledges and values the skills and experiences that fathers can bring into the educational environment.

Basic to achieving this, I believe a plan should be developed collectively by school personnel, P.T.A. representatives and other community organizations (e.g., local, universities, social service agencies) that would embrace the importance of fathers as equal partners. This would require leading the educational community to a vision that would include the involvement of both mothers and fathers but in different ways. The plan would

also address the professional and non professional staff development in order for school staff to better understand the dynamics and the culture of paternal involvement.

Schools leaders might include in the plan methods for recruiting fathers recognizing that the same recruiting strategies for mothers may not work for fathers because of their unique needs. In addition to recruiting, the plan would need to include communication standards that would develop two-way communication practices as well as utilizing technology to facilitate communication across a diverse population.

A plan might scaffold the value of home learning activities into school-based activities. In addition, it would encourage and provide ways fathers could be active in inner-active school activities such as parent-teacher conferences and the non-interactive academic activities such as assemblies that would be conducive to the working fathers' participation. And finally, the plan would offer leadership training to fathers who were willing to participate in decision-making roles related to school improvement and to the development of Title 1 home-school compacts. For example, schools could hold forums to make fathers aware of what decision-making roles are available to them. They also could conduct surveys as to what the fathers' leadership's interests are in order to build on their previous experiences. In either case, schools need to initially separate mothers' responses from fathers' responses to clarify the needs of the fathers.

These forums and surveys could also identify the paternal "funds of knowledge" which are the information, skills and culture which fathers bring to informal and formal learning. To date, no definitive study that we know of has specifically focused on

determining the nature of the fathers' "funds of knowledge". These paternal experiences could be meaningful learning opportunities that teachers draw upon and turn into literacy experiences.

The findings from my study mirror a national movement that identifies men desire to bond with other men to discuss their "guy" issues. It could serve schools well to provide fathers with that kind of an arena where fathers could discuss and compare their experiences about work, raising their children, educating their sons and daughters and other concerns of interest. This is not to say that involvement programs should not include mothers but some school events should be for mothers, some for fathers, and some activities which would include both parents. For example, women may enjoy planning a Teacher Appreciation Day through the P.T.A., while fathers would prefer discussing playground improvements.

Recommendations for research. As I have stated before, my sample of ten fathers was small. Therefore, I recommend that a much larger sample of fathers be interviewed regarding their perceptions of paternal involvement in the home-school partnerships. The data from a larger pool would offer a clearer picture of paternal involvement.

A missing aspect to my study was that administrators and teachers were not interviewed to determine the school's perception of paternal involvement. Furthermore, these additional interviews would identify individual perceptions and expectations that school personnel have regarding the involvement of fathers. Additional interviews would

also help educators further examine if race is a determining factor in the involvement or uninvolvement of fathers from Title 1 schools.

I would also recommend research be conducted on how to differentiate paternal involvement from maternal involvement. Studies in other areas have indicated there is a difference in women and men's behaviors (Lamb, 1997; Marsiglio, 1995; Parke, 1995; Pleck, 1997) and future studies could provide some insight in how to develop a differentiated plan to parent involvement.

As I indicated in my research, the role of the father is emerging; his role within the family is also evolving into more engagement in the family structure. Churches have laid a foundation for fathers to be involved in social activities, and yet, schools apparently are slow to recognize these trends. As the family structures become more complex and stressful, both parents need multiple supports and resources in dealing with the stress of these dynamics.

My research dealt with a Title 1 school (e.g., low-income, minority); however my fathers represented a mixed sample of family configurations. They all dealt with these configurations in different ways but they were all productive. Research needs to be carried out to see if a larger population would mirror these outcomes regarding family configurations because this information could impact school personnel's expectations and behaviors towards fathers.

Additional research could be conducted on what effective Title 1 schools are doing to involve fathers in the educational process including the design and participation of

home-school compacts. These results could make a significant impact that would benefit the school, the classroom and the home.

Another recommendation is related to home learning activities. Being that these activities are the foundation to school success, research needs to be conducted on which home learning activities effectively impact student success. Additionally, Title 1 schools would benefit from the development and dissemination of these activities to all parents.

Effective leadership is fundamental to creating effective Title 1 schools. Additional research could be conducted on which Title 1 schools exhibit effective leadership skills as opposed to those who fail to comply with the requirements of the Title 1 law.

Additional research could be conducted on what effective Title 1 schools are doing to nurture the development of the father's educational culture. Effective schools have strategies in place to reach all fathers and acquire knowledge about them. These results could provide schools with information about paternal "funds of knowledge" that can be used to strengthen home-school relationships and increase student learning.

I was pleasantly surprised with some of the outcomes of my study. I would be anxious to see if these findings could be generalized to a larger population of fathers of Title 1 schools. I would also support the development of a comprehensive parent involvement plan that would guide Title 1 schools to effective implementation. This plan would include the development of specific activities that would recruit and involve fathers at every level.

This study has provided a better understanding of paternal involvement both at home and at school. Fathers have unique characteristics as parents and ultimately it is the children who benefit from their involvement both at school and at home. The emerging role of fathers could influence and affect the home-school relationships in a positive way that would benefit school leaders and educators. Finally, and most importantly, I hope that the future faces and the voices of parents will represent both mothers and fathers equitably as they collaborate and participate in the various roles of home-school partnerships.

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Appendix A

District Administrator Letter

Geraldine Giglio
17724 Rosewood Drive
Lansing, IL 60438
(708) 305-5138
gergig2000@yahoo.com

Date:

Dear _____:

As part of my doctoral studies, I will be conducting a research study on paternal involvement in the schools during this school year. My name is Geraldine Giglio and I will be conducting this research project. I am a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Organization and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Professor Brad Kose is my advisor who will advise and serve as a guide in this project. My professional background includes working as a school administrator and a classroom teacher at the elementary level.

This research study will deal with trying to ascertain the reasons why fathers are participating or not participating in parent involvement activities. Ultimately, this research project will provide me with data necessary to make recommendations and provide insights as they relate specifically to the perceptions and activities associated with paternal involvement at the elementary school level.

This research study will attempt to examine three research questions:

1. How are fathers in Title I schools involved in their children's education?
2. How are fathers in Title I schools involved in their children's schools?
3. How do fathers in Title I schools perceive schools can improve their involvement in their children's education?

Now that I have provided you with a preliminary explanation of my project, I am asking you to consider allowing your district to participate in this study. As part of this study, I will conduct 10 individual interviews with fathers.

It would be my hope that your school district will be willing to participate in this research study so as to benefit from the information as it relates to paternal involvement. At the conclusion of this research study, I will provide you with summary results of this study.

Should you have any further information regarding my request, please do not hesitate to contact me at your earliest convenience at (708) 305-5138. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Geraldine Giglio

Appendix B

Description of Research Study

The purpose of this study is understand the reasons why fathers are minimally or not participating in home-school activities and to understand which practices would encourage fathers to attend, support, and participate in home-school activities and programs. Listed below are the procedures I will be using to conduct this research study:

- 1) One Title I school will be selected for participation in this study. The school superintendent will be contacted to ask permission to conduct the study in their school.
- 2) There will be 10 interview sessions with fathers.
- 3) Letters will then be sent to school families asking fathers to voluntarily participate in this research study. At least 30 fathers will hopefully respond to the letters. If not, principals, school secretaries or teachers will identify fathers they believe might be willing to talk with me about their participation in their children's school lives.
- 4) It is intended that all of the above data will be collected from March through April, 2009.

Appendix C

Invitation to Participate in Research Study

Geraldine Giglio
17724 Rosewood Drive
Lansing, Il 60438
(708) 305-5138
gergig2000@yahoo.com

Date:

Dear Father:

You are invited to participate in a research project on father involvement consisting of an individual interview and a focus group session. My name is Geraldine Giglio and I will be conducting these interviews. Many of you may know me as your school's former acting assistant principal or substitute teacher. I am also a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Organization and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Professor Brad Kose is my advisor who will advise and serve as a guide in this project. My professional background includes working as a school administrator and a classroom teacher at the elementary level.

I am interested in father involvement because I want to better understand three areas that educators still do not know enough about. The first area is understanding how fathers are involved in their children's education at home. Second, I am interested in father's involvement in their children's education at school. The last area is understanding what schools could do to support father involvement in schools. I really want to hear a lot of different perspectives; I'm interested in fathers who rarely participate in home-school activities and fathers who often participate in home-school activities. I hope you can help me in this important research.

There will be one interview session with each father. This session will last approximately 1 hour. You will be able to select the day and time of the interview. After each individual interview, I will contact you to review and examine your statements from the interview in the form of a written transcript. This review could take approximately one hour to review. You may choose not to review the transcript.

Interviews will be conducted at your child's school. At the beginning of the interview, you will be asked to sign a consent form agreeing to participate in this study. Each father's total participation time in this study will be approximately 2 hours. After you have participated in the interview and reviewed the transcript or declined to review the

transcript, I will present you with a \$20.00 gift card thanking you for your time and participation in this research project. This gift card will be your choice of a gas, grocery or Visa credit card.

There are no physical risks to you. Your participation is voluntary and you can choose to withdraw from this research study at any time. Additionally, you can skip any questions you do not want to answer. During the interview session, I will ask you to discuss your experiences and opinions in home-school learning activities. This interview will be audio taped or recorded. I will be responsible for transcribing the interviews. To ensure that all interviews are strictly confidential, the names of yourself, school personnel, children, or the school will be changed during the interviews and removed when the results of the study are reported. Your participation may help me to develop programs and activities that could improve father involvement at your child's school and other schools. It may also provide important information that may be used for publication and educational purposes. At the end of my study, the results will be included in my dissertation and may be used in journal articles or conference presentations. I will make my findings available to any interested fathers.

I would very much appreciate you participating in both interview sessions. If you are interested, please return the response form in the enclosed stamped envelope addressed to me. I will then contact you by telephone to arrange an appointment in the near future and answer any questions you may have about the study.

Fathers need to be heard too. Please consider volunteering for this study. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Geraldine Giglio

Appendix D

Father's Response Form

Geraldine Giglio
17724 Rosewood Drive
Lansing, Il 60438
(708) 305-5138
gergig2000@yahoo.com

You are invited to participate in a research project on father involvement at your child's school. This project will be conducted by myself, Geraldine Giglio, a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Organization and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Professor Brad Kose is my advisor who will advise and serve as a guide in this project.

I would like to volunteer for this research project on father involvement in schools.

My name is: _____.

I prefer to be contacted by:

Telephone-my telephone number is _____. The
best time to call me is _____.

or

Email-my email address is _____.

Please fill in days and times that you might be available for an individual interview.

First choice: Day of the week _____

Time: _____

Second Choice Day of the week _____

Time _____

Appendix E

Telephone Script

Fathers' Preliminary Verbal Consent for Interview Session

Date: _____

“Hello, Mr. XXXX. My name is Geraldine Giglio. You returned a form to me stating your interest to participate in my research study on father involvement at your school. As I stated in the letter, I am a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Organization and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. My advisor, Professor Brad Kose will advise and serve as a guide in this project.

I am interested in the views of all fathers. I will be identifying activities and events that would encourage fathers to participate in school activities and increase student achievement. I hope you are still interested in participating in my study.

There are no physical risks to you. Your participation is voluntary and you can choose to withdraw from the research study at any time. Additionally, you can skip any questions you do not want to answer. If you agree to participate, I will ask you to discuss your experiences and opinions in home-school learning activities. You will be asked to sign a consent form agreeing to participate in this study. These interviews will be audio taped or recorded. I will be responsible for transcribing the interviews. To ensure that all interviews are strictly confidential, the names of yourself, school personnel, children, or the school will be changed during the interviews and removed when the results of the study are reported. You will receive a copy of the signed permission form. If you are interested in my findings at the end of this project, I will be happy to provide you with a copy. And, at the end of the study for your time and participation, I will present you with a \$20.00 gift card. You will be able to choose from a gas, grocery or Visa credit card. I appreciate you helping me with my study. Mr. XXX, do you have any other questions?

You stated a tentative individual interview for XXXX. Is that date and time still available? All interviews will be conducted at SCHOOL NAME. The day is XXXX. The time is XXXX. My phone number is (708) 305-5138. Please call me if you are unable to attend the interview. I am required to have a certain number of fathers interviewed, so I will have to contact other fathers to arrange for their participation.

I will call you the night before the interview to remind you of the appointment. Mr. XXX, thank you so much for agreeing to participate in my study. I look forward to meeting you.”
Thank you again.

Appendix F

Telephone Script for Fathers not Receiving Letters

Date: _____

“Hello, Mr. XXXX. My name is Geraldine Giglio. I am inviting you to participate in a research project on father involvement consisting of an individual interview and a focus group session. My name is Geraldine Giglio and I will be conducting these interviews. Many of you may know me as your school’s former acting assistant principal or substitute teacher. I am also a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Organization and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Professor Brad Kose is my advisor who will advise and serve as a guide in this project. My professional background includes working as a school administrator and a classroom teacher at the elementary level.

I am interested in father involvement because I want to better understand three areas that educators still do not know enough about. The first area is understanding how fathers are involved in their children’s education at home. Second, I am interested in father’s involvement in their children’s education at school. The last area is understanding what schools could do to support father involvement in schools. I really want to hear a lot of different perspectives; I’m interested in fathers who rarely participate in home-school activities and fathers who often participate in home-school activities. I hope you can help me in this important research.

There will be one interview session with each father. This session will last approximately 1 hour. You will be able to select the day and time of the interview. After each individual interview, I will contact you to review and examine your statements from the interview in the form of a written transcript. This review could take approximately 1 hour to review. You may choose not to review the transcript.

Interviews will be conducted at your child’s school. At the beginning of the interview, you will be asked to sign a consent form agreeing to participate in this study. Each father’s total participation time in this study will be approximately 2 hours. After you have participated in the interview and reviewed the transcript or declined to review the transcript, I will present you with a \$20.00 gift card thanking you for your time and participation in this research project. This gift card will be your choice of a gas, grocery or Visa credit card.

There are no physical risks to you. Your participation is voluntary and you can choose to withdraw from this research study at any time. Additionally, you can skip any questions you do not want to answer. During the interview session, I will ask you to discuss your experiences and opinions in home-school learning activities. This interview will be audio taped or recorded. I will be responsible for transcribing the interviews. To ensure that all

interviews are strictly confidential, the names of yourself, school personnel, children, or the school will be changed during the interviews and removed when the results of the study are reported. Your participation may help me to develop programs and activities that could improve father involvement at your child's school and other schools. It may also provide important information that may be used for publication and educational purposes. At the end of my study, the results will be included in my dissertation and may be used in journal articles or conference presentations. I will make my findings available to any interested fathers.

Are you willing to participate in this interview? Thank you. What day and time would you like to be interviewed?

My phone number is (708) 305-5138. Please call me if you are unable to attend the interview. I am required to have a certain number of fathers interviewed, so I will have to contact other fathers to arrange for their participation.

I will call you or if you prefer to be emailed, the night before the interview to remind you of the appointment. Mr. XXX, thank you so much for agreeing to participate in my study. I look forward to meeting you.”

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Geraldine Giglio

Appendix G

Interview Questions for Fathers

- A. How long have you lived in this school district?
- B. How many children do you have?
- C. Tell me their ages and/or grades.
- D. Could I ask you your marital status?

I am here today because I am studying father involvement in their children's education. Participating in your child's education can be both outside the school and inside the school. Let's start with activities outside the school.

1. Describe your best memory when you were involved in your child's education and felt as a dad, you were making an impact in your son or daughter's education?

Probe:

- a. *Describe an experience that you did not feel satisfied?*
- b. *Describe some other things you teach your child at home or the activities you participate with your child at home.*
- c. *Describe parenting activities, home learning activities (reading) and/ or outside the home learning activities (e.g., camping, museum trips, take your child to work).*
- d. *Describe community learning activities (e.g., scouts, sports, volunteer, religious). Is community involvement greater or less than school involvement?*
- e. *Describe how your involvement has changed through the years with your children.*

- f. *Tell me about the factors that support your participation with your child's education home. Describe the factors that limit your support.*
 - g. *Are their learning at home activities you would like to be more involved with in your child's education? Can you tell me about these activities?*
2. I would like to move to inside the school. Can you tell me about your interactions with your child's school?

Probe:

- a. *Can you describe some of the ways you are involved in your child's school?*
- b. *When the school sends home written information, who receives and reads this information in your family?*
- c. *The school offers a variety of ways to communicate (e.g., newsletters, email, home visits, phone calls) to parents. Which is your 1st, 2nd and 3rd preference to receive home-school communication?*
- d. *Tell me about your experiences with parent-teacher conferences. What happened, how did you feel about the process? To what extent did the teacher engage or talk with you?*
- e. *As a parent, there are many opportunities to become involved at your child's school. Identify some activities in which you have participated. What motivates you to participate in these activities? In which activities do you not participate? Why? Share your reasons why you choose to participate or not participate and identify the activities. You had to give up your time, what motivated you to do this (probe-preferences of short or long term commitments).*
- f. *Discuss your involvement with home-school compacts.*
- g. *Can you tell me more about your frustrations or concerns (e.g., work, time, childcare, culture) with your child's school?*

3. What suggestions can you offer to encourage fathers to become involved?

Probe:

- a. *What can schools do specifically to help dads become more involved in their child's school?*
- b. *Charles Saylor, National President of the P.T.A. claimed fathers are not involved because they have not been asked. What are your thoughts on that statement?*

I think this is a good place to stop.

Is there anything else you would like to share that I did not ask you specifically?

Appendix H

Consent Form for Interview

Date:

Dear Father:

Thank you for agreeing to voluntarily participate in this research project on father involvement. I am a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Organization and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Professor Brad Kose is my advisor who will advise and serve as a guide in this project.

Your participation is voluntary and you can choose to withdraw from the research study at any time. You have agreed to participate in a one-to-one interview and a follow up focus group session. This individual interview today will last 60 minutes. There are no physical risks to you. If you agree to participate, I will ask you to discuss your experiences and opinions in home-school learning activities. Additionally, you can skip any questions you do not want to answer. These interviews with your permission will be audio taped or recorded. I am responsible for transcribing the tapes.

To ensure that all interviews are strictly confidential, the names of yourself, school personnel, children, or the school will be changed during interviews, transcripts and removed when the results of the study are reported. Two weeks after the individual interview session; I will contact you to review your statements from a written transcript. The review of the transcripts will take approximately 1 hour. You have the option to examine your statements or choose to decline. Your review of the transcripts can be done through mail, telephone or another scheduled meeting at your child's school. Your total participation in this study will be approximately 2 hours.

After you have verified (or declined) to review the transcript, a \$20.00 gift card will be presented to you as a token of my appreciation for your participation and time in this study. This gift card (a choice of a gas, grocery or Visa credit card) will be given to participants who fulfill all requirements of this study.

The audiotapes, tape recordings and all other information obtained during this research project will be kept secure in locked file cabinets and accessible only to the researcher and project advisor. The audio tapes and tape recordings will be transcribed and coded to remove individuals' names and will be erased and/or destroyed after the project is completed.

Your participation may help me to develop programs and activities that could improve parent involvement at your child's school and other schools and provide important information that may be used for publication and educational purposes. At the end of my study, the results will be included in my dissertation and possibly used in journal articles or conference presentations. I will make my findings available to any interested fathers.

If you have any questions about this research project, please contact Miss Giglio by telephone at 708-305-5138 or by e-mail at gergig2000@yahoo.com or Professor Kose at 217-333-2802 or by email at bkose@uiuc.edu.

Sincerely,

Geraldine Giglio

I have read and understand the information and voluntarily agree to participate in the research project described above. My questions have been answered and I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Signature

Date

I agree to have my interview audio-recorded for the purposes of transcription only.

Signature

Date

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Anne Robertson, Bureau of Educational Research, 217-333-3023 or arobrtsn@uiuc.edu or the Institutional Review Board at 217-333-2670 or irb@uiuc.edu.

Appendix I

Contact Information Form

Name: _____

Address: _____ Te

Telephone number: _____ Additional number: _____

Best time to contact: _____

Listing of contact dates, purpose and summary information:

1)

2)

3)

4)

Appendix K

Coding of Themes by Research Questions

Tree Nodes

Name	Sources	References	Created On
Demogra	10	26	9/12/2009 7:40 PM
Likud Sca	9	11	9/19/2009 7:31 PM
RQ 1 Invo	1	1	9/12/2009 1:16 PM
Pater	1	2	9/12/2009 1:29 PM
Home	0	0	9/12/2009 1:24 PM
Pater	0	0	9/12/2009 1:33 PM
Roles	0	0	9/12/2009 1:39 PM
Barrie	0	0	9/12/2009 1:44 PM
RQ 2 Ho	0	0	9/12/2009 1:49 PM
Barrie	10	58	9/12/2009 3:00 PM
Father	2	5	10/26/2009 5:09 PM
Father	2	8	10/26/2009 5:09 PM
Father	1	6	10/26/2009 5:09 PM
Father I	1	8	10/26/2009 5:09 PM
Father	1	12	10/26/2009 5:09 PM
Father	1	4	10/26/2009 5:09 PM
Father	1	9	10/26/2009 5:09 PM
Father	1	7	10/26/2009 5:09 PM
Father	1	13	10/26/2009 5:09 PM
Father	1	9	10/26/2009 5:09 PM
Activit	1	1	9/12/2009 2:49 PM
Reas	1	1	9/12/2009 2:58 PM
Ways	0	0	9/12/2009 2:53 PM
RQ 3 Ho	0	0	9/12/2009 3:02 PM
Pater	10	46	9/12/2009 3:19 PM
Scho	1	1	9/12/2009 3:05 PM
Staff Pe	7	9	9/12/2009 3:09 PM
Commu	6	9	9/12/2009 3:09 PM
Lack of	5	6	9/12/2009 3:13 PM
More M	5	10	9/19/2009 9:57 PM
PTA	3	7	9/14/2009 7:10 PM
Safety	2	2	9/12/2009 3:11 PM
Hispani	1	5	9/12/2009 3:13 PM
Scho	0	0	9/12/2009 3:03 PM
Financi	2	2	9/12/2009 3:08 PM
Other S	2	3	9/19/2009 9:41 PM
Activit	0	0	9/12/2009 3:07 PM
Father	9	12	9/12/2009 3:17 PM

Appendix L

Demographic Results of Participants

Table L1

Demographic Results From Paternal Interviews

Ethnicity	Marital status	No. of children	Ages of children	Employment status
African-American	Separated	1	9	Doorman
African-American	Remarried	3	12, 19, 23	Retired
African-American	Remarried	5	2, 7, 17, 19, 24	Factory Worker
African-American	Married	2	7, 2	Teacher
Hispanic	Married	5	18, 15, 14, 13, 8	Maintenance Worker
African-American	Single	1	14	Paint Technician
Hispanic	Single	4	11, 16, 14, 12	Stay-at-home father
White	Married	1	13	Police Officer
African-American	Married	2 ¹	30, 34	Retired
African-American	Married	2 ²	11	Program Administrator

Note. 2¹ This father is a grandfather. In addition to his two adult children, he has eight grandchildren whose ages are: 17, 15, 14, 13, 12, 8, 7, and 6; 2². This father also has a 17 year old stepchild.