ENCOURAGING PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

A Project

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Abstract

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School and family environments have the most influence on the development of elementary-aged children. Parent involvement in both the school and home setting has multiple benefits for the child. More efforts are needed for schools and families in low socioeconomic areas to work collaboratively. Ethnic, cultural, and language differences, socioeconomic barriers, parent efficacy, and the role of schools can prevent families from becoming involved in the school setting. The purpose of this project was to provide educators with essential information regarding the benefits of parent involvement and recommend activities and opportunities to increase parent involvement by overcoming perceived barriers. A single elementary school was selected as a case study in the Sacramento City Unified School District. Teachers provided feedback on the feasibility of the activities as well as their current practices to recruit parents. The training post assessment showed that teachers gained
knowledge and were open to providing opportunities for parental involvement, but few parents consistently volunteered at their school.

_______________________, Committee Chair
Dr. Juliana Raskauskas

_______________________
Date
DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my loving parents, Ge and Pamoua Thao, for their commitment to giving their nine children a better life. They sent half of us to private school so we can get the best education and stayed as involved with our lives as much as possible when they were not working to support us. If at any time they could not be there, the teachings through their words, love, and unselfish actions taught us how to become better individuals.
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My kids- I appreciate your patience and continuous love. Trust me, I did this for you! You will go far in all that you do: dream big, believe, and be kind to yourself.

Most importantly, my husband- words cannot express how much gratitude I have for your love and support through this entire experience. You always believed I could- thank you. The ending is really just the beginning. Now, on to bigger things!
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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Project

The purpose of this project was to give educators resources to increase parental involvement by overcoming perceived barriers. The project collected activities for educators in low socioeconomic areas to increase parent involvement within the school, classroom, and at home. Due to the lack of resources and funds in some low socioeconomic schools, the purpose was to provide practical activities for educators to easily incorporate into their daily routine or that require some or little preparation or cost. A PowerPoint presentation was developed to inform educators about the barriers to and benefits of parental involvement and suggested activities that could be used to include parents and overcome the barriers of ethnicity, cultural, language, and socioeconomic differences, low parent self-efficacy, and the role of school staff. Self-efficacy is beliefs in one’s abilities to plan and act upon the necessary steps for achievement (Bandura, 1986). The presentation was given to a group of teachers whom provided feedback on the information and feasibility of the strategies.

Statement of the Problem

Home and school are the two most influential environments that children are immersed in during early and middle childhood. Home is where parents set the
foundation for learning and success (Grinstein-Weiss, Yeo, Irish, & Zhan, 2009; Wingard & Forsberg, 2009). In the school environment, educators support the academic growth and social development of children (Alexander, Entwisle, & Dauber, 2002; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Powell, Son, File & San Juan, 2010). Even after the transition to school, parental involvement in learning is beneficial (Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Van Voorhis, 2003, Wingard & Forsberg, 2009). It is critical for families and schools to collaborate and provide positive experiences in both environments that support the growing child and learning (Badgi & Vacca, 2005; Cox, 2005; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Oakes, Rogers, & Lipton, 2006). Differences in culture, language, and education between families and school staff are a few factors that may be perceived as barriers to parents becoming and staying involved in their child’s education (Hill & Taylor, 2004; Shah, 2009; Tan & Goldberg, 2008; Turney & Kao, 2009).

There are significant amounts of research that focus on the benefits of parental involvement. For example, Tan and Goldberg (2009) suggest that academic performance is improved by parental involvement and children find learning more enjoyable when at least one parent is involved at school. Many parents do not feel they can be as involved because of their work schedule or other responsibilities, but even parents who do not have flexibility with work or lack the supporting resources can be involved by communicating regularly with teachers and contributing to their
child’s learning at home. For example, one way to build a better understanding
between the parent and teacher is to create a relationship or system of communication
to keep each other informed about the child’s academic and social progress, like
school-to-home binders. Parents can also support classroom learning through reading
to the child at home (Van Voorhis, 2003). Reading develops a stronger relationship
between parents and children because of the quality time together plus it is associated
with positive outcomes for early literacy and later reading performance (Cox, 2005;
Senechal & LeFevre, 2002). Another way parents can be involved is to talk to their
child about their day, provide a quiet studying environment in the home, and to help
their children with homework (Rutchick, Smyth, Lopoo, & Dusek, 2009; Van
Voorhis, 2003).

A less obvious benefit of parent involvement in school is the development of
social capital. Social capital refers to increasing parents’ skills and information to be
better prepared to assist their child as well as networking with teachers and other
parents (Hill & Taylor, 2004). The definition as defined by Hill and Taylor relates to
how social capital is relevant in the school system only. Parents can develop their
skills in the classrooms to further help their child but also develop their own skills
through participating in leadership roles within the school alongside other parents on
committees. Another advantage of social capital is the gaining of information and
knowledge about programs or resources that are available to advance their children’s
extracurricular activities or prepare them for postsecondary education. Social capital is established as a result of families who have engaged in activities together thus having built a relationship in which they are able to provide future support and resources (Coleman, 1988; Kao & Rutherford, 2007).

Parental involvement may be encouraged, or hindered by the culture of a school and the behavior of its staff (i.e., teachers, principals, aides, office manager, and custodians). In low socioeconomic areas, school staff may perceive parents to be a problem or barrier to their child’s school success (Okpala, Okpala, & Smith, 2001) and thus may not encourage parental involvement. Furthermore, some school officials may view parents as an intrusion rather than as a positive resource when parents inquire about school programs and budget issues (Oakes, Rogers, & Lipton, 2006). On the other hand, Hoover-Dempsey and colleagues (2005) suggested that when opportunities are presented by friendly, welcoming staff parents are more willing to participate. Therefore, the attitudes of the staff, especially that of the teachers, and the culture of the school influence parental involvement and can encourage or prevent parent participation.

Children from minority, single-family, and stepfamily homes have the lowest parental participation (Okpala, et al., 2001; Oyserman, Brickman, & Rhodes, 2007). The obstacles that inhibit parent involvement include the low self-efficacy of parents, disadvantaged socioeconomic status, cultural differences, and language differences
(Hill & Turner, 2004; Turney & Kao, 2009; Weiser & Riggio, 2010). In addition to these barriers there may also be a disconnection between parents and teachers due to different expectations, lack of communication, or the need for more information and may not always be able to occur (Hill & Taylor, 2004; Shah, 2009; Turney & Kao, 2009; Weiser & Riggio, 2010). Being able to communicate with a parent or teacher who does not speak the same language requires knowledge of both languages, confidence in communicating, and a willingness to learn from each other.

Hill and Taylor’s (2004) study noted several barriers that limit parents in low socioeconomic areas to become involved in their children’s school. For example, parents may have dropped out of school or had their own negative experiences in the education system resulting in lower self-efficacy and an insufficient level of academic confidence to become involved in their own children’s education. Barriers may also include not having transportation to the child’s school or inability to have a flexible work schedule (Hill & Taylor, 2004; Oyserman et al., 2007; Turney & Kao, 2009). Similarly, in single parent homes, it may be more difficult to take time off from work because the parent is the sole provider for the family.

Many parents report they feel schools are unwelcoming and discouraging (Shah, 2009). Language and teachers of different cultural backgrounds may discourage parents from attending meetings or make them less likely to participate. On the other hand, when those in authority are the same ethnicity as the parents, they
can feel more comfortable in attending meetings because they can communicate better and feel a connection with the instructor (Shah, 2009). Parents may be more willing to participate if the invitation comes from the teacher who they have a connection with or is in the parent’s home language (Hoover- Dempsey et al., 2005).

Perceived barriers arising from differences between families and schools can be overcome. To be successful schools need to closely examine the culture in their school and how the role of teacher is viewed, as well as emphasize the positive effects that collaboration of schools and families have on children’s performance and development. Creating a culture of communication to overcome perceived barriers is needed. To encourage parental involvement, understanding between schools and families must be bridged and a relationship must be built where parents and teachers both feel they are working together to support the child. Though some perceived barriers (ie., disadvantaged socioeconomic status, cultural differences, low self efficacy of parents, and language differences) may seem challenging or impossible to change, the chasm they create between family and school staff can be overcome. When these qualities on which people differ are valued and understood the home-school partnership may be able to meet the needs of every child.

Significance of the Project

The significance of the project described here is that it educates schools and staff how to overcome perceived barriers to increase parental involvement in low
socioeconomic schools, and maximize support and opportunities for children in their programs.

Language barriers may be the initial obstruction for families to become more involved at schools since Sacramento schools include large numbers of families for whom English is not their first language. Identifying ways to include parents who speak other languages or may have limited English is an important thing for local schools. It may be difficult for both parents and school staff to clearly communicate their needs or expectations with the lack of an interpreter. However, parents who know they have access to an interpreter at school functions or meetings are more likely to participate (Shah, 2009). Furthermore, the division of languages could also create segregation within the school such that funds and resources are not appropriately allocated to serve bilingual students including parents, unknowingly, relinquishing their right to advocate for their children in decision-making opportunities (Gordon & Nocon, 2008; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Oakes, Rogers, & Lipton, 2006; Trumbull, Rotherstein- Fisch, & Hernandez, 2003). Overcoming perceived barriers such as this can help families and teachers collaborate to help the children’s social and academic growth. Furthermore, teachers are more aware of how to provide opportunities for families as families understand the importance and benefits to becoming more involved in their children’s development.
Methods

A literature review was conducted of the existing research on barriers to parental involvement, strategies to encouraging parental involvement, and benefits of parent-school collaboration within key academic journals using PsychInfo and ERIC search engines. Based on this literature an informative presentation and activities for schools were developed.

A single elementary school in the Sacramento City Unified School District was selected to provide formative feedback on the materials developed. First, the PowerPoint presentation based on the research findings from the reviewed articles and best practices identified was shared with teachers and staff during a meeting at their school. After viewing the presentation and receiving the materials, teachers were given an assessment and asked to provide feedback on the practicality and feasibility of the activities suggested (N = 23). Last, descriptive data were collected to examine what the teachers and school staff were currently doing to maintain and/or increase parental involvement. The answers from the assessments were used to make suggestions for future changes to the presentation and materials.

Definition of Terms

Parental involvement is referred to as parents’ interest and participation in their children’s learning and schooling by encouraging, facilitating, or supplementing school teaching (Garg, Melanson, & Levin, 2007). Parent engagement is referred to...
as being present at school functions in which parents act as observers of their children or school activities or events (Seginer & Vermulst, 2002). Greenwood and Hickman (1991) state there are six types of parent involvement: 1) parents as audience; 2) parents as volunteers; 3) parents as paraprofessionals; 4) parents as the teacher of (their) own child; 5) parents as learners; and 6) parents as decision-makers. Seginer and Vermulst’s (2002) definition added that parent involvement can take place through either home or school based activities. Traditionally, school-based parent involvement has included activities such as volunteering at the school or in the classroom, communication with school staff and teachers during parent-teacher conferences, attending school events, and being involved in school organizations (Hill & Taylor, 2004). Another way of involvement is through home-based parent involvement such as providing a structured place and time for homework, assisting child with homework, communicating parental expectations for achievement, scheduling the child’s academic and nonacademic activities, and providing emotional support for the child (Rogers, Theule, Ryan, Adams & Keating, 2009; Shah, 2009; Van Voorhis, 2003). Parents’ self-efficacy is one factor that affects the level of parent involvement. Self-efficacy is beliefs in one’s abilities to plan and act upon the necessary steps for achievement (Bandura, 1986).
Limitations

There are some limitations in this project. The project training was only delivered to one school on one day; presenting to more schools throughout the district would be beneficial to gather more data and feedback about parental involvement and also to gain feedback on what parent involvement practices are working at the different schools. Providing more ongoing training should also be considered to help maintain involvement. The present project focused on the development of the materials. Future research needs to follow implementation and examine attitude and behavior changes over time. Another limitation was that not all teachers at the school participated in the assessment (n = 23 of 39), therefore, the data did not show an accurate picture of the entire school and these teachers’ attempts to involve parents. It is possible that teachers who were already encouraging parental participation were more likely to complete the assessment; this is supported by the fact that the teachers who completed the assessment rated their support for parental involvement as high. Future projects should focus on why teachers don’t offer feedback or how to encourage those teachers who do not value parent participation to participate in these activities. For future studies, trainings can be conducted in schools with low acceptance of parental involvement to assess if attitudes and perspectives of educators change. Lastly, the perceptions of one teacher’s efforts to involve parents may differ from parents’ perspectives. Parent perceptions of barriers were not addressed directly
by this training. A recommendation for future projects would be to get parents’ feedback and perspectives on how they feel the teachers and schools can welcome parents to become involved.

**Organization of the Project**

The following three chapters will encompass the content, methods, and conclusions of my project. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the existing literature on parent involvement and also addresses the benefits of involvement and barriers that deter families from becoming involved with schools. The importance of collaboration between parents and families is addressed through the *theory of symbolic representation*. Chapter 3 explains the process and execution of how the project was developed and administered. This chapter also includes the demographics of the school used to obtain feedback on the materials. Chapter 4 includes results of the feedback assessment and a discussion of recommendations and implications.
Encouraging Parent Participation in Classrooms

Most people would agree that parental involvement is a key component of children’s development, however what constitutes parental involvement and its contribution to academic success can be debated. There is a wide range of activities and purposes which can fall under the heading of parental involvement such as working in the classroom, assisting the child with homework at school, communicating with the teachers, helping at the school or at school functions, etc. Parental involvement has been defined as parents’ interest and participation in their children’s learning and schooling by encouraging, facilitating, or supplementing school teaching (Garg, Melanson, & Levin, 2007). Seginer and Vermulst (2002) add to the understanding of parental involvement the fact that parent involvement can take place through either home or school based activities. Traditionally, school-based parent involvement has included activities such as volunteering at the school or in the classroom, communication with school staff and teachers during parent-teacher conferences, attending school events, and being involved in school organizations (Hill & Taylor, 2004). Other parents engage in home-based parent involvement by providing a structured place and time for homework, assisting child with homework,
communicating parental expectations for achievement, scheduling the child’s academic and nonacademic activities, and providing emotional support for the child (Rogers et al., 2009; Shah, 2009; Van Voorhis, 2003). According to Greenwood and Hickman (1991), there are six types of parent involvement: 1) parents as audience; 2) parents as volunteers; 3) parents as paraprofessionals; 4) parents as the teacher of (their) own child; 5) parents as learners; and 6) parents as decision-makers.

Studies have documented a number of positive outcomes of parental involvement for children’s academic performance. Parental involvement has been positively linked to indicators of student achievement, including teacher ratings of student competence, student grades, and test scores (Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green, Wilkin & Closson, 2005; Powell et al., 2010). As parents become more involved in school, student confidence increases, and teachers note that students participate more and perform better. Students who receive positive feedback and discuss the importance of academic achievement with parents tend to be intrinsically motivated to perform and report higher academic expectations for themselves (Freiberger, Steinmayr, & Spinath, 2012; Rutchick et al., 2009).

Parental involvement is encouraged by educators and the education system during early childhood to build a strong foundation and set high expectations for the child to succeed (Rogers et al., 2009). Before a child enters preschool, parents may seek out or may be provided with information about how to support and develop their
child’s academic skills. Parents are often self-motivated and encouraged to be involved with the school during the preschool age. In fact, many private preschool systems require parental involvement to some degree as a condition of enrollment. However, as a child advances through school, parental involvement tends to decrease (Chen, 2006; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Rogers et al., 2009; Wingard & Forsberg, 2009). This disengagement comes partly from schools reaching out less to parents and the misconception of some parents that older children need less support as they demonstrate competence in academic skills (Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007).

Cultural differences and beliefs by parents that they cannot support children’s schooling due to parents’ own limited education or not knowing academic expectations may also inhibit support for students (Chen, 2006). Schools could do more to help encourage and maintain parental involvement into elementary school and beyond. This often begins with educators understanding the barriers to parental involvement and both parents and teachers understanding the benefits of parental involvement in elementary school.

**Benefits of Parent Involvement in School**

There are many identified benefits to parental involvement to children starting with the transition to school. The collaboration of parents and teachers can bridge the
gap between home and school. According to Cox (2005) this collaboration is best when teachers and parents address academic and behavioral concerns together and create a plan suitable for the child. Working together empowers parents to partake in the academic success of the child and see they play a key role in schooling. Lewis, Kim, and Ashby Bey’s (2011) study suggested that communication about children’s social and academic behavior, ideas for at-home activities, and referrals for outside services (i.e. health and social services) can increase parents’ participation overall. In addition, on-going communication between these parents and teachers is more effective to immediately correct a child’s school work and/ or behavioral problems as well as recognize his or her successes (Huntsinger & Jose, 2009; Powell et al., 2010). This is an effective approach because good communication can lead to consistency for the child in regards to academic and social expectations and immediately address problem behaviors that may arise.

Another benefit of parental involvement is increasing children’s engagement in school. For example, Tan and Goldberg (2009) results suggest that elementary school children enjoyed school more when even one parent was involved, regardless of whether it was the mother or father. Children also reported more enjoyment with parents when they provided positive emotional support and attended school events as opposed to parent-teacher interactions regarding negative academic performance. Parents who demonstrated a great appreciation for education often influenced their
children to have the same appreciation, indirectly encouraging the children to put forth more effort in making academic progress. Furthermore, parents’ expectations of their children’s behavior are interconnected with academic expectations and its outcomes (Rutchick et al., 2009). If a child is already struggling with school and feels more pressure to perform beyond his or her ability, it may create more negative feelings toward education. This is where teachers can help parents understand what reasonable expectations are. Parents can be very influential through their academic expectations, whether explicit or not, encouraging children’s active engagement in school and helping them to attribute success and failures to effort or lack of: Negative interaction between parent and child during homework or school interactions can put strain on the relationship and discourage interest in school (Van Voorhis, 2003; Wingard & Forsberg, 2009).

Parents who cannot attend school to participate can still be involved from home (Tan & Goldberg, 2009). Homework involvement is one way to help children stay involved at school by providing that extra assistance and support when children are at home. There is some controversy about the effectiveness of homework such that it can be too difficult, too much or not enough for students and given with little or no instructions for parents to fully understand and provide sufficient mentoring for their child (Rutchick et al., 2009; Van Voorhis, 2003; Wingard & Forsberg, 2009). Additional issues arise when the child is unmotivated thus putting more pressure on
the parent to plan and encourage the child to complete homework (Wingard & Forsberg, 2009). Parents are encouraged to sit with their child a few moments at a time because it makes learning more interesting for the child and eliminates the feeling of isolation (Van Voorhis, 2003). In addition, positive discussions with children about school events increase children’s ability to overcome obstacles (Rutchick et al., 2009). In supporting the engagement and involvement of parents in schoolwork, the amount and depth of homework will need to be considered by teachers. It is important to remember that parents are not substitutes for teachers therefore the complexity and amount of homework for one child can leave parents feeling uncomfortable or stressed (Van Voorhis, 2003). The purpose of homework at the elementary level is to practice skills and concepts, provide communication between teacher and parent(s), and have parents and children work effectively together (on homework) to cultivate study skills for latter years of schooling (Van Voorhis, 2003; Wingard & Forsberg, 2009). It is important to consider the different perspectives and recognize the limitations or demands in order to provide the best possible support for the child.

Reading is another way that parents can be involved at home to further keep children engaged in school. Reading sessions at an early age develops a stronger relationship between parents and children. This quality time together indirectly influence the outcomes of reading performance for the child (Cox, 2005; Senechal &
LeFevre, 2002). Children’s reading ability in grade 1 was a predictor of their grade 3 reading ability (Senechal & LeFevre, 2004). Parents who are involved at home can help to develop their child’s reading ability. Furthermore, reading develops language and literacy skills (Hindman & Morrison, 2011; Senechal & LeFevre, 2002; Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, Whetsel, & Green, 2004) as well as implementing higher order thinking questions to further develop comprehension (Walker et al, 2004).

According to Green et al. (2007), the motivation for parent involvement changes when the children enter middle-school compared to elementary. Respectfully, the children become more independent even if the work becomes difficult. This type of work is related to children’s sense of independence because children begin to socialize with peers about their work more often than with their parents. Children do not ask for much help from parents as many parents may not be able to help their children with the academic work. The amount of children’s requests for homework assistance decreases which gives parents the notion that the children are able to complete the work independently. Woolley, Kol, and Bowen (2009) suggest it is important for teachers and parents to stay connected through middle school, even if indirectly, as to provide a support system for the child. Children become more influenced by their peers at this age; therefore, it is important for parents to continue to be involved.
However, some evidence suggests that parent gender makes a difference to how they are involved. Tan and Goldberg (2009) found that mothers were generally more involved with the children’s academics; however, fathers were becoming more involved than they were traditionally. Mothers, who generally provided emotional support and encouragement, were involved in homework, and created a structured learning environment tended to have a positive effect on children’s achievement (Rogers et al., 2009). In contrast, when mothers were directly involved at school, some children tended to show less enthusiasm for school (Chen, 2006; Tan & Goldberg, 2009) but direct involvement was related with better developed self-concept (Rogers et al., 2009). Fathers who encouraged their children were indirectly related to achievement but when fathers were actively involved with homework or in the school, it was negatively linked to the child’s grades (Rogers et al., 2009; Tan & Goldberg, 2009). While this may imply that having parents in the classroom is detrimental to learning, these studies use correlational methods and do not include the child’s starting academic achievement or behavior. It is important to examine the outcome versus the purpose of parent involvement. It is possible that parents are most motivated to be in the classroom when their child is struggling academically, has behavior problems, or they do not agree with the way the teacher is conducting instruction – under these conditions it is not surprising that student performance might suffer (Rogers et al., 2009; Rutchick et al., 2009).
It is also possible that having parents in the classroom can lead to their own children to not try as hard in class, figuring they will get special treatment or that some parents have lower expectations of their child than others (Green et al., 2007; Rutchick et al., 2009). Despite these few studies that call into question the benefit of having parents in the classroom; the majority of research has shown overwhelming positive effects of home-school collaboration and parents in schools (Green et al., 2007; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Powell et al., 2010; Rutchick et al., 2009). Future research suggests longitudinal studies to follow the academic performance of the children along with more specific types of parent involvement (Rogers et al., 2009; Tan & Goldberg, 2009).

**Barriers to Parent Involvement in Schools**

Despite the potential benefits of parental involvement for a child’s learning and development, many parents are not involved in their child’s education, either at home or at school. Researchers have offered several possible explanations why some parents are more involved than others including: cultural expectations (Chao & Kanatsu, 2008; Chen, 2006; Eaton & Dembo, 1997; Krumm, 1996), ethnic representation of school staff (Krumm, 1996; Shah, 2009), the teacher-family
relationships (Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Huntsinger & Jose, 2009; Shah, 2009), and parent education level (Chen, 2006; Yamamoto, Holloway, & Suzuki, 2006).

Parents may face practical or logistic barriers to involvement in their children’s schools or classrooms. Language differences, socioeconomic status (SES), employment, and family structures such as single-parent families (Hill & Taylor, 2004; Huntsinger & Jose, 2009; Yamamoto et al., 2006) are possible obstacles that make parental involvement more difficult to achieve. It may be difficult for a single-parent to be involved at school if that parent is the sole-provider for the family or if parents are allowed only a limited time away from employment in addition to childcare becoming an issue (Cox, 2005; Hill & Taylor, 2004). Parents in low SES families may lack the necessary transportation to get to school. Financial limitations may interfere being able to afford a vehicle or public transportation to the child’s school to volunteer, if the school is not located in the neighborhood (Hill & Taylor, 2004; Okpala et al., 2001; Shah, 2009). These perceived barriers from differences in ethnic, culture, language, socioeconomic status are discussed in the following sections along with concerns about low parental efficacy and how staff influence parental involvement.

**Ethnic, Cultural, Language Differences.** Cultural beliefs and values provide a foundation for all aspects of parenting (Rogoff, 2012; Vygotsky, 1978). One powerful aspect of culture that shapes a family’s beliefs and practices is related to the
culture’s perspective as a group. Some cultures are characterized as individualistic, which can be defined as a perspective that focuses on the individual as an independent, self-fulfillment, and autonomous entity (Krumm, 1996). In contrast, some cultures are characterized as collectivist, which can be defined as a perspective that emphasizes socioeconomic interdependence and/or the fundamental connectedness of human beings to one another (Harwood, Handwerker, Schoelmerick, & Leyendecker, 2001).

The members of a society are greatly influenced by the predominate world. Those values are instilled in a society such that conformity, obedience, centralized thinking, and harmony reflect a collectivistic society such as China. In contrast, like many western countries, the society is focused on independence, personal success and self-determination (Krumm, 1996). Many Asian countries are considered collectivist. In the Chinese culture, for example, academic performance is considered reflective of the parents so it is important for children to meet and exceed the expectations of their parents so there is no shame brought to the family (Chen, 2006; Eaton & Dembo, 1997; Krumm, 1996). It is also important for Chinese children to perform well in elementary, junior high and high school in order to get into prestigious universities, which are highly competitive (Krumm, 1996; Chen, 2006). For example, in Hong Kong, there is so much competition to outperform classmates that false peer support is often given (Chen, 2006). A student may not provide genuine support or advice to
his peer in fear that his peer might be more knowledgeable or more successful than him.

In some cultures, immigrant parents continue to uphold the same roles as their native country such that the parents are not involved at the schools because educators are upheld to a high standard and viewed with great respect; however, this viewpoint creates conflict in that teachers perceive this limited interaction as a lack of support in their child’s education (Green et al., 2007; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Huntsinger & Jose, 2009; Yamamoto et al., 2006). It seems as though in this individualistic society, the beliefs and expectations of academic success lies solely on the teacher’s guidance and child’s perseverance to succeed. The two types of cultural orientations (collectivist and individualistic) may influence parents’ perspective and their role in their child’s education as well as the development of values and expectations. These values and expectations can transcend to how the child and parent perceives oneself and aides in the development of self-efficacy that helps to determine the level of parental involvement (Yamamoto et al., 2006). Self-efficacy is beliefs in one’s abilities to plan and act upon the necessary steps for achievement (Bandura, 1986).

Chinese parents have high expectations and other parenting beliefs that foster their child’s academic success. Chinese parents also provide criticism and immediate feedback so the child can correct the mistake immediately (Huntsinger & Jose, 2009; Eaton & Dembo, 1997) and parents intervene particularly when the child is failing
European American teachers were thought to give too much praise as observed by Chinese American families (Huntsinger & Jose, 2009). Chinese families took the initiative to teach their children ahead of time, giving them strategies and promoting mental math where European families let the school expose the child to the concept first (Huntsinger & Jose, 2009). Austrian parents’ perception is that learning is to be done primarily in the school as opposed to school and home; furthermore, mothers felt less connected to their child’s successes or failures therefore, academic success might be deemed less important (Krumm, 1996). The structure of these different cultures (collectivist or individualistic) influence parents’ perspective and indirectly form their role in their child’s education as well as the development of values and expectations that reflect the society as a whole.

Ethnic and cultural diversity is intertwined with language thus creating another barrier for precise and on-going communication between parents and the school staff whether in spoken or written form. Turney and Kao’s (2009) study investigated parental involvement across 100 counties between 12,954 immigrant and native-born parents of preschool children from 1,000 different schools. Data were collected over four different times throughout the first two years of school (preschool and Kindergarten). The results showed that 30%-50% of the immigrant parents spoke another language other than English in the home. Furthermore, parents perceived language as another barrier, making it more challenging to attend parent-teacher
conferences due to the inflexibility of scheduling, the lack of interpreters available, and an unwelcoming school environment. In contrast, having an interpreter conduct phone calls to recruit parents and one available at school events increased parent participation (Shah, 2009).

In the absence of communication, there could be difficulty in supporting the child’s academic and social development. For instance, notices or flyers that are sent home to inform parents of academic information or behavior concerns might not be fully addressed because of the language barrier. Interventions that require two-way communication and feedback for daily parent support may not be implemented accurately which can lead to it becoming an ineffective strategy (Chen, 2006; Cox, 2005). Teachers may assume to believe parents do not care about their children’s education. Furthermore, the division of languages could also create segregation within the school such that funds and resources are not appropriately allocated to serve bilingual students including parents, unknowingly, relinquishing their right to advocate for their children in decision-making opportunities (Gordon & Nocon, 2008; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Oakes et al., 2006; Trumbull et al., 2003).

Ethnicity, language, and culture barriers may imply the persons whom have differences in these attributes have a deficit, which is not the case. Simply put, there are differences in values, language, and cultural beliefs that may make reaching out to
schools more challenging for minority parents to do, as explained in the following quote from Turkey and Kao (2009):

Minority immigrant parents face additional barriers that prevent them from participating in their children’s school at comparable levels, and their children seem to suffer the consequences not only through their actual levels of participation buy by virtue of the obstacles themselves that likely represent general domestic hardships. In addition, minority immigrant parents are at a particular disadvantage, but even a greater facility with English and a longer length of residence in the United States cannot assuage the persistent disadvantage associated with minority status…Children may benefit tremendously if schools take steps to make minority immigrant parents feel welcome at the children’s school or to decrease the language or other logistical barriers that these parents face (p. 269).

**Socioeconomic Barriers.** Studies have suggested that socioeconomic status (SES) as well as cultural differences influence parents’ relationships with their child’s school as well as their attitudes about schooling (Chen, 2006; Gordon & Nocon, 2008; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Oakes et al., 2006; Okpala et al., 2010; Shah, 2009). Yamamoto et al. (2006) identified a number of ways in which family SES was a predictor of family involvement for both Japanese parents. They interviewed 108 Japanese mothers with children ages 5 or 6. The mothers were between the ages of 25 and 45 with an income between $40,000- $60,000 annually. For instance, Japanese parents in high SES areas were more involved in the home-based activities but had less direct involvement at the school. These parents viewed involvement at the school as too time consuming and not directly related to their child’s future academic
success. Similarly, employed Japanese mothers of preschool children were more likely that non-working mothers to contact schools and seek additional information though they were less likely to participate at the school site, perhaps because of work constraints, unlike American families, such that the amount of involvement varied depending on SES (Yamamoto et al., 2006). In low SES neighborhoods in United States, it is an important that parental involvement is encouraged by the teachers and school personnel (Gutman & Midgley, 2000) as early as preschool to set the foundation of parental involvement in later school years (Hill & Taylor, 2004; Powell et al., 2010). Schools must offer parents more meaningful roles in order to get them involved therefore, parents can be a role model for their children in the school setting as another way to promote and emphasize the importance of education (Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Shah, 2009). Hmong parents were asked during a Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) meeting held at SCUSD about meaningful roles and ways they feel they can participate in their children’s school. One parent responded they were asked to volunteer by teachers but the task was not specific. Another parent added they would not be able to volunteer daily but can donate their time by preparing food for an event (Local Control Accountability Plan, SCUSD, April, 2014). Though these opinions do not reflect all families, it provides some insight on perspectives of families who want to volunteer to help their children’s classrooms. Perhaps, a suggestion to addressing some of the barriers is identifying specified roles
and/or duties would better help parents decipher the amount of responsibility and time they can volunteer.

**Parental Self Efficacy.** Self efficacy is the belief in one’s self and the ability to administer and complete a task (Bandura, 1986). For the purposes of this project, it is the degree to which a parent believes they have the ability to influence their child’s learning or what happens at the school. As mentioned previously, the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler parent model (2007) has 3 components or factors for motivation of parent involvement. One component of this model, the role construction efficacy, is based on the beliefs of the parents. Parents develop their role as a caretaker, provider, and parent in the home (Green et al., 2007; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005) and thus the degree to which their roles include being an educator to their children and partner to the teacher. Based on this model, the more efficacious a mother feels as a parent, the more supportive she is of the child’s intellectual development. In fact, parents who are efficacious would be more involved in their child’s assignments whether home-based or school-based, have higher expectations for their child, believe that their action will make a difference in decision-making committees and, furthermore, serve as a model for their children to develop self efficacy around school as well (Green et al., 2007; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Shah, 2009; Weiser & Riggio, 2010). Different levels of self efficacy of
child and parent, can determine the amount of parental involvement such that children with high self efficacy might need less parental support.

Parent self efficacy beliefs are affected by one’s SES, employment status, and their own educational experiences. Higher SES and being employed are related to higher self efficacy about school. Parent’s own negative experiences in school (Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Hill & Taylor, 2004) may contribute to parents not helping their children because they lack confidence in their own academic abilities (Chen, 2006; Yamamoto et al., 2006). This may also deter parents from becoming involved at the school and home. Perhaps, parents who did not finish school feel they cannot provide their child with sufficient help so therefore, do not participate at all. For other parents, personal characteristics or challenges may limit their interest in or ability to be involved with their child’s schooling (Hill & Taylor, 2004; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Lewis et al., 2011; Oakes et al., 2006; Rutchick et al., 2009; Shah, 2009). Some affordances may include mental illness, and their own negative experiences in school (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Hill & Taylor, 2004). Parents with mental illnesses, who might not be able to help themselves or cannot get the appropriate care, are less likely to participate in their child’s school or even provide home-based parental involvement (Hill & Taylor, 2004; Keeley & Wiens, 2008).

**Role of school staff as perceived barriers.** The school, including the staff and aspects of the environment and culture, represents the other half of the parent-
school dyad, and as such plays a critical role in determining the quality of that relationship. In order to promote parental involvement, schools must present an environment with welcoming school staff and teachers. In schools that lack a feel of invitation, parents who may want to participate may be discouraged from doing so by personnel, teachers, and administrators (Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Hoover- Dempsey & Sandler, 2005; Huntsinger & Jose, 2009). Additionally, the comprehensive initiation for parent involvement would have to be instructed by administrators and supported by school staff and parents.

The administrators’ responsibilities encompass communicating to parents about programs and opportunities to volunteer, supporting and encouraging school staff to work with parents, and creating a positive environment for parents (Giles, 1998; Hoover- Dempsey et al., 2005). Furthermore, administrators are the link between educational policies and school issues (Giles, 1998). Administrators have more authority to initiate and set the expectations for teachers and the school to promote more parental involvement as well as direct available funds to promote family engagement.

In low SES neighborhoods in United States, it is important that parental involvement is encouraged by the teachers and school personnel (Gonida & Urdan, 2007; Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Lewis et al., 2011) as early as preschool, to set the foundation of parental involvement in later school years and to provide support and
services available to low income students and families (Cox, 2005; Hill & Taylor, 2004). Again, this point reiterates the importance of teachers creating opportunities for parents become involved.

Welcoming schools may encourage parents to be more visible on school grounds and the outcomes of teacher invitations may vary based on individual parents. Some current efforts are building relationships with families through home visits. A benefit of home visits is to establish better communication between parents and teachers in order to have more consistency and influence on the child (Meyer, Mann, & Becker, 2011). Home visits provide an opportunity for teachers to learn more about the families and the community that students come from which help to broaden and possibly change the teachers’ perspectives about other cultures and their own teaching styles or approaches to better address the children’s needs (Lin & Bates, 2010; Meyer et al., 2011).

Though some families welcome the invitation by teachers and staff to participate in school events, not all families may accept or acknowledge such invitations. If the school, administrators, and teachers did everything “right” to encourage parent involvement, there are still parents who contribute their time and effort differently than other parents according to Greenwood and Hickman’s (1991) six different types of parent involvements- not all parents will be actively involved based on individual differences and preference.
Models Informing this Project

Two models that explain how the school context can encourage involvement and why involvement can increase child academic performance are: Parental Involvement Model and Social Capital Model.

Parent Involvement Model. The *theory of symbolic representation* was used in support of Shah’s (2009) study with 324 Latino parents of students who attended Chicago public schools. This theory “predicts that the psychological orientations of minority parents will change in response to the presence of minority school board members or administrators (regardless of actual policy shifts), and that this internal change will manifest in the form of behavioral alterations” (Shah, 2009, p. 214). Latino parents were encouraged to be more involved in parent-teacher associations and other school governance committees when other Latinos were in leadership positions. Shah found for some families, a lack of representation of their own ethnic culture was perceived as a barrier to their involvement with the school.

Furthermore, Shah (2009) focused on two of three components from the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005), the motivation for parent involvement. The first component is psychological resources- role construction and efficacy- of parents (Hoover- Dempsey et al., 2005; Shah, 2009). Role construction is what parents believe is expected from them and how they act upon those beliefs to support their children’s education (Hoover- Dempsey et al.,
Parents see their role as the caretaker in the home whereas the teacher would be the educator in the school setting (Green et al., 2007). Parents’ motivation to participate is based on self-efficacy—the belief in one’s self and the ability to administer and complete a task (Bandura, 1986)—in which parents may feel more prepared to be involved. Dependent on whom the invitation was from, the Latino community was more likely to participate in school activities based on representation of teachers with the same ethnicity, having received a phone call to attend the event, and if there would be an available translator. Therefore, seeing someone of the same ethnicity can be empowering, at the same time, making parents more comfortable to be involved in a decision-making process.

The second component is parent perceptions of teacher invitations. When parents received an invitation, their participation would be determinant on their (the parents’) perception, such that parents’ presence was deemed important or it was an opportunity for criticism on child-rearing thus referring to one’s psychological resources. On the other hand, another factor that determined significant results was based on the school environment and its relationship with parents (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

**Social Capital Model.** Parental involvement also increased academic achievement indirectly through increasing social capital (Coleman, 1988; Hill & Taylor, 2004). Social capital refers to increasing parents’ skills and information to be
better prepared to assist their child as well as networking with teachers and other parents (Hill & Taylor, 2004). Social capital is established as a result of relationship-building with-in and outside of a family to achieve and maintain various resources, collaboration, and organized action (Coleman, 1988). Relationships outside of the family will be discussed in order to demonstrate the full benefits of social capital through parental involvement.

Researchers have deemed social capital as positive educational outcomes such as but not limited to math performance, pursuing higher education and hours spent on homework (Kao & Rutherford, 2007). One example of social capital might be a community organization that provides support for parents from different schools in a surrounding area usually in low-income areas where parent participation is lacking (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2010; Kao & Rutherford, 2007; Oakes et al., 2006). Another example may be parents connecting through intergenerational closure, which means “to network in which parents interact with parents of their children’s friends, thereby increasing surveillance and knowledge of all children’s activities in and out of school” (Kao & Rutherford, 2007, p. 29). Parents create a network with each other therefore they are able to reinforce academic expectations with each other’s children including the ability to monitor social activities in and out of school. This allows for more support and cohesiveness among children and parents. In sum, schools can
increase social capital by providing a support system for parents that helps them stay engaged and support their children’s learning.

According to Coleman’s (1988) Social Capital Model, there are three components required as the foundation to achieve social capital (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2010; Coleman, 1988). The first component is trust. Creating a safe environment for facilitators and parents to share personal experiences in their primary language is critical to build confidence in each other (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2010). The second component encompasses norms and sanctions (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2010; Coleman, 1988). Parents are given information about the school system, how to gain access to resources, and are taught basic knowledge about norms or social etiquette in situations such as engaging with various personnel including the appropriate vocabulary or educational terms to assist in these situations (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2010). Parents become empowered to advocate for their own families and as a group thus developing personal growth and confidence. Furthermore, in a collective effort, parents are able to bring awareness about similar issues to the school or district level by having a unified voice (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2010; Gordon & Nocon, 2008). The third component of social capital is information channels (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2010; Coleman, 1988). This is described as having accessibility and knowledge from multiple sources of information before making a decision or gaining a broader perspective while strategically planning the next step of action. This
includes making contact with the proper school personnel or department who can help with resolving the immediate issue.

There have been few studies on how social capital affects ethnic minorities, immigrants, and Caucasian students (Kao & Taggart Rutherford, 2007). There is an argument that minorities and cultural groups experience and implement other forms of social capital (Hannum & Fuller, 2002) For example, language barriers may limit families from participating in the mainstream culture thus losing out on social capital, the families can still benefit from ethnic or cultural capital. Ethnic or cultural capital is defined as benefiting in other ways from the mainstream society because of ethnic, language, or cultural barriers; additionally, within a particular culture, there may be established programs or other types of support for families that are available to them. One missed opportunity is that these families lack opportunities to become involved in decision-making and intergenerational closure in the school setting (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2010; Kao & Taggart Rutherford, 2007). First- and second-generation ethnic minority and immigrant parents may have closer community ties and conform to more cultural expectations than third-generation families and Caucasian families (Kao & Taggart Rutherford, 2007). Because of the collectivistic culture of the minority families, the social status and privileges may be comparable to social capital in the mainstream culture though having different benefits and purposes to each. For example, a minority family who possesses social status or privileges in their
community may not see the importance of gaining social capital in their child’s school because it may not serve a purpose to the parent.

In low SES areas, it may be more difficult to engage parents who have more obstacles to overcome compared to those parents of high SES who act as advocates for placing their children in more advanced or challenging courses because they are more aware of the school system and the appropriate courses to be accepted into a prestigious school (Gordon & Nocon, 2008; Oakes et al., 2006). Strategies that schools can use that increase social capital have a greater likelihood of maintaining parental involvement over time so this project specifically sought to identify social capital based recommendations for schools. Understanding the distinction between cultural and social capital can help educators comprehend which of the two may be more significant to the family; however, when parents understand the importance of social capital, there will be more opportunities available for their child too.

**Recommendations for Encouraging Parent Involvement**

The purpose of the current project is to identify strategies for encouraging parental involvement based on the above models and existing literature. The research on parental involvement was reviewed to identify strategies schools can use to encourage involvement through building trust, providing resources, and developing
social capital. Below recommendations that address the barriers to parental involvement from the existing literature are discussed.

**Ongoing Communication.** Communications via invitations, notes, home visits, phone calls, or newsletters are multiple ways to keep families informed. It is important to be mindful that not all families are English-literate; therefore assistance from other staff members may need to be arranged when making contacts through these various ways. Communication via invitations to attend school events can be initiated from three different sources: the school, the teacher, and the child; all which illicit a distinct purpose or motivation to attend the school functions (Green et al., 2007; Hindman & Morrison, 2011). It is beneficial for parents and teachers to establish a two-way communication for the most effective relationship. In addition, resource staff can also provide support for the teacher in situations that the teacher’s efforts in communication are not successful, especially if interpretation is required (i.e. home visits, social workers, attempts for phone calls, etc.). There is the possibility and likelihood that communication will be one way school-to-home. For example, simple notes being sent home are effective; however, it will not effectively address more pressing issues such as school work, behavior problems, or academic progress (Cox, 2005). The notes may target specific issues but also provides parents an opportunity to stay involved at home if parents are not able to volunteer at school. Schools that are culture and language-rich need to consider allocating funds to in
order to provide services and resources to accommodate for communication and translations (Hindman & Morrison, 2011).

**Invitations to Become Involved.** “Invitations are manifest, for example, in the creation of a welcoming and responsive school atmosphere, school practices that ensure that parents are well informed about student progress, school requirements, and school events; they are also reflected in school practices that convey respect for and responsiveness to parental questions and suggestions” (Green et al., 2007, p. 533). Invitations from these three sources are an important yet simple way to keep families informed about the current school events and providing ongoing opportunities for parents to be involved.

School invitations are classified but not limited to fliers, letters, newsletters, and event reminders that are sent to all families with general information. Child invitations are sent from the child specifically to a parent with the intent to attend a specific event, such as Open House or Parent-teacher conferences (Green et al., 2007; Hindman & Morrison, 2011). It is a personal invitation from their child to show how important the event is for the child. Teacher invitations and parent outreach is critical in developing a positive rapport with the families especially at the beginning of a new school year (Green et al., 2007; Hindman & Morrison, 2011). Lewis, Kim, and Bey’s (2011) study suggests that teachers invite parents for an initial meeting, share his/ her academic and social expectations of the child, and continue the communication via
notes, newsletters, and phone calls as a way to inform parents on the successes and challenges of the child.

**Establish a Positive Rapport.** As mentioned previously, a part of parent outreach is establishing a positive rapport between the families and teachers (Lewis et al., 2011). This positive rapport is the gateway to initiating future assistance with their children or school events. Knowing families is beneficial because parents can be resourceful too. Parents are knowledgeable or may be skilled in a certain trade; parents may potentially have connections with the community and other organizations that can benefit the students or school (Lewis et al, 2011; Rule & Kyle, 2009). It is also important to be mindful of the different cultural values that may conflict with the mainstream ideas of parent involvement hence creating a trusting relationship is important (Trumbull et al., 2003). For example, a few ways to build a positive rapport is to interact in less formal engagements, learning more about the families’ cultures, and respecting parents’ perspectives. Having a genuine interest and conversation with parents about topics other than their child creates a gateway to building a closer relationship, as explained in the following quote:

> When parents are involved in schools, children may come to see school as a safe a valued place where one would choose to spend time. For children whose parents are low in school involvement, creating a sense that school success is possible self-defining should also increase willingness to spend time in school, reducing risk of skipping school, and increasing chances of participation in in-school activities (Oyserman et al., 2007, p. 488).
Furthermore, a positive rapport is also established with the students in which concerns can be addressed, as needed, and learning occurs in a safe environment (Lewis et al., 2011). It can be comforting for families to know that their children are in a safe place when the parents themselves receive the same feel as they enter the school environment.

**Welcoming School Environment.** Welcoming schools and staff are the most vital factors in creating a welcoming school for parents (Meyer et al., 2011). A welcoming school encompasses diversity in languages and cultures in the school environment, for example, on school banners and/ or hallway bulletins welcoming families on campus (Lewis et al., 2011). Families can identify with their native language and recognition of their culture thus creating a sense of belonging. In addition, creating a positive physical environment free from debris and clutter as well as in neutral colors which can be more calming (Lewis et al., 2011; Rule & Kyle, 2009). When there is uniformity throughout the school, it creates consistency. In order to create an environment such as this, it is also important that the administrators and staff have the same vision for the community thus created by respecting and appreciating each other’s differences and efforts through open conversations (Rule & Kyle, 2009). To set the foundation for these conversations to occur, a set of guidelines and norms must be agreed upon and followed. Furthermore, administrators must be willing to relinquish some decision-making power to governance committees.
composed of parents and teachers (Giles, 1998). When the shift of powers occurs, the decisions and responsibility becomes shared amongst the group because the members’ voices and concerns can be heard and addressed appropriately. More time and effort may be contributed by the members to develop their ideas for projects in the interest of the children. It is important to create a community where staff welcomes, greets, and recognizes each parent, including every child, to build a positive, caring culture at the school.

**Support Centers.** Parent Resource Centers are established at the schools to encourage parents to be visible in the school environment but also act as a source of support and/ or provide resources for families (Lewis et al., 2011). Families may need to be connected to outside services or agencies which the parent resource centers could assist with. Another objective of these resource centers is to train parents to develop their skills to volunteer in the classroom but also to encourage other parents to become involved by visiting families in the community as one way of recruitment (Lewis et al., 2011). With more parent resource centers, it becomes more feasible and purposeful for parents to be present on campus and possibly makes it easier to involve them in other school functions. In the Sacramento City Unified School District, parent resource centers are becoming more visible and available on school campuses. For example, at the school where this project was conducted, the resource center provides uniforms for needy students, helmets, and backpacks. Additionally, monthly meetings
were hosted by a district committee, as opposed to school teachers and staff. These meetings are held to encourage parents to become engaged and knowledgeable about the schools, systems, and resources available. At the same school, other resources are also available, such as the afterschool program which promotes parent education in health and nutrition. Parents who attend the hour informational workshop receive a bag of healthy foods for the family.

**Parent-Teacher Teams.** Academic Parent-Teacher Teams (APTT) is a different way to restructure the traditional parent-teacher conferences. In the 2012-2013 school year in Sacramento City Unified School District, five schools piloted the APTT program. The following year, 13 schools participated (Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project, 2013). As part of the APTT process, during the fourth or fifth week of school at the beginning of the year, teachers hosted a meeting session where parents were invited to the classroom to get a brief overview of the grade level standards and expectations. The class’ most recent score is posted on a pre-made chart in the classroom that is associated with a random anonymous number given to the parents at the beginning of the session, each of these anonymous numbers are children’s scores. Parents are then able to compare their child’s score to the entire class. This is a valuable way for parents to know their child’s academic standing in relation to the entire class and may act as a motivator to maintain or improve their academic standing. Of those who attended, ninety-seven percent (97%) of parents who attended
the APTT meetings felt more confident in helping their child at home (Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project, 2013). Parents were given tools on how to help their child to develop academic skills. Parents gained a better understanding of the standards and how to help with their child succeed as a result of participating in the program.

Teachers provided parents with tools, information, and procedures of a specific skill that is focused on for the next 6-8 weeks. For example, if the specific skill is to increase the child’s fluency, there would be multiple reading passages at differentiated levels for each child and any appropriate materials would also included in a kit for families to take home for use. During the session, parents get to practice the procedures with other parents so they have some first-hand experience in how the child might feel but also to answer any questions for clarification. Ninety-five percent (95%) of parents who attended felt more confident in how to monitor their child’s progress (Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project, 2013). Furthermore, at the end of the session, parents were asked to set a realistic goal for their child as well as provide feedback on the session. After this initial meeting, teachers used home visits as a way to connect with families and build relationships. The teachers who utilized home visits resulted in twice as many families attending the APTT meetings than those teachers who did not conduct home visits (Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project, 2013). Parents and teachers continued to build their relationship and had the
opportunity to meet one-on-one to establish a relationship during the end of the first trimester.

Six to eight weeks after the initial meeting, parents were invited back to look at their child’s score and learn a new practice to help the child at home. This was a chance to see how each child progressed and also puts some expectations and social pressure on each parent to be involved so their child’s score is not stagnant. According to Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project in Sacramento City Unified School District (2013), families who attended and participated in the APTT saw an increase of 21 points in math facts and a 32 point increase in fluency scores in their elementary school children. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of parents also preferred the APTT structure compared to the traditional parent/teacher conferences. In an APTT meeting, parents had more opportunities to engage and interact with the teachers and other parents. The setting was informal and allowed parents to feel more comfortable.

**Parents in Classrooms.** Parents are encouraged to volunteer in the classroom to observe the teaching that students are engaged in as an insight on how to continue the teaching strategies at home (Hindman & Morrison, 2011; Trumbull et al., 2003) such as homework help or questioning strategies (Lewis et al., 2011). In the classroom setting, parents may also be encouraged to work only with their child as to observe, in detail, the skills the child knows or does not share in the home setting.
such as his/her reading ability (Lewis et al., 2011). Parents can also receive training in order to develop specific skills with assisting in small groups or one-to-one settings in the classroom. However, it is very important for teachers to talk to parents about what they are comfortable with before they come to the classroom and not assign them to tasks they may not feel prepared to do (Trumbull et al., 2003). Every teacher and grade level might utilize parents differently. For example, in Kindergarten, more parents might be needed to facilitate learning centers or prepare materials for the children to use as opposed to children in latter primary or intermediate grades. Nonetheless, teachers should provide a set of guidelines during a short orientation so parents are aware of the expectations and behaviors when volunteering in the classroom. Topics can be addressed to create consistency and to avoid any favoritism by any parents amongst the children. Parents can develop these skills as an assistant to teachers in the classroom but more importantly be prepared to help their children and educate themselves as teachers in their own home.

**Home Visits.** Home visits are another way to outreach and recruit parent involvement. Home visits benefit children especially if they are enthusiastic about learning; additionally, home visits build a rapport between the teacher and families (Hindman & Morrison, 2011; Lewis et al., 2009; Meyer et al., 2011) as well as increasing the child’s academic performance (Hill & Taylor, 2009; Meyer et al., 2011). Children may show a higher interest in school if they recognize their teacher
and parents interacting in a different setting outside of the school especially if the child is the topic of positive discussion. Academic goals, communication, and positive attitudes can be established to influence positive outcomes for the child (Hindman & Morrison, 2011; Meyer et al., 2011). Another reason for home visits is to add insight for educators about how the child’s home life influences and impacts learning at school (Rule & Kyle, 2009). If the child has displayed negative behaviors in the classroom, a home visit may help teachers better understand why the child may have acted in this manner. Teachers, administrators, and parents can work together to provide support for the child if needed (Meyer et al., 2011). For example, if children are not getting their basic needs met at home, there are several ways to supplement or address these concerns at school such as breakfast, clothing from the clothes closet, or homework support in an afterschool program where available.

It is recommended that teachers conduct home visits in pairs for safety reasons but that also allows an interpreter to be made available. Not all families will be comfortable or willing to welcome teachers and other school staff into their homes, often refusing for fear of embarrassment or judgment (Meyer et al., 2011), in those cases other arrangements can be made as an initial attempt such as stopping by outside the home visit or parents coming to the school depending on what the parent feels comfortable with. This would be a way to meet and begin the conversation between teachers and parents. Teachers are suggested to attend trainings along with
being given monetary incentives such that home visits can be a bridge to building positive relationships as opposed to another added responsibility (Meyer et al., 2011; Rule & Kyle, 2009).

**Teaching Parents How to Support Learning At Home.** Teachers can provide instructions for parents and clear expectations so parents can assist with homework as one way to children’s support learning. In accordance with efficacy building, if parents feel knowledgeable about the task their child is doing they are more likely to stay involved in their child’s learning through play thus resulting in relationship-building. Parents can be taught strategies to help their child develop vocabulary knowledge, language skills, mathematical reasoning, and higher order thinking skills such as asking thought-provoking or application questions (Hindman & Morrison, 2011). Parents can create opportunities to engage with children so they can develop these skills indirectly. In situations where parents feel limited due to language or academia skills, parents can still encourage their children by providing feedback on their child’s performance (Walker et al., 2004). For example, parents may offer compliments when children show good study habits and when completing assignments. Furthermore, parents should be encouraged to expand their knowledge and awareness that homework is about analyzing and developing problem solving skills; by doing so, teachers have to demonstrate this for parents so they can be enabled with the appropriate tools to support their children (Walker et al., 2004).
**Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS).** All of the responsibility in preparing and differentiating homework is the responsibility of the teacher. Parents, however, play an immense role in achieving success in completing homework assignments successfully. Teachers can develop homework that engages parents such as having children read to them 2 to 3 times a week to accommodate family schedules, but also include a time for parents to validate their child’s learning (Walker et al., 2004). For example, parents validate their children’s learning by acknowledging the child’s academic growth, even if the progress happens in small increments. Van Hooris (2003) suggests that assignments need to include clear instructions for both child and parent; the objectives of the activities also need to be explicit for families to fully understand extensive assignments. Van Hooris (2003) discusses a homework program designed to involve parents: Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS). The program is characterized by four main components: 1) homework tasks are assigned periodically (i.e. twice a month or once a week); 2) assignments are provided a grace period of a few days to complete; 3) sections of the homework require interactions/ engagements with family members, and 4) parents include their feedback on the practicality of the activities for the parent and child. (Van Hooris, 2003). As a way to engage parents who may not have had an extensive education or any at all, the teacher provides interactive questions in order for the child
to complete the assignment. The assignments focus on what the child knows and also allows for parents to provide feedback on the assignments.

There were two important implications from TIPS. The first implication addressed the importance of teacher collaboration in designing the homework which requires time and available funds to compensate for professional development (Van Hooris, 2003). This planning was completed during summer months which might not otherwise have been completed. Teachers had to develop the purpose and identify the specific skills needed to be taught. The second implication addressed benefits of interactive homework. Parents were more aware of their child’s assignments in addition to being more involved. The students earned better grades as well as enjoyed the activity more (Van Hooris, 2003).

The proposed recommendations mentioned require collective efforts from schools, teachers, and the school district but also participation from families. The benefits of parental involvement for families and schools are countless but more importantly, the child’s academic and social development have long-term effects too. Various methods of communication, home visits, and invitations to inform families of school events and individual child reports can continue to maintain a positive relationship between teachers and parents. Academic parent-teacher teams and an array of opportunities for parents to volunteer in the classroom can provide parents a better understanding of the academic performance expected but also more insight on
how to further support their children at home focusing on a multiple skill(s). More efforts from schools and high expectations by the school district for schools to provide support centers create an open-door policy for families. The initiation and continued opportunities that the education systems provide can create the desired vision to embody a safe and welcoming environment for more and more families to be involved especially in low socio-economic areas. There are multiple ways for families to stay engaged and involved in their children’s schooling in both school and home.

There are many opportunities for involvement recommended for teachers and school staff to invite parents to participate in the classroom and at home. Due to the lack of resources and funds and in low socioeconomic areas, these activities were compiled to be readily available and applicable with some preparation to be implemented. The collaboration between home and school will continue to influence and support the development of children.
Chapter 3

METHODS

Project Design

This project was designed to help teachers increase their awareness of the importance of parent involvement, knowledge of ways that teachers can involve parents, understanding of the perceived barriers to parental involvement, and how to overcome these barriers. To this end, a literature review was conducted examining the importance of parental involvement and barriers to it. The research literature helped identify the importance of parental involvement to academic performance and development of children (Cox, 2005; Lewis et al., 2011; Tan & Goldberg, 2009).

Further examination of both the research and practice literature identified key barriers of: ethnic, cultural, and language barriers; socioeconomic barrier; parent efficacy, and role of staff as potential barriers. Finally, based on the research as well as the understanding of proximal processes, the importance of social capital, and the parent involvement model, recommendations and strategies were compiled to give to teachers. An informational PowerPoint, discussion activity, and accompanying resource information was developed and delivered in a teacher workshop.

A teacher professional development training was selected as the strategy for delivering information because research has identified this as the most common and
effective method of delivering information on best practices to educators (Burke, 2013; Stanley, 2011; Stewart, 2014). A teacher training was further selected because many of the barriers identified regard matching the school environment to the characteristics of the families they serve so a workshop would allow for discussion of the specific populations and needs of each individual school. These discussions could also increase teacher buy-in that changes needed to occur at the school before future programs could work to build parent efficacy and advocacy to initiate contact with the school.

Setting and Participants

A single elementary school was selected to deliver the workshop, as a case study. At the time of this project, the school had a total of 789 children (School Accountability Report Card, 2013-14). The school received Title I funds with 93.8% socioeconomically disadvantaged students and 48.3% English learners. All students qualified to receive free lunch. The ethnic demographic makeup of the school were: 53.7% Asian; 31.3% Hispanic or Latino; 5.4% Black or African American; 2.9% Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander; 2.8% White; 0.8% Filipino; 0.3% American Indian or Alaska native, and; 2.7% two or more races. There were a total of 30 teachers and 7 other staff (administrator, office staff, aides) at the school. Sixty-seven percent (67%) or 23 school staff voluntarily attended the parent involvement presentation and also completed the feedback survey. Those who participated were: 8 primary teachers
(Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd grades), 9 intermediate teachers (4th, 5th, and 6th grades), 3 in administrative positions (principal, assistant principal, and site instructional coordinator), and 2 specialists (speech and RSP). The years of total teaching years ranged from 5 years to 30 years ($M = 16.61; SD = 16$).

**Procedures**

One week prior to the presentation, an email was composed by the researcher and sent to the school staff requesting their voluntary participation. The parent involvement presentation was conducted after a regularly scheduled staff meeting during the first week of the school year. After the staff meeting, teachers were reminded by the researcher about the parent involvement presentation. About one-third of the teachers left after the staff meeting. The researcher thanked the teachers who were able to stay. A discussion was facilitated among the staff about how they envisioned parent participation to be at their school site. The general question was asked as a way to evoke personal experiences with parent involvement at the school site and could serve as an initial platform for discussion with the entire staff at a later time, if decided on by the principal. Three teachers and one administrator were actively engaged in the discussion as well as sharing ideas and acknowledging the current efforts of a few mentioned teachers. The parent involvement information was presented in a PowerPoint format that lasted approximately 20 minutes. Next, the
assessment was handed out and completed individually taking from 10 minutes to 20 minutes to complete. Teachers turned in the assessment when they were finished. Those who attended the workshop were provided with a list of additional online resources where they could get additional information.

**Data Collection**

An assessment of the content was given at the end of the presentation. The assessment was divided into three parts. The first section had three questions inquiring about the educator’s total teaching years, total years at the current elementary school, and current grade or position at the school. This would help determine the familiarity of the teacher with the families and community including any on-going success of the teachers’ efforts to recruit parents. The second section was based on a Likert-type scale of 0 (‘not likely’) to 10 (‘very likely’) to gather feedback regarding the presentation. There were four questions to determine if the information was relevant, useful, applicable, and feasible in their current classroom. Suggestions/ recommendations were compiled from various empirical studies that addressed the mentioned barriers and would be most beneficial to the populations of this elementary school. The third section was composed of 5 short response questions. These questions inquired about how teachers envisioned parents to be volunteering and what kinds of opportunities or challenges teachers have encountered in having
recruited parents into the classroom. It was also important to know what practices teachers were currently using to build relationships with the families and what activities teachers planned to have available for parents this year, if any. An additional section was available for any additional comments or feedback. All teachers who were present completed the assessment.
Chapter 4

DISCUSSION & RESULTS

The purpose of the current project was for teachers to learn about perceived barriers to parental involvement and to learn how to create opportunities for parents to be involved to support their child’s development and academic success in elementary school. A presentation was provided to improve teacher knowledge about the importance of parental involvement and to introduce strategies to overcome barriers for parent involvement in a low socioeconomic school. Feedback from teachers and administrators were also collected to take a closer look at the current practices and efforts to involve parents.

The training was found to be effective in achieving the goals of this project. An evaluation of the training was conducted and showed gains in knowledge and awareness. Teachers also made important recommendations for additional information and recommended additional strategies to enhance parent involvement. Specific results are discussed in more detail.
Training Assessment Results

Table 1 provides the mean and standard deviation of teacher feedback regarding the presentation. Teachers learned new information regarding parent involvement with an average rating over 8.00 (out of 10.00 possible). Teachers felt the parent involvement information presented was useful. Teachers also felt the recommendations suggested were achievable in their current classroom. Teachers reported they were likely to use the suggestions or recommendations in their own classroom this year.

Table 1. Presentation Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel that you learned some new information from this slide show?</td>
<td>8.04</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel this information presented is useful?</td>
<td>8.78</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel the recommendations can be achievable for you in your classroom?</td>
<td>8.24</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How likely are you to use the suggestions/recommendations?</td>
<td>8.24</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 displays how educators envisioned parents volunteering in the classroom. Nineteen of the 23 teachers (83%) stated they currently invite parents to volunteer. Four teachers (17%) did not invite parents. Two of the four teachers who do not invite parents to volunteer stated it would violate confidentiality of the students they work with. One teacher works with small groups of students for speech therapy; the other works in one-to-one or small groups as a resource specialist program (RSP) teacher. “Due to the type of groups we work with, parents would not be involved in the learning at the direct instruction level; however, parents would benefit from watching the way children learn and would be able to support the learning” (Anonymous, Parent Involvement Study Teacher Questionnaire, 2015). Those teachers that do initiate involvement do so during conversations either on the phone or at school events in which these parents are in attendance. Teachers also invited parents through ongoing newsletters. Teachers reported in the questionnaire that parents who volunteered usually helped in the classroom assisting the teacher with clerical projects or during class celebrations. Other parents donated supplies to help the teacher and students. Some barriers these teachers faced with parent involvement were schedule conflicts and language. An intermediate teacher stated, “most parents/guardians are hesitant or unavailable- there’s a perception of independence as upper grade students” (Anonymous, Parent Involvement Study Teacher Questionnaire, 2015).
In the feedback portion of the survey, teachers mentioned 68 times they wanted parents to be more visible on school campus or act as helpers. For example, teachers envisioned parents to be more visible in the classroom to read and/or listen to children, assist with class projects, attend school-wide functions, or act as a chaperone on field trips. Teachers also wanted to see parents be a part of decision-making committees and attend conferences. Many teachers also expressed (11 times) the importance of parents providing consistent and stable care in the household for the children if they are not able to volunteer in the class, but preferably wanted to see parents in the classroom sharing their knowledge and skills.

Maintaining a positive relationship was found to be important for parents and teachers to create a consistency for the children as reported by teachers. Many of the teachers at this school site stay connected through conversation when parents are on school campus or during home visits, which may realistically occur once or twice a year. There is also continued communication through weekly newsletters or notes to inform parents of the events in the classroom and school. Four teachers indicated, as a way to build a positive relationship, they created a welcoming environment in their classrooms and acknowledged parents in passing through quick conversation. Some teachers also made themselves visible during the school events as a way to connect with parents who do attend.
Many teachers report they would like to provide opportunities for parents to be involved this year. Teachers would like to have parents work or read with kids in small groups or have parents attend school events. The next most requested form of assistance from parents would be completing clerical projects. Thirteen percent (13%) of teachers mentioned they would like parents to share their knowledge or skill with their classrooms.

Table 2. Teachers’ Vision of Parental Involvement in Their Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How can parents??</strong></td>
<td>Parents on campus</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents are teachers in their home</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What do they do in class?</strong></td>
<td>Parents helping in the classroom</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents donating</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How do you recruit parents?</strong></td>
<td>Conversations</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Newsletters</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What are some barriers?</strong></td>
<td>Schedule conflict</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other: misconception; too much hassle</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How do you build rapport?</strong></td>
<td>Conversation</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Newsletters/ notes</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Welcoming environment</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outside of school/classroom activities</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What other ways can parents help?</strong></td>
<td>Parents as helpers</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents as teachers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The presentation was only delivered to one school so multiple presentations to more schools throughout the district would be beneficial to gather more data and feedback about parental involvement, in general, but also to gain feedback on what...
parent involvement practices are working at the different schools and why these practices are working. Although this was a limitation, this study was able to assess the efforts of the teachers at this specific school. The information was given to the administrator as a baseline to initiate different methods for parent involvement. For future studies, an extension of this project would be to implement the presentation at the beginning of the year and conduct an assessment at the middle and end of the year to measure the involvement of parents based on one or two specific strategies that the entire school would be implementing. Another recommendation is to have a study between two or three schools with similar demographics, each using a different strategy to recruit families to discover which could result in the most parent involvement. Another study could be conducted between schools with high parent involvement and different major ethnic groups could be compared to examine what might be a catalyst for involvement. This could provide more insight on what might motivate specific ethnic groups.

The results of the current study showed the case study school was already high on desire to involve parents. Since the staff is looking to recruit parents as helpers and leaders it may be that a lower SES school might be more in need of creating a parent-teacher organization. Despite teachers’ desire for parental involvement, teachers reported there were not a large number of parents consistently and actively involved on school campus. Many of the teachers do recruit parents to
volunteer via different methods. A suggestion is to develop a coordinated school-wide plan for recruitment and training of parents so they know the expectation of parent involvement for their child(ren) at the school. For future trainings, intervention should target schools with low acceptance of parental involvement to address attitudes toward parents and perspectives of educators on how to get parents involved. Lastly, the perceptions of one teacher’s efforts to involve parents may differ from parents’ perceptions. Future projects should collect parents’ feedback and perspective on how they feel the teachers and schools could be more welcoming to parents on how to get parents to be involved. This would provide a better idea of how parents perceive the teachers’ outreach for involvement.

**Discussion**

The assessment of the training was encouraging; responses indicated teachers at the school were interested in working with parents and felt they benefited by learning about barriers and ways to overcome them. This is just the beginning; these strategies need to be put in place and assessed over time. Parent involvement in-service trainings could be embedded in teacher training programs (Green et al., 2007; Lewis et al., 2011). This would provide teachers with skills and strategies to get parents involved in their children’s learning in various capacities. Schools can also provide programs to help families on how to overcome challenges such as time and
energy (Green et al., 2007). This could make parents more aware of their role as a partner in their child’s education, development, and growth. In collaboration, parents and teachers can support each other.

When there are high teacher expectations for students, students are more likely to meet those expectations (Rutchick et al., 2009; Tan & Goldberg, 2008). Similarly, parents’ expectations are important so if they can match their expectations to the teachers this could help increase the academic achievement of the students. In attempts to involve parents and increase student achievement, it is important to inform parents about educational programs and college-planning (Auerbach & Collier, 2012) and to which parents can actively advocate for their children (Oakes et al., 2006). Building knowledge and self-efficacy puts parents in a position to do that. Parents can be better aware of the resources available and have a better understanding of the minimum basic procedures and needs of college entry. Furthermore, it is important to emphasize the effort and proficiency of the child rather than solely on academic success (Auerbach & Collier, 2012) such that when too much pressure and negative attention is placed upon the need of the child to perform, the child can deviate from pursuing his/ her full academic potential (Wingard & Forsberg, 2009).

Families and educators alike are encouraged to understand, connect, and collaborate with each other. Multiple resources and various methods to build relationships are available and can be utilized as established through the schools and
its district. The opportunity of home visits is one way to learn more about each other in a more intimate way. Ultimately, this gives the teacher more insight to understand the child and his or her lifestyle in order to accommodate the child’s needs in the classroom (Hindman & Morrison, 2011; Lewis et al., 2009; Meyer et al., 2011).

Relationships are established between families and the teacher but also between the child and the teacher. Each of the relationships can develop further as the year progresses. Continuous newsletters and communication from teachers to notify families of their child’s progress is recommended for those parents who are not able to volunteer in the class. More resources are becoming available for families at the school site. Families are encouraged to attend school events that are held by schools to support the learning and development of their children. Programs such as the APPT are established as a way for parents and teachers to connect but also establish some consistency in academic skills and strategies for children’s learning. Parent resource centers can connect families with many outside agencies for needs that the school cannot provide. There are a multitude of opportunities for families and teachers to collaborate and connect in support of the child.

In the same school district, informal observations were made at another school. This science and mathematics-focused school is located in a middle-class community; parent involvement hours were required by design of the school’s program. Parents can contribute in many ways, for example, preparing projects at
Parents also have other options of taking a managerial position such as fieldtrip coordinator, finance manager, class president, or events coordinator, to name a few. Parents contribute funds for their children’s field trip fees and classroom material funds. Many families network with community agencies or contact previous businesses, which they have developed a strong relationship with to ask for donations for events. The school also provides several opportunities for fund raising throughout the year.

The academic program is based on thematic units that are thoroughly developed and planned by grade level members. There are a variety of after school programs available for the children to be engaged. In comparing this particular school to the focus school, there are many apparent differences. Some of the main differences that families in low socioeconomic areas are the requirement for parents to contribute a minimum amount of parent participation hours per year, monetary contribution, and an extensive variety of involvement opportunities and roles for parents to partake. There are barriers that families are faced with if these same expectations are placed on low-socioeconomic area schools, for example, time and finances. One parent might need to miss work to volunteer, which means less income for the household. Another barrier is also the additional yearly cost for field trips that
may not be budgeted in the family expenses. Schools in low socioeconomic areas need to find ways to address such barriers and/or find alternative opportunities for parents to be more involved in different ways.

There are many barriers or challenges families may perceive to participate in school especially in low socioeconomic areas. The need for more resources is prevalent but not always existent depending on the amount of funding, parent voice and awareness, and demand. Teachers are encouraged to create opportunities for parents to be involved in the classroom and on school campus. The school climate can also create a warm inviting environment for parents to feel welcomed. It is also important for parents to take an active role in their children’s development and growth.

**Conclusion**

Overall, school climate sets a strong contextual foundation for involvement, and school principals have a critical role in creating and maintaining a positive, welcoming climate. These practices appear especially important in schools serving families of children at higher risk for poor educational outcomes (Hoover- Dempsey et al., 2005, pg. 111).

This quote highlights that it is important for schools to provide a school climate that welcomes, engages, and connects everyone. Teachers can contribute by creating and implement a plan of action to involve parents in each of their own classrooms that takes into account potential barriers. According to the Parent
Engagement Model, trust and communication are important to establish a trusting relationship (Green et al., 2005). Furthermore, when relationships were formed such that parents feel more comfortable to communicate with teachers, they are provided with more options and resources to be involved (Social Capital Model). Parents who are connected are more open to share their suggestions about their child’s learning. Administrates or principals can help establish a welcoming school community by fostering relationships with the teachers and parents, and seeing that both have a voice in the educating and supporting of students (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Rule & Kyle, 2009). After all, educators and parents working together give the student the best environment for working up to their potential.