REDUCING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP THROUGH PARENT INVOLVEMENT

A Project

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Abstract

of

REDUCING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP THROUGH PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

by

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Statement of Problem

The academic achievement gap continues to be a critical issue in the education of minority and economically disadvantaged students (Bemak, Chung, & Siroskey-Sabdo, 2005; College Board, 1999; Flores, 2007; Yaffe & Educational Testing Service, 2011). Due to an increase in poverty in the U.S., many more students are more likely to experience an education that is characterized by the academic achievement gap. In comparison to students from higher-income backgrounds, students from low-income backgrounds are more likely to fall behind in various areas of academic achievement. The lower levels of academic achievement among low-income students often result from the lack of access to adequately resourced schools and equal opportunities to learn (Flores, 2007).

The ability for low-income middle school students to be academically successful despite their educationally disadvantaged environments has been attributed to many individually-based factors (Elliott, DiPerna, Mroch, & Lang, 2004). However, current research has found that parental involvement and perceptions play a key role in
determining academic achievement for low-income students (McCoach et al., 2010).
Many parents are aware that they play a role in their child’s academic success. However, some parents are often unsure of the specific things they can do to support their child’s academic success (West-Olatunji, Sanders, Mehta, & Behar-Horenstein, 2010). Therefore, it is important to help parents in low-income families understand how their involvement plays a vital role in promoting the academic achievement of their students.

Sources of Data
A workshop was created that focused on parental involvement as an environmental factor that promotes academic achievement in low-income students. The researcher collected evaluations on each day of the workshop. The aim of the evaluations was to provide the researcher with feedback on the effectiveness of various aspects of the workshop. The evaluation consisted of checklist, Likert-Scale, and open-ended questions. Analysis of the evaluation results allowed the researcher to determine workshop effectiveness.

Conclusions Reached
After completion of the two workshops, findings showed that the workshop effectively provided low-income parents with research-based involvement practices shown to support academic success and help reduce the academic achievement gap for low-income middle school students. The information gained from this workshop will help low-income parents know how to be more involved in the academic achievement of their students.
student. Additionally, the effective design of this workshop will be useful in the planning of future parental involvement workshops.

_______________________, Committee Chair
Dr. Kimberly Gordon Biddle

_______________________
Date
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to provide low-income parents with research-based practices that have been shown to support academic success and help reduce the academic achievement gap for low-income middle school students. This information will be shared with parents in the form of a workshop series. Content for the workshops will be based on research findings about supporting academic achievement in middle school students, with a particular focus on achievement for low-income students.

In addition to previous research findings, this project will also incorporate concerns the parents themselves have with the role they play in their child’s education. Through this project, parents will be able to address their personal concerns and learn about specific research-based practices to promote academic success. It is hoped that presenting low-income parents with this information will result in increased academic success for their students. In turn, this increase in academic success may help to reduce the academic achievement gap for these low-income students.

Statement of the Problem

The academic achievement gap continues to be a critical issue in the education of ethnic minority and economically disadvantaged students (Bemak, Chung, & Siroskey-Sabdo, 2005; College Board, 1999; Flores, 2007; Yaffe & Educational Testing Service, 2011). Due to an increase in poverty in the U.S., many more students are likely to experience an education that is characterized by the economic academic achievement
gap. In comparison to students from higher-income backgrounds, students from low-income backgrounds are more likely to fall behind in various areas of academic achievement. The lower levels of academic achievement among low-income students often result from the lack of access to adequately resourced schools and equal opportunities for learning (Flores, 2007).

The ability for low-income middle school students to be academically successful despite their educationally disadvantaged environments has been attributed to many person-specific characteristics, as opposed to contextual and environmental factors. Some of these individual characteristics included one’s level of motivation, engagement, and social ability (Elliot et al., 2004). However, current research has found that parental involvement and perceptions play a key role in determining academic achievement for low-income students (McCoach et al., 2010). Many parents are aware that they play a role in their child’s academic success. However, some parents are often unsure of the specific things they can do to support their child’s academic success (West-Olatunji et al., 2010). Therefore, it is important to help parents in low-income families understand how their involvement plays a vital role in promoting the academic achievement of their students.

**Significance of the Project**

Despite continued efforts by schools to close the academic achievement gap, the lag in academic achievement among low-income students remains a widespread issue in education. One important issue in addressing this academic achievement gap is finding ways to ensure that low-income students have the same opportunity to achieve their
educational goals (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2001). There have been many interventions aimed at reducing the academic achievement gap among middle and high school students. These include programs such as the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) and the Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP). But these programs address the academic achievement gap by focusing only on the students. This student focus may not be enough to resolve the issue of the increasing academic achievement gap, especially given the research supporting the importance of the parents’ role (Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins, & Weiss, 2006; Ingram, Wolfe, & Lieberman, 2007; Turner & Johnson, 2003). Therefore, parents also need to be a focus of any efforts designed to close the achievement gap among low-income students. But many parents, particularly those in low-income families, are not aware of the practices they can adopt to help their students in achieving academic success (West-Olatunji et al., 2010).

According to the Bioecological Theory, an individual’s development is influenced by the active interaction between the individual, time, and various environmental influences (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). These environmental influences consist of the various activities and behaviors surrounding an individual. In relation to this project, the actions and behaviors of parents can be seen as a critically important environmental influence impacting a student. Since a main focus of this theory is on the interaction between the individual and their environment, it is seems that future interventions would be more effective with the incorporation of parents.

This project is designed to create an intervention, which focuses on parental involvement as an environmental factor that promotes academic resilience and success in
low-income students. The project will highlight the specific practices of parental involvement that have been shown to promote academic achievement in students in an educationally disadvantaged environment. Increasing focus on these environmental factors can result in more resilient and academically successful students who are no longer impacted by the academic achievement gap.

A review of previous studies confirms that parental involvement plays a vital role in countering the adverse effects a low-income student may face in an educationally disadvantaged environment. In a study conducted by McCoach et al. (2010), the academic achievement of low-income schools was predicted by examining various school demographic and background variables. Students in high achieving schools were found to have higher levels of parental involvement with the school and communication with teachers (McCoach et al., 2010).

Another study examined the influence of family involvement on the literacy skills of low-income students (Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins, & Weiss, 2006). The researchers reported a positive association between family involvement and the low-income students’ literacy achievement. Students were shown to improve in literacy performance when family involvement increased (Dearing et al., 2010).

These studies demonstrate that parental involvement is a major factor that can promote the success and academic achievement of low-income students, thereby helping to close the achievement gap for these students. Since the impact of parental involvement may be greatest among low-income students (Dearing et al., 2010; McCoach et al., 2010), it is important to have this population be a primary focus in the implementation of
intervention services. The proposed project will help to provide parents of low-income students with the necessary knowledge to promote their involvement and support for their students.

**Methods**

The aim of the proposed project was to develop and present a pilot workshop series for parents of low-income, low achieving middle school students. The parent participants were recruited from families of students enrolled in AVID classes at an urban middle school in the Sacramento Unified School District. In order to ensure that the population of the school was reflective of low-income families, the researcher verified that at least 50% of the students qualified for free or reduced lunch. Parents received an informational flier informing them of the upcoming opportunity to participate in the workshop. The goal of the recruitment was to obtain the participation of at least 30 low-income families in the workshop.

The project began with a thorough review of the literature related to parental support of students’ academic achievement, with a focus on supporting the success of low-income and or middle school students. This review helped the researcher identify pertinent information for parents to be included in the workshop content.

Workshop content was organized into two sessions held over the course of two weeks. In the first session, the researcher presented information and activities to help parents understand and incorporate practices that would best support the academic achievement of their student into their daily lives. The researcher also provided parents with resources for the promotion of the academic achievement of their student.
On the second day of the workshop, which occurred two weeks later, parents reported on the progress and effectiveness they had with implementing the various practices and skills discussed in the first session of the workshop. Parents shared and discussed the challenges and successes they encountered while trying to carry out the plans they had made two weeks earlier. At the end of each session, parents completed an anonymous questionnaire which elicited feedback about each day of the workshop.

**Definition of Terms**

For the purposes of the current project, academic achievement has been characterized as a students’ academic performance level. Grade point averages and standardized test scores are frequently used to measure the academic achievement levels of students (Flores, 2007). The achievement gap has been discussed as the lack of low-income students’ ability to achieve an equivalent level of academic success as their higher income counterparts (Flores, 2007; Yaffe & Educational Testing Service, 2011). The discrepancy in achievement levels between groups creates a discouraging gap in the educational system. Parent involvement or participation was often described as the display of various behaviors such as: volunteering at school, maintaining contact with the teacher and school, attending various school events, monitoring and providing support during homework, setting high academic expectations for their student (Halle, Kurtz-Costes, & Mahoney, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Burrow, 1995; Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996). In terms of low-income status, many studies based this categorization on per capita income or the low socioeconomic status of families (Dearing et al., 2010). Low-income students are often identified by their eligibility for free or reduced price
school lunch (Milne & Plourde, 2006). Academic resilience has also been addressed in terms of the types of protective individual and environmental factors that are able to aid in the academic success of students, despite the impoverished conditions of their lives (West-Olatunji et al., 2010).

**Limitations**

There are several factors that could present limitations to the usefulness and value of this project. Since the topic of these workshops was personal and sensitive, some parents may not have been completely open to learning about and expanding on their parenting skills. In order to avoid this, participation in the workshops was volunteer-based. This way the parents who attended the seminar were those who were open to learning new information and sharing experiences with others who were in similar situations as themselves.

Similarly, parents may feel uncomfortable or be offended at the suggestion that they may be contributing to the academic failure of their student. They may have been under the impression that they were doing something wrong in their parenting method. Having this approach could have been offensive and made some parents become uninterested in participating in the workshop. In order to avoid this issue, during the workshop, participants were given multiple opportunities to initially to share and discuss their own parental questions and concerns. This way parents felt reassured that the purpose of the workshop was to provide them with research based information and incorporate any concerns they may have had about their role in promoting the academic achievement of their child.
The content of the workshops presented several additional limitations. First, the focus of the workshops was on practices designed to promote academic achievement in low-income students, and content did not include supporting other aspects of students’ development. A further limitation was that the workshop content did not specifically address issues related to any cultural differences that may have been evident among the participants. The researcher did, however, make efforts to incorporate any cultural issues and concerns parents may have had. The researcher was only able to incorporate issues that were shared with them. It is possible parents had additional issues the researcher was unable to address because she was unaware. Another limitation was that the content for the workshop involved ways of parental involvement that may not be practical for low-income parents to incorporate into their lives. The parental involvement practices mentioned in the workshop might be more applicable to parents of high socioeconomic status. In order to address this, parents were provided with the opportunity to discuss ways the research conflicted with the reality of their lives, and any modifications that could be made so that the parental involvement practices would be most useful for their families.

**Organization of the Project**

The first chapter has presented an overview of a project to help low-income parents support the academic achievement of their middle school students. Chapter Two includes a review of literature in four main areas: the prevalence and persistence of the academic achievement gap in low-income and ethnic minority students, programs and intervention aimed at providing student-centered support to increase academic
achievement, parental involvement as an influential factor in supporting academic
achievement, and current efforts to assist low-income parents in providing support for
their students that will increase their academic achievement. Chapter 3 describes the
methods used to complete the project. Chapter 4 will report the results of the workshop
evaluation surveys and discuss the project implementation and recommendations for
dissemination and future use. The appendices will include the project and all
supplemental materials used for the workshop.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Academic achievement is a goal many parents have for their students. Parents know that there is an increased potential for real-world success if their student is able to maintain a certain level of academic success while in school (Hara & Burke, 1998). This mindset is even more evident for low-income parents who know that academic achievement can be an effective way to ensure future financial stability. Having a strong educational background will provide their student with the opportunity to succeed. Though many parents are aware that education is the key to the future economic success of their student, many are not completely knowledgeable of the exact steps and resources they can use to help ensure a strong education for their student (West-Olatunji et al., 2010). The following is a review of literature that addresses the achievement gap issue and subsequent attempts to reduce the gap. This is followed by a discussion of the researcher’s suggested recommendation as to how aspects of parent involvement can aid in the reduction of the achievement gap. Using effective programming to provide low-income parents with the various parental involvement practices should increase the likelihood of parents’ incorporating these skills into their daily lives (Ramirez, 2004).
The Academic Achievement Gap for Low-Income Students

Prevalence and persistence. Academic achievement, the attainment of grade point averages and standardized test scores that are at a level of proficiency, is an aspect of education that is not attained by all students. The likelihood of low-income students to perform more poorly than their higher-income counterparts has been described as an academic achievement gap (Flores, 2007; Yaffe & Educational Testing Service, 2011). According to the California Department of Education (2011), figures from the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Report indicate that only 44% of low-income students met the proficient or advanced criterion level in English-Language Arts and only 49% did so in Mathematics. When compared to their higher-income counterparts, fewer than half of low-income students were able to meet the state standards in these specific academic areas.

Students who live in low-income areas are also less likely to have access to programs and resources that promote educational achievement and success than students who live in high income areas (Flores, 2007). This lack of access and information has made many students unable to reach their educational goals and placed them at-risk for academic failure. As a result, the academic achievement gap continues to be a critical issue in the education of ethnic minority and economically disadvantaged students (Bemak, Chung, & Siroskey-Sabdo, 2005; College Board, 1999; Flores, 2007; Yaffe & Educational Testing Service, 2011).

Prevalence and persistence in relation to ethnic minorities. The lack of academic achievement on the part of low-income ethnic minority students continues to be
a major trend in the educational system. The largest discrepancy was seen among low-income African American and Hispanic minority students. Ethnic minority students continue to be outperformed by their Caucasian counterparts (Ward, 2006). The gap in achievement is evident upon examination of the high school completion rate of low-income ethnic minorities. In 1971, the difference in high school completion between Caucasian and low-income Hispanic students was 34%. By 2003, this difference had only decreased to 32% (Ward, 2006). Though slight gains have been made to narrow the achievement gap impacting low-income ethnic minority students, the problem continues to be prevalent and persistent within their communities.

The achievement gap among ethnic minorities can especially be seen in the academic area of advanced mathematics. Riegle-Crumb and Grodsky (2010) examined the achievement gap in advanced courses that include pre-calculus and calculus. Though there has been an increase in enrollment in advanced mathematic courses, African American and Hispanic students do not seem to reach the same level of success in these courses as Caucasian students. They found that some factors contributing to the lack of success included low levels of parent education and family income (Riegle-Crumb & Grodsky, 2010). Despite enrollment in advanced courses, the majority of low-income ethnic minority students continue to fall within the achievement gap because they are still unable to reach the academic success that is attained by their Caucasian counterparts.

**Reducing the Academic Achievement Gap through Legislation**

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was aimed at holding all educators accountable for the lack of academic achievement in the mathematics and
reading skills of all children. By setting national educational standards, the federal
government aimed to have all students proficient in math and reading (Taylor et al.,
2010). Under this legislation, the use of assessments provided the government with tools
to change the achievement gap among low-income and minority students (Berliner,
Arizona State University, University of Colorado at Boulder, & the Public Interest,
2009).

According to Murnane (2007), the basic foundation of the NCLB legislation was
hindered by the lack of attainable standards or goals. The performance goals for the
students were not realistically achievable. Also, the NCLB did not provide states with
strong enough incentives for strengthening high school graduation requirements and
increasing the rates of high school graduates. Also, the NCLB did not provide states with
the financial means to allow many schools to effectively increase performance levels of
failing students through the development of teacher training programs (Murnane, 2007).

Further criticisms of the NCLB were discussed by Darling-Hammond (2006),
who stated that though restructured schools were benefiting from NCLB, the majority of
urban students of color and low-income were being failed by the system. Her view is that
the NCLB ends up increasing the drop-out rates of students and creates difficulty in
allowing educators to develop personalized relationships with their students. Also, the
focus on assessments that reflect performance on the federal standards hinders the
incorporation of assessments that reflect performance on critical thinking levels and
abilities (Darling-Hammond, 2006).
Based on the various criticisms discussed, the federal attempt to reduce the academic achievement gap may be seen as ineffective. For Murnane (2007) and Darling-Hammond (2006), the NCLB has many changes that need to be incorporated into the foundation of the federal program in order for it to make effective change in the lives of all students. The development of grants would be an effective way to provide states and schools with the financial means to create the programs necessary to support educators (Murnane, 2007). Also, the federal government can make the NCLB more effective by restructuring the measure of school accountability so that schools are not given incentives for pushing out students who consistently do not meet the federally mandated standards (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

Though the federal government took the initiative to address the achievement gap within education, the efforts made may have not been as effective as hoped because it seemed to be beneficial for only a small number of students. It turns out that many low-income students and students of color are not reaping the proposed benefits of the NCLB (Murnane, 2007). Despite this attempt by the federal government, more needs to be done in order to ensure that all students, especially low-income students, are able to be academically successful. Reduction of the achievement gap should not be limited to a few students, but should be accessible to all students. This issue led to the development of additional means for closing the achievement gap through creating in-school intervention and/or support programs for students (Ward, 2006).
Student-Centered Programs and Interventions

Despite their educationally disadvantaged environments, studies have shown that low-income middle school students have the potential to be academically successful. This potential has been attributed to many individual factors including: motivation, engagement, social skills and study skills (Elliott, DiPerna, Mroch, & Lang, 2004). One important means of addressing the academic achievement gap has been to ensure that low-income students have the same opportunities to achieve their educational goals (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2001). This approach has led to the development of various intervention programs aimed at reducing the academic achievement gap. Most of these programs have been designed to work directly and specifically with selected middle and high school students. Examples of such programs in California include the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) and the Early Academic Outreach Programs (EAOP).

The AVID program is an organization aimed at closing the academic achievement gap by increasing the 4-year college attendance rate of low-income and ethnic minority students. AVID helps students develop note-taking, time-management, organization, and group collaboration skills. AVID also provides the opportunities necessary for college success by ensuring student enrollment and achievement in some rigorous Advanced Placement Calculus, Economics, English, or Chemistry courses. As a result, the AVID program was able to increase the number of students who are prepared to have a successful college career (Mendiola, Watt, & Huerta, 2010). Similarly, EAOPs are University of California based programs that are focused on closing the academic
achievement gap through increasing academic achievement. These programs also provide students with direct services that give them the educational opportunities to achieve academic success. Some of the ways students are supported are through mentoring, academic advising, and college test preparation (Jackson, 2010).

Other efforts that address the achievement gap include the implementation of Program Achieve. This program provided low-income and underachieving students with the opportunity to experience academic growth in the subject areas of mathematics and reading. Project Achieve was a local instructional effort that was implemented in elementary and middle school grades. This instructional effort was an eight-step continuous process that used test scores to determine areas of need. Once these needs where placed on a calendar, instructional lessons were given so that they fit within the timeframe stated on the calendar. Mini-assessments were followed by tutoring and enrichment in areas that were not mastered. Materials and support were given to help students maintain skill levels, while educators within the instructional process continuously monitored student progress (Speas, Wake County Public School System, & Research, 2003). An evaluation of the effectiveness of the program showed that students were able to meet the previously unachievable state standards. There was also an increase in the number of students who performed at or above grade level (Speas, et al., 2003).

While in-school interventions can provide needed support for low achieving students, these programs address the academic achievement gap by focusing only on the students. This student focus may not be enough to eliminate a student’s achievement gap, especially given the research supporting the importance of the parents’ role in a child’s
learning and development (Dearing et al., 2010; Ingram et al., 2007; McCoach et al., 2010; Turner & Johnson, 2003). Unfortunately, many parents, particularly those in low-income families, are not aware of the practices they can adopt to help their students in achieving academic success. Therefore, parents also need to be a focus of any efforts to close the achievement gap among low-income students.

**Parental Involvement as an Influential Factor**

According to Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological Perspective, an individual’s development is influenced by the active interaction between the individual, time, and various environmental influences (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). These environmental influences consist of the various individuals, activities, and behaviors interacting with an individual. In relation to this project, the actions and behaviors of parents can been seen as a critically important environmental influence impacting a student.

Current research indicates that parental involvement and perceptions play a key role in determining academic achievement for low-income students (Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Milne & Plourde, 2006). Many parents are aware that they contribute to their child’s academic success. However, some low-income parents are often unsure of the specific things they can do to support their child’s academic success (West-Olatunji et al., 2010). Therefore, it is important to help parents in low-income families understand how their involvement plays a vital role in promoting the academic achievement of their students.
Role of parental involvement. To examine the role parental involvement plays as a factor in the achievement of at-risk students, Turner and Johnson (2003) studied 169 African American pre-school children, their parents, and their teachers. They proposed a theoretical model of mastery motivation which hypothesized a direct relationship between parental characteristics, parenting beliefs and interactions, and a child’s mastery motivation and ability to achieve academically. The Kaufman Survey of Early Academic and Language Skills battery was administered to the children as a pre-test and post-test at the beginning and end of the school year. Parents answered questionnaires regarding their education, income, self-efficacy, parenting beliefs, and parent-child relationships.

Turner and Johnson (2003) found that there was a statistically significant and direct relationship between parent-child interactions and academic achievement of at-risk students, with mastery motivation acting as a mediating factor. Mastery motivation was considered to be an individual variable that explains student’s engagement in various activities and academic progress. These findings showed that there was a strong relationship between at-risk African American students’ ability to perform well and the level of parental involvement (Turner & Johnson, 2003). This was an important finding because it supported the argument that achievement can be fostered when at-risk students have parental figures who are involved and supportive of their education.

Some of the methods used by Turner and Johnson (2003) limit the findings of this study. For example, parents provided a self-report of the interactions between themselves and their children which may not have been accurate. Another threat to this study’s validity was that the participants were of a nonrandom sample, which restricted the
findings from being able to generalize to a larger population. A strong area of this longitudinal study was the inclusion of a pre-test measure of student achievement as a control variable in the analysis of the data (Turner & Johnson, 2003). Despite some minor limitations, this study provided a methodologically sound depiction of the impact parental involvement can have in the academic achievement of at-risk pre-school students.

In a longitudinal study by Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins, & Weiss (2006), family involvement was characterized as the level of parent involvement within schools. Some of the behaviors that constituted parent involvement within schools included how often parents attended parent-teacher conferences, visited and volunteered in their student’s classroom, and attended school social events (Dearing et al., 2006). This research focused on the association between family involvement within school and the literacy achievement of low-income elementary students. Following 281 students from kindergarten to fifth grade, researchers hypothesized that students with more involved parents would outperform students whose parents were less involved.

Data for this study were taken from two federally-funded intervention programs, the Comprehensive Child Development Program (CCDP) and the School Transition Study (STS). Information on family involvement was self-reported by the mothers. The Letter-Word Identification subscale was used to determine literacy performance levels in kindergarten, third grade, and fifth grade (Dearing et al., 2006).

Dearing et al. (2006) found that there was a positive association between family involvement and literacy involvement. Mothers who were only involved on an average level had students who had an average performance in literacy, whereas more involved
mothers were found to have students who had higher literacy performance levels. Again, the findings of this study were limited by the use of the self-report methods to obtain information regarding parental involvement. Also, the use of participants from CCDP and STS programs may have created a potential for additional bias. Families who participated in these programs could have had characteristics that made them inherently different from low-income parents who did not participate in such programs. For example, by voluntarily participating in these programs, families show a greater level of interest than families who did not participate. Based on this difference, use of data from this sample of participants can make it more difficult for any findings to be generalized to the larger population of all low-income parents.

Despite the limitation, this was a strong study because the researchers provided a longitudinal examination of the association between parental involvement and achievement in the area of literacy. Few studies have been able to show this relationship over a long period of time. By accomplishing this task, these researchers were able to effectively support the notion that parental involvement plays an important role in supporting the academic achievement of low-income students.

In addition to student-based approaches, the academic achievement gap can be most effectively reduced with the incorporation of parent-based intervention programs. Because parental involvement has been shown to be an important factor in enhancing and supporting the academic achievement of low-income students (Evans & Shaw, 2000; Turner & Johnson, 2003), it is imperative that intervention programs develop ways to
keep parents informed and empowered in regards to the role they play in supporting the academic achievement of their student.

**Parental involvement practices.** With the establishment of the importance of parental involvement, it is also necessary to highlight the specific parental involvement practices that have been shown to support the academic achievement of low-income students. This issue was examined in a study conducted by Milne and Plourde (2006). They examined the home factors that enabled low-socioeconomic status students to attain academic success. Using purposive sampling, researchers interviewed the primary caregivers of six high achieving, low-socioeconomic status second grade students. The researchers asked about 20 questions designed to elicit information on the parents’ home practices and routines (Milne & Plourde, 2006).

Milne and Plourde (2007) transcribed and coded the responses, noting four emergent themes. The first theme, educational resources, revealed that parents of high achieving students often reported that their home environment was well equipped with the structure and materials necessary to aid in their student’s academic achievement. In the theme of relationships, parents viewed themselves as having very positive relationships with their student as well as some level of support system (Milne & Plourde, 2006).

The education of the parents themselves was another important theme of the study. The lowest grade achieved by the parents was the tenth grade, while the highest level achieved was a bachelor’s degree. Parents with low levels of education often expressed to their children the importance of staying in school and getting an education.
A fourth theme, labeled cause of success, was related to parents’ reports that their student’s achievement was mostly due to having the necessary support and guidance within the home (Milne & Plourde, 2006).

The findings of this ethnographic study identified several important home characteristics that are present among low-socioeconomic students with high academic achievement. Milne and Plourde (2006) suggest that these characteristics aid in countering any negative impacts low-socioeconomic status may have on a student. Their findings support the idea that parenting and an educationally supportive home environment are influential in the academic achievement of low-income students.

Ingram, Wolfe, and Lieberman (2007) conducted a study that resulted in slightly different findings. Their descriptive study focused on developing a model of parental involvement using low-income schools with high levels of parental involvement and high academic achievement of low-income students. The aim was to create a model of parental involvement that could be useful with other schools that have many low-income and underachieving elementary students. The study was based on Epstein’s six typologies: collaborating with the community, making decisions, learning within the home, communicating, parenting, and volunteering (Ingram et al., 2007).

Using Epstein’s six typologies of parent involvement, researchers mailed parents the Family Involvement Questionnaire to obtain information on three specific areas of parental involvement found to be present within these high achieving low-income schools: school-based involvement, home-based involvement, and home-school
conferencing (Ingram et al., 2007). Out of the three schools that participated in the study, a total of 220 parents returned their surveys.

Ingram et al. (2007) found that parents consistently reported frequent participation in various parenting practices such as the following:

limiting a child’s television and video watching, taking the child to school in the morning, keeping a regular morning and bedtime schedule, praising a child for schoolwork, sharing stories with a child, checking to see that the child has a place at home where books or school materials are kept, maintaining clear rules at home, and picking up a child from school in the afternoon. (p. 485)

Though Ingram et al. (2007) found that parents always attended parent conferences, a majority of parents themselves reported having very little involvement in activities that involved communicating with the school. Additionally, most parents reported that they rarely participate in volunteer opportunities, planning of classroom activities, or collaborating with the community. Rather, parents more often reported involvement in activities that promote learning at home in the following areas:

reviewing schoolwork, taking children to the library, taking children to places such as zoos and museums, talking with children about how fun learning is, bringing home learning materials, spending time working on reading and writing skills, talking to teachers about expectations of completing schoolwork at home, spending time working on creative activities, and spending time working on number skills. (Ingram et al., 2007, p. 486)
The findings of this study were very different from the typical view of what type of parent involvement is necessary for ensuring the academic achievement of low-income students. The parents at these schools reported that they only engaged in 2 of Epstein’s 6 typologies of parent involvement. The two most influential typologies in the academic success of the low-income elementary students were parenting and learning within the home (Ingram et al., 2007).

The methodology of this study was a major limitation that hindered the researchers’ ability to determine whether the other four areas of Epstein’s typology were influential factors for the academic achievement of the participant students. Ingram et al. (2007) used self-report questionnaires as a way to obtain the information of parent involvement. This method allows room for response bias because parents are more likely to rate themselves at a more positive level (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009).

In addition, the number of parents who actually responded to the mail-in questionnaire introduces another limiting factor. Out of the three schools that participated in this study, Ingram et al. (2007) had a response rate of only about 26%. The fact that such a small number of parents participated, suggests an increased possibility that these parents might share common characteristics that would make them more likely to participate in the study, and also possibly more likely to be involved parents.

In 2000, Gutman and Midley researched the various factors that help low-income minority students make successful academic transitions from elementary to middle school. They focused on aspects of psychology, family, and school as the main factors that may be influential during this transition time. The specific aspects of the familial
factor included parent involvement. Parent involvement was measured with an adapted scale from the Family School Survey Study. It included 10 interview and six-point scale questions that addressed involvement in school events, volunteering in the school, and monitoring of homework (Gutman & Midgley, 2000).

Gutman and Midley (2000) hypothesized that low-income minority students were likely to have a greater grade point average throughout the elementary-middle school transition. The academic achievement of the students was determined by the grade point average. Based on data collected from a previous study, this study consisted of 62 African American students and their families. All students participated during their 6th and 7th grade years. They also came from families who lived below the poverty line (Gutman & Midgley, 2000). Gutman and Midley (2000) found that low-income African American students with high levels of family and school factors were more likely to have higher grade point averages than those students with neither family nor school factors. For these middle school students, the familial factor of parent involvement was influential in determining their level of academic achievement.

The studies reviewed above demonstrate that various aspects of parental involvement are major factors that can impact the success and academic achievement of low-income students, thereby helping to close the achievement gap. Milne and Plourde (2006) found that the academic achievement of low-income students was most influenced by parent education and the home environment, while Gutman and Midgley (2000) showed that this influence was based on parental involvement as well as school factors. Expanding on this, Ingram et al. (2007) highlighted specific parenting practices and
aspects of the home environment that had the most influence on achievement. Though the major findings of Ingram et al. (2007) are not exactly consistent with the general findings from Milne and Plourde (2006), both studies effectively highlight the various aspects of parent involvement, parenting practices, and the home environment that aid in promoting the academic achievement of low-income students.

Because the impact of parental involvement may be greatest among low-income students, it is important to have this emphasized in the implementation of intervention services with low-income families. Another focus of intervention services should provide parents with the necessary information about how to become more involved in their child’s education. Though all areas of parent involvement may not be necessary to improve achievement, it is still beneficial for parents to be informed of the different ways they can be involved in their student’s education. Low-income parents must first obtain the knowledge of specific involvement practices before they can aid in the academic achievement of their student.
Promoting Involvement in Low-Income Parents

**Developing programs for low-income parents.** Parent programs are a major way educators attempt to provide low-income parents with the knowledge necessary to be effectively involved parents. Programs hope to achieve this goal by providing parents with a foundation of knowledge that enables them to further develop the various skill sets necessary to create change and become a more involved parent (Ochoa & Mardirosian, 1990). These programs may vary in terms of the specific topics areas of involvement, but research has shown that there are common features of a program that are necessary in order for the program to be effective for low-income parents.

Neuman and Caperelli (1998) examined successful parent programs that covered parental involvement in the topic area of family literacy. In addition to a thorough review of each program’s grant proposal and final report, researchers also interviewed the program participants who answered a variety of open-ended questions about the program. The programs reviewed ranged from school locations to homeless shelters (Neuman & Caperelli, 1998).

Their examination showed that the most effective programs used a variety of methods to market the program. Parents were told verbally, programs were announced over the radio, and announcements were made in the local paper. Provision of childcare and transportation was also found to be a major way to retain parent participation in the programs. Programs also created a supportive environment and gave parents the opportunity to network with one another and various community resources (Neuman & Caperelli, 1998). These underlying characteristics and qualities of a program are
necessary in ensuring the long-term effectiveness in the daily lives of the parent participants.

**Conclusions**

Students from low-income backgrounds are often not provided with the same opportunities to reach the same level of academic achievement as their higher-income counterparts (McCoach et al., 2010). An achievement gap is created because they are left behind in the educational system. Various assessment driven attempts to reduce this achievement gap have been implemented by the federal government (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Murnane, 2007). Contrasting these attempts, many programs have taken a student-focused approach that provides students with personal skills that can aid in the reduction of the achievement gap (Speas et al., 2003).

Though these efforts may have provided some level of success, a missing component in effectively reducing the achievement gap is incorporating low-income parents in the various intervention and support programs. Because parents are a major aspect of a students’ environmental context (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), it is important to provide parents with specific parental involvement practices that can aide in the academic achievement of their student. It is also important to know the key components of previous successful parent programs to ensure that future programs are developed with similar characteristics (Neuman & Caperelli, 1998). Based on this importance, the researcher of the current project incorporated many of the effective parent program characteristics in the development of the project’s methodology.
Chapter 3

METHODS

Project Design

The aim of the implemented project was to develop and present a two week workshop series for parents of low-income, low achieving middle school students. The workshop mainly consisted of power point presentations that highlighted the most effective parental involvement practices discussed in Chapter 2. For the purposes of the workshop power point, the parental involvement practices were categorized into two content areas titled Academics and Parents as Advocates. The power point presentation was also supplemented with various practice-based activities. These content areas and supplemental activities are further discussed in the Content of the Workshops section of this chapter.

Setting and Participants

The parent participants were recruited from families of students enrolled in the AVID classes at an urban middle school in the Sacramento area. In order to ensure that the population of the school was reflective of low-income families, the researcher verified that at least 50% of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. The researcher was able to verify this statistic and the school’s low level of achievement by reviewing the 2010/2011 School Accountability Report Card Summary for the school. Parents who participated were made up of nine women and three men.
Role of Researcher

As a previous low-income middle school student, I was aware of the many difficulties and obstacles low-income students face to reach academic success. I knew, firsthand, the important role my parents played in ensuring that I attained my educational goal of getting higher education at a University of California. Though I am not an educational expert or professional, my previous experiences allowed me to be able to relate to participants on a more personal level. As a student from a low-income family, I also grew up in the same urban area where the workshop was held. Growing up in this low-income area provided me with a certain level of background experience and knowledge of the population of this area of Sacramento. I was also able to maintain objectivity during the implementation of the workshops because I did not know any of the participants.

Procedures

In order to develop the workshops, the researcher conducted a thorough review of the literature related to parental support of students’ academic achievement, with a focus on supporting the achievement of low-income and or middle school students. This review helped to identify which information was most pertinent for parents to be included in the workshop content. The researcher developed the basic content and organization of the workshop sessions incorporating information from the literature review into a power point presentation (see Appendix A). Details about the workshop content are included below.
Following approval by the Institutional Review Board, informational fliers were drafted for parents of AVID classes (see Appendix B). The researcher was able to work with the AVID Coordinator at the school, who agreed to distribute the fliers in all four AVID classes and school loop. School loop is a website the school designed to allow parents to stay informed on various school activities. A segment of the flier was open-ended in order to solicit the concerns and questions parents had about their role in promoting the academic success of their child. Parents returned these forms to their student’s teacher. A week prior to the first workshop, the researcher was able to obtain parent phone numbers from the returned fliers. Courtesy phone calls were made to these parents to remind them of the workshop in the following week.

The researcher also collected all of the returned forms to gain an idea of how many parents would participate in the workshop. The researcher was able to obtain returned fliers from 12 parents. With the emails provided on the fliers, the researcher was able to send weekly reminders for the parents who decided to participate. The school also helped provide reminders for the workshop by sending out reminders over their distribution system.

Once the researcher had an idea of the number of participating families, she was able to secure the accurate amount of materials needed to conduct the workshops. Various materials used in the workshop included: workshop agendas (see Appendix C), workshop activity handouts (see Appendix D), resource center materials (see Appendix E), workshop evaluations (see Appendix F), consent letters (see Appendix G), writing utensils, and the donated school supplies. During the month prior to the workshop, the
researcher was able to secure donations from a couple of local organizations. Starbucks agreed to provide refreshments for both days of the workshop, and the Discovery Museum Science and Space Center agreed to provide parents with free tickets to their museum. These tickets were distributed to parents at the second day of the workshop as a way to ensure their attendance for both days of the workshop. The donated tickets were used as an incentive for parent participants.

The workshops were held in a nearby public library. The first day of the workshop was about 2-hours long and was held at 10am on February 18th, 2012. The second day was a 1-hour long workshop that was held at 8am on March 3rd, 2012. Prior to the start of the first workshop, parents completed consent letters that informed them of the confidential nature of their participation.

At the end of each day, participants completed an evaluation survey to provide feedback about the workshops (see Appendix F). Some of the questions included in the survey given on the first day of the workshop were: what content areas were least and most informative for your knowledge of parental involvement practices, what segments of the workshop gave you information that you plan to use the most in order to increase your level of involvement in your student’s academic achievement, and what are two specific things you plan to do to increase your involvement? On the second day of the workshop, parents completed a checklist survey that answered the following questions: what segments of the workshop did you find least and most helped to increase your level of involvement in your student’s academic achievement, and a 5-point Likert-scale about how well specific plans from Day #1 were carried out.
Content of the workshops. The first 2-hour workshop focused on parent involvement practices that were categorized into two segments titled academics and parents as advocates. Participants’ engagement with these topics was supported through a variety of activities including icebreakers, power point presentations, small group discussions, application exercises and parents’ personal reflections. Using the findings from the studies discussed in Chapter 2, the researcher developed and presented a brief power point presentation that addressed parental involvement in three main areas of academics: study strategies (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995; West-Olatunji et al., 2010), homework (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995; Ingram et al., 2007), and home environment (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995; Ingram et al., 2007; Milne & Plourde, 2006) (see Appendix A). The power point was followed by a Mix-N-Match activity (see Appendix D). This activity involved each parent pairing their question and statement strips with the parent who had the corresponding answer strip. With this activity, the researcher was able to evaluate how well parent participants understood the materials presented in the power point presentation. Upon completion of this activity, the researcher facilitated group discussion where the parents were able to raise concerns of how the information presented can be incorporated into their daily lives.

The researcher also used the findings, from the studies discussed in Chapter 2, to present other aspects of parent involvement practices in another brief power point presentation (see Appendix A). This presentation was titled Parents as Advocates and addressed aspects of parent involvement that included monitoring/asking questions (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995; Ingram et al., 2007; McCoach et al., 2010), school
involvement (Ingram et al., 2007; McCoach et al., 2010; West-Olatunji et al., 2010), and setting high expectations/rewarding achievement (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995; Ingram et al., 2007; McCoach et al., 2010; West-Olatunji et al., 2010). For this power point, the parents presented the information to one another. The parents were split into two groups. The first group read the information on the first half of the power point, while the second group read the second half. This was followed by a Student Profiles activity that allowed parents to work in groups to show exactly how they would advocate for a student facing various educational struggles (see Appendix D). This activity was also followed by a group discussion which allowed parents to voice any concerns they had about being a parent advocate.

Parents were then directed to the resource centers that were designed to provide parents with the various resources necessary to promote the academic achievement of their student. The library center provided parents with tools that support their students’ reading ability. At this center parents received information on conducting library research on computers, as well as practice completing a library application (see Appendix E). Parents also received information regarding the selection of age-appropriate educational books for their student (see Appendix E). The supply center provided parents with a school supplies checklist and the opportunity to have the supplies necessary to provide adequate academic support (see Appendix E). The researcher was fortunate to have Staples donate the school supplies that were given to parents. The school/district program center provided parents with informational handouts and fliers about the various
upcoming and continuous school and district programs. The parents had 10 minutes at each center before they moved on to the next one.

Once all parents had visited all three centers, the researcher redirected parents to their seats where they completed the Day #1 workshop evaluation (see Appendix F). Parents were instructed to place completed evaluations in an unmarked manila envelope so as to ensure anonymity. Collection of the evaluations signaled the end of the workshop. The researcher thanked the parents for their participation and reminded them of the next workshop that was held two weeks later.

The second 1-hour long workshop focused on providing an opportunity for parents to report on the progress and the effectiveness of carrying out the various practices and skills they had planned in their evaluation on Day #1. The day began with a brief activity that allowed the parents to assess the helpfulness of the three resource centers from the previous workshop. Further discussion of the challenges and successes that were faced were discussed in multiple small groups. In these groups, parents developed summary statements and a brief role-play of one success or challenge for the entire group of parents. Between each groups’ presentation, the entire group discussed any similarities or differences they faced, as well as any advice they might have had for other parents. By the end of this activity, each small group of parents had the opportunity to share their experiences, role-play, ask questions, and share their similarities and differences.

After the discussions had wrapped up, the researcher concluded the workshop by encouraging parents to network with one another, and directed them toward the feedback
center where they completed the Day #2 workshop evaluation (see Appendix F). The
parents were asked to place completed evaluations into the unmarked manila folder so as
to ensure the anonymity of responses. Once all evaluations had been completed, the
researcher concluded the workshop by thanking parents for their participation.

**Summary**

This 2-day workshop provided parents with research-based parental involvement
practices in the areas of academics and being a parent advocate. The content of the
workshop incorporated a variety of activities that included power point presentations,
interactive assessments, practical applications, and group discussions. All aspects of this
workshop were able to provide parents with the key practices that can be helpful in
increasing the academic achievement of their students.

In the following chapter, the researcher presents and discusses the results of how
effective the workshops were in helping to increase the involvement of parents. The
researcher also suggests recommendations for future implementation of these workshops.
Chapter 4

DISCUSSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

A two-day parent involvement workshop was held at Ryan Watt Library in South Sacramento. The participants were parents of students who attended a nearby middle school. During the workshops, parents participated in various activities aimed at helping to increase their knowledge of appropriate parent involvement practices. They were also provided with some of the resources necessary to be more involved in the academic achievement of their student. At the end of each day of the workshop, parents completed a brief evaluation which provided feedback on the effectiveness of various aspects of the workshop. Analysis of the evaluation results allowed the researcher to determine workshop effectiveness.

The following section will discuss the evaluation results. These results will be further discussed in relation to the literature. Additionally, the researcher will address recommendations for future implementation of the workshop. This is followed by a conclusion of the project.
Results

**Parent workshop evaluation: Day #1.** The evaluation parents completed at the end of day one consisted of eight questions. Questions were presented in three formats: 1. checklist form, 2. Likert-Scale, 3. open-ended. The first evaluation included three checklist questions. The first two checklist questions were regarding the content areas of the power point presentation that were most and least informative for their knowledge of parental involvement practices. A comparison between the most and least informative content areas showed that Homework, Asking Questions, and School Involvement were the least informative content areas for four, two, and six parents, respectively. Rewarding Engagement, Stimulating Home Environment, and School Involvement were the most informative content areas of the power point presentation for six, two, and four parents, respectively (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Most and Least Informative Power Point Content Areas: Questions 1-2 (12 total participants)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power Point Content Areas</th>
<th>Most Informative</th>
<th>Least Informative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study Strategies</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>33% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulating Home Environment</td>
<td>16% (2)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking Questions</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>16% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Involvement</td>
<td>33% (4)</td>
<td>50% (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewarding Engagement</td>
<td>50% (6)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data reported presents conflicting trends. Rewarding Engagement and School Involvement had the highest percentages, suggesting that the Parents as Advocates
portion of the workshop provided participants with the most helpful information. However this finding is hindered by the Asking Questions area that was only marked as informative by 16% of the participants. If the Parents as Advocates section was the most informative aspect of the workshop, the Asking Questions content area should have received a higher percentage. It is also important to note that School Involvement was rated as both the least and the most informative content area. This conflicting data suggests that some parents may have been more knowledgeable and informed than other parents.

Usefulness of the content of the power point presentation was determined with a numerical rating where the possible answers were: 1=not very useful, 2, 3=useful, 4, and 5=very useful. The researcher found that 66% of participants gave usefulness a rating of five, while ratings of three and four were given by 16% of participants (See Table 2). These ratings are important because there were no negative ratings. In sum, 100% of the participants found portions of power point presentation to be useful, to some degree.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Usefulness of Power Point Presentation: Question 3 (12 total participants)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usesfulness of Power Point Presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Very Useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Useful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The third checklist question addressed the segments of the workshop that gave participants information that they planned to use the most in order to increase their level of involvement in your student’s academic achievement. Out of the nine workshop segments, the Student Profiles Activity (16%), the Advocates Discussion/Concerns (33%), and the Resource Centers (50%) were found to be the segments that gave participants the most information they plan to use to increase their level of involvement (See Table 3).

Table 3

_Most Informative Workshop Segment: Question 4 (12 total participants)_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop Segments</th>
<th>Most Informative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academics Ice Breaker</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics Lecture Activity</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mix-N-Match Activity</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics Discussion/Concerns</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Reflection</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocates Lecture Activity</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Profiles Activity</td>
<td>16% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocates Discussion/Concerns</td>
<td>33% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Centers</td>
<td>50% (6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These findings show that half of the participants found the Resource Centers provided them with the most information that they planned to use to increase their involvement. The Student Profiles Activity and Advocates Discussion/Concerns provided the next most informative workshop segments. A possible explanation for this data is that the Resource Centers provided participants with actual materials and resources to make the concepts they learned about more practical. This contrasts the Student Profiles
Activity and the Advocates Discussion/Concerns segments, which were more focused on providing participants with the opportunity to interactively practice parent involvement concepts. Perhaps, participants were more inclined to use the information they received in the resource centers because it provided them with some of the actual materials necessary to become more involved.

The next section of the evaluation included an open-ended question that asked participants to write down two specific things that they planned to do to increase their involvement. Some of the parent participants responded by writing “create ‘down time’ before homework,” “get involved with school activities,” “communicate with teachers,” and “encourage more reading and writing with my son.” Review of the responses allowed the researcher to note three main categories that emerged: a) parents planned to communicate with teachers and be more involved with school activities, b) parents planned to create down time before specified homework times, and c) parents planned to encourage more reading and writing around the house. The plans of the participants suggest that both aspects of the power point presentation were also helpful in providing them with information that they could use to increase their involvement. Communicating with the teachers and being involved with school activities was discussed in the Parents as Advocates section, while creating down time and encouraging reading and writing was discussed in the Academics section of the power point presentation.

Parents noted how sure they were of being able to carry out their plans with a numerical rating scale where: 1=not very sure, 2, 3=sure, 4, and 5=very sure. Eighty-three percent of participants reported that they were very sure of their plans, while 16%
of participants reported that that were only somewhat sure of their plans (See Table 4). In
sum, 100% of participants reported that they were sure or very sure of being able to carry
out their plans.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sureness of Involvement Plans: Question 6 (12 total participants)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Very Sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last two questions of the workshop evaluation were open-ended. None of the
parents responded to the question that asked “What additional information would you
find to be helpful?” Only six of the participants answered the last open-ended question
that asked, “Any additional comments?” After reviewing their responses, the researcher
found that it seemed like most parent participants enjoyed the first day of the workshop.
One of the parent participants wrote that that it was a “good presentation,” while another
parent participant commented that the workshop was held at a “great location.” This
feedback helped to inform the researcher of the overall effectiveness of the workshop.
By giving their opinion of general aspects of the workshop, parent participants allowed
the researcher to see that the workshop, as a whole, was effective.

**Parent workshop evaluation: Day #2.** The evaluation parents completed, at the
end of day two, consisted of four questions. Questions were presented in three formats: 1.
checklist form, 2. Likert-Scale, 3. open-ended. This evaluation began with two checklist
questions. The questions were regarding the segments of the workshop that least and
most helped to increase their level of involvement in their student’s academic achievement. A comparison between the most and least helpful workshop segments showed that the Mix-N-Match Activity and the Student Profile Activity Asking Questions were the most helpful segments for nine and three parents, respectively. The Academics Ice Breaker, the Personal Reflection Introduction, and the Advocates Discussion/Concerns were the least helpful segments for three, six, and three parents, respectively (see Table 5).

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop Segments</th>
<th>Most Increased Parent Involvement Levels</th>
<th>Least Increased Parent Involvement Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academics Ice Breaker</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>25% (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics Lecture Activity</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mix-N-Match Activity</td>
<td>75% (9)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics Discussion/Concerns</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Reflection</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>50% (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocates Lecture Activity</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>25% (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Profiles Activity</td>
<td>25% (3)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocates Discussion/Concerns</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Centers</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The third question of this evaluation was a Likert-scale question that addressed how well parents thought they carried out the plans they had made for themselves at the
previous workshop. Parents provided numerical ratings where: 1=not very well, 2, 3=well, 4, and 5=very well. Fifty percent of participants reported that they carried out their plans very well, while the other fifty percent gave this question a rating of four (see Table 6). None of the parents completed the open-ended question that asked if they had any additional questions.

Table 6  
*How Well Personal Plans Were Carried Out: Question 3 (12 total participants)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not Very Well</th>
<th>Very Well</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Completion of Personal Plans | 0% (0) | 0% (0) | 0% (0) | 50% (6) | 50% (6) |

**Recommendations**

Review of the results from the evaluations provided the researcher with a better understanding of how certain design and methodological changes might have made this workshop more effective. The researcher highlights and recommends specific changes that would be important for future implementation of the workshop. The main areas discussed include the attainment of parent participation, the design of the evaluations, and the overall design and format of the workshop program.

**Parent participation.** Although it was useful to target parent participants from AVID classrooms at one predominantly low-income middle school, it also hindered the
results of the workshops. Targeting only one low-income middle school was a hindrance because it limited the amount of potential participation that may have been gained if multiple low-income middle schools were targeted. The workshop fliers could have been distributed to multiple middle schools within the area. This would have provided more parents with the information about the workshop and possibly increased participation. Future workshops may also have increased participation if they expand the target population of participants to include multiple schools.

Another factor that could have influenced the rate of parent participation is the fact that the workshops were held on two different Saturdays over the span of three weeks. Though it tends to be easier for parents to participate on Saturdays, it may have been difficult for some parents to make time to be available over a three week period. This could have been due to busy work schedules that prevented parents from physically being able to attend the workshops. It is possible that more parents would have participated had the workshops been held on two consecutive Saturdays or on weekday evenings. Though this may not have allowed much time for implementation of the information learned, it is possible that this schedule change could have increased attendance. These changes regarding scheduling and the targeting of participants are important aspects to consider when developing future parent involvement workshops.

**Evaluations.** Two evaluations were used to provide the researcher with feedback on the effectiveness of each day of the workshops. The evaluations could have been developed more clearly, for accurate parent understanding. Though the use of checklists to rate the least and most informative content areas of the power point presentation was a
simple way to obtain a rating, parent participants could have been unable to remember and properly identify the information they received during a specific content area. It may have been more useful to have parents refer to their handout copy of the presentation that had headings that corresponded to the various items on the checklist. This method could have also been used to modify the day two checklist questions on the evaluation, which addressed the segment areas parents felt helped them least and most increase their level of involvement. It also may have been more effective to obtain information on the usefulness of the power point presentation, the sureness of their personal goals, and how well plans were carried out by using a “yes or no” format. This method could have been less confusing, and thereby reduced any chance of possible invalid responses. For this reason, future implementation of parent workshops should include evaluations that are clearer and presented in a simple format that allows for easy understanding.

**Workshop design.** The design of the workshops incorporated variations of lecture, interactive activities, topic-specific discussions, and resource materials. The researcher used brief power point presentations and corresponding handouts as a way to incorporate lecture-style information into the workshop. As noted in Table 1, all of the participants found the power point presentation to be either useful or very useful. The researcher also involved the participants in the presentation of the power points. This may have been useful because it varied the typical method of presenting a power point. It allowed parents to be more involved and more active participants in the workshop. As previously noted in the Nueman and Caperelli (1998) study, parent workshops have been shown to be most effective when the workshop design consists of a variety of methods,
including group discussion. Future workshops would be most effective if they also varied the method of instruction and involvement.

This heightened level of active participation may also account for why parents rated the Student Profiles Activity, the Advocates Discussion/Concerns, and the Resource Centers as the workshop segments that gave them information they plan to use the most (See Table 3). These specific workshop segments may have also provided parent participants with the opportunity to be engaged and involved with the concepts that were being addressed during the workshop. In addition to all these design aspects, it may have been useful to incorporate a segment that allowed a professional in the field to speak and answer questions from a professional view. Incorporating a professional speaker is an additional effort that should be considered when designing future parent involvement workshops.

**Conclusions**

The parent participants of this project attended two parental involvement workshops, each held on a Saturday morning. Participants completed evaluations at the end of each workshop in order to provide information on the effectiveness of the workshops. The researcher reviewed and analyzed data from the evaluations and found trends that were common among the responses. The researcher found that all of the participants felt that the power point presentation was at least useful. More specifically, the majority of parents thought that the Rewarding Engagement and the School Involvement were the most and least informative content areas of the power point presentation, respectively. The high rating of the Rewarding Engagement area is
reflective of the literature that highlights that providing praise (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995), rewards (Ingram et al., 2007), and exhortations are effective ways to enhance a student’s motivational efforts (Spencer, Dupree, & Swanson, 1996).

The researcher also noticed that Resource Centers provided parents with the most information that would help them carry out their plans of encouraging more reading and writing at home, creating ‘down time’ before specified homework times, and increasing communication with school staff and involvement in school activities. These specific plans were important because they support various studies that discuss these practices as being integral parts to becoming a more involved parent (Dearing et al., 2006; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995; Ingram et al., 2007; West-Olatunji et al., 2010). The Mix-N-Match Activity was also determined to be most helpful in increasing parents’ level of involvement in their student’s academic achievement. In addition to these findings, participants also voluntarily provided positive feedback on the workshop presentation and location. Overall, the workshops seemed to be helpful and effective in increasing the involvement levels of low-income parents. Based on the positive feedback gained from the evaluations, it is hoped that this project may motivate other libraries to adopt the workshops into their monthly programs. Through advertisement within the library bulletin boards and website, more parents can become aware of the opportunity to participate in future parental involvement workshops.
APPENDIX A

Power Point Presentation: Day #1

Reducing the Academic Achievement Gap through Parent Involvement

Facilitated by:
Amo Eki-Edo
Workshop Purpose

- To highlight the specific parental involvement practices that have been shown to promote academic achievement in students in an educationally disadvantaged environment.

Topics:
- Academics
- Parents As Advocates

Academics

- Key Areas:
  - Study Strategies
  - Homework
  - Home Environment

http://polaris.umuc.edu/Adjem/edtxt020/parentswhohomework.html
Study Strategies

- Bring home age-appropriate books for your students (West-Olaniyi, 2010)
- Encourage reading aloud while you are engaged in daily household activities (i.e., cooking, cleaning, etc.) (Hoover-Dempsey, 1995)

Study Strategies Cont.

- Vary review of math problems with use of mini-black/white boards
- Provide mini-spelling/vocabulary lists to help with writing skills (Hoover-Dempsey, 1995)
Homework

- Communicate with the teacher on the homework being assigned, due dates, & any concerns you may have (Hoover-Dempsey, 1995; Ingram, 2007)

- Break up homework given into smaller increments until completion of the assignment (Hoover-Dempsey, 1995)

Homework Cont.

- Balance encouraging independence with providing assistance-compromise (Hoover-Dempsey, 1995; Ingram, 2007)
- Model completion of a problem or two so as to ensure your student's understanding (Hoover-Dempsey, 1995)
- Review all homework completed with student (Hoover-Dempsey, 1995; Ingram, 2007)
Home Environment

- Designate a specific time frame & area dedicated to homework completion (Hoover-Dempsey, 1998; Mline, 2006; Ingram, 2007).

- Create a “down-time” before beginning homework time (West-Olatunji, 2010)

Home Environment Cont.

- Be available for your child to come to you during these designated times (Hoover-Dempsey, 1998; Mline, 2006)

- Have necessary books/writing materials necessary to complete assignments (Mline, 2006; Halla, 1997)
Home Environment Cont.

Limit amount of television to 30min/1hr each day (Milne, 2006; Ingram, 2007)

Take child/ren to the library, zoos, museums (Ingram, 2007)

References

Parents As Advocates

- Key Areas:
  - Monitoring/Asking Questions
  - School Involvement
  - Rewarding Engagement/High Expectations

http://www.positivepins.com/index2.html

Monitoring/Asking ?s

- Communicate with teachers on the progress of student
  (Anderson, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey, 1998; Ingram, 2007; McCaughan et al., 2010)

- Know what classes your child is taking and knowing when your child has misbehaved
  (Simmons-Morton & Crump, 2005)
Monitoring/Asking Questions

- Stay informed on child’s classroom progress how the day went
  (Anderson, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey, 1998; McCandless et al., 2010; Wilson, 2009)

- Understand the results of the state tests
  (McCandless et al., 2010)

School Involvement

- Maintain regular contact with teacher: email or phone
  (McCandless et al., 2010; Ingram, 2007; West-Olatunji, 2010)

- Volunteer in the classroom, class trips, fundraisers, parent programs
  (Anderson, 1997; Ingram, 2007)
School Involvement Cont.

- Attend/volunteer school-wide special events, meetings, parent/teacher conferences (Anderson, 1997; Ingram, 2007; McCooen et al., 2010; Shuman & Miller, 2001)
- Schedule meetings with school administrators (Ingram, 2007)
- Ensure that school curriculum is geared towards test preparation (McCooen et al., 2010).

Rewards/High Expectations

- Emphasize the importance of education (Halle, 1997; Misty, 2009; West-OLatute, 2010)
- Motivate your student by expressing your values/high expectations (Halle, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey, 1995; Linver & Davis-Kean, 2005; Misty, 2009)
- Ensure student receives challenging work in all classes (McCooen et al., 2010)
Rewards/High Expectations Cont.

- Provide praise, rewards, or exhortations to enhance motivational efforts

- This can be done by reviewing returned work with student (Hoover-Dempsey, 1995; Ingram, 2007; Spencer, 1996)

Video Recap

http://www.youtube.com/user/FernAvery8blend=22&ob=5#p/u/0/s16eS37Zb2k
References


APPENDIX B

WORKSHOP FLYER
REDUCING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP THROUGH PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

A Parent Workshop

Purpose:
To provide parents with the resources necessary for them to aid in the academic achievement of their students.

Held @ :
Robbie Waters Pocket-Greenhaven Library
7335 Gloria Dr., Sacramento, CA 95831

Provided:
⇒ Childcare
⇒ Refreshments
⇒ Ticket to Discovery Museum

Two-Day Series
Day #1: Saturday
February 18th, 2012
10am-12pm

Day #2: Saturday
March 3rd, 2012
8:00am-9:00am

Topics
♦ Academics
♦ Parents as Advocates

YES! I’m interested!
I would need:
☐ Childcare

Please return to:
Your student’s teacher

Name:
________________________________________
Address:
________________________________________
________________________________________
Phone: (______) -_____ -________
Email:
________________________________________
Other Concerns:
APPENDIX C

Workshop Agenda:

Day #1

February 18, 2012

10am-12pm

Welcome/Refreshments

Introduction of program and speaker

➢ Unit #1: Academics

   Ice Breaker (Intro)

   Activity #1: Mini-Lecture (by facilitator)

   Activity #2: Mix-N-Match (activity & assessment)

   Activity #3: Discussion/Concerns

➢ Unit #2: Parents as Advocates

   Personal Reflection (Intro)

   Activity #1: Mini-lecture (by groups)

   Activity #2: Student Profiles Activity

   Activity #3: Discussion/Concerns

➢ Unit #3: Knowing How

   Resource Centers
Activity #1: Workshop Evaluations

Workshop Agenda:

Day #2

March 3, 2012

8am-9am

➢ Unit #4: Knowing *What Worked*

Activity #1: A-B-C Activity

Activity #2: Challenges & Successes

Activity #3: Feedback Center
APPENDIX D

Workshop Activities

Mix-N-Match Activity

Questions/Statements:

1. The two main topics of this workshop are ________ and ________.

2. _____ ________ ______ have been shown to increase the academic achievement of low-income students.

3. How can you encourage reading around the house?

4. What types of books are best for your student?

5. What can be used to vary the review of math problems?

6. Giving your student mini-spelling/vocabulary lists can help improve their _____ _____.

7. Who can you communicate with to find out more on homework assignments, due dates, and any other concerns you may have?

8. The best way for your student to complete a large homework assignment is to have it broken up into _____ _________.

9. Why should you model how to solve a problem instead of just doing it for your student?

10. What in your home environment can support your student with the completion of their assignments?
11. Besides the library, what other educational outings can you take with your student?

12. Who should review completed homework assignments?

13. How can you balance your student’s independence in homework completion?

14. When should you be available to provide assistance for your student?

15. Before beginning the designated homework time, you should create “_____ _____” for your student.
Mix-N-Match Activity

**Answers: (cut out answers into strips)**

Academics and Parents as Advocates

**Parental Involvement Practices**

Have student read aloud while I am engaged in daily household activities (i.e. cooking, cleaning)

**Age-Appropriate Books**

**Mini-White/Blackboards**

My student’s teacher

“Down time”

**Smaller Increments**

**Writing Skills**

To ensure my student understands the problem
To zoos and museums

Designating specific homework time/area and having the necessary books and materials in my home

I, along with my student

By providing less assistance

During the designated homework times
Mix-N-Match Activity Answer Key

Questions/Statements:

16. The two main topics of this workshop are academics and parents as advocates.

17. Parental Involvement Practices have been shown to increase the academic achievement of low-income students.

18. How can you encourage reading around the house? Have students read aloud while I am engaged in daily household activities (i.e. cooking, cleaning)

19. What types of books are best for your student? Age-appropriate books

20. What can be used to vary the review of math problems? Mini-white/blackboards

21. Giving your student mini-spelling/vocabulary lists can help improve their Writing Skills.

22. Who can you communicate with to find out more on homework assignments, due dates, and any other concerns you may have? My student’s teacher

23. The best way for your student to complete a large homework assignment is to have it broken up into smaller increments.

24. Why should you model how to solve a problem instead of just doing it for your student? To ensure my student understands the problem
25. What in your home environment can support your student with the completion of their assignments? Designating specific home time/area and having the necessary books and materials in my home

26. Besides the library, what other educational outings can you take with your student? To zoos and museums

27. Who should review completed homework assignments? I, along with my student

28. How can you balance your student’s independence in homework completion? By providing less assistance

29. When should you be available to provide assistance for your student? During the designated homework times

30. Before beginning the designated homework time, you should create “down time” for your student.
Student Profile Activity

Directions: Using the information below on your given student, discuss and take note of at least two ways you would advocate for this student. Have one volunteer from your group write your plans up on the board.

Defensive Dave:
- Assumes that he will perform poorly regardless of any effort he makes
- Would rather be the class clown than look unintelligent
- Completes assignments without reading and understanding
- Makes little progress mastering curriculum

Helpless Hannah:
- Insists that she does not know anything
- Puts in no effort, and as a result does not succeed
- Has poor academic performance because she views herself as incompetent
- Never ask questions or disrupts the class
- Gains very little happiness by attending school

Safe Sally:
- Earns straight A’s, but only because she enrolls in courses she is sure she will excel in
- Does the minimum required to receive an A
- Is not motivated to learn; she is only motivated by receiving a grade
- Has no potential for creative thinking because she anxiously follows guidelines so closely

Satisfied Santos:
- Is a class clown only motivated to stay out of trouble
- Could earn better grades but only does the bare minimum
- Engages in intellectual activities only when they are science-based (his subject of interest)

Anxious Alma:
- Is an average student, but does poorly in math
- Lacks self-confidence
- Would rather not answer a question than get it wrong
- Uses ailments as a way to get out of her math period

Alienated Al:
- Frequently skips school and only goes to class to socialize with friends
- Half-heartedly does his academic work
- Has a 6th grade reading level
- Thinks that reaching success is impossible because it requires too much effort
- Teachers do not know his name and are disturbed by his poor attendance and effort

APPENDIX E
Resource Center Materials

LIBRARY CARD APPLICATION

Photo ID and proof of current address are required to obtain a library card.
Under age 18, a parent/guardian ID and proof of address are required. Applicant and parent/guardian must sign application.

PLEASE PRINT

LAST NAME: ____________________________ FIRST NAME: ____________________________ MI: __________

APPLICANT'S BIRTHDATE: ____________ / ____________ / ____________

Month Day Year

MAILING ADDRESS: ____________________________________________ APT: __________

CITY: ____________________________ STATE: ________ ZIP CODE: __________

TELEPHONE: ( ) ____________________________

Your email address will be used to notify you of the delivery of requested items and when materials are overdue.

EMAIL ADDRESS: ____________________________________________

☐ I do not want to be contacted about library programs and events.
☐ I do not want to be contacted about the Library Friends and Library Foundation.

Signature of Applicant: ____________________________ Date: __________

For a person under 18 years old:

PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN'S NAME:

LAST NAME: ____________________________ FIRST NAME: ____________________________ MI: __________

If you are a parent or guardian and wish to restrict your child’s card so that it cannot be used to borrow Rated DVDs, please speak with library staff.

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT OR PARENT/GUARDIAN FOR PERSONS UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE

☐ I understand the library provides a broad range of materials, in print and in other formats, as well as through the Internet; some of which may not be suitable for minors.
☐ I understand that library policy permits children access to all resources and materials within the library. All library cardholders are granted user confidentiality under the California Public Records Act (Government Code 62597) which prohibits the release of circulation records of library users.
☐ I accept responsibility for selection I make for myself and selections made by my minor age children.
☐ I agree to obey the rules and regulations of the Sacramento Public Library and to be responsible for all materials borrowed, and for all charges incurred for any overdue, lost, or damaged materials borrowed with this card, and know the library may use a collection agency to ensure the return of materials and the payment of fines and fees.
☐ Most materials check out for 21 days. Overdue fines of $1 per day to a maximum of $60 per item accrue on children's items and $2.50 per item per day to a maximum of $30 on adult items for materials returned late. A lost or stolen card will be replaced for a $2 fee.
☐ I agree to notify the library of changes in address or email address, telephone number, and name, or if this card is lost or stolen.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: ____________________________ Date: __________

PRIMARY LANGUAGE SPOKEN OR READ AT HOME: ____________________________

Sacramento Public Library saclibrary.org
Tips on Selecting Age Appropriate Books

1- Look at the book and see if an age is given. Books which state they are
good for all ages are mainly for older teens and adults and are not right for
younger children.

2- At a bookstore ask a clerk for help in selecting the best books for the age
of the child or children you are buying for.

3- Ask a librarian for suggested books for the child's age. She may have a
free list of recommended books.

4- Take the child with you and see what books are selected. Let the child
read some of the books out loud and then ask for an explanation of what
was read. Knowing the words is not the same as understanding the
meaning.

5- Ask the teacher for a suggested reading list. The school media person also
can help you.

Retrieved from:
6- Ensure the child is comfortable with the length of the books selected.

7- Make sure the child is comfortable with the structure of the book. (i.e. chapter length, text size)

8- Comfort with the genre and topic are ways to increase interest levels.

9- A child’s prior knowledge in a specific area or topic can help determine the type of books selected.

10- Interest levels can also be increased with books that provide some level of connection to the child.

Academics

Helpful Subject Links

Language Arts/Reading

- Citation Machine: Another site for crediting information sources and formatting citations.  
  http://citationmachine.net/index.php?new_list=1#here

- MLA Style: Help with understanding MLA formatting for English and Humanities.  
  http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/p04_c08_o.html

- OWL Online Writing Library: Provides resources for the writing process, different essay genres, and resources for citing work.  
  http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/677/01/

Math

- Purplemath: Developed by Algebra teacher Elizabeth Stapelton, this website offers many lessons, as well as links to other good resources.

- McDougal Littell Algebra 2: Site provides sample animated problems.

- e-Tutor Graphing Calculator: Advanced web-based graphing calculator allows students to enter one or more equations and view them with position/intersection indicators and zooming functionality.  
  http://www.e-tutor.com/et2/graphing/

Social Studies

- Calisphere: University of California's free public gateway to a world of primary sources. More than 150,000 digitized items — including photographs, documents, newspaper pages, political cartoons, works of art, diaries, transcribed oral histories, advertising, and other unique cultural artifacts.  
  http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/

- The Gilder Lehrman Collection: Site contains more than 60,000 documents detailing the political and social history of the United States. The collection's holdings include manuscript letters, diaries, maps, photographs, printed books and pamphlets ranging from 1493 through
modern times.
http://www.gilderlehrman.org/

- Harper's Weekly: Provides electronic access to Harper’s Weekly, the illustrated 19th century "Journal of Civilization" for a 56-year period: 1857-1912. The electronic database makes it possible for the user to discover the lively news stories, illustrations, cartoons, editorials, biographies, literature, and even advertisements that shaped and reflected public opinion in this era.
http://www.harpweek.com/

Science

- **Glencoe Physical Science**: Resources to complement and extend textbook content.
- **Glencoe Biology**: Resources to complement and extend textbook content.
- **Holt Chemistry**: Resources to complement and extend textbook content.
- **Glencoe Physics**: Resources to complement and extend textbook content.

Retrieved from:

http://www.egusd.net/students_parents/homework.cfm
School Supply Checklist

When did your babies get so big? Instead of juice boxes, now they're asking for sports drinks. You still know what's best for them, but your main concern is making sure they stay healthy and safe without letting on that you still take care of them. Making sure you know what the kids need to bring on the first day of school can relieve the pressure when it comes to shopping. You can shop online for these items, or print out the list to take in-store with you.

Middle- and Junior-High School Checklist

The Basics

• **Backpacks and lunch bags**

• **Binders and pocket folders**

• **Black pens (medium point)**

• **Calculator**

• **Colored pencils**

• **Glue sticks**

• **Hand sanitizer**

• **Highlighters**

• **Markers**

• **No. 2 pencils**

• **Notebook paper**
• Pencil sharpener
• Pink erasers
• Ruler
• Tabbed index dividers
• 3" x 5" ruled index cards
• 3- or 5-subject wide-rule spiral notebook

Retrieved from:
**Accountability Report**

**California Accountability**

The state education officials decide how schools are doing by looking at students' test scores. By combining the results of all tests and measuring progress year to year, state officials calculate a number between 200 and 1,000 that becomes a school’s Academic Performance Index.

- **Academic Performance Index**: 758
- **Growth attained from prior year**: 40
- **School wide growth targets**: No
- **Growth targets for all groups of students**: No

**API, Spring 2010**

This graph shows our schoolwide API in comparison with the API for the average K-6 school in the state. Our target student subgroups' API appear below:

- **All Students/Total**
  - **Math**: 75%
  - **English Language Arts**: 77%
  - **Science**: 70%
  - **History/Social Science**: 70%

**Federal Accountability**

Following the law known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), federal officials also interpret test scores to evaluate schools. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is the federal measure of the percentage of students who have scored proficient or higher on state standardized tests in math and English Language Arts.

- **Made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in English Language Arts and Math**: No
- **Is the school on the Program Improvement (PI) List**: No
- **Number of API Targets met**: 21
- **Number of API Targets the school was required to meet**: 33

**In order to meet the federal requirements of No Child Left Behind, schools are now expected to help more students score proficient or higher on two tests: math and English Language Arts.**

The dot on the graph to the right (35 to 55 percent) marks the percentage of students in a school that had to score proficient or higher in 2008 for the school to make AYP. In addition, every significant subgroup of students (for example, English Learners) also had to meet this math for the school to make AYP.

Please go to [http://www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov) for more information about this school, including our School Accountability Report Card, or visit us at the school office.
Parent and Guardian Guide to California’s 2010-11 Accountability Progress Reporting System

The primary goal of California’s Accountability Progress Reporting (APR) system is to measure and report the academic success of California’s nearly 10,000 public schools in over 1,000 school districts and local educational agencies (LEAs). The system includes three major components:

- The Academic Performance Index (API) Report
- The Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Report
- The Program Improvement (PI) Report

The California Department of Education (CDE) prepares these reports for each school, school district, and LEA. The reports are available on the CDE APR Web page at http://www.cde.ca.gov/aps.

API Report

The API Report is required by the State’s Public Schools Accountability Act (SPAA) of 1999. This report shows how much a school is improving from year to year based on its API. A school’s API is a number that ranges from 200 to 1000 and is calculated from the results of statewide tests. The state has set an API target for all schools to meet. Schools that fall short of this target are required to meet annual growth targets with that goal is achieved. API targets vary for each school.

The annual API growth target for a school is 5 percent of the difference between the school’s API and the statewide performance target of 780 with a 5-point margin. Schools that meet or exceed 780 API are expected to maintain that level of achievement to continue working to improve the academic performance of all students.

There are two API reports: (1) the Basic API that is released to schools in the spring and (2) the Growth API that is released in the fall. These reports show results from two different school years.

The Growth API is compared to the prior year’s Basic API to show how much a school improved from one year to the next.

Schools must meet API growth targets for the whole school as well as for each numerically significant group of students in the school (see explanation on page 2). Each API and Growth API Report includes the schoolwide API and the API for each numerically significant group of students. The Growth API Report summarizes the school’s progress in meeting its growth targets.

If a school meets all API participation and growth criteria, it may be eligible to become a California Distinguished School, National Blue Ribbon School, or the California Academic Achievement Award School. A school does not meet or exceed its growth targets and is ranked in the bottom quartile of the statewide distribution of the Basic API, it must be identified to participate in state intervention programs. These programs are designed to help the school improve its academic performance.

AYP Report

The AYP Report is required by the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). This report shows how well a school and school districts are meeting the national standards of academic performance, as measured by whether the school or school district makes AYP. Required AYP targets include yearly increases in the percentage of students performing at or above the proficient level state-wide tests. By law, all California schools and school districts receive annual AYP report.

Each year, school and school districts must meet sets of requirements to make AYP. The requirements reflect statewide performance levels and are the same for all schools and school districts of the same type (see table on next page).
The requirements include: (1) student participation rate on statewide tests; (2) percentage of students scoring at the proficient level or above in English-language arts and mathematics on statewide tests; (3) API growth; and (4) graduation rate of grade twelve students are exonerated. Numerical significant groups of students at a school or school district at one student participation rate and perceivable participation rate.

### Statewide AYP Requirements for 2010-11 School Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of School or LEA</th>
<th>Panel Participation Rate</th>
<th>English Language Proficiency</th>
<th>Mathematics Proficiency</th>
<th>API Growth</th>
<th>Graduation Rate (Graduating Students)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Schools, Middle Schools, and Elementary School Districts</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Schools and High School Districts (with grades 9-12)</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>66.1%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United School Districts, High School Districts, and County Office of Education (all grades)</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
<td>67.3%</td>
<td>1 point growth</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 2010-11 AYP requirements are the same as from the prior year. AYP targets were adjusted to increase gradually until 2013-14.

### Numerically Significant Student Groups

To be considered a numerically significant group (e.g., API or AYP, a student group must include at least 100 students or at least 50 students who make up 15 percent or more of the school's total population. Results of numerically significant student groups analyzed separately and as part of the total student population. Results of numerically significant student groups are calculated for the following categories:

- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Filipino
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Two or More Races
- Socioeconomic Disadvantaged
- English Learner
- Students with Disabilities

### PI Report

The PI Report supplements the AYP Report by providing information on the PI status of schools and school districts. A school or school district that receives federal Title I, Part A, funds is subject to identification for PI status and make AYP for two years in a row. A school or school district is eligible for PI if it meets the requirements for PI for two years in a row. Information about PI and identification is posted on the CDE AYP Web page at [http://www.cde.ca.gov/ct/af/apy.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ct/af/apy.asp).

### Frequently Asked Questions

Do API or AYP calculations affect student standardized testing and reporting (STAR) Program in California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) score report?

No. API and AYP results are calculated for state, school district, and school level reports only.

How can parents or guardians help to improve a school's accountability results?

The best way to improve a school's accountability results is for students to perform at state-wide level 5. Parents can help by supporting their school's efforts in providing classroom instruction and assessments that are aligned with the California Academic Standards and by ensuring that their students are well-prepared and motivated to succeed.

### More Information

To obtain more information about state and federal accountability requirements and the API, AYP, and PI reports, parents and guardians should contact their school or school district office during regular hours. Additional information is available on the CDE AYP Web page at [http://www.cde.ca.gov/ct/af/apy.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ct/af/apy.asp).
Parent Teacher Association

Meeting Dates

(Every third Wed at 6:00 or 7:00; free childcare provided)

January 20, 2012-Principal Forum 6:00 pm/ PTA meeting 7:00 pm
February 15, 2012-6:00 pm
March 17, 2012-Principal forum 6:00 pm/PTA meeting 7:00 pm
April 21, 2012 (Election of Officer)-6:00 pm
May 19, 2012-6:00 pm Last general meeting of the school year

PTA Board meetings: - (Every first Thursday of the month at 6:00 pm in the teachers’ lounge)

Fundraisers and Activities:
Cookie dough fundraiser 2/1-2/19/2012
Father/Daughter dance & Family restaurant night 2/5/2012
Chili cook- off 2/26/2012
Read-A-Thon 3/1-3/22/2012
Science fair 3/5/2012
Telephone Book recycling contest March 2012
Family movie night #3 6:00-8:00pm 3/19/2012
Book fair (3 of 3) 5/19-5/28/2012
Staff Appreciation week 5/10-5/14/2012
Spring Carnival 5/21/2012
APPENDIX F

Parent Workshop Evaluation: Day #1

1. What content areas were least informative for your knowledge of parental involvement practices?
   
   Academics:  
   ____ Study Strategies  
   ____ Homework/Note Taking  
   ____ Stimulating Home Environment

   Parents as Advocates:  
   ____ Asking Questions  
   ____ School Involvement  
   ____ Rewarding Engagement

2. What content areas were most informative for your knowledge of parental involvement practices?
   
   Academics:  
   ____ Study Strategies  
   ____ Homework/Note Taking  
   ____ Stimulating Home Environment

   Parents as Advocates:  
   ____ Asking Questions  
   ____ School Involvement  
   ____ Rewarding Engagement

3. How useful was the information presented? (Circle one)
   
   1  2  3  4  5
   Not very useful  Useful  Very Useful

4. What segments of the workshop gave you information that you plan to use the most in order to increase your level of involvement in your student’s academic achievement?
   
   ____ Academics Ice Breaker  ____ Personal Reflection Intro
   ____ Academics Lecture Activity  ____ Advocates Lecture Activity
   ____ Mix-N-Match Activity  ____ Student Profiles Activity
   ____ Academics Discussion/Concerns  ____ Advocates Discussion/Concerns
5. Personal Goal: What are two specific things you plan to do to increase your involvement?

6. How sure are these plans?

1  2  3  4  5
Not very sure  Sure  Very Sure

7. What additional information would you find to be helpful?

8. Any additional comments?
Parent Workshop Evaluation: Day #2

1. What segments of the workshop did you find most helped to increase your level of involvement in your student’s academic achievement?

   ___ Academics Ice Breaker   ___ Personal Reflection Intro
   ___ Academics Lecture Activity   ___ Advocates Lecture Activity
   ___ Mix-N-Match Activity   ___ Student Profiles Activity
   ___ Academics Discussion/Concerns   ___ Advocates Discussion/Concerns
   ___ Resource Centers

2. What segments of the workshop did you find least helped to increase your level of involvement in your student’s academic achievement?

   ___ Academics Ice Breaker   ___ Personal Reflection Intro
   ___ Academics Lecture Activity   ___ Advocates Lecture Activity
   ___ Mix-N-Match Activity   ___ Student Profiles Activity
   ___ Academics Discussion/Concerns   ___ Advocates Discussion/Concerns
   ___ Resource Centers

3. How well were your specific plans from Day #1 carried out?

   1  2  3  4  5
   Not very well   Well   Very Well

4. Any additional comments?
APPENDIX G

Consent Letter

Consent to Participate in a Workshop Evaluation

You are being asked to participate in a research project which will be conducted by Amenaghawon Eki-Edo, a graduate student in the Child Development department at California State University, Sacramento. The project will be a two-day workshop series providing low-income parents with research-based practices that have been shown to support academic success and help reduce the academic achievement gap for low-income middle school students.

You will be asked to participate in two workshops over the course of three weeks. These two-hour workshops may be video-taped and photographed for academic purposes. You will then be asked to voluntarily provide written feedback on the effectiveness of the various aspects of the workshop series.

You are given the option to opt out of participating in any questions or discussions that may seem too personal. Though your attendance is greatly appreciated, you may also opt out of participating in the workshop series at any point.

Potential benefits that may result from your participation in the workshop include: an increase in your student’s academic achievement, a positive relationship between you and your student’s school, and an increased positive view of your level of involvement in your student’s education.
Your participation in the workshop will be kept confidential. However the aggregate results of the workshop evaluation will be shared with the educational community and may end up as public record. Participation in the workshop provides you with complementary refreshments, school supplies, and child care on each day. If you have any questions about this research, you may contact Dr. Kimberly Gordon Biddle at 916-278-4831 or email at kagordon@csus.edu.

Your participation in the workshop series is completely voluntary. Your signature below indicates that you have read this page and agree to participate in the evaluation.

________________________________   ____________________
Signature of Participant       Date
REFERENCES


