SCHOOL, FAMILY, COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS:

CREATING REAL WORLD CONTEXT FOR LEARNING IN SCHOOL

by

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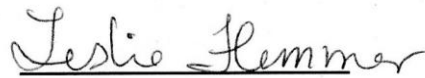This Project for the Master in Teaching Degree

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines effective school, family, community partnerships, and educators' motivations for creating them. A historical review chapter explores the ways that families and communities have traditionally been included in American public education and how school, family, community partnerships have developed as an increasingly important educational topic over the past twenty years. A chapter on current research studies examines and suggests a very broad range of goals that motivate schools to partner with families and communities. These goals include benefits for students, schools, teachers, local communities, and the larger society. The literature also suggests a variety of ways that schools can more effectively create partnerships toward these ends.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In the last century, educational institutions in the United States have focused on preparing students for adult roles in the modern world. Schools as institutions have included the surrounding communities in the educational process to varying degrees. Some argue that schools can educate and prepare students in relative isolation, acting as the sole source of the knowledge and skills students should acquire to contribute to economic, spiritual, and political realms of the greater society. On the other hand, modern learning theories (i.e., Social Learning Theory, situated learning, semiotic domains, and experiential learning of John Dewey) suggest that people learn through observation of others and through direct interaction with the subject and systems they are learning about. This perspective leads educators to include family and community in student learning activities to a greater degree, as the learning environments outside school greatly affect what is gained in the school environment. Educators now structure learning opportunities and curriculum that connects students directly to out of school contexts and gives them meaningful roles within the society to which they are expected to contribute.

There are a wide variety of motivators for including family and community in educational experiences, many of which are linked to the overarching goal discussed above of preparing students for future roles in our diverse and changing world. Goals for partnership extend beyond this, however, and can be student focused, school focused and community focused. Partnerships are pursued by teachers and schools in a variety of ways with newer methods, such as community liaisons, communication in the home language, and broadened authentic roles for participation of increasing importance to effective programs. Awareness is growing about the importance of school and district support and leadership in effective partnering programs, which can range from one teacher to state wide programs aimed at increasing communication and partnerships between families, communities, and schools. The motivations

for and methods of linking school experiences with the world outside the classroom walls also vary depending on the age of students.

In order to better understand the benefits that the educational community draws from connections to family and community, the following question frames this research project: What are the motivations that drive secondary teachers create school, family, community partnerships and the methods that make them effective? Chapter one provides a general context for the research question and the benefits educators may gain from a clearer understanding of family, community, and school connections. It also lays out some of the limitations of this paper's investigation. Chapter two looks at the history of family, community, and school connections purposely formed by teachers and schools to improve the educational experience. Chapter three examines current educational studies related to the research question. Chapter four summarizes the research findings and discusses implications for the classroom and possible areas for future research.

Rationale

We find ourselves at a point in American educational history where schools are being held at higher levels of accountability for student success on standardized academic measures. At the same time, our nation continues to develop increasing diversity racially, ethnically, linguistically, while regional and socioeconomic differences also remain. We are also more technologically advanced than at any point in our nation's history, and schools are preparing many students for jobs that may not yet exist. Somewhere these facts merge and beg the question: How can schools prepare students to participate in such a diverse democracy, solve challenges we cannot yet imagine, and meet the standardized minimum national standards in isolation? The answer is they cannot.

Schools should create ways for students to interact in dynamic ways with the communities in which they live. As Dewey suggested, students need real environments in which

to apply what they learn in school (as cited in Raskoff & Sundeen, 1999). At the same time, schools need the resources that communities have to offer. This includes the resources of multiple perspectives and value systems even when their inclusion in the school system requires negotiation, time, and resources. It seems natural to include families in formal education given the importance of their influence on the child's development. The American public school system, developed by the dominant White Anglo culture, is serving populations whose needs cannot be met without the inclusion of communities as well. In attempting to educate students from multiple cultures, we cannot exclude the perspectives of those cultures, or we will only be repeating the period of our nation's history when public education was blatantly used as an assimilation tool.

There is already a well established body of research on the importance of parental involvement on student success. There is less research, however, on how schools effectively invite this involvement or create opportunities for roles that extend beyond volunteering in the school or participating in Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO). Additionally, research around the motivations for and ways that educators partner with the greater community is a body of research that has begun to emerge within the last twenty years. Methods for engaging families and communities in education continue to develop and sometimes unexpected benefits to students, the school, or the community are revealed. Schools are increasingly creating connections within the larger social system responsible for raising children. These connections often increase the capacity of the whole system to benefit youth.

Teachers working to leverage youth educational and support systems by partnering with families and communities can learn from other educators who have done this effectively. This paper examines a range of ways that educators connect to, recruit, and incorporate such resources, from organizing youth to volunteer within local organizations to incorporating professional guest speakers on curriculum-based topics in the classroom. Given the multitude of ways represented in the research to draw on and integrate community resources it seems important to understand

the benefits and possible drawbacks of each method. This paper attempts to provide such a perspective for educators by examining the history of and current research on school, family, and community partnerships. It examines the motivations for their creation as well as aspects that make for effective partnerships.

Controversies

With the accountability movement in education over the last 30 years, many of the studies and much of the literature in the educational field focuses on what academic achievements can be measured as benefits of certain treatments or methods. Funds have been directed to research investigating the academic performance benefits of programs. While research does show academic benefits to community connected curriculum, it also clearly outlines many other benefits, such as increased awareness of community and political issues, increased self-efficacy, and increased accountability between youth and community. With fewer funds attached to the study of such benefits, there is potential for the discussion to focus too narrowly on the academic benefits of community connected curriculum. The question of what research to fund is linked here to the core concept of the purpose of education. Readers of this paper should be aware that research into the effects of school, family, community partnerships may focus heavily on academic outcomes due to funding influences of the accountability movement.

Another potential controversy relates to the role of school's, teachers' and students in relation to standardized tests. As the accountability movement increases the demand for high test scores, teachers will spend more time aimed at achievement of higher student test scores and may dedicate less time developing partnerships that would result in social or community benefits. Studies on community connected curriculum are still inconclusive about the academic benefits demonstrated in standardized tests. Many of these 'out of the classroom' connections require extra time, effort, resources, and support to implement. Schools that are tight on these resources may chose to cut programs or teacher support for family and local community inclusion in the

curriculum, and instead opt to place more resources into methods proven to have higher return on standardized test scores.

Perhaps the largest controversy surrounding the creation of school, family, community partnerships relates to their cost effectiveness. While creation and maintenance of such connections does take time and resources, it can be argued that these partnerships bring benefits of united and leveraged resources. Schools that are able to unite their communities around a common vision for and commitment to education may have greater success at accessing funding and resources from non-traditional sources as well as through increased levy and bond support. Unfortunately, there is little research at this point demonstrating if efforts to connect families and community more tightly to education can be cost effective.

Definitions

Educational philosopher and researcher Joyce Epstein (1992) emphasized the 'overlapping spheres of influence' of school, family, and community that necessarily work together to prepare students for their futures as active members of our society. Since this framework was established, understanding the multiple learning environments needed for truly effective education has heightened research and interest in school, family, community partnerships. Epstein also established a framework for understanding the numerous ways that parents contribute to their child's formal education. According to Epstein (1996), family involvement can be categorized into six categories that include parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. This framework has been used for much of the research on parental involvement in education since it honors the many ways that parents contribute, extending beyond traditional participation of parents as classroom volunteers. Expanding the recognized contributions of parents has created new ways for diverse contributions to be acknowledged and encouraged by schools and classroom teachers.

Curriculum connected to local communities can be incorporated in a number of ways and be motivated by a variety of goals. Members of local communities can literally enter the classroom or can be figuratively included in the curriculum. Examples include: volunteer reading partners or tutors; guest speakers; use of Problem Based Instruction with current local issues; inclusion of students' Funds of Knowledge; and use of technology or other resources to engage with the semiotic domain of the subject area (i.e., German language websites where students can interact with native speakers or pen pals). Students can also engage with the community in roles that are meaningful to them and connected to their curriculum. This includes: volunteering or service learning, tutoring, and internships.

One example of a curriculum including direct experience with community is service learning. The National Service Learning Clearinghouse's definition of service learning is used to focus the discussion of this paper. By this definition, service learning is "…a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility and strengthen communities" (Dymond, 2007, p. 227). Attention is also drawn to volunteer and tutoring experiences that are connected to curriculum of classrooms. Many studies address the ways teachers design their instruction to connect students to the communities they will soon be a part of as adults.

Service learning is widely used today, with estimates ranging from 30% to 60% of American schools incorporating it. Some states require community service for graduation. These volunteer opportunities may be directly linked to curriculum or may not be. School-organized opportunities for students to participate in meaningful community roles seem to increase as students mature throughout secondary school. At the same time, there is a trend to welcome fewer volunteers and speakers into the classroom as students get older and focus more on individual subjects. This may be due to a belief that secondary students do not need the direct participation of family and community in their education and that as they become more

independent and responsible, they may benefit more from seeing what they learn in school in outside settings. Several studies examined in chapter three examine these beliefs.

Limitations

Because there is such variety in ways to connect curriculum to community, the research on benefits and drawbacks to these methods is varied and results on their effectiveness is not definitive. For example, many schools incorporate service learning to "…promote social development, personal and moral development, vocational development, academic achievement, and political development" (Raskoff, 1999, p. 78). Much of the research assumes the benefits of service learning include improvement of students' self image and self efficacy as well as critical thinking skills. Other research investigates benefits to community organizations. Due to varying definitions of service learning and measurements of benefits, the research is not without debate. A clear definition of service learning is needed to be able to measure how a multitude of studies look at this topic. This paper does not examine volunteer/community work outside of school but focuses instead on what school curriculum encourages and incorporates. The National service Learning Clearinghouse's definition can be found in the definitions section of this chapter and focuses this paper. In reading the research in chapter three it is important to keep in mind that not all studies used this definition and variations in results may be the result of variations in what was included as 'service learning.'

Typical studies on the topic of school, family, community partnerships also have limitations in the methods used to conduct them. For example, many use small sample sizes and lack control or comparison groups (Raskoff & Sundeen, 1999). Due to the benefits being measured, many studies also rely on stakeholder perceptions (Dymond, 2007) and are difficult to generalize because of the situated circumstances of the stakeholders in the study (e.g., regionally, economically, investment in program).

Some of the limits of this paper relate to the author's personal interest and experiences. It is important to acknowledge my own biases as the researcher for this paper. I chose to research the topic of school, family, and community partnerships for a variety of reasons. I strongly believe in the importance of overlapping spheres of influence. I was led to study sociology as an undergraduate because of an interest in how social patterns develop in micro-environments such as schools and how these patterns mirror and influence that of the greater society. As I prepare to teach in public schools, it seems pertinent to me recognize that students do not enter an isolated environment when they come to school to learn. Instead, the learning that school promotes is shaped and formed by the multiple environments that students participate in. In turn, the learning they do in school changes their preparedness to participate in these other environments of home and community. If I am to be effective as a classroom teacher, I need a clear understanding of how these multiple environments influence a child's learning. I also need to examine how I can best incorporate these environments for the best interest of the child.

I was also influenced by my own youth in a rural community where I had many advantages due to community members outside of the official school structure (i.e., volunteers, tutors, and family friends with social capitol and knowledge of post-secondary educational opportunities). My parents' work in the arena of community capacity building also greatly influenced my interest in this research. These experiences sparked and kindled my interest in the topic and have driven my research. I started the research with the belief that family support and a connection to community is important and valuable to a quality education.

Summary

This paper examines the reasons and ways that educational curriculum is built to include families and communities, including the benefits and drawbacks to these environment bridging strategies. This chapter has introduced the research question, reasons for interest, and controversies surrounding it. Chapter two will explore the history of school, family, and

community interactions surrounding education, including how such partnerships have come to be of increasing importance. Chapter three will examine current research related to the research topic and analyze the findings of the body of research. Chapter four will then summarize the findings and review the themes that may be helpful for educators looking to build family and community connections that increase educational opportunities for young people.

If educators' goals continue to focus on the preparation of students who are informed, active, and engaged members of their communities and nation, it seems clear that they cannot conduct this education in isolation from families and communities that also work to raise these youth. The intent of this paper is to provide insight into the breadth of potential benefits of school, family, community partnerships and to serve as a resource for educators seeking ways to increase the effectiveness of their partnering strategies.

CHAPTER TWO: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

The building of school, family, and community partnerships has become of increased interest to the educational world in the past quarter of a century. Chapter one introduced the topic and discussed some of the current controversies and terminology associated with the research question. In order to better understand why school partnerships with families and communities are receiving increasing attention, it is helpful to examine the historically perceived purposes of schooling and historical interactions between schools and communities in the U.S. This chapter examines the history of family, community, and school partnerships based on the shared interest of raising and educating American youth. It begins before the founding of the country with colonial America's first formal schools introducing early purposes for education and communities' involvement in early schooling. Then, the chapter follows educational theory and commonly understood purposes of education through modern times in an attempt to provide background on the research question.

Early Partnerships

An understanding of the original purposes of schooling in the American tradition help explain why collaborative partnerships between schools and the community were not as relevant 300 years ago as they are today. Simply put, the purposes of schooling were not such that education would be improved by including family and community. When Massachusetts enacted the "Old Deluder Satan Law" of 1647, citizens were taxed for the creation of public schools for the first time, creating an explicit link between citizenry and responsibility for the next generation's education (Spring, 2008, p. 15). While the purposes of education have developed over time to meet the demands of a developing society, the tradition of responsibility of all citizens to education continues today, demonstrated financially through taxes.

The purpose of colonial education was to teach students to read and write so they could participate in society by obeying the laws of God and the state (Spring, 2008). Educators did not strive to include input or cultural heritage of multiple communities, as schools were designed around the protestant population they were founded to serve. In fact, they actively worked to change Native American cultures. Their purpose was not to educate a pluralistic population or to engage students critically in a democracy, but to help create an Anglicized population of citizens that would obey. Even during these times, Spring (2008) explained, "…concern about freedom of thought sparked debates about whether or not education should be secular and controlled by government" (p. 12).

Teaching strategies during colonial times were also disconnected from the contexts of family and community and included mostly reading, memorization, and acceptance of official interpretations of texts (i.e., the Bible). The publication of French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emile* in 1762 introduced the new educational concepts that children should learn through experience and be motivated by situations requiring acquisition of new knowledge. Spring (2008) wrote, "… [departing] from schooling that emphasized memorization and subordination to authority…learning and knowledge are tools to be used by the individual—not tools enabling society to use the individual" (p. 40). This aligned with John Dewey's later assertion in the early 1900s that learning needs to be grounded in experience and students can experience this context and motivation for learning through work within their community (Raskoff & Sundeen, 1999). In the opposing theory, the child is seen as a tabula rasa (e.g., a blank slate) molded the environment. This concept was advanced by English philosopher John Locke in the late 1600s and the notion influenced American education through the 20th century. Working from the concept of the child as a blank slate, educators were charged with providing proper knowledge and morals and worked toward creating an ideal society "…through the proper molding of children" (Spring, 2008, p. 41).

By the early 1800s there was a lively debate over whether schools should be controlled by local citizenry or elite education 'experts.' The populist view held that political power over education should rest in local citizenry, aligning with Thomas Jefferson's belief that the United States would be more economically and politically stable if political decisions, including the educational system, were made by communities. The Federalists, however, believed that the urban elite should be in control of the political systems of the nation. Alexander Hamilton and the Federalists broke from populist views and moved the educational field toward professionalization. During the Progressive Era of the late 1800s and early 1900s, schools distanced themselves from parents and the community, established centralized bureaucracies without local control, and began to rely on 'experts' and standardization (Bauch, 2001). The educational theory of the day asserted that these experts were more qualified to organize schooling for students than the communities from which students came.

This professionalization of education stemmed partly from a desire to create a society of equal competition in which social position would be determined through efficient, 'scientifically' managed social selection. Schools would do the selecting, and they would use students' interests, desires, and talents to determine their career and thus social position. The hope was that this selection, managed by schools, would serve as a social equalizer. Elite school boards that could manage the standardization of this process from the top down became the calling of the day. This increased the lack of control families had on the educational process of their children (Spring, 2008).

Twentieth Century Partnerships

By the late 1800s and early 1900s alliances had formed between school administrators and local businesses. It was a commonly held belief that educational management should mirror business management. The accepted purposes of public education had shifted to the preparation of students for the workforce. Spring (2008) states, "…in fact, one could argue that schooling as

a means of developing human capital became the most important goal of the educational system in the twentieth century" (p. 252). The 1920s saw the development of modern high schools that focused attention on the social development of youth, teaching them the skills of cooperation necessary in an industrial society. Business values and the desires of businesses for their workforce dominated educational theory and purposes until the Depression years of the 1930s (Spring, 2008).

After WWII, the federal government exerted increasing amounts of power over schooling and became a major source of national educational policy. Because of the influence of the Cold War, the federal government had an interest in steering academic courses toward science and math (Spring, 2008). This was an extension of the professionalization trend in which 'elite experts,' 'business experts,' and 'government educational experts' monopolized control over school structure, purpose, and funding. While the intention was always to improve schools for children across the country, the professionalization of schools and reliance on educational experts for decision making also served to delegitimize the contributions, needs, and purposes that were important to families and local communities. The federal government and experts held that they knew what was best for the nation's children and how to educate them.

Also in the early 20th century, unprecedented numbers of immigrants, many from Southern and Eastern Europe, entered the United States. In response to perceived threats to culture that this immigration wave produced, a Nativist sentiment developed which soon worked its way into formalized programs of Americanization in schools. The social context that arose from this created a particularly salient need for school-community partnerships as well as significant challenges in forming them (Banks, 2004). The ideology of Americanization that was prevalent in public schools was accepted by some immigrants and as a means toward upward mobility. Others, however, refused the suggestion that their "…ways of speaking, behaving, and thinking were inferior to what they were taught in school" (Banks, 2004, p. 753). Instead, such immigrants worked to have their cultures represented and respected in the public schools they

were taxed to fund. They often worked closely with educators who also opposed the Nativist sentiments of the time.

One example of such an educator is teacher Rachel Davis DuBois.[1] DuBois was one of the main leaders of the intercultural education movement of the 1920s through the 1940s. As a high school teacher in the late 1920s, she worked with parents and community members, speakers, and designed assembly programs "…to affirm the values, customs, and contributions of ethnic students, improve intergroup relations, and dispel negative images" (Banks, 2004, p. 756). She recognized that the lessons of multiculturalism and tolerance could not be taught in any meaningful way without inclusion of diverse communities both in the school and in the surrounding communities. She argued that schools had responsibility to provide learning opportunities to students, but that their obligations did not stop there. They also had an obligation to the community to prepare students for contributing roles in a multicultural society and to work towards easing social tensions created by increased cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity.

Also stemming from the intercultural education movement, another early example successful school, family, and community partnering is Benjamin Franklin High School in the 1930s and early 1940s in East Harlem, New York. Under the leadership of principle Leonard Covello, the school's staff worked hard to find solutions to tensions and conflicts in the larger community. The school took on the burden of building relationships with parents and community through community involvement in local issues that extended beyond schooling. The educators worked beyond the typical role of school at the time to solve conflicts surrounding multiracial understanding, housing, jobs, and other social justice issues. These educators reached out by organizing speakers and radio addresses, publishing articles in local foreign-language publications, and using direct communication with parents in several languages. Banks (2004) wrote that Covello's argument for this extensive involvement with the community was "…that students should not be seen as clay to be molded in the hands of skilled craftsmen. They were

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[1] no relation to W.E.B. DuBois

alive, vibrant, ever-changing young people who were being shaped by forces both within and outside of the school" (p. 766). These educators recognized the need to align the experiences students were having in and outside of school in order to meet the goal of teaching tolerance in a volatile social climate.

The work of Covello, DuBois, and others to unite communities and schools around the goal of examining prejudice and discrimination was a rare strategy at the time. The idea of bringing together the school and community to teach tolerance was an attempt to quell early 20th century Nativist sentiments, which had lead to lynching and race riots. These acts by Nativists were themselves a response to the perceived threat to high numbers of ethnically and religiously diverse immigrants entering the country (Banks, 2004). The 1924 Immigration Act reduced the number of immigrants entering the country and, in turn, concern for the teaching and integration of non-English speaking students also decreased (Spring, 2008). By the 1950s the social context had changed enough that the focus on intercultural education that drove school-community partnerships had significantly diminished.

The intercultural education movement did not completely solve the problem of segregation and other institutional barriers preventing racial minorities from gaining access to good schools and meaningful curricula (Banks, 2004). It did, however, influence the social structures and expectations around multiculturalism. It also demonstrated early examples of successful school community partnerships created with the understanding that learning is done both *in* and *outside* of school. When schools work to unite these two worlds, the lessons learned by students are that much more effective because experiences in one sphere are reinforced in the other and lessons learned can transfer from one environment to the other. Students can see that what they learn in school is useful and allows them to better contribute to the world outside of school.

In these early examples of school and community partnerships, education was viewed "…as a means to address intergroup tensions, the centrality of democratic values and

responsibilities in American life, and the recognition that education took place in the community as well as in schools" (Banks, 2004, p. 756). It was not until the 1960s and the federal War on Poverty, the Civil Rights Movement, and the re-opening of immigration regulations that the social climate again called for focus on community control and schools as a focal point for major social reform efforts. The use schooling as a key to building successful, engaged multicultural democracy was a goal sparked from the social climate of the 1920s and 1930s. It is again relevant in today's multicultural American society and this goal is among the modern motivators for school, family, community partnerships examined in chapter three.

<div align="center">School Reform Movement</div>

The 1960s was a decade of social change in many respects, including the educational realm. The demographics of America were changing due to federal policies around desegregation of schools and immigration. This created a dynamic tension between state and federal powers regarding the operation of schools. Consequently, schools were forced to develop and accommodate changing policies in order to serve shifting populations. One such tension emerged when the federal government mandated desegregation of schools, overturning many local and state educational policies in the South. Another tension emerged when the federal government enacted a new immigration policy in 1964, allowing for more linguistic and cultural diversity in the immigrant populations allowed to enter the country and thus caused an increase in the diversity in schools. Grassroots organizations utilized the energy created by this tension to secure more rights for children, forcing schools to further adapt and accommodate the diverse needs of students with many backgrounds and languages (Spring, 2008).

An example of such a grassroots movement involved immigrant families who put pressure on those in power to grant their children appropriate educational opportunities. This movement opened access for other reforms, affecting populations such as English language learners. In 1974, Chinese immigrant families organized with other minority communities in San

Francisco (including Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, and Spanish speaking communities as well as Samoan, Korean, and Hindu communities) and won rights for bilingual/bicultural education. This was accomplished in the Lau v. Nichols Supreme Court decision, a key contribution to national legal protection of educational rights of non-English speaking Americans (Hidalgo et al., 2004). The ruling was a big step toward opportunities for true access to academic content. It also demonstrated the power of strong community coalitions that united around the educational goals that were important to them and for their children. This is one example of the movement in the 1960s and 1970s in which diverse populations organized and spoke out en mass, demanding that the educational purposes and structures of schools serve their unique needs.

Grassroots organizers were holding local, state, and federal governments accountable for children's rights to education. As court cases such as Brown v. Board of Education and Lau v. Nichols were pushed to the Supreme Court, social tensions forced the federal government to increase involvement and power over local schools to protect students. This federal involvement in schooling continued to increase during the accountability movement, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Also in the 1960s, schools were also emerging as one of the main government structures through which social welfare programs could take shape. Schools were one of the only extensive government structures and were located in almost all American communities (Spring, 2008). They were convenient in the fight against social ills because of their location. There was also an increase in social-science literature identifying schools as a cornerstone in the interdependent causal relationships that created negative social cycles. Theory suggested, for example, that to change the cycle of poverty, one had to change the structures in multiple arenas of life, including the home environment and schooling. This is seen in the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) and the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). These pieces of legislation were a continuation of the federal government involvement pattern since World War II, which was driven by educational goals linked to the economy. They were federal acts that used education to

prepare students for the workforce and fight the 'war on poverty' by providing low income

students more skills and chances to enter the "opportunity structure of society" (Spring, 2008, p.

408).

The EOA attempted to do this by establishing the Head Start program. The goal of Head

Start is to give preschool children from poor families advantages that allow them to start school in

a more equal position to students of more affluent families (Spring, 2008; Epstein, 1996). This

was also one of the first federally funded programs mandating family participation in education

and a program that still leads today in terms of the wide variety of strategies it uses to encourage

family involvement to benefit students. By the 1970s, parent involvement was often included as

an element of school reform. The effective schools movement included it as an element that

would improve student success. Educational focus was sharpened on curriculum, instruction, and

connections with families (Epstein, 1996).

Educational theory was developing drastically to accommodate the changing societal

needs and goals. Urie Bronfenbrenner's 1979 ecological model had a great influence on

educational theory related to the interconnectedness of students' school and home worlds.

Bronfenbrenner's sociocultural developmental theory directed attention to the mutual

accommodation between the immediate settings that surround a child (i.e., home) and the larger

environments of which the immediate setting is a part (Keyes, 2000). One can visualize it as the

layers of an onion, in which the innermost layer is the immediate setting of the developing person

and the outermost layer is the macro system level, which refers to the values, laws, and customs

of the culture that influence all inner layers. The different layers of the system are continuously

interacting and influencing one another and none ever operates in isolation. The theoretical

structure emphasizes that there is interconnectedness both within and between the various layers

of the system (Bronfenbrenner, as cited in Keyes, 2000). When this theory was applied to

schools, educators and researchers could not deny the influence of home and community life on

student success. The model provided a framework to reexamine how students' experience in and

outside of school influenced one another. Researchers began to focus more on understanding how all of these environments influenced students' success (Epstein, 1996; Keyes, 2000; Castro, Bryant, Peisner-Feinberg, & Skinner, 2004).

Social science and educational research in the 1980s "…began to challenge prevailing theories of social organization, which assumed that organizations were most effective when they operated independently and separately" (Hidalgo, Siu, & Epstein, 2004, p. 632). Over the last twenty to thirty years, there has been a steady increase in studies on family and community involvement in the education of youth. This revived interest may have been spurred on for many reasons, but is attributed by many researchers to the accountability movement of schools. This movement was sparked by the National Commission on Excellence in Education's 1983 *A Nation at Risk* report which generated national motivation to reform schools in significant ways, including renewed interest in inviting the students' home and community life into the educational setting (Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). The school reform efforts that grew from the accountability movement created a sense of urgency later "…culminating at the national level by implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001" (Masumoto, 2009, p. 2).

One example of concerns raised by the *A Nation at Risk* report were low achievement and high dropout rates among poor and marginalized groups who were disengaging from formal educational systems in mass numbers. Students were not identifying with what was taught in schools and the opportunities and role models they found there. Loosened immigration regulations and the civil rights movement had changed the demographics of American schools and also the expectations students had for what the educational environment should be. Banks (2004) wrote, "As the ethnic and racial texture of our society deepens and as social class, language, and other forms of diversity become more salient, linking schools to communities can help teachers better understand their students and increase their ability to draw on the community as a rich resource" (p. 767). Poor and marginalized groups were suffering from a division between home and school life that was not being connected in this way by teachers who were

primarily white and middle class. Considering Bronfenbrenner and Epstein's theories on the importance of aligned spheres of influence in a child's life, it is easy to see that connections made between the school and home life make the students' worlds more congruent. This raises the comfort level and decreases the risk for minority students to disengage from the school environment as they did in the 1970s and 1980s. Unfortunately, while studies demonstrate the connection between aligning home and school life and increased attendance and engagement, many also show that minority students today are still primarily taught by teachers without personal connections to the communities in which they teach (Banks, 2004).

Educational theory surrounding the effectiveness of such school to home connections continued to develop. Researchers in the 1980s redefined 'parent involvement' which had been established as important to student success, to 'school and family partnerships.' This change in terminology recognized the shared responsibilities for children across contexts and also shifted part of the responsibility for parental involvement from parents' shoulders to shared responsibility (Epstein, 1996). Schools began creating programs that informed and involved parents, often overcoming linguistic barriers by communicating in the home language. Research also shifted from the question of whether schools or families were more important to an understanding that schools and families share responsibility and influence children simultaneously. As Epstein (1996) wrote, "…it became increasingly clear that neither schools nor families alone can do the job of educating and socializing children and preparing them for life" (p. 210).

In the 1990s Joyce Epstein emerged as the top theorist on school, family, and community partnerships. She extended her theories from Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, which describes layers of contextual environment that continually interact with one another to influence the development of a child (Keyes, 2000). Epstein's model of 'overlapping spheres of influence' the child is the center of three major contexts or environments that influence development: home, school, community. When these three contexts have shared goals and work collaboratively to meet these goals they are more effective (Epstein, 1996). Both Bronfenbrenner and Epstein's

theoretical models reflected the logic of educator Leonard Covello, who insisted that students could not be molded by educators' intentions for them, but were shaped by forces both within and outside of the school. Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence, first developed in the 1980s, and her framework of six types of family and community involvement in education continue to be a popular theoretical framework for recent research. Epstein's theoretical framework, which was also discussed in chapter one, set the stage for current research and debate on the purposes and effectiveness of school, family, and community partnerships.

During the late 1980s and the 1990s, beginning with President H.W. Bush and continuing through President Clinton, there were increased government sponsored initiatives aimed at encouraging volunteer participation to further connect youth to their communities. One example is the 1990 National Community Service Act. At this time, states also began encouraging community service in public schools (e.g., Maryland requires community service in curriculum or 75 hours of community service pre-graduation). These programs were also a part of the school reform movement that grew in the 1970s out of educators and other observers who "…decried the alienation of American youth and called for reforms of public education, including community service learning, work-study programs, internships, and community participation" (Raskoff & Sundeen, 1999, p. 76).

The accountability movement increased standardization and federal control over education, but it also had components that focused on connecting learning in school to meaningful experiences within families and communities. This continued to gain momentum in the fields of educational policy and research as well as the practice of many teachers, schools, and districts. Using GOALS 2000: Educate America Act, Congress offered directives and funding to all states that enabled districts and schools to design and test ideas for partnerships with families (Epstein, 1996). No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2002 and other recent federal and state initiatives, further "…underscore the need for families, communities, and schools to work

together to produce healthy and academically successful students" (Michael, Dittus & Epstein, 2007, p. 577).

Today, research on school, family, and community partnerships is still being compiled and there is still a need to extend this body of research to increase understanding of the practices of school partnerships that will include families from diverse backgrounds (Hidalgo, Siu & Epstein, 2004). The research is moving away from deficit theories that explained students' academic struggles stemming from problems internal to the student. The most recent research in the field is focusing more on understanding student successes despite known barriers, such as daily stress produced by poverty and how schools can further develop already existing success. This has led to consideration of ways schools can reexamine the structures and methods they use to invite parents and community to play a role in youth's educational experience (Hidalgo et al., 2004; Marcon, 1999). A sociocontextual approach allows researchers to take a second look at how parent and community involvement is considered advantageous. Thus, research has recently focused more on partnerships that positively affect student outcomes and recognize a variety of cultural views and local involvement in education (Hidagalo et al., 2004).

<center>Summary</center>

This chapter has provided a description of the historical context related to the research question of the paper. The original purposes of early American education did not support inclusion and respect for multicultural perspectives. As seen throughout this chapter, the context of the American social fabric has changed the demands on education and diverse communities have won rights for equitable education of their children that reflect their cultures, languages, and perspectives. It is difficult to design educational experiences to serve a pluralistic society without including the perspectives of the diverse communities within it. The educational field is still seeking effective ways to incorporate the perspectives and expectations of many cultures and communities. While there is more work to be done in understanding the ways in which schools

can work with families and communities to improve education, families and local communities are now invited to participate in educational processes more than ever before.

Learning theory has also progressed throughout the history of American Education, shaping and reshaping the ways that schools work with community to educate youth. Students are no longer thought of as blank slates to be filled with the knowledge that previous generations have prepared for them and deem necessary for their futures. Many more schools seek to provide real world context for the skills, knowledge, and perspectives they are developing in students by teaming up with community organizations and families to extend the learning environment. There is increasing recognition that children cannot be prepared for adult roles in our society solely by schools. Schools, families, and communities must share the responsibility for the education and socialization of the next generation. Theorists postulate that if these overlapping spheres of influence can align their educational goals for students, they can provide a more effective, positive, and welcoming learning environment where students will achieve more.

This chapter two has examined the history of this topic and how our educational changes have helped develop the theory and research questions that shape current research on school, family, community partnerships. Increased interest in these partnerships, coupled with the effect they have on student learning and student success has inspired significant research into the topic, even while there are still gaps in the knowledge base. The following chapter examines and analyzes current research on the motivations for schools to create school, family, and community partnerships and how they do this effectively.

CHAPTER THREE: CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This paper examines the motivations for creating school, family, community partnerships and the ways that secondary teachers and schools create effective partnerships. As discussed in chapter two, schools early in American history were entrusted with teaching students to read and write so they could obey the laws of the Bible and government. By the 1900s the purpose of schooling had developed to the preparation students for their future life in society and the work force. Most recently, the accountability movement and the increasingly multicultural fabric of our society have pushed educators to prepare students for roles in the economy that require knowledge and innovation as well as positively contributing roles to our complex pluralistic society. Educators are finding that direct connections to multiple communities and the support of children's families are key to this preparation. Modern learning theory also supports the need for concrete, connected, contextualized experience within the environments students are being prepared to contribute to as adults. Connecting students to these real-world contexts and aligning the goals of the schools and families for their education is not a straightforward, clear process, however. As teachers and schools have found varying degrees of success at partnering with families and communities to improve educational opportunities, it is important to examine which goals can be met through such partnerships and what aspects of partnering programs make them successful.

Chapter one of this paper laid out the research question and described the goals of the paper. Chapter two examined the historical context to family and community participation in and partnership with public education. This chapter will investigate current research on the topic of school, family, community partnerships and seek to find the most common goals and methods for creating successful partnerships.

School, family, community partnerships do not all look the same, have the same goals, or achieve the same results. There are many motivators for schools and teachers to create and maintain partnerships outside of the school and to utilize them to work toward many different goals. Schools that do encourage and work toward partnerships with families and communities do have one thing in common; they recognize the power of these overlapping spheres of influence (Epstein, 1996) on the education and development of students in their care. In order to understand what partnerships best help students, it is important to have an understanding of current research on the topic and the direction that new strategies involving partnerships may be developing.

School, family, and community partnerships take on many forms. Schools create opportunities for students to work within their local communities, such as in service learning or community service programs. Parent and community volunteers work within the schools, bringing in resources and variety of perspectives and experience to the learning environment. Schools and districts also work to create various key partnerships with families and with other community organizations that serve multiple goals. This chapter examines the forms that school, family, and community partnerships take on as well as their effectiveness in relation to student learning and cost by examining current educational research.

The first section begins by examining studies that investigate students engaged with their communities through school-organized volunteering and service learning opportunities. The hope of such volunteer programs in public schools is that students will have positive interactions with their community that also provide real world experience which will contextualize what they are learning in school. Other more specific goals for volunteer and service learning programs in schools include social development and socialization of students toward civic engagement (Kielsmeier et. al., 2004; Raskoff & Sundeen, 1999; Taylor & Trepanier-Street, 2007; Dymond, 2007), community building (Raskoff & Sundeen, 1999; Seitsinger, 2005; Kielsmeier et. al., 2004), and improved student academic engagement and achievement (Soslau & Yost, 2007;

Kielsmeier et. al., 2004; Seitsinger, 2005). Studies in this first section examine these goals and investigate what program elements lead to improved success.

The next section looks at schools working to incorporate family involvement in the school environment as school family partnerships. The third section explores schools that invite community members into the school as mentors and volunteers. The final section explores studies that investigate program characteristics that are key to creating successful partnerships that benefit a wide range of people.

Volunteering and Service Learning

One type of school-community partnership is school-based community service, in which the student(s) work to contribute to the greater community in programs designed by their school. Evaluating the effectiveness of students' interaction with their communities through such volunteer experiences can be difficult. One reason for this is the broad range of existing program structures and goals. Andrew Furco has developed a typology of service program goals or rationales that includes social development, personal and moral development, vocational development, academic achievement, and political development of students (as cited in Raskoff & Sundeen, 1999). These categories demonstrate the broad range of goals for students when designing volunteer opportunities including: engaging youth in civic and community life, strengthening academic education, increasing student engagement in school, extending student learning beyond the classroom and providing opportunities to use new skills to meet their community's needs, and fostering a sense of caring for others. Which of these goals are achieved through school based volunteer programs and what makes these programs successful is one of the main strands of inquiry in the following research studies.

When evaluating research in this field, it is important to distinguish between programs that offer or require volunteer opportunities for students and those that do this *and* link volunteer experiences directly to curriculum. Programs directly linking service to the community to

curriculum are often designated as 'service learning.' Service Learning is defined by the National

Service Learning Clearinghouse as "…a *teaching and learning strategy* that integrates

meaningful community service with *instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience*,

[italics added] teach civic responsibility and strengthen communities" (Hardison, n.d.). While

programs designed to give students volunteer opportunities may share many of the same goals,

service learning is distinguishable from community service or volunteer programs because it

requires a direct connection to academic curriculum as well as reflection time. Both types of

service create partnerships that schools hope benefit the community, the school, and students, but

research demonstrates differing types of results depending on program type. The first studies

examined here include research on volunteer programs, followed by studies involving service

learning projects.

In their three-year multi-method case study in Los Angeles County high schools (both

public and private), Raskoff and Sundeen (1999) investigated how community service programs

were implemented and what would be the perceived costs and benefits to the school, community

service organizations, and students. To collect the data, mail surveys were conducted with 385

schools about their community service programming and 84 community organizations about their

relationship with schools. The researchers conducted interviews with administrators and faculty

from 18 schools, representatives from 11 community organizations, and 281 students from 22

schools county-wide. Schools of focus were chosen to represent the diversity of socioeconomics

and culture in the county.

The researchers found that 82% of the county's schools had community-service programs

and school personnel interviewed believed such programs encouraged personal growth,

educational development, multi-cultural understanding, and altruism. The researchers

emphasized the pattern that public schools tended to stress community involvement and career

and personal development. The students had positive attitudes toward their community service

experiences with direct service, in which they could see the results of their work, as their favorite

type. They worked in and outside of schools, collected and distributed goods, tutored, performed cleanup and maintenance, assisted patients in medical settings, aided teachers and librarians, and conducted fundraisers (more common in public schools). Students reported liking helping others, the opportunity for social interaction, a sense of accomplishment, and learning about careers, their community, and themselves. Programs that had a reputation for being well run had supportive and committed school and community organization partners, a school-based staff member serving as a coordinator, financial resources dedicated to activities, and tended to integrate service experiences with academic goals. The main obstacles reported were difficulties in establishing strong relationships between the school and organizations where students could volunteer, transportation for students, and unclear links between the volunteer work and the educational goals of the school.

Raskoff and Sundeen (1999) clearly described the theoretical underpinnings of their study and spent three years researching in the community and collecting multiple-sources of data that they could triangulate from hundreds of stakeholders. However, they did not describe their data collection methods or the demographics of the population in much detail in this report, which damages the credibility of the study. By including a broad range of participants in their case study Raskoff and Sundeen improved the accuracy of the patterns deducted from their data and provided a broader perspective on the benefits sought and achieved by community service programs in schools. Overall, those students and school staff involved in school-based volunteer programs studied here thought highly of the programs and the benefits to students in their personal growth and connection to their community, despite reporting some difficulties in the logistics of running such programs.

When Taylor and Trepanier-Street (2007) examined the effects of community service through qualitative surveys, they also found positive effects on the specific goals of civic and multi-cultural education as well as several other benefits. Students from 44 colleges across the country who had volunteered as mentors of at-risk preschoolers reported increases in their own

leadership skills, understanding of issues facing the community and appreciation for variety of viewpoints and backgrounds strengthening community and democratic process. Participants also reported increased recognition that good citizenship includes responsibilities and that individuals can make a difference in social justice issues. The 941 students surveyed were more racially and ethnically diverse than the general population (42.6% white, 26% African American, 10% Hispanic, 6.7% Asian) and 14% male (which is high when related to 2.5% of preschool teachers as male). Nearly identical pre and post program surveys in which most questions included Likert scales were administered at local Jumpstart program sites where the college students served as mentors twice a week and received early childhood education training during the 2003-04 academic year. Responses were also cross referenced with a separate, qualitative research project at one of the universities in which interview questions were open-ended in order to increase accuracy of survey interpretation.

Taylor and Trepanier-Street's (2007) study has some strong points for credibility, such as stakeholder perception checking through open-ended questions in interviews at one university, but it is lacking in other areas that would improve its credibility. The researchers fail to clearly describe the details of their data-gathering procedures, such as the sample-selection process from the population of Jumpstart participants nation-wide, their procedures for coding and cross-referencing volunteer responses, and lack of member checking. While they did collect data through both interviews and surveys, they failed to further triangulate this data with any perspectives other than the volunteers themselves. Volunteers may have reported increases in their civic engagement and multicultural awareness due to an internal desire to have personally grown from the time they dedicated their time to the Jumpstart program. Additionally, while the large number of participants and interviews to fill-in which aspects of the program may have led to positive results positively affects the transferability of the study, a lack of thick description of the program itself prevents direct transfer of the findings from Jumpstart to other community service programs to a certain degree. Though the authors generalize to service projects in social

studies curriculum throughout the K-12 level, they do not offer evidence to support the transfer from the college-level studied to these younger age groups.

Even considering the above critiques of the study, the focus on one example of community service in education used for the dual purpose of developing civic awareness in student volunteers and simultaneously benefiting younger learners should not be ignored. It demonstrates that, at least in the eyes of participants, there are types of school based community service that build leadership skills and change attitudes about diversity and social issues. This may be dependent on the program design and implementation, but the Jumpstart program itself seems to benefit student volunteers in this way. In light of this study's results, the following study examines some of the differences between school-based community service program type, design, and implementation.

In their analysis of school principal responses to a nationally representative sample of principals, Kielsmeier, Scales, Roehlkepartain, and Neal (2004) found that 69% of K-12 public schools had community service programs while only 30% had service learning. The disparity between these percentages demonstrates the importance of clear definitions of program types for further research. Research that claims certain benefits for service learning programs may not be transferable to all community service programs. The researchers analyzed 1,799 responses to mailed surveys with follow-up telephone interviews to principles. Principals also reported that many of the service-learning opportunities available to students were short term, and nine out of ten reported that service learning had a positive impact on student academic achievement and school engagement. The study's results could be strengthened by multiple measurements of student success instead of using solely relying on the perception of principles. It could further be strengthened by further research to determine if the length of service learning projects is a factor in the impact on student success.

The study also examined aspects of programs that the researchers deemed important to successful service learning programs. While the researchers purported that length of service-

learning project is one important aspect of 'effective service-learning,' only 24% of surveyed schools with service-learning ran projects lasting more than one month. Student participation in identification of possible projects, which Kielsmeier et al. (2004) also identify as important to quality service learning experiences, is only a component of 36% of schools with service-learning. Schools received varying degrees of structural support for service learning programs. Only 15% of those with service learning had a part time service learning coordinator and only 9% had a fulltime coordinator. Sixty percent of schools with service learning supported teachers in attending service-learning training outside of school. Seventeen percent offered extra planning time for teachers to develop or supervise service-learning activities. While this study does not examine the effectiveness of these aspects of service-learning programs, the frequency with which they are found in public school provides an important perspective for understanding other research on the topic. The survey-based study contributes to the field's understanding of service-learning as a legitimate educational tool recognized for its ability to increase student engagement in school and healthy development.

In Seitsinger's (2005) study she also looked at the frequency of service-learning implementation and clearly delineated between community service and service learning, which is used as an "…integral element of the teaching and learning process" (p. 19). Seitsinger analyzed data collected through Project on High Performance Learning Communities (Project HiPlaces), which is a comprehensive whole-school research model that had been used to gather data on school reform success for twenty years. Her goal was to determine to what extent service-learning was implemented in middle-school classrooms, what educational beliefs led to the use of service-learning, and how those beliefs and implementation of service-learning related to standards-based education. She examined teacher responses to 48 variables related to these research questions for the 2,164 teachers in 271 middle schools surveyed through Project HiPlaces for one academic year. On average, 51% of students at these schools in Colorado,

Indiana, and Rhode Island were eligible for free/reduced lunch and were 52% white, 15% African American, 21% Hispanic 4% Asian American, 2 % Native American, and 6% multiracial.

Seitsinger found that the middle-school teachers surveyed highly valued service-learning because of a belief that it was "…essential to students' effective education" (p. 27) in that it provided "…opportunities to engage in and develop their higher order thinking skills" (p. 27). Despite this widely-reported attitude toward service-learning, this instructional strategy was used far less often than others, such as 'traditional practices,' 'practices for writing skills,' 'mathematical reasoning and skill enhancement,' and 'critical thinking enhancement practices.' While Seitsinger reported that service learning was used several times a year on average, she did not report on how many of the teachers used service learning. This provides a different picture from the Kielsmeier et al. (2004) study which reported on the number of schools using service-learning but not on frequency of use. Seitsinger also found that those teachers who used service-learning strategies leaned towards the use of instructional strategies such as critical thinking, authentic instruction, and cross-content standards-based instruction over traditional practices and those related to basic skills.

While the Seitsinger study does not confirm or disconfirm claims that service-learning increases the quality of student learning, it does show that these beliefs are prevalent among middle-school teachers, even if those same teachers do not implement service learning often in their classrooms. Seitsinger's data analysis was limited to the framework set up by the Project HiPlaces survey, which compared 'instructional strategies' that are most likely not equally easy to implement. The time and effort necessary to implement service learning in a classroom, especially when the school or district does not financially or structurally support such a program, may be one factor in the infrequent use. Because Seitsinger did not investigate reasons for frequency of use, it is difficult to guess at the source of the disparity between teacher belief in service-learning and implementation. It is clear, however, that middle-school teachers in various

parts of the country have a perception of service-learning as a positive and effective strategy for encouraging student engagement and higher-order thinking skills.

Because this is a relatively new field, much research focuses on perceived benefits of service-learning and not on determining if these benefits can be empirically proven. In terms of the benefits and costs of service learning, researchers are still investigating what aspects of service learning might be worth further researching. Some outcomes are measured empirically, but much of the data on outcomes, such as academic improvement, is limited to stakeholder perceptions. In the Kielsmeier et al. (2004) study, for example, there was a correlation between the positive effects of service learning as reported by principles and low-income schools. While service learning may have more positive impact on students in low-income areas, this correlation may also simply be representative of principles' desire to report success of their students in lower income areas due to their bias of personal investment. Without triangulation of the findings of positive impact on student achievement with multiple forms of empirical evidence, it is difficult to rely on stakeholder perceptions of programs alone to determine the success of said program.

There is potential to overestimate the effectiveness of programs when relying on participant's personal evaluation of the program's success because these participants, or stakeholders, may be personally invested in the production of positive outcomes. While it is important to recognize this potential it is also important that the positive results they report not be completely negated because of lack of empirical evidence. The results that such studies report should instead be interpreted with awareness of the limitations produced when relying on the perceptions of one group of people. Both the Keilsmeier et al. (2004) and Seitsinger (2005) studies rely on perceptions of teachers or principles and do not investigate the perceptions of students, parents, and community partners about the effectiveness of service-learning on students' academic and social learning in schools.

One study that is strengthened in comparison because it does include a wider range of stakeholder perceptions is Dymond (2007). Dymond's qualitative study used focus groups at five

Illinois high schools that had well established, school wide service learning programs that were inclusive of students with disabilities. The researchers sought to determine if those elements of such programs deemed 'key' to successful programs by current literature were also viewed as important to stakeholders. Dymond first examined peer-reviewed journal articles published between 1990 and 2005 to define list of elements deemed important for successful High School Service Learning Programs (HSSLPs). She identified the following overarching key elements of HSSLPs: (a) authentic context; (b) link to the curriculum; (c) strength of home, school, and community partnerships involved; (d) programmatic support; (e) frequency of instruction; (f) planning and preparation (including student/community participation in planning); (g) types of and choice in service; (h) reflection; (i) celebration; (j) student assessment and program evaluation, and; (k) student participation and ownership.

The next step was to determine if participants in such programs also viewed these elements of HSSLPs as key to program success. She identified five schools through purposeful sampling using criterion and snowball procedures and ran focus groups. Participants in the focus groups included administrators, service learning coordinators, general and special education teachers, related services personnel, paraprofessionals, parents, and community members, but no students. When given the list of key elements of successful programs and asked to determine if these were truly critical elements or not, the focus groups unanimously confirmed the importance of each element with few points of conflict between their experience and existing recommendations in the literature. Focus groups did, however, propose some revisions to the descriptors used to explain each element. These revisions tended to focus on loosening of expectations about which parts of a program should be formalized and on increasing the roles that students can play in their service and in designing and implementing the service-learning plan.

The study's focus was on checking stakeholder perception against current literature focus on key elements of service-learning programs. While participant responses may have been biased toward key elements of programs already defined by the literature because the researcher

provided a list of these elements to work from, one can still conclude that the elements are seen as valuable to communities working with service learning. The diversity of the stakeholders included in the study demonstrates positive perception of such programs on both the school and community side of partnerships. Dymond (2007) could have improved the picture of stakeholder experience in such programs further by including students in the focus groups.

As it was, the adult participants of focus groups emphasized the need for flexibility within HSSLPs so that projects can be adapted to fit the needs of the students and the community. Another clear message that surfaced from the focus groups was the potential for HSSLPs to be inclusive of students with disabilities by eliminating barriers such as transportation, so that these students can take advantage of the life skills and academic curricula that is enriched by such programs. The study only included five communities and so results may not be transferable to all high schools with service-learning programs. Despite this, its findings would most likely transfer to other schools with well-established programs that are inclusive of students with disabilities. Schools establishing service-learning programs could use this list of attributes of successful programs and have confidence that they are worth focusing on in the eyes of adult contributors to such programs.

The three studies described above focused on stakeholder perception of the benefits of school community partnerships in the form of service-learning programs. Complimenting these findings are those of Soslau and Yost (2007), who measured multiple indicators of student success to examine service-learning programs' place in standards-driven curriculum. Soslau and Yost (2007) investigated the effect of service-learning experiences on students' knowledge and motivation to learn by measuring both qualitative and quantitative data: connections between academics and life experiences in journals, academic achievement based on test scores, attendance, and suspension rates. One urban fifth grade classroom served as the experimental group. Students in this experimental group helped to create their own service-learning project that included hands-on learning, guest speakers, projects to improve their community, and

personal portfolios to track their individual work. The researchers used another class as the control group against which the class could be measured. The control class was taught by the same teachers and had similar academic goals but was taught using traditional core curriculum instruction without service-learning components. Students in both fifth grade classes were in the same urban middle school and were primarily African American and eligible for the free lunch program. In written journals, students in the experimental group who did service-learning projects were more likely to find real-world connections with academic material learned. They also made greater increases in their mathematics and reading scores than the control group over the course of the one school year examined in the study. They were slightly more likely to attend school (1.79%) and less likely to be suspended, demonstrating that such programs can have positive effects on both academics and behavior.

The use of multiple indicators of success of the program in this study supports the breadth of advantages claimed by supporters of service learning. Students out-performed those in the control group on all four indicators of student learning and motivation. While the study only included 66 children, it supports other research claiming effectiveness of service learning when students have partial control over the design and reflection and the experiences are linked directly to curriculum. Future studies would need to include more students from a variety of backgrounds in multiple environments.

The results of Soslau and Yost (2007) study support service learning as a viable instructional strategy that increases student motivation and learning. The research also contributes to a newer body of literature that focuses on the positive impact students can have on their communities. Such programs may be a step away from common portrayal of youth as deficit in some way, especially urban students with low socio-economic backgrounds.

The studies in this section demonstrate that schools working to create programs where students can volunteer through partnerships with local community organizations, whether designed as community service or service learning, have a variety of aims for students. They also

demonstrate that such programs have varying levels of success toward these aims. Goals for such

programs can be broad and encompass socialization toward civic engagement and social

development (Kielsmeier et. al., 2004; Raskoff & Sundeen, 1999; Taylor & Trepanier-Street,

2007; Dymond, 2007), community building goals (Raskoff & Sundeen, 1999; Seitsinger, 2005;

Kielsmeier et. al., 2004), and academic engagement and achievement (Soslau & Yost, 2007;

Kielsmeier et. al., 2004; Seitsinger, 2005). The experiences students have due to this type of

school-community partnership provide students with often positive experiences within their own

community and grounds what they are learning in school in real world experiences.

     While research results on school-based volunteer programs is mixed (especially for

schools that *require* volunteer hours), there is strong evidence to support service learning as a

viable instructional strategy. The studies described above suggest, however, that the success of

these programs require certain elements. Program elements shown to create successful,

sustainable programs include: (a) creating clear links and meaningful connections to academic

curriculum (Raskoff & Sundeen, 1999; Dymond, 2007; Soslau & Yost, 2007); (b) giving students

time for reflection on their experience and how it relates to the larger system (Dymond, 2007;

Taylor & Trepanier-Street, 2007); (c) providing opportunities for students to see and celebrate the

outcomes of their work (Taylor & Trepanier-Street, 2007; Kielsmeier et. al., 2004); and (d)

support of more formalized school community partnerships from the school or district in the form

of finances, manpower, and structure (Dymond, 2007; Raskoff & Sundeen, 1999). Schools that

seek to serve the purpose of creating active and informed citizens by connecting students in

valuable and personal ways to society may do well to examine this body of research and this type

of school-community partnership.

Family Involvement

     When schools partner with families they pull together two main overlapping spheres of

influence, which is key to student success. Current research on the ways that families support

students has moved away from traditional expectations for parental involvement that was often limited to parents volunteering in school or being a part of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). A broadened vision of the scope of family influence has led educators and researchers to a better understanding of the ways in which families can truly support children as students. Parents respond to a child's developmental and behavioral needs and adjust their involvement to the context. This includes what child requests verbally or demonstrates his/her needs are through behavior as well as what opportunities and invitations there are for action/involvement (Muller, 1998). Thus, when schools offer more opportunities to become involved, parents most often do so. Secondary schools tend to be more distant geographically from homes which limits opportunity for involvement, contributing to parents feeling removed from the school (Muller, 1998).

Family involvement does not have to stem only from parents and indeed in some cultures the childrearing roles are not traditionally those of parents. Because of this it is important to recognize the involvement of any and all family members making contributions to the rearing of the child. While this distinction is not made in all of the studies in this section, it is an important one and one which is made more often in recent research.

The research studies in this section look at many aspects of parental involvement and examine what is considered as 'involvement' and how effective this involvement is for various goals. Much of the current research on parental involvement focuses on elementary schools. Though the focus of this paper is primarily the secondary level, studies of younger students are included at the beginning of this section because they demonstrate important ways adults can make an impact on student learning and development. Research also points out, however, that family involvement is not the same at any age and that the types of involvement that occur as well as their effectiveness may change as students age. The studies at the end of this section focus on research on family involvement at the secondary level in order to more fully complete the investigation of family involvement's impact on students.

Marcon (1999) conducted a longitudinal, correlational study investigating the relationship between the amount of active and passive parent involvement on the behavioral and academic success of preschoolers. Using Epstein's (1996) framework of parent involvement, Marcon investigated two types of involvement: communicating, as measured by participation in parent-teacher conferences and home visits, and volunteering, as measured by extended class visits or helping with a class activity. She classified these types of involvement as passive and active, respectively. Findings revealed the active type of parent involvement as significantly associated with almost all categories of adaptive development, higher GPAs, and greater mastery of basic skills in all areas regardless of gender. Marcon also found that preschoolers with parents who were involved in a wider variety of ways had children with significantly greater development of communication, daily living, socialization and motor skills and greater mastery of early basic skills in math/science, verbal, social and work habits. Results also indicated that parents of boys and girls, single and two-parent households, and well off and poorer families were equally likely to be involved. Lastly, she found a stronger positive correlation with high parent involvement and students' academic performance and development for boys than for girls. Though Marcon does not postulate at the reason, boys benefitted more academically from parental involvement than girls. Perhaps parents involve themselves in different ways with males around academics than with females, but further research is needed to investigate possible reasons for this finding.

Marcon (1999) collected data from three cohorts of students in the urban classrooms of sixty-two teachers who were predominantly African American and female, reflecting the early-learning staff of the district. The random stratified sample of students (n=708) came from predominantly low-income families (69% qualified for subsidized school lunch), were mostly African American (95%), and 60% lived in single parent households. Marcon measured parent involvement by teacher survey evaluating which of four types of interaction the teacher had had with parents throughout the year. The four types of parent involvement were parent-teacher conference, home visits, extended class visits, and helping with a class activity. Student

outcomes were a measurement of teacher evaluation on the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales (measuring language, self-help, social, motor, and adaptive development) and the district's Early Childhood Progress Report (measuring basic school skills). Marcon used chi-square analysis to contrast low, median, and high parent involvement groups, ANCOVA to analyze student outcomes as related to gender, and F-tests to interpret MANCOVA to analyze student outcomes as related to parent involvement.

Marcon (1999) clearly explained possible relationships between parent-involvement and the multiple-indicators for student development, behavior, and academic success and did not attempt to draw conclusions about causal relationships. Considering the bidirectional nature of development it may be that parents were more involved because the children had initial success in school. One weakness of the study is that it only examined two types of parent involvement, ignoring any at-home involvement or involvement in the community, which are potential additional factors in student outcomes. Marcon only investigated whether parents were involved in one of the four indicators and not how frequently this involvement occurred. Future studies could examine if frequency of involvement has an affect on student outcomes. While these critiques are important, they should not negate the finding that active parental involvement was clearly correlated with student developmental and academic success with these urban, majority low-income and African American preschoolers.

In another study examining low income parental involvement, Mapp (2002) takes a qualitative case study approach to examine why and how low income parents are involved in their children's education and what factors influence involvement. She found that parents clearly understood the importance of their involvement in their child's educational development and that the great majority of parents, regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, were intensely interested in their children's education. Further, parents were involved in their child's education in a wide variety of ways both in home and at school. Many of the ways parents were involved were not always recognized by school staff with narrow visions of what constituted

legitimate parent participation. Finally, Mapp found that parent participation was influenced by social factors from parents' own experience and history. Involvement was also majorly impacted by school factors that included positive, caring, and trusting relationships with teachers who recognized parents as partners and connected with parents through a focus on children and their learning.

Mapp (2002) chose an urban elementary school in Boston for her study because of its strong family participation initiative, high student achievement on state standardized tests, and the diversity of students racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically. She conducted one on one interviews with 18 parents in their homes over a two year period. All of the students of parents interviewed qualified for free and reduced lunch and nine were African American, eight White, one Hispanic, and five were families with children categorized as special needs. Mapp also conducted interviews with school faculty and staff as well as observed school activities for family and community in order to gain contextual information about the school's culture and history of its programs.

Unfortunately, Mapp (2002) does not clearly describe how she analyzed the data to find common themes of experience once she collected it nor does she report if any member checking was conducted to assure that her interpretations of parent statements were accurate with their intended meaning. Also, with the inclusion of only 18 parents and one elementary school environment these findings may not transfer to many other environments. Further research is needed to see if these same themes arise with parents at other schools with family participation initiatives and similar parent involvement strategies. Similar studies at the secondary level would also enrich the research findings. Still, with triangulation of findings about how programs encourage parent involvement through interviews from multiple perspectives as well as observations and findings that are consistent with other recent research, this study provides greater insight into what leads to high levels of family participation in urban elementary schools with low-income families. Parents across social and class lines care deeply about their children's

education and participating in it and when schools reach out to build trusting relationships around the common desire for student success, those same parents became involved in a wide variety of ways.

Complimenting the findings of the qualitative case study described above, Gutman and McLoyd (2000) conducted a correlational quantitative study that examined how parent involvement of high-achieving African American students differed from those of low-achieving students. The researchers investigated parents' encouragement of educational activities within the home, frequency of and reasons for involvement in school, and encouragement of their child's involvement in community activities. The results showed that parents of high-achievers in the single district in Southeastern Michigan did indeed support their children in the home, school, and community engagement with education in different ways. At home, parents in both groups had discussions about school, but parents of high-achievers used more specific strategies to assist children and had more supportive conversations about school, even when kids were not successful. In the homes of low achieving students, on the other hand, discussions about education often focused on children's behavior or existing difficulties. Parents of the high achieving group frequently initiated interactions with the school in order to check on the children's progress and maintain good relationships. Parents of low achievers rarely visited the school except when requested to, often due to behavior issues, and were often wary and of the school's actions on behalf of the students. High achieving students were also involved in more extracurricular and religious activities in the community than low achieving, and their parents reported explicitly engaging children in these activities to support academic goals and encourage development. Some parents of low-achievers reported that they were unaware of such community activities unless they were encouraged by their children's school to sign up.

The participants in the Gutman and McLoyd (2000) study were pulled from a larger longitudinal study in both elementary and middle schools. This study focused on one district due to a high percentage of African American students (42%) and economically disadvantaged

families (84% free and reduced lunch) so that the researchers could examine what parent involvement strategies might be successful for this group. All participating families in the study (n=62) were below the 1995 U.S. poverty threshold and had completed both surveys of the larger study. Grades were collected from these surveys and the researchers defined student achievement quartiles. The study examined students in the top and bottom quartiles. Interviews including open ended questions about parents' strategies for encouraging their child's educational goals were conducted in the homes of these families by two African-American women interviewers from the community. Interviews were coded separately twice and codes were entered in to HyperResearch which researchers used to compute similarities and differences of codes for high and low achieving students.

Strengths of this study include credibility due to clear descriptions of data gathering and analysis procedures, including how and why families were identified, examples of questions asked, and explanation of process for testing the reliability of coding. The use of interviewers from the community most likely functioned to make a nonthreatening environment for parents in which they could speak honestly about how they supported their child's educational development. The researchers did not triangulate the data with any perspectives other than the parents, potentially affecting the credibility. Also, the study does not consider other family contextual factors and there was an unequal distribution of boys and girls, meaning that results might be influenced by gender differences or other types of interactions. As with other correlational studies, there are limitations on causation. One cannot assume that parental behavior caused, rather than resulted from, differences in children's academic levels.

The Gutman and McLoyd (2000) study linked frequent, positive school-parent interactions and opportunities for student involvement in a variety of activities to student academic success. The next study examined the effectiveness of a different parent-involvement strategy. Van Voorhis (2003) found that interactive science homework assignments in an urban middle school had three main benefits. The interactive homework given successfully encouraged

more family involvement with homework, helped families to know what type of involvement was helpful and appropriate, and increased student achievement as measured by class grades. Though not a major finding, it is also interesting to note that sixth graders reported significantly higher family involvement than eighth graders.

The quasi-experimental study had a non-equivalent control group design and examined the effects of the Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) interactive homework approach, developed by Joyce Epstein and colleagues, on students' science homework habits and achievement. Van Voorhis (2003) also used Epstein's (1996) theoretical framework of six types of parent involvement. Van Voorhis collected data from sixth- and eighth-grade classes of students and their parents over eighteen weeks (two grading periods). Six classes served as experimental classes and four as the control group, which did not get the treatment of weekly interactive homework assignments. Dependent variables measured were homework completion, homework accuracy, family involvement, time spent on homework, science achievement, and science attitudes. TIPS assignments included specific instructions on how to include a 'family partner' in the homework, encouraged two way communication between family and teacher, and focused on questions families can answer without formal education or detailed knowledge of the subject. Survey measures were taken from students (n=226) and parents for non-achievement variables and report card grades and percentage of homework related test questions answered correctly were used as the two measures of science achievement. Van Voorhis conducted ordinary least squares regression analysis to calculate the independent effects of various background measures and homework type.

Van Voorhis (2003) controlled for student attributes commonly correlated to academic achievement (race, mother's education level, etc.) and for history by using multiple classrooms at the same school with the same teachers. She also used weekly homework with a similar introduction for the 'non-interactive homework' control group so students in both groups were exposed to similar homework schedules, with the difference being the independent variable of the

interactive aspect of the homework in the test group. In general, the study design is strong, although there is a change in instrumentation between the pre and post treatment measurements. Also, the addition of a standardized achievement scores to grades would balance any results influenced by teacher grading practices. Further research could measure not only frequency but also quality of homework interactions. One important factor to note is that the author is the coordinator for TIPS at the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins so she has personal investment in demonstrating that TIPS is advantageous to student learning. The study methodology was sound enough to pass peer review, however. While her relationship to the treatment investigated should create caution about drawing heavily on her single study to demonstrate the success of interactive homework, it still sheds valuable light on interactive homework, a relatively new and minimally researched school family partnership strategy.

In another study including older public school students, Hickman, Greenwood, and Miller (1995) conducted a correlational study examining the relationship between secondary school achievement and amount and types of parent involvement. Of the six categories of parent involvement investigated (communicator, supporter of activities, learner, advocate, decision maker, volunteer/paraprofessional, and home-based activities), only the home-based type of parent involvement was significantly related to academic achievement. In investigating relationships to socio-economic-status (SES), gender, and grade level, they found that at the secondary level parents rarely involved themselves as advocates or decision makers. SES was found to be significantly correlated with parent-as-learner and parent-as-supporter (both school-based types of involvement). They also found that females had greater parent involvement of the home-based, parent-as-communicator, and parent-as-advocate type than males, although researchers point out that this finding is most likely affected by the fact that all parents who participated in the study were female.

Hickman et al. (1995) conducted a structured interview schedule for this study designed by Hickman and Greenwood with a sample chosen from a population parents (n= 47) of students

at six secondary schools in a single Florida county through random, stratified sampling. The interview design was pilot tested to include 51 items and internal consistency was found to be high according to Cronbach's Coefficient Alfa. This was then pilot tested on four randomly selected parents and minor changes were made. Data collected was analyzed using multiple regression to investigate the relationships between the chosen variables.

The study's strengths included random sampling, clearly defined terms of involvement, achievement, and SES, use of a previously tested interview instrument and the fact that researchers hold to explaining correlation and not causation. At the same time, the sample was too small to generalize to secondary school in general and reproductions of the study with a variety of populations and more families would be needed to see if findings are generalizable across communities and regional differences. Future studies could also include indicators of achievement other than GPA and include longitudinal data to see how parent involvement and achievement relate over time. It is also highly likely that all parents being female influenced how they responded to interview questions and what types of involvement they engaged in with their sons or daughters.

While Hickman et al. (1995) were clear on the types of parental involvement they investigated, they did not use a theoretical framework for the creation of these types, which makes comparison to other studies that also examine effects of parent involvement on achievement more difficult because many define parent involvement differently and use different measurements for it. For example, if they had used Epstein's (1996) framework they may still have had different measurements of parent involvement, but we could compare this study more easily to one such as Catsambis (1998), which is introduced below and which shares similar research questions. This is a common difficulty in social science research and one reason why it is so important that researchers define categories they are studying and are transparent about the indices used to measure those categories, as Hickman et al. were in this study.

The next four studies investigating effects of parent involvement (Catsambis, 1998; Keith et al., 1998; Muller 1998; McNeal, 1999) all use the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS:88). NELS:88 was a major survey of a nationally representative sample of eighth graders first conducted in 1988 with follow-up surveys in 1990, 1992, 1994, and 2000. It was sponsored by the National Center of Educational Statistics, which is the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education. The survey included a wide range of topics and while still in school students also took achievement tests on reading, social studies, math, and science. Student grades were collected and parents, teachers, and school administrators were also surveyed to enrich the data set. The longitudinal design and large sample size make NELS:88 a rich data source for researchers to investigate a wide variety of topics about student achievement and other educational outcomes (Quinn, n.d.). Each study uses a slightly different set of data and number of students from NELS:88 for their analysis.

Catsambis (1998) used NELS: 88 and the second follow-up survey in 1992 to examine the links between types of family involvement and student achievement in her correlational study. She used indices identified in NELS:88 organized into the six categories of Epstein's types of parental involvement. Catsambis found the family practices in eighth grade most strongly linked to twelfth grade achievement to be high educational expectations, consistent encouragement through frequent communication and actions that advance learning opportunities of students. To a lesser extent, supporting the school through volunteering or other roles and contact with other parents was also found to influence achievement in twelfth grade. There was a significant link to higher test scores but the strongest link was to curricular enrollment and credits earned. Overall, this research supported general research that most effective types of parental involvement at the secondary level are those geared toward advising or guiding teens' academic decisions. Parents well informed about academic decisions can better help the student who is now making his or her own decisions. Her study also revealed that parents reported a lack of communication on such topics from schools and that parents contact schools rarely at the secondary level.

Catsambis (1998) was clear in her goal of filling a gap of previous research on this topic, which had no consistent analytic strategy so that findings of various studies reported differing effects of family involvement because they measure very different indicators of involvement (as discussed above in Hickman et al., 1995). Catsambis used twelve to fifteen indices of involvement organized into the six types of involvement identified by Epstein. Dependent variables drawn from NELS:88 included test scores, high school credits completed, and curricular enrollment as measures of twelfth grade academic achievement. The researcher controlled for independent variables of social background, family characteristics, student characteristics (such as ESL, absenteeism, tardiness, etc.), and eighth grade achievement and used OLS multiple regression analysis of the data from a sample of 13,580 students.

The size of the sample used from NELS:88 and the use of multiple indicators of academic success, multiple indicators of parental involvement, and clear comparison between results before and after controlling for other factors makes the findings of Catsambis (1998) more generalizable. The indices used to examine parental involvement in the twelfth grade differed from those used in the eighth grade, an instrumentation factor that may threaten the validity of results relying on steady definitions of parental involvement. This is partially mitigated, however, by the fact that Catsambis clearly defines how she identified all indices and how she categorized them into the same analytical framework of family involvement.

Keith, Keith, Quirk, Sperduto, Santillo, and Killings (1998) conducted similar research investigating the longitudinal effects of parent involvement on high school students' grades. They also examined differentiation of gender and found that although parents were more involved with girls, equal levels of involvement were associated with equal strides in learning and that involvement in eighth grade had strong effects on students' tenth grade GPA. Interestingly, once family background and previous achievement were controlled for, minority students and parents reported higher levels of parent involvement than white and Asian students. Asian students (6% of participants) reported significantly higher *parental aspirations* than all other ethnicities and the

lowest levels of *communication* about school. White students (72%) reported significantly higher *parental aspirations* than Hispanic (11%). White students also reported the most *communication* about school. These findings demonstrate differences between ethnicities in how they support student educational growth.

Similar to the previous two studies examined above, this correlational study also used NELS data from the baseline year of 1988 and the first follow-up in 1990 with a final sample of 15,703. Keith et al. (1998) developed a longitudinal structural model based on previous research and theory and tested this model using latent variable structural equation modeling (SEM). A cross-validation approach was used to test the theoretically defensible structural model researchers had developed and complete the analysis of correlation with tenth grade GPA on different data. After the first test to confirm the model and second to analyze the relationships between parent involvement and GPA separately for boys and girls, the model was also analyzed to examine relationships to GPA separately for White, Hispanic, African American, Asian, and Native American students. Parent involvement as it was investigated here was limited to parent aspirations for children as reported by parents and children and communication between parents and children about school and accompanying activities.

It is unfortunate, given that NELS had more information on family involvement than these two factors that Keith et al. (1998) did not investigate a wider range of involvement strategies as Catsambis (1998) did. As with other correlational studies, these findings cannot draw causation and so it is difficult to tell, for example, if academically successful students had high parent involvement because of their previous success, or vice versa. Even though the parent involvement was measured in eighth grade and achievement in tenth and previous achievement was controlled for, since parental involvement may be a constant factor it is difficult to draw causation. As with the Catsambis study, the researchers here also used different indices for eighth grade achievement (NELS achievement tests) than for tenth (GPA), which is a potential threat to the validity of the findings controlled with previous achievement, since the

instrumentation is different. Unlike the Catsambis study, Keith et al. do not state explicitly how many and which responses they used from NELS:88 to determine levels of parent involvement, which makes it more difficult for future research to compare results, even if they draw on the same data sample. The large nationally representative sample and systematic, hierarchical procedure used to test the model separately across gender an ethnic groups was appropriate for this type of non-experimental study, however, and the findings that parent aspirations and communication served equally well for secondary boys and girls should not be discounted completely.

The third quantitative correlational study examined here that used longitudinal data from NELS:88 was conducted by Muller (1998). She used the first and second follow-up surveys to investigate if parental involvement differed for sons and daughters as well as how it relates to secondary mathematics achievement. Similar to Keith et al. (1998) she also found that girls talked more with their parents about school than boys and that parents were involved in significantly different ways with boys than with girls. The research shows girls' gains in math from tenth to twelfth grade associated more closely with verbal interaction and supportive involvement and the locus of control seemingly at home. Boys' gains, on the other hand, were associated with social control and guidance with a locus of control at school. Interestingly, the positive effect of family income on math achievement was stronger for girls, the negative effect of being African American was larger for boys, and the negative association between parental intervention and grade eight test scores was larger for boys. The relationship between parent involvement and achievement for boys and girls was found to be similar but to diminish over the course of high school to essentially no relationship to achievement by seniors, suggesting the relative importance of family involvement and support of the type studied here early in a student's secondary school career.

Muller (1998) used two measures of math achievement (performance on NELS:88 math achievement tests and self reported math grades) and nine forms of parental involvement for

grade eight and seven for grade ten, categorized by locus of activity (at home or at school) and whether the involvement was 'management' of child's education or 'intervention in a crisis.' The researcher also included controls in the data analysis for math specific self concept, measures of coursework taken, and student and family background. The data analysis of the 12,766 public school students who had completed all three years of NELS was weighted with three wave panel weight and adjusted for the design effect in order to determine correlations between the three years of data. Muller also used pairwise deletion, and separately listwise deletion, to estimate all models and found consistent results with these multiple methods of data analysis.

This use of multiple methods to analyze data strengthens the findings in the data analysis, assuming that the variables measured are factors that actually measure what the researchers were looking for. As with other studies that use NELS:88 as a data source, the number of survey respondents and nationally representative population as well as a lack of experimental morality[2] improve the study's reliability. The main critique of this study is common for any correlational study, which is that researchers cannot draw conclusions about causation. For example, it is quite possible here that the negative association between parental intervention and boys' test scores was the result of parents intervening because boys were having trouble already, not that the intervention strategies of parents resulted in decreased test scores of boys. Due to this weakness in the study design, it would be good to interpret the results of this study in conjunction with other studies that have similar research questions and different research designs.

McNeal (1999) also used NELS:88 to study the effect of parental involvement on student success. He utilized NELS:88 and the first follow-up survey when most students were in tenth grade to investigate the relationships between parent involvement practices and science achievement and behavior and how these relationships are distributed in the student population. Findings demonstrated that *parent-child discussion about education* was the only dimension of parental involvement investigated that had an significant relationship both with improved

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[2] Muller (1998) used only data from students who completed all three years of NELS.

achievement and reduction of drop-out and truancy, but that general parental involvement was significantly related to reduced truancy and dropout rates. The researcher also found that parental involvement generally had more positive correlations to student outcomes for white students and those of higher SES, meaning that "…even at comparable levels of involvement, single parents, minority parents, and lower-SES parents simply got less for their involvement" (McNeal, 1999, p. 136). Lastly, McNeal found that 'educational support strategies,' a measure of parent-teacher contact and interaction, were not significantly correlated with either science achievement or behavioral measurements of truancy and dropout rates. This may be due to parent teacher contact that is mostly reactive to existing student behavior issues. This leads to the question of whether student outcomes would improve if examined using proactive, supportive teacher parent contact vs. negative, reactive contact. For the interpretation of this study, however, this distinction cannot be made.

The McNeal (1999) study is grounded in the theoretical social-capitol construct of Coleman (as cited in McNeal, 1999). The study's focus is on how different types of parental involvement might increase attainment and behavior by providing students with opportunities to build social capital that increases their success in school and the value they find in their own school experience. Parent involvement was identified with four dimensions: (a) parent child discussion about education; (b) involvement in PTO, which would provide parents access to social capital due to parental networks; (c) monitoring of child behavior, homework, etc.; and (d) direct parental involvement in the educational process. McNeal extracted the above parental involvement factors through a principal-components factor analysis with a promax rotation on the entire eighth-grade sample. He then used ordinary least-squares and logistic regression models to determine correlations between parental involvement and student achievement and truancy on the sample of students who took the NELS achievement test both years and had parent data available (n=11,401). Separately, McNeal analyzed correlations between parent involvement and dropout

on students (n=15,663) who had taken the baseline survey and tests, had parent data, and were identified in the second follow up survey (when most were in 12th grade).

As with other correlational studies using NELS, the longitudinal design and large sample set of the McNeal (1999) study increase the strength of the study. However, while the correlational nature of relationships found within the data prevent assertion of causation, so caution should be used in interpreting results presented in this manner. McNeal's study also requires care in comparing it to other parental involvement studies because it may use widely different indicators and categories of involvement than other studies. Results linked to the four types of involvement studied here should not be interpreted as linked to all types of parental involvement. McNeal fails to account for courses taken as a measure of history, which threatens the internal validity of findings related to student academic success because he uses NELS science tests to measure success without controlling for prior achievement or level of science courses taken in the two years between the tests. This concern should not effect interpretation of data related to dropout rates and truancy, however.

As with all research, each of the studies in this section has its own weaknesses and limitations. Together, though, the body of research on school family partnerships working toward the common goal of educational success for children reveals clear patterns. As clarified in the introduction to this section, much of the research investigating how families team up with schools limits itself to the term 'parental involvement.' This terminology has been used in the descriptions and critiques above in order to accurately reflect the outcomes of the research questions investigated. It is also important to note the trend in the newest research toward the term 'family involvement,' which is more appropriate. The language and research questions commonly investigated under the older terminology of 'parental involvement' reflect a bias toward white and middle class modes of involvement and supporting students. Including only the parents assumes students have parents willing and able to be involved and is often paired with consideration of 'involvement' as certain limited behavior, such as volunteering during school

hours or involvement in the PTO. The older language also tacitly implies that it is the parent who would be culturally appropriate family member to provide the supports researchers deem helpful when in fact these child-rearing roles in some cultures are played by grandparents, aunties and uncles, or other extended family members. Keith et al. (1998) found, for example, that different ethnicities utilized different parent involvement strategies. Hickman et al. (1995) found school based involvement related to SES, suggesting that families with a higher SES have the resources and time for this type of involvement. The Mapp (2002) and VanVoorhis' (2003) studies, however, point out recent trends to recognize and extend recognition of the forms of family involvement that support students' education. Family members in the Van Voorhis (2003) study on interactive homework, for example, are not expected to have the formal education necessary to *help* with the concepts of the assigned homework, but only the willingness to *interact* with the student about their assignment. Van Voorhis also focuses on school initiated involvement of a 'family partner' rather than parent initiated forms of involvement.

While the research discussed in this section does indicate that family strategies for educational support of their children may take on different forms in different communities and have varying degrees of effectiveness, it also demonstrates that most families, *regardless of race, ethnicity, or SES,* care deeply about their children's educational success (Mapp, 2002; Gutman & McLoyd, 2000; McNeal, 1999). It may well be, as Mapp (2002), Gutman & McLoyd (2000), and Epstein and Hollifield (1996) assert, that researchers and educators have been acknowledging and investigating far too narrow a definition of what constitutes 'parent involvement' to include all of the ways that families support children's education.

McNeal's (1999) research showed more positive correlations of parental involvement for those already 'advantaged' by their race, class, and parents' family status, but correlations with disadvantaged groups were also significant. Other studies support the hypothesis that certain types of family involvement can be positive, countervailing influences that help such students to overcome barriers to success (Marcon, 2000; Gutman & McLoyd, 2000). Still others support the

understanding that family can help students experience success by bridging gaps in their overlapping spheres of influence and keeping them involved in their school and in extracurricular community activities (Gutman & McLoyd, 2000).

Although it is generally accepted that family involvement has a positive effect on student behavior and academic development outcomes in elementary school (Gutman & McLoyd, 2000; Mapp, 2002; Marcon, 2000), results of studies investigating secondary level family involvement vary. For example, Keith et al. (1998) reported equal effect of parental involvement for both males and females while Muller (1998) reported differences in both the typical type of involvement practices for parents of males and females as well as differing levels of effectiveness of these strategies dependant on gender of the student. McNeal (1999) found that parent involvement in general significantly reduced incidents of truancy/drop-out while showing inconsistent effects on achievement[3]. Hickman et al. (1995) and Keith et al. (1998) found positive correlations between family involvement and academic success at the secondary level.

Possible reasons for discrepancies in these findings likely include differences in researchers definition of parent or family involvement as they investigated it. In research on secondary students, the effects of this inconsistency of terminology across studies may have been magnified because the research indicates a trend toward parent involvement remaining positive through high school but a change occurs in the *type* of involvement strategies that are useful and effective (Hickman et al., 1995; Catsambis, 1998; Keith et al., 1998; McNeal, 1999). There is also some evidence that the effects on academic outcomes may lesson as high-school students get older (Muller, 1998). Research that investigates family involvement in general and does not differentiate between involvement strategies or measure more than academic outcomes may report inconsistent results of family involvement at the secondary level.

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[3] This finding should be interpreted with caution due to concerns with the academic measure used that were raised earlier in this paper.

Despite the critiques raised in the discussion of each study in this section and the heavy reliance on correlational data, one clear trend is that family involvement in education has small to significant positive effects on student outcomes through secondary school. The correlations were never negative. Though worded differently in each study, the research also shows a trend that the involvement strategy with the strongest link to student educational success at the secondary level is positive discussion about education at home in which parents advise or guide students (Gutman & McLoyd, 2000; Hickman et al., 1995; Catsambis, 1998; Muller, 1998).

So the question remains, if increased parent involvement is clearly linked to student success, how can schools get families more involved in the ways that are best for students? One assertion is the importance of positive teacher parent interactions and inclusion of parents in the educational process. This goes beyond teachers and parents simply having high amounts of contact and requires but that contact positive, supportive, and inclusive in nature (Mapp, 2002; Gutman & McLoyd, 2000). This could mean home visit programs to connect with parents who are hard to reach or translation of school correspondence and meetings for those parents who do not speak English as a first language. Communication from school needs to clearly inform families of school expectations, schooling options and opportunities so that families can help students make educational decisions. Discussion about education in the home sphere is seemingly important and should be encouraged and promoted by schools (McNeal, 1999; Van Voorhis, 2003). Schools are increasingly finding ways to do this by reaching out to families, increasing communication and opportunities to be involved in multiple ways, and including parents as true partners in student success (Mapp, 2002; Van Voorhis, 2003; Gutman & McLoyd, 2000; Catsambis, 1998). Schools can also serve as a link between families and other community resources such as family services or community extracurricular activities for students (Gutman & McLoyd, 2000; Mapp, 2002). Mapp's (2002) case study makes clear, however, that a key element of the successful program she investigated was a whole school effort and strong leadership from the principle and even district as well as the encouragement and acceptance of a

wide range of forms of family involvement. The research indicates that encouragement of family involvement is more effective if families are encouraged, informed, and welcomed by the entire school and not just the efforts of a single teacher.

This section on family involvement as a form of school family partnership has examined current educational research that points to the positive effects of family involvement in education both in the schools and at home. The research here points to positive academic and behavioral outcomes of a variety of family involvement strategies throughout the secondary level. While the specific types of family involvement that effectively and positively influence student outcomes change at the secondary level, it has been demonstrated that secondary students do better when their families are encouraged to and do remain involved in their education. The next section of research examined in this paper extends beyond family involvement and investigates the effects of community volunteers who give their time to help improve the student experience in schools.

<center>Community Volunteers</center>

While many volunteers in schools are parents, this next section of research is separate from that on parental involvement strategies because volunteer programs are by no means limited to parents. Many communities are successful in recruiting volunteers from outside families at their school. Some research even indicates broader benefits of non-family community volunteers than exclusive use of family volunteers. This strategy often simultaneously raises community awareness of school needs and commitment to community partnerships that increases the community capacity to raise and educate its children and opens opportunities to students not accessible through their family connections.

Studies in this section examine the types and frequency of volunteer programs as well as the range of their goals and effectiveness toward these goals. Some of the results indicate ways that schools are able to increase their volunteer recruitment capabilities or improve school programs by utilizing volunteers. Several studies also address the question of whether

community volunteers can deliver programs effectively without extensive training in education or teacher certification. Volunteers in these studies are used as reading partners and tutors, classroom assistants, curriculum developers, and presenters. As there are almost countless ways that volunteers can be utilized in schools, studies on this topic tend to focus on one program and are almost all limited in their transferability to other volunteer programs because of differences in program design, goals, or extent of support for the program. While the results of studies examined in this section are limited in their transferability, they provide valuable insight into the possibilities for engaging local community members as volunteers in the school system, providing students with positive adult role models and leveraging school dollars in support of student progress.

In their multi method qualitative case study on Head Start volunteers in urban, suburban, and rural areas in a Southeastern state, Castro, Bryant, Peisner-Feinberg, and Skinner (2004) identified the nature and extent of volunteer involvement. Data was collected from four Head Start programs as part of the Head Start Quality Research Center. Families must be considered low income for their preschool aged children to qualify for Head Start services and Head Start also requires parental involvement. Parents in the program examined tended to work in service-level jobs. Slightly 80% of the preschoolers involved in the study were African American.

Although the researchers' language focuses on parent volunteers, it is important to note that parents made up only 76% of the volunteers in the four programs studied. Castro et al. (2004) made no mention of the motives for, recruitment of, or characteristics of the 24% of volunteers who were not parents of kids in Head Start. Head Start programs organize and recognize a wide range of school-based and home-based volunteer opportunities.

This study found that the most frequent volunteer activity was 'helping out in the classroom,' followed by attending parent meetings. It also revealed that of the volunteer characteristics, the strongest predictor of volunteer involvement was employment status. Those who were unemployed were more likely to volunteer, a finding which is consistent with recent

research. It differs, however, from studies of the 1980s that showed parent education as the predictor most correlated with involvement. This may be due to a more limited view about what constituted 'involvement' in the 1980s research. Those parents that reported doing more 'family activities' at home were also more likely to volunteer, perhaps indicating greater awareness in these households of the strategies they could use to increase their children's' educational advantages. Of classroom characteristics, high classroom quality was the strongest predictor of volunteer participation followed by number of years of teacher experience in the classroom.

Data was collected from volunteer logs (n=1,491), parent interviews (n=127), teacher questionnaires (n=62), and classroom observations (n=35). Descriptive analyses were conducted on volunteer logs and parent interviews to determine type and extent of volunteer work and as bivariate correlations and multivariate analyses of variance (MANCOVA) were performed to investigate the correlations between nature and extent of volunteer hours and volunteer and teacher/classroom characteristics.

The credibility of this study is strong as researchers clearly describe data gathering and analysis procedures and triangulate the data from multiple perspectives, using a relatively large sample of participants. Transferability to other Head Start programs is also strengthened due to the study being conducted at multiple Head Start sites, although the unique attributes of the Head Start program prevent transfer to other programs and ages of children. While Castro et al. (2004) report the methods of data collection, they do not go into enough detail in their write up with examples of what questions were asked in questionnaires and interviews to be considered auditable by an outside party, limiting the study's validity. The study operates on the assumption that volunteers in the program are beneficial and results and implications are directed at what characteristics result in higher levels of adult volunteer participation so that similar programs can improve their ability to overcome barriers to volunteer participation. The results indicate that volunteers who are aware of school needs and believe that volunteering will be helpful are more likely to volunteer. The study also indicates that the experience and quality of the classroom

where volunteers are placed does affect involvement, supporting current educational theory that educators that work to create informative and welcoming environments will receive more community support.

In a longitudinal study with a non-equivalent control group design, Invernizzi, Rosemary, Juel, and Richards (1997) investigated the effectiveness of volunteer programming with young schoolchildren. They study of a one-on-one reading tutorial demonstrated that it is possible for community volunteers to deliver effective, economical reading intervention. The student group with more tutorial sessions made greater gains in reading in all four areas measured even when data was controlled for gender, poverty, special services, and behavior. The researchers asserted that the effect of the program may be even greater than numbers demonstrate since the comparison group also had some treatment. The program was also found to cost approximately one sixth of the cost of Reading Recovery program, a comparable reading intervention program that does not use volunteers. The reading tutorial program was a school community partnership between the school, a local university, and individual community volunteers in six Charlottesville elementary schools.

The tutorial program Invernizzi et al. (1997) studied included first and second graders (n=358) in three cohorts who were selected for the program from the bottom quartile of each school's Title I referral list by teacher recommendation and from reading test scores. The average demographics of students in these three cohorts was 60% male, 40% female, 68% African American, 30% White, 70% free and reduced lunch, and 13% receiving speech or language services. Community volunteers were recruited by a volunteer recruiter, held a wide variety of professions, and were evenly split in age brackets of 20-39, 40-59, and over 60. Volunteers were trained, given materials, and supervised by graduate students in education who designed the program and individualized lesson plans for each student. Volunteers instructed children one on one twice weekly for 45 minute tutorials.

Researchers used research based, non norm referenced assessments with established predictive validity and reliability to test students' reading ability before and after the year of participating in the reading tutorial program.   To evaluate the data on program effectiveness, students were divided into two groups based on the number of tutoring sessions they received with the low group receiving less than 40 sessions and the high group more than 40. The two groups were found to be similar when researchers controlled for any correlation to pre-test measures. A 2x2 analysis of variance was conducted for each measure of achievement with ANOVA and point biserial correlations of risk factors (gender, poverty, special services, and behavior) were conducted to control for the possibility that the lower-session group might include students with more risk factors. Separately, the cost of the program was determined per-year per-child by including salaries of coordinators and volunteer recruiter, cost of books, materials, and training supplies[4].

The sample is admittedly biased, as the program was designed to help the students with the greatest need and not for the benefit of the study, so no control group with random assignment was established. The establishment of a comparison group that received less tutoring did help the internal validity of the study, however, since this group of the same age attending the same school presumably had similar maturation and history, at least in the school environment. The external validity is strengthened by the study's longitudinal design as it studied studies three cohorts in six different schools. It was, however, limited in scope to short-term effects of the program.   Further research would be needed to determine the effectiveness of the tutorial model in the long term. Also, the study does not clarify if the tutorial program was an after-school or pull-out program, making comparison to other programs slightly more difficult. Lastly, as it relates to this paper's research question, this study is limited in transferability to the use of volunteers in intervention programs at the elementary school level, and is not necessarily transferable to secondary level

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[4] In-kind contributions from the school, community, and university were not figured in to the cost of the program, as they did not represent dollar cost to the programs.

programs. It does demonstrate that programs with reputations of being expensive can be run more cost effectively with volunteers with equal or better results for students. When community members dedicate themselves to helping students and are utilized in well designed programs that include human resources from a variety of community of sources, students benefit.

Volkmann and Bye (2006) also studied the effects of an adult reading partner program at an elementary school, but focused on its effectiveness at improving student attendance rather than reading improvement or program cost. The program studied by Volkmann and Bye was preventative and included a weekly session with a community volunteer reading partner for every student (n=278) in one low-income (76% free and reduced lunch) elementary school in Deluth, Minnesota. Volkmann and Bye, using a one group pretest/posttest design, found that the overall number of absences at the school decreased by 6%, which is not a statistically significant decrease but does represent a positive trend. When they examined individual student attendance they found that on the days when they were scheduled to meet with their reading partner students were less likely to be absent at a statistically significant level (p=.0004).

The reading partner program was a school community partnership program initiated by the school and a consortium of local agencies and organized by an advisory board that included a retired education specialist, leadership from the school, and local organizations. As the program was nearly all volunteer run and the advisory board secured donations for all of the materials needed, there was virtually no cost to the program. Any increase in attendance saved the school money, as they lost $34.70 of state funding per day per student absence. Volunteers had a 90 minute training session with the district reading specialist and age appropriate materials were organized and made available to them.

To investigate the program's effects on attendance chi-square test was conducted to look for differences in the absentee rates between the treatment year and the year prior, with data on absenteeism acquired from the school records. To examine effects on individual student attendance rates on the days they were to meet with their community reading partner, a pared t-

test was conducted on a sample of 56 students selected through systematic random sampling and a random start.

The study and design of the reading partner program are grounded in previous research on reasons for absenteeism and in social learning theory. The results align with previous studies that one-on-one time spent in a positive relationship with adults in an academic environment has a positive effect on student outcomes for young children. Unfortunately, Volkmann and Bye (2006) did not collect descriptive information about individual students and so could not address variables of gender, culture, or SES and how they relate to findings. Threats to internal validity due to limited ability to control many variables in the environment between the pre-test and post-test include (a) history (events that happened during course of study), (b) maturation, (c) possible changes in instrumentation or personnel collecting attendance figures, and (d) the high rate of student turnover at school. The study demonstrates again that reading programs at the elementary school level that use community volunteers can be effective toward their goals. It also describes one more example of a community that successfully pulled together capacity to build school community partnerships that leverage the funding of the school and improve student opportunities for success.

One of two studies in this section that examine volunteer programs at the secondary level, Dynarski, Gleason, Rangarajan, and Wood (1998) conducted research on a one year peer support and mentoring program led by a trained volunteer facilitator for middle and early high school students. The study had a pretest/posttest control group design and Dynarski et al. found that the program decreased dropout rates (but not at statistically significant rates) as compared to those programs already available to the students through their school. The program was a school community partnership involving the local university where most of the volunteer support group facilitators were students and were trained for their role in the weekly after school discussion groups.

The study included 219 eighth grade students in nine ethnically diverse middle schools who were a mix of students identified at high, medium, and low risk of academic failure in Chula Vista, CA. The program discussions were based on student interest and usually related to personal, family, and social issues. It also offered homework assistance, trips to college campuses, and an annual weekend retreat. Students (n=119) were recruited to participate and randomly assigned to groups at the start of their eighth grade year while the control group students (n=100) did not participate in the program but did attend the same middle school. Baseline data (including student and parent demographic characteristics and characteristics associated with dropping out) and follow-up data was drawn from school district records and questionnaires. A follow-up survey was conducted three years after random assignment with response rates of 92% for intervention group and 86% for control group. Though the use of community volunteers as program facilitators certainly saved money, researchers also found that more money was spent on the treatment group than the control group.

The experimental design of the study with random assignment and follow up three years later to investigate long term effects of the program make for strong internal validity. The study's biggest weakness is the differential attrition (mortality) of six percentage points between the intervention and control groups, which poses a threat to validity. It is difficult to say from this study if the use of volunteers as facilitators was a strong benefit to the program or not. It does, however, present another use of volunteers, this time at the secondary level, and the implementation of an extracurricular school based program that may not have come into existence without the school community partnership set up with the local university. It demonstrates that secondary level schools that work to build community partnerships can reap benefits for their students, as does the next study described.

After conducting their qualitative case study at a primarily African American (80%) school in Baltimore, Dauber and Epstein (1995) described the social studies and arts volunteer program studied as a "…viable strategy to organize productive volunteer time in middle-school

grades to help increase students' experiences with interdisciplinary connections of subjects" (p. 141). They found that students strengthened their ability to describe and discuss art, generally liked the program and the discussions of each piece of art that were the monthly focus. Findings also pointed to the importance for teachers focused on social studies curriculum of volunteers conducting the research and presenting the art pieces brought in to enrich this curriculum.

The social studies and arts volunteer program served sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students (n=495) and brought volunteers in once a month who introduce a piece of art related to the social studies subject currently being studied and led a discussion about it. In the third year of the program, after two years of informal assessments, the researchers framed research questions related to the effects of the program on student learning and attitudes. Surveys were administered by teachers to a convenience sample of students in attendance on one day in fall and one in spring (n=207 surveyed both times).

Due to familiarity with the program, the researchers designed quality questions to determine its effectiveness and were able to triangulate data on the success of the program by including teachers' experiences with the program in addition to students'. Research was grounded in the theoretical framework of Epstein's six types of involvement that was also the basis for the program's school-family partnership design. Given the unique design of this partnership program, transferability is limited to other middle school programs following a similar design and most likely not extendable to any program in which community volunteers bring academic curriculum to the classroom. The design of the study also limited what aspects of the program researchers could examine. Future research into this program design would do well to include a control group that received the same type of curriculum design delivered by their teachers to investigate what effect, if any, the delivery of the curriculum by volunteers had on the students' learning and engagement with the material.

The Dauber and Epstein study does demonstrate one more way volunteers are used in the classroom, in this case to develop and deliver interdisciplinary aspects of the curriculum. This

may be useful in schools where teachers do not have the time or resources to improve interdisciplinary curriculum on their own. The study may not prove that students learned more because volunteers presented the arts information, but from what teachers in the study stated students would not have been introduced to the information in the first place if volunteers had not prepared the presentations.

In a body of research that tends to be descriptive and isolated to single programs, Brent (2000) filled an important gap by conducting a multi-method quantitative study investigating what roles volunteers play in schools, if they benefit schools, what they cost, and if they are equitably distributed. He analyzed administrator interviews and survey data from principles and 575 volunteers in 57 urban (n=34), suburban (n=11) and rural (n=12) elementary schools in New York State. Principles and volunteers were asked to provide Likert scale type responses to a series of statements in the surveys.

Brent (2000) found that volunteers were most likely to be between the age of 36 and 55 and few were younger than 20, "…confirming claims that high school students are a frequently overlooked source of volunteers" (p. 496). Volunteers were also likely to be white, both in urban schools which had 75% minority students and in rural schools where minority students comprised only 10% of the student body. Suburban and rural volunteers were usually married and worked in their children's schools. In urban schools, however, only 22% were parent volunteers and 70% lived in other districts. When the number of volunteer hours per pupil was compared, urban schools had more volunteer resources than those in suburban and rural settings. When the number of volunteers available on typical day was compared, however, suburban schools had higher levels of volunteer resources. Lower levels of volunteerism were associated with higher poverty schools.

Most volunteers were utilized to support classroom and tutoring activities, with 53% supporting reading/writing activities. In urban settings a higher percent performed supervisory duties such as hall monitor or cafeteria duty. More than half of volunteers worked at least a part

time job, which "suggests that schools located in working communities can successfully recruit volunteers" (Brent, 2000, p. 496). Principles reported that volunteers improved school climate, children's achievement in reading/math, and school-community relations (more principles agreed on this than any other benefit). Brent also found that over 90% of schools actively recruited volunteers since few can attract them without solicitation. Only 28% of schools surveyed ran volunteer orientations and none trained volunteers in pedagogy or formally evaluated their own programs.

The picture drawn by the Brent (2000) study of typical volunteers also indicates that volunteers in suburban and rural districts more often match the demographics of the school population while urban volunteers are often of a different race and live in a different community from the students with whom they volunteer. Given that recruitment is reported as key to volunteer rates, this picture raises questions about the differences in recruiting practices and or the roles given to volunteers in urban and non-urban environments.

Unfortunately, the methods of this simple description observational study are not thoroughly discussed in the study write up, severely weakening its reliability. Without more information on how surveys were administered and interviews conducted, it is impossible to tell if the samples were biased. Given the indications of this study, further research could examine the ways that schools recruit volunteers, since 90% in this study did, and the effect that this or the roles provided for volunteers is related to schools in poverty not having as many volunteers. Given the theory that frequency and use of volunteers changes drastically at the secondary level, the study also has limited generalizability to settings other than elementary schools. The findings of the study do indicate interesting trends in the differences between use and type of volunteer in urban, suburban, and rural areas. If this data could be confirmed by comparison with other studies it would potentially hold great value for schools hoping to increase educational quality through school community partnerships in the form of volunteer programs.

The studies presented in this section represent a range of findings on school community partnerships in the form of school volunteer programs. Schools engage communities to participate in the daily operation of classes and school based extracurricular programs in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes. These seven studies are by no means an exhaustive look at the possibilities for and effects of volunteer engagement. Some themes are uncovered, however, and it is obvious from this research that there are programs in which the benefits of incorporating community volunteers far outweigh the costs. There are also other programs where much could be done to improve the effectiveness of the school-community link.

Similar to research on parent involvement, this research indicates that families of all types care and that volunteers are from all walks of life (Castro et al., 2004; Brent, 2000). Though some findings showed that higher income communities enjoy more volunteer participation (Brent, 2000), Castro et al. (2004) also demonstrated that schools and students also benefit from volunteers in low income communities when volunteers are given a wide range of opportunities and when programs work to overcome barriers to participation. Indeed, several studies demonstrated that volunteers come from all walks of life and age groups (not just high-income, highly educated, or district parents) if schools take on the role of reaching out to them (Invernizzi et al., 1997; Volkmann & Bye, 2006; Dynarski et al., 1998; Brent, 2000).

Despite volunteers donating their time to school programs, there are still costs associated with school and district wide volunteer programs, such as recognition of volunteers, reimbursement for bus or cab fare or other spending, personnel time in organizing volunteers, orientation and training, volunteer organizer and/or recruiter salary, and potentially large cost of litigation for volunteer negligence or impropriety or injuries on site (Brent, 2000). At the same time, studies show that programs can be cost effective when weighed against comparable programs that do not use volunteers (Volkmann & Bye, 2006) and can also save districts money by improving attendance rates through meaningful connections to adults (Inverenzzi et al. 1997). Dynarski et al. (1998) found that the program they investigated did result in a cost more per

student, but the price was certainly reduced by the use of volunteers. If the Brent (2000) study is correct that volunteer involvement in schools can create community support for schools that rely heavily on local tax dollars for support, there may also be an indirect financial benefit of volunteer use. Community members who are personally involved in the schools may work to pass community levies and bonds that increase the district's overall funding. Whether the benefits out weight the costs of such programs depends greatly on program design and the amount of community support the school is able to leverage toward the program.

When schools look to build partnerships with the community in this way, it is important for them to first look at trends in what makes other volunteer programs effective. The findings of the studies above have drawn out several common themes of programs shown to be effective toward their goals. Invernizzi et al. (1997) asserted that the effectiveness of a volunteer based intervention depends on the plans made and the programs responsiveness to students' needs. Individual teachers also have a difficult time organizing effective programs on their own, and the most effective seem to be sustainable and school or district wide with a fulltime coordinator or even advisory board (Volkmann & Bye, 2006; Dauber & Epstein, 1995; Invernizzi et al., 1997; Castro et al., 2004). Another key to quality programs, though Brent's (2000) study indicates that it may not be common in elementary schools, is training and supervision of the volunteers by an education specialist (Invernizzi et al., 1997; Dynarski et al., 1998; Dauber & Epstein, 1995; Volkmann & Bye, 2006). Brent (2000) also indicates that although none of the programs he examined had formal evaluation processes of their own programs, this is something that schools looking to create and improve volunteer programs ought to consider.

Overall, the studies in this section demonstrate that not all volunteer programs are automatically effective toward their goal but that some are effective, both toward positive student outcomes and also in terms of cost. School-community partnerships of this type have been shown to strengthen school programs and ties to the community (Dauber & Epstein, 1995; Brent, 2000; Volkmann & Bye, 2006; Invernizzi et al., 1997) and are often strengthened themselves through

partnerships with local universities (Dynarski et al., 1998; Invernizzi et al., 1997). While the general perception of volunteer programs is positive and successful programs can galvanize the community behind schools and "…increase the public's sense of responsibility for their schools" (Brent, 2000, p.508), school-community partnerships in the form of volunteer programs and the research on them remains heavily focused on elementary schools. The Dauber and Epstein (1995) and Dynarski et al. (1998) studies serve as examples of such partnerships at the middle-school level that challenge the common perception that older students do not need or want the additional interaction with positive adult role models from their community.

Schools' Role and Capacity in Partnership Creation

There is currently general agreement among policy makers, practitioners, and researchers that school, family, community partnerships hold value (as seen in Goals 2000, NCLB, increased funding for studies, and countless school initiatives). In the last decade there has been increasing focus on schools working to improve the quality and quantity of family and community engagement with educational experiences and programs. Schools are partnering with families, community members, non-profits, higher education institutions, and also local government and businesses to make clear investments in education to improve curriculum and educational opportunities, ease the transition from school to work or higher education, and increase the occurrence of welcoming environments for all, a prerequisite for any student to learn and feel welcomed. Schools are working to align the goals of the overlapping spheres of influence (Epstein, 1996) in students' lives.

Despite this focus on the importance of partnerships, it is still often difficult for schools to know which underlying structures will create partnerships that will effectively mobilize involvement and commitment from the community and increase student success for all students. Schools are working to learn how to utilize and engage the overlapping spheres of influence,

pulling them closer together, sharpening the focus of the arenas where they overlap around education, and make better learning and developmental opportunities for all populations.

Other sections of this chapter examine students engaged in the community through school organized community service and service learning, family involvement that serves to bridge the home school gap, and schools welcoming caring community members into the school environment as volunteers. The studies in this last section center around schools' role and responsibility in forming school, family, community partnerships, and the ways that schools effectively create partnerships not just with families, but also with community organizations.

In their qualitative case study of three high schools, Sanders and Lewis (2005) examined what school's motivations are in building partnerships with community and what types of community partners and activities are selected. They found that the "…schools viewed community involvement as a means to get resources, as well as to give them" (p. 6) and that all three schools had similar motivations in partnering with community. These goals included: (a) improving student academic and personal success by giving a context to what they are working on in school, (b) enhancing school quality by creating a sense of community ownership that results in support for resources in the form of levies and bonds, and (c) supporting the building of strong communities and student connections to them so students are motivated to be contributing members as adults. The schools had varied partners including businesses, colleges, health care organizations, government and military agencies, service and volunteer organizations, faith organizations, senior citizen organizations, cultural and recreational organizations, alumni, and community individuals. The three schools also organized connected resources for a wide variety of activities. Some activities were focused on the students, such as scholarships, awards, tutoring and mentoring programs, mock interviews, and job shadowing. Others were focused on the school, including partnership fundraising for school improvements and volunteers and supplies for school events. Yet other activities created by the schools focused on the family, such as workshops, family incentives and awards, or focused on the community as in co-sponsored

cultural events, community health fairs, advertisements in school newsletter, food drives, and student volunteer activities. Advice from leaders in such partnership-focused schools included prioritizing process (strategic plan and good leadership and goals), permitting time for partnerships to develop, and promoting community ownership of partnerships and programs.

The three school sites studied by Sanders and Lewis (2005) were chosen for their membership in the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) and to reflect different community contexts and demographics (1 urban, 1 suburban, 1 rural). The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with school administrators, partnership program chairs, and partnership team members. They also collected supporting documents and observed at planning meetings and partnership activities. Using Ethnograph, v.5, the data collected was coded and categorized to find the main themes between school partnership programs.

The use of NNPS in the study has both benefits and drawbacks. A strength it creates is that the schools have similar structures for their programs as well as years of experience and share a support organization for sharing strategies and ideas. It seems such schools would reflect accurate picture of themes, given the partnership programs are structured in a similar way through their connection with the NNPS organization. Since the schools had committed to creating such partnerships in such major ways, school leaders are potentially biased in their reports of the benefits of such partnerships. No interviews with students or community members not directly involved in the partnership programs were conducted to gain the perspective of community members potentially affected but not personally invested in the partnership programs. Interestingly, the authors mention that questions were also asked about the difficulties that each case study school faced in creating their partnership programs, but no themes on this topic are shared in the findings section. Also, the authors could have made it easier for readers to interpret validity of the study if they had demonstrated more examples of interview questions and responses that led them to their conclusions about motives and partnership activities.

Sheldon and Epstein (2004) also studied NNPS schools, but in a longitudinal, correlational study with a one group pretest/posttest design, examining the effects of family and community partnerships on rates of chronic absenteeism. At 29 elementary and 10 secondary schools they found that the change in chronic absenteeism after implementation of up to 14 attendance focused partnership activities varied widely (-6% to 7% change). Three practices had the strongest, statistically significant correlations with lowered absentee rates. These included (a) sending home lists of students with excellent attendance in a newsletter, (b) connecting chronically absent students with a community mentor, and (c) orienting parents about the school expectations and policies for attendance in newsletters. Contrary to the clear effective correlations here, respondents at the schools rated this last strategy, parent orientations about school expectations, very low and did not believe that this communication had much of an effect. The researchers suggested that this indicates educators may not fully understand which strategies are those that families are responding to. It is also worth noting that two of three top effective practices fall within the 'communication' category of Epstein's (1996) framework of involvement. The third practice links children at risk with community mentors, which may be effective because it reaches those students without strong parental guidance or focus on education at home. They also found that schools implementing more of the practices reported lower levels of chronic absenteeism, suggesting that multiple methods of communication and partnership are most effective.

While Sheldon and Epstein (2004) do not report where in the country schools were located, they were in large urban (n=10), small urban (n=9), suburban (n=11), and rural (n=9) areas and had a range of socioeconomic status and ethnicities. On average, 51% of students at these schools were on free and reduced lunch (with a range of 1.3% to 100%) and 20% were from homes where English was not the main language (range of 0% to 95%). Initial contact was made with the schools through a cover letter and baseline survey sent out. Follow up surveys were sent again one year later. The 39 responding schools provided the percentage of students who had

missed 20 days or more of school, which was the level set for 'chronic absenteeism,' and how many of 14 attendance focused partnership activities they had initiated throughout the study year. These partnership activities were categorized according to Epstein's framework of six types of involvement. Data was analyzed using descriptive and regression analysis, using controls for factors such as prior absentee rates.

The study's reliability was strengthened by the fact that Sheldon and Epstein (2004) examined both participant perception of effectiveness and correlated effect on actual attendance rates. These two measurements were very different for several indicators, demonstrating the importance of studies such as this that analyze results based on more than just stakeholder perception. The study's internal validity would have been improved had it included a control group of schools with similar characteristics that did not implement any of the truancy prevention methods. Also, despite the fact that the researchers label this a longitudinal study, based on findings from Sanders and Lewis (2005) suggesting that such partnerships take time to build trust and take effect the two measures taken one year apart from each other may not be enough to measure true effectiveness of new family partnership methods. Since the study is biased in its sampling of schools in the NNPS, which were already working to strengthen partnerships, the findings may only be generalizable to other schools already attune to the importance of such partnerships. Because of the wide range of communities in which these schools were located, it may be that certain outreach and partnership strategies are not as effective within certain communities or regions or with certain age groups, which might account for the varied findings related to effectiveness at reducing chronic absenteeism.

Another study that investigated how schools create environments in which students from all backgrounds feel welcomed and connected was completed by Irvine and Lupart (2006). They conducted qualitative interviews to determine what factors create inclusive experiences for persons with disabilities and found strong evidence that social supports from multiple environments within overlapping spheres of influence were key factors. The 36 individuals

interviewed identified family supports, and specifically sibling supports, were important for modeling social skills, introducing them to potential friends, and enhancing self esteem. Having friends without disabilities as well as those with disabilities was also important. Community support, such as activities with religious organizations, helped these individuals to feel engaged with the community and gave them an additional environment to 'fit it' and find success. These organizations that welcomed families as a whole also provided key supports for parents of kids with disabilities. There was a clear rural advantage found, which researchers postulated came from an shift in attitude toward support of families which are in turn supporting a student with a disability in rural communities. Rural communities may have more of an awareness of other families and closer ties between interacting spheres of influence.

Irvine and Lupart (2006) conducted interviews with 36 individuals in a variety of age groups twice over a two year period. Supplemental interviews were also conducted with family members for those with a disability limiting communication or abstract thinking necessary for some questions. Interviews were transcribed and coded for common themes and trends using the qualitative data analysis package NUDIST. The study was conducted in urban and rural communities in Canada, but the specific location was not given by the researchers.

The inclusion of the perspective of students with disabilities in the research is important for schools looking to engage partnerships for the benefit of all students. Unfortunately, the researchers did not describe the population studied in a very detailed manner. It was not clear if the students had similar disabilities or not. Researchers were also working under the presumption that families and communities did support these individuals, so the questions in interviews were somewhat leading towards reporting support from the variety of individuals and organizations asked about. Member checking by allowing students and their families to comment on and suggest revisions for the statements made in the results of the study could have increased the credibility of the study. This study demonstrates how powerful it can be for students to have multiple areas of their life that share common goals around their success and education. Schools

can be a powerful force in aligning these multiple spheres of influence and connecting students to environments in which they are welcomed, supported, and able to experience success, which the children of this study reported as key to their own success.

Schools that set a goal of aligning the spheres of influence for the benefit of students may want evidence that their efforts will be met with effort and response on the part of communities and families. The next study examines this question. In her correlational study using data from NELS:88 and the two follow-up surveys, Simon (2004) found that parents who perceived more outreach from high schools reported higher participation regardless of the teen's SES, gender, family structure, race/ethnicity, and achievement. Her finding that schools reaching out to parents in positive ways is correlated with involvement in various parenting, volunteering, and learning at home activities is an important addition to research. It has been argued that what high schools do to encourage family involvement is of lesser importance and research has focused instead on how family background and beliefs shape how families relate to children's education.

The study further indicated that despite the fact that parental participation often declines as students get older, perhaps because of the presumption that teens need more autonomy, many parents are still highly involved with day to day aspects of their kids' education. Two thirds reported working on homework with their children 'sometimes' with 21% reporting doing so 'frequently' and over two thirds of parents reported attending school activities such as sports, plays, concerts, and so on in support of their child.

Simon (2004) used a subset of students (n=11,348) who participated in all three NELS surveys, attended the same school throughout the duration of the study, and had the parent survey completed in 12th grade. She used Epstein's (1996) framework to conceptualize broad categories of family and community involvement into which many activities can be placed. Due to limitations of the NELS data set, she did not examine predictors of parents' involvement in communicating, decision making, and collaborating categories, but focused on indicators of parenting, volunteering, and learning at home. As schools often report outreach measures that do

not match parents' perceptions, the researcher focused on parental perception of school outreach efforts to assure that those indicators being measured were ones parents had the potential to respond to, as they were clearly aware of them. Simon conducted ordinary least squares regression models to test how parent perceptions of school outreach predicted reports of their involvement practices. Two models were tested for each dependent parent involvement indicator. She used pairwise deletion and ran separate regression models for every combination of school outreach and family involvement.

While the reliability of the study is strengthened by the number of participants, interpretations still need to be cautious as the study is correlational and cannot prove causation. The use of NELS as a data set was also limiting in some ways, in that it restricted the ways the research question that could be examined. Not all of Epstein's six types of involvement could be investigated and NELS also did not contain data about outreach or parent involvement *quality* but only frequency of involvement and contacts. Future research could increase external validity by gathering data for analysis on these factors, as well. Still, the pattern was clear that parents of all backgrounds participated at higher levels when there was more outreach from schools encouraging them to do so and explaining what types of participation would help students.

Schools have many strategies of reaching out to parents to encourage participation, one of which is the use of parent liaisons. Sanders (2008) used a qualitative case study research design to investigate how parent liaisons placed in Title I schools in a diverse suburban district supported school, family, and community partnerships as well as how district specialists support them in their roles. This study was part of a larger longitudinal qualitative study of district leadership for partnerships. The particular district of study was chosen for its membership in NNPS and high levels of district leadership and school facilitation. The district, which had 70 K-12 schools, was in a racially and ethnically diverse suburb of about 248,000 residents (74% Euro-American, 14% African American, 8% Asian, 3% Hispanic, and 14% ESL). Sanders relied on Epstein's (1996) theoretical framework of the 6 types of involvement and collected data over a three year period

through phenomenological, semi-structured, and informal interviews, focus groups, observation, document review, site visits, and surveys of a convenience sample of families receiving liaison services. She performed both deductive and inductive coding of interviews and conducted member checks with those she interviewed.

From the data collected, Sanders (2008) identified four essential roles of parent liaisons in helping schools minimize the influence of class and cultural differences in the home school relationship. These essential parent liaison roles included (a) direct services to families placed at risk, (b) support for teacher outreach, (c) support for school based partnership teams which are part of the NNPS structure, and (d) data collection for program improvement. In essence, they became the school expert and most family available assistance for school family connections. Some parents reported needing help navigating the school system because the 'school world' was so different from their own. They reported that the parent liaison helped them with this in significant ways. Parents wanted to help their children through school, but relied on the school's parent liaisons to know what the best ways of doing this were. The support from the district's family and community involvement specialist and the thorough training of the parent liaisons was found to be key to their effectiveness.

The credibility of Sanders' (2008) study is strong, due to triangulation of data, member checks, and clear descriptions of her data gathering procedures. She also clearly explains the theoretical underpinnings of her research as tied to Epstein's framework and the NNPS. The transferability is limited to schools using parental liaisons and with a structure of support for family, community partnerships. Given Irvine and Lupart's (2006) suggestion social support structures operate differently in rural communities, the transferability of the Sanders study may also be limited by the urban setting. Further research would be needed to see if parent liaisons role and purpose is different in urban or rural areas or in schools with less general emphasis on parent and community partnerships.

In their large scale, quantitative, sample-survey study, Michael, Dittus, and Epstein (2007) studied what strategies are used to involve families and communities in school health programs across the nation and how effective these strategies are. Data was collected as part of the School Health Policies and Programs Study (SHPPS) of 2000 and 2006 from the state, district, school, and classroom level. The researchers found that many schools, encouraged by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and other policies that underscore the need for schools to communicate and work together with community groups, are working in partnerships with health departments, health organizations, hospitals, businesses, and colleges to develop and improve school health programs.

Schools partnering strategies were found to fall into all six types of involvement identified by Epstein (1996). For parenting, 46.6% of districts and 28.2% of schools offer health education and 27.8% districts and 21.1% schools offered physical education or activities to families. Programs communicate with families at high rates: 90% give a way to contact the health teacher directly, 94% contact family about student problems, 74% contact family to praise the child, 94% encourage families attend parent teacher conferences. Health and PE programs encouraged families to volunteer at a rate of 83%. In an effort to improve learning at home, schools discuss with families ways to reinforce learning at home (83%), assign homework that involves family members (30-55%), or ask students to advocate for a health related issue within their community (25%). Though some had school health councils that included community members, less than 50% of schools involved families in decision making regarding the development and implementation of health policies or activities.

Health and PE programs collaborated with the community, as well, with 56% of districts requiring or recommending that schools provide service learning opportunities for students and even some health and PE classes requiring volunteer work as a part of the course (7% and 22.4% respectively). Only 51% of districts offered PE staff development on how to encourage family and community involvement, though this was higher for health teachers. Finally, the program

also examined changes in programs from 2000 to 2006 that may show influence of NCLB, and found that communication with families and communities and collaboration with businesses and colleges both increased. Programs in which family or community serve as role models to students or mentor students also increased from 17.9% to 30.8% during this time.

To collect the data Michael et al. (2007) used 23 different questionnaires. At the state level, data was collected from education agencies in all 50 states and DC. At the district and school, data was collected by computer-assisted telephone interviews (84%) or self-administered mail questionnaires (16%) from a nationally representative sample of districts (n=445-461) and a nationally representative sample of public and private K-12 schools (n=849-1029). Classroom level data was collected by computer assisted personal interviews from teachers of randomly selected PE (n=912) and Health classes (n=1194).

The study has strong external validity due to the extremely large number of classrooms, schools, and districts surveyed and the multiple educational agency perspectives that were included. With the questionnaires and public use datasheets available to the public so readers can look at the individual questions from which findings are based, the study also has strong objectivity. The authors point out, however, that it is possible that community and family involvement in these programs might be present in ways not measured by SHPPS since the survey was not explicitly designed to measure Epstein's framework, which Micheal et al. (2007) used to analyze the information collected. Though limited to health/PE aspects of school, this study shows how families and communities can be involved as contributors to and benefactors of school environments. They contribute to schools by serving as collaborators on curriculum development, mentors to students, volunteers for fundraising or trips, and by extending school curricula to home by completing assignments with students. Families and communities were also shown to be receivers of school produced resources, for example parents attending health trainings or physical activities, community organizations and individuals benefiting from student volunteers and service learning, and so on.

Rademaker (2003), examined school community partnerships from another perspective, investigating what issues and goals would lead a nonprofit group to partner with schools to improve public arts education and what the potential influences on public education this involvement potentially has. The qualitative case study was conducted about Arts Collaborators, Incorporated (ACI, a pseudonym), a non-profit arts advocacy group that served a medium sized Illinois community and three surrounding counties. ACI was selected for study because it worked with schools within the researcher's community.

Naturally, there can be many motivations that can lead a private non-profit to collaborate with public schools about arts education. Rademaker (2003) found that one potential weakness of ACI's actions was actually a lack of consensus among board members on the definition of art and purpose of 'helping' local schools. The multiple goals and lack of consensus on a focus led to vague policies and unfocused actions on the part of the nonprofit. Board members reported different beliefs about the reasons for public arts education, from giving outlets of self expression to creating audience members for art and appreciation for the arts. Board members did not clarify their vision(s) of public arts education with the districts or seek agreement on these overall purposes. Over the course of the study ACI initiated several arts education actions, including a jazz curriculum used in only one district, a trip to the opera with pre and post discussion guides for teacher use in one district, and the production of an arts guide listing groups in the area available for arts education opportunities. These efforts, while well intentioned, were designed without consulting with schools or teachers and given as a 'gift' that ACI believed schools would incorporate without question. The fact that ACI lacked stronger aspects of collaboration and partnership with schools led some to see in ACI's work as a desire to exhibit authority over the school and community about what art should be and how it should be taught. Rademaker also asks the question of whether ACI's provision of arts education programs might encourage the school districts served to eliminate arts education as a school obligation.

Rademaker (2003) collected data for this study through interviews with open ended questions, observations at all board meetings and many committee meetings for several months, and reviews of two years worth of board meeting minutes and committee communications about arts education initiatives. She categorized the perspectives on art and public arts education expressed in the interviews.

The strengths of this study include a clear description of the researcher's theoretical influences, persistent observations, and interviews were conducted by Rademaker, who was a member of the community as well as a researcher and so likely received more honesty than if she had been from outside of the community. Data about the nonprofit were triangulated within ACI, but no data sources from other perspectives, such as teachers or students served by ACI, were included. Unfortunately, Rademaker (2003) included little information about the procedures and methods for the case study or the population that ACI served or that made up their board, limiting both confirmability and transferability of the study.

Sheldon (2005) examined relationships between implementation and results of school, family, community partnerships modeled after the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) structure using a correlational quantitative study design. He found that the level of parent involvement at school is partially a function of school organization, social processes, and outreach to increase family and community involvement. He found that NNPS planning, school support, and district support in the elementary schools studied predicted stronger school level outreach to families. This was in turn a predictor of greater parental involvement at school. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) showed no direct connection between school demographics and implementation of effective team structures and writing of annual plans; low and high income elementary schools were equally likely to implement these aspects of NNPS model. Demographics were correlated with levels of support however, with low income schools in large urban areas more likely to have district support for these programs but less likely to have support from colleagues and school community. The study showed, however, that family income was

"…not an inevitable barrier between home and school (Sheldon, 2005, p. 183) as schools in large urban areas that served low income families were able to have high family and community involvement.

Sheldon (2005) collected data from 565 elementary schools (83.2% return rate of surveys sent out) through the NNPS annual survey from Johns Hopkins University. Measures included two indicators of school demographics, three indicators of program implementation, four indicators of collegial support, and five indicators of external district support as well as partnership program quality and parent involvement at school. These measures were based on estimations by school personnel who completed the survey. Sheldon examined the means, standard deviations, and correlations among variables. He then conducted SEM using the EQS program to test model of relationships between implementation of school, family, community partnerships and results of these partnerships.

This study is rare in that it looks into what makes programs strong and so provides a unique set of findings for educators seeking to increase family and community involvement. The survey includes a large number of schools so it represents perspectives from different regions of the country and urban as well as rural environments. One possible area of caution in interpreting the data stems from the fact that Sheldon (2005) relies on data from stakeholders at schools in NNPS who have a vested interest in positive perception of their programs, so their responses may be biased in this direction. A similar critique can be made for the researcher himself, who works with Joyce Epstein at Johns Hopkins University, where the NNPS is located. As with other correlational studies, causation cannot be determined but this study is supported by other research that also draws similar correlations between program strength and increased engagement with families and communities (see discussion at the end of this section). Because it was conducted in elementary schools, readers should be cautious of generalizing findings to the secondary level. One last limitation of the study is that it only examined parent involvement activities that

occurred within the school; findings might be strengthened if involvement activities based in the home or greater community were also included.

Sheldon's (2005) study leaves open the question, if school structure, planning, and district support are keys to successful outreach to families and communities, how can school leaders build such structures and community capacity? This is the focus of Masumoto and Brown-Welty's (2009) case study of successful high poverty rural California schools. They investigated the ways that educational leaders of these schools interfaced with the community to overcome challenges of poverty, educational reform, and rural circumstances and enhance student outcomes. They used an established cross-case study design model with the focused phase of the study lasting two months and relied on interviews with school personnel, parents, and community members as their primary data source, supported by document review, content analysis, and observation.

Masumoto & Brown-Welty (2009) found that schools were successful in overcoming challenges of community poverty and large numbers of multi-ethnic and English Language Learner students in a variety of ways. Three primary cross-case findings were identified. First was the prevalence of strong contemporary leadership practices focused on improvement. Leaders at all three schools did not dwell on problems of the community but kept the school and community's educational goals in focus and motivated toward improvement.

Second, multiple formal and informal mechanisms of school community linkages were established to accomplish each schools mission and enhance student outcomes. This included formal school community partnerships with colleges providing information to students and families, formal and informal supports for career education and extracurricular programs (FFA, FBLA, band, athletics, etc.), and local businesses that donated services or goods, provided scholarships, and served as resource people for students doing job training. Students also provided support to communities at all three schools through community service or other forms of civic engagement. Leaders focused on two way communication with constituencies, used a

variety of formal and informal communication strategies with parents and community, and had established a goal of bettering relationships with Latino populations. Partnerships with the community were associated with improved student outcomes and increased the school's ability to leverage resources and school and community energy toward positive outcomes for students.

Third, the common contributors to school success included a focus on instruction, standards, and expectations, strong teachers, and multiple support systems for students with various needs such as individual tutorials, regular communication with parents, extracurricular activities. Masumoto & Brown-Welty (2009) came to the conclusion that these schools were centers of their communities, had effective leadership that found ways to "…utilize and stretch resources to help students, regardless of location or lack of funding" by building valuable school community partnerships within the community and with universities (p. 15).

The study was well designed, drawing on Bauch's framework of 6 attributes/assets of community context unique to rural schools (as cited in Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). The sample of schools was selected using a non probability sample selection process, beginning with 163 rural California schools and screening for schools with Title I funding and two indicators of high performance schools. From the remaining list, researchers used consistency of leadership and diversity of ethnic makeup and proportion of ELL's as the final factors to narrow the study down to three schools. Data is given on each school's demographics, and the schools share a small student body (all under 550 students) and low teacher-student ratio as well as high ethnic diversity.

After data collection, Masumoto and Brown-Welty (2009) first focused on constructing descriptive picture of characteristics and practices at each school, then analyzed (sorted, coded, structured, and restructured) each case individually based on thematic development. Three peer researchers analyzed several interviews and extracted thematic findings to ensure inter-rater reliability. A third cross site analysis identified major themes and patterns common to all three schools, and from this the researchers drew general conclusions.

This study's credibility is strong due to triangulation of data, the cross case study design, and clear descriptions of data gathering and analysis procedures. Also, the schools selected for study were identified based on strict requirements of their characteristics and not a convenience sample, which is rare for this type of qualitative study and increases the external validity of the study. Researchers make it clear which characteristics schools would need to share in order to have these findings generalized to them. Overall the study design, validity, reliability, and objectivity are strong and the study provides valuable insight into the capacity for low income rural communities to unite in partnerships with the shared goal of overcoming barriers and providing quality education for students.

The studies in this section examine a range of school and partnership characteristics that lead to success. This includes schools' ability to partner not only with families, but also with the greater community in the form of local non-profits and businesses, higher education, and other community organizations. When these studies are looked at as a group some key themes emerge about a school's role in partnering and how schools can successfully draw the three spheres of influence closer together to benefit all populations, even those that are often marginalized.

One key pattern that these studies reveal is that successful partnership programs take advantage of the wide variety of partnerships that are possible in any given community as well as partnerships specific to the community. Schools partner with private nonprofits, universities, national educational institutions, families, community-service organizations, government organizations, faith organizations, senior citizen organizations, cultural and recreational organizations and community individuals. Schools that are creating successful partnership programs are working with multiple partners within their community (Sanders & Lewis, 2005; Irvine & Lupart, 2006; Rademaker, 2003; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). By uniting such a wide range of interests and resources under clear and focused goals of improving student education, schools can help create multiple environments that share clarity and consistency in their goals for youth. By doing this they can improve environments and developmental and

academic opportunities for all youth, including those who often experience difficulty integrating socially, such as students with disabilities. Such partnerships align community values and goals around raising youth and benefit students and the community as a whole (Irvine & Lupart, 2006).

The Rademaker (2003) study points out that when schools partner with community organizations, issues of power may arise from differing agendas and visions of public education and community collaboration. Partnering with others includes incorporating not only their resources but also their opinions and perspectives in designing school objectives, activities, and curriculum. While this increase in perspectives can greatly benefit schools and the students they serve, it also comes with responsibility to do the work of aligning educational visions and maintaining goals of public education. There may be a line between collaboration and in school marketing by the partner organization that schools sometimes have to straddle in order to take advantage of the additional perspectives and resources provided by the partnership. It may also be the case that schools are put in the position of exchanging some control of educational purposes or methods for resources as the accountability movement increases accountability while simultaneously decreasing funding. Effective partnership programs, though, relying on a variety of partnerships to as not to become over dependent on any one source. This assures that the variety of partners influencing a school's goals also includes the voices of families from diverse cultures and backgrounds. It also creates a wide variety of learning and developmental opportunities for students that schools could not otherwise provide in isolation. This is especially true at the high school level, from which students will make the transition to adult, contributing members to our democratic society (Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009).

Another important component to successful partnership programs that emerges from the studies in this section is a wide-base of support from both the community and school and district leadership. As Sanders and Lewis (2005) argued, "…the concept that support is critical to the development of partnership programs, as well as an outcome of these programs, has received little research attention but has important implications" (p. 182). Thus successful comprehensive

programs that invest in comprehensive partnerships with their community create a positive cycle of increased support for the community's youth. The Michael et al. (2007) study showed that only 30-50% of PE and Health teachers are trained to include family and community. Though this number may be higher for teachers of other subjects, without more structural support for and training on how to successfully create partnerships, it is a heavy burden to expect teachers alone to create effective partnerships. For example, the successful parent liaison program examined by Sanders (2008) required the support of the paid district partnership specialist as well as district itself in creating these parent liaison positions in the first place. Masumoto & Brown-Welty (2009) also found that strong leadership was one of three key characteristics of schools effectively partnering within their communities. Teachers as individuals should not be expected to be able to implement effective programs without support and resources from their school and district.

Another key pattern of successful programs was the school's ownership of their role and responsibility in initiating and developing partnerships. Efforts to reach out to the community and to families to become more involved have been shown to illicit positive responses in communities of all SES backgrounds, ethnicities, and in both rural or urban communities (Sheldon, 2005; Simon, 2004; Sheldon and Epstein, 2004; Rademaker, 2003; Sanders, 2008; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009).

This can also be seen in the parent involvement section in the Dauber and Epstein (1995) study, which showed that schools' practices to inform and involve parents predicted parents' involvement more strongly than parent education, family size, marital status, and even grade level. Two of the three most effective strategies schools used to engage parents identified by Sheldon and Epstein (2004) fall under the category of 'communication' with parents about school expectations, demonstrating once again that when parents know how to be involved effectively, they are. This is also supported by parent reports that schools' efforts to create a welcoming environment, provide them with meaningful roles and include them in decision-making

processes, and reach out in the families' native language to invite their participation heavily influenced their decision to become active educational partners (Simon, 2004; Sanders, 2008; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). The data reveals that if the schools involved with ACI in the Rademaker (2003) study had reached out to the arts nonprofit, ACI might have had a clearer concept of what would help schools and this would likely have resulted in a more beneficial collaboration. In each case when schools put forth the effort to collaborate on education with families and communities, they got a response. Without the effort and communication on the part of the schools, many families and community members and organizations were left without knowing what efforts on their part might be helpful.

The studies also reveal that no one strategy works to engage involvement from all parties, so those programs that use *multiple methods* to engage families and communities are more effective toward their goals (Simon, 2004; Michael et al., 2007; Sheldon & Epstein, 2004). Some of the methods emphasized in these studies include the use of parent liaisons hired by schools to help targeted families navigate educational support for their kids (Sanders, 2008), use of community mentors to improve attendance rates of elementary school students (Sheldon & Epstein, 2004), and increasing contact with families in ways that accommodate their needs (Michael et al., 2007). Several studies also indicated that rural and urban schools face different challenges, for example the higher rates of chronic absenteeism seen in urban communities in the Sheldon and Epstein (2004) study. Differences in urban and rural communities may change how schools go about forming effective partnerships (Irvine & Lupart, 2006; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). The Simon (2004) study even suggests that the use of multiple-methods of outreach and partnership creation has benefits in raising the capacity of community support in general, with outreach strategies that were not necessarily correlated with direct responses, but instead with a variety of involvement. This indicates that community partnership programs operate as a system or network within the community, and building one part of this network can be effective at raising capacity in other parts as well.

As schools work on the elements that will create successful partnerships with families and community, it is important for them to consider how they can do so for the benefit of all populations. Irvine & Lupart (2006), for example, showed how support from the community, family, school, and religious institutions can interact to create an overall better experience for students with disabilities who are often marginalized. Pulling together the overlapping spheres of influence with the goal of creating multiple positive environments where students can experience success and see the value of their education benefits students of all types (Irvine & Lupart, 2006; Simon, 2004; Sanders, 2008).

School, family, community partnerships benefit more than just students but also the school and community (Sanders & Lewis, 2005; Sanders, 2008; Michael et al., 2007; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). Teachers reported that parent liaisons at their school helped them immensely as a kind of cultural broker with parents that were difficult to get in touch with and communicate with, saving teachers time and energy and making their students more successful as well (Sanders, 2008). Studies suggest that families and communities can be involved with schools both as contributors to school environment and as receivers of services provided by the school. They also suggest that a school's investment in the community may receive a return of both financial and human resources in the long run due to the community's increased connection to and investment in the school (Sanders & Lewis, 2005; Michael et al., 2007; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). So, those schools that are successful at leveraging resources through partnerships also give back by hosting events, allowing facilities use, hosting student projects for the community, providing community education events, etc. (Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). They often become more than just the center of youth education in their community, but a center for the community.

For all of these reasons and more, it seems that interest in school, family, community partnerships has grown over the last decade. From 2000 to 2006 there was an increase in specific types of school, family, and community partnerships that may suggest an influence of NCLB

(Michael et al., 2007). Sanders and Lewis (2005) suggest a potential link between the growing interest in school, family, community partnerships and the increased accountability and decreased funding of years since NCLB. Schools may be looking not only to help students directly with opportunities, but to leverage their resources by partnering with non-governmental sources of funding, support, and human resources.

Another change over the last decade is an increase not in the amount of partnerships but in their quality, with schools more often using home languages to engage parents, refusing the deficit model and not expecting parents to take the lead in participating or expecting them to participate only through PTA and school based activities. Instead, schools are accommodating the needs of their individual and unique community and families and creating innovative methods to increase family and community involvement and partnerships (Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009).

There is general agreement today that school, family, community partnerships have positive benefits for students as well as the other parties involved. National policy has increasingly encouraged schools to work more closely with families and communities, and schools are getting better at doing so in order to benefit their students, their communities, and the school. The next question to focus on becomes how schools can create underlying structures and programs that engage, motivate, and fill the needs of family and community partners in order to benefit students and increase their educational opportunities and better prepare them for their futures.

The studies in this section are representative of the newest research attempting to answer such complex questions about the aspects of partnership programs that make them effective, efficient, worthwhile, sustainable, and feasible. Each study examined here represents a different aspect of a complex picture of how schools have been successful at creating partnerships thus far. Creating opportunities for the spheres of influence that guide a child's development to align around clear and positive goals for that child may be a complex job, but it is one schools of today

must be prepared to take on if they truly hope to prepare all students for positive adult roles in our society.

Summary

This paper's focus is on investigating the motivations for creating school, family, community partnerships and the ways in which educators create partnerships that are effective and worthwhile. Chapter one introduced the research question and the reasons this question is important to educators along with terminology related to the topic and a brief discussion of the limitations of this paper. Chapter two examined the history of American schooling as it relates to community and family involvement in educational experiences and decisions. This history examines the historical purposes of schooling and learning theory as it developed to today's educational climate which calls for schools to initiate partnerships with families and communities at higher rates than ever before.

Chapter three has reviewed current peer reviewed research relating to school, family, community partnerships including an examination of common goals for partnership formation and what makes them successful, especially at the secondary level. The studies examined were grouped into four sections and brief summaries were given. The findings were analyzed with consideration for study and results analysis design.

The first set of studies examines volunteering and service learning as a school community partnership. Goals for such partnerships range from increased student academic achievement due to real world contexts for curriculum (Soslau & Yost, 2007; Kielsmeier et al., 2004; Seitsinger, 2005) to improved community perception of youth and socialization of students toward civic engagement (Kielsmeier et. al., 2004; Raskoff & Sundeen, 1999; Taylor & Trepanier-Street, 2007; Dymond, 2007; Soslau & Yost, 2007). Though some results are mixed, especially for programs that require community service with no connection to academic curriculum, the studies

in this section clearly demonstrate that it is possible to design and implement quality programs that benefit students and the community.

There is already a fairly well established body of research indicating the importance of parental involvement for students' educational success (Hickman et al., 1995; Keith et al., 1998; McNeal, 1999; Marcon, 2000; Gutman & McLoyd, 2000) but recent research broadens both the definition of who can be included in 'family involvement' and what activities constitute 'involvement.' Several studies in the second section use Epstein's (1996) framework of six types of involvement (Catsambis, 1998; Marcon, 1999; Van Voorhis, 2003). The family involvement strategy found to have the strongest link to academic success was supportive discussion at home focused on educational advice or guidance (Catsambis, 1998; Hickman et al., 1995; Gutman & McLoyd, 2000; Muller, 1998), meaning schools would do well to provide educational training or materials that encouraged and modeled this type of communication at home, especially once students reach high school (Hickman et al., 1995; Catsambis, 1998; Keith et al., 1998; McNeal, 1999).

The volunteer programs section demonstrates how many goals schools can have when they recruit and utilize community members to serve as volunteers in the school. The reasons range from improving student achievement in a specific subject area (Invernizzi et al., 1997; Brent, 2000; Volkmann & Bye, 2006; Dauber & Epstein, 1995), or improving student attendance and reducing dropout rates (Invernizzi et al., 1997; Volkmann & Bye, 2006; Dynarski et al., 1998); to boosting children's self esteem and positive experiences with and connection to school (Volkmann & Bye, 2006; Castro et al., 2004), and to improving school climate and community relations (Brent, 2000).

The fourth section of research describes and analyzes several studies that looked at what made school, family, community partnerships successful. In the community service and service learning section the research showed that successful programs included: (a) creating clear links and meaningful connections to academic curriculum (Raskoff & Sundeen, 1999; Dymond, 2007;

Soslau & Yost, 2007); (b) giving students time for reflection on their experience and how it relates to a larger system and/or to their curriculum (Dymond, 2007; Taylor & Trepanier-Street, 2007); (c) providing opportunities for students to see and celebrate the outcomes of their work (Taylor & Trepanier-Street, 2007; Kielsmeier et. al., 2004); and (d) support of more formalized school community partnerships from the school or district in the form of finances, manpower, and structure (Dymond, 2007; Raskoff & Sundeen, 1999). Programs that were shown to be most successful at inviting effective family involvement were whole school initiatives (Mapp, 2002) and used frequent positive communication in the family's native language that clearly communicated what meaningful roles family could play (McNeal, 1999; Van Voorhis, 2003; Mapp, 2002; Gutman & McLoyd, 2000). The third section of research demonstrated that partnership programs are successful at recruiting volunteers from all ethnicities, SES backgrounds, and ages if they are well planned, supported by the school and/or district, and reach out to recruit a variety of community members and create volunteer roles that overcome barriers to participation (Castro et al., 2004; Brent, 2000; Dynarski et al., 1998; Volkmann & Bye, 2006; Invernizzi et al., 1997; Dauber & Epstein, 1995). The final section demonstrates that schools are most successful when they use a variety of partnering strategies to connect to a variety of family and community partners and raise the capacity of the entire community to focus on and improve education and opportunities for youth. These schools are able to leverage resources of the community for the benefit of students while at the same time better incorporating the cultural values and community goals for youth because of more inclusion of partners in school culture and goal setting. These studies show the ways in which schools are in the best position to organize and align the three overlapping spheres of influence that make up the experiences of youth and that prepare them for their futures.

By examining the research presented in chapter three, one can see that schools are withdrawing slightly from the professionalization of the educational system and increasingly welcoming and inviting the valuable contributions of the communities in which they operate.

Students are benefitting from overlapping spheres of influence that encourage them in multiple realms of life to stay in school and work toward their own education while learning valuable roles as contributors to their communities. Hopefully, this will translate to increases in the American education system's ability to prepare youth for an increasingly interconnected world, and engage with community both to give and get as adults playing productive roles in a our democracy. Chapter three has examined current research related to the goals of and strategies for effective school, family, community partnerships. Chapter four outlines the research findings, considers the classroom implications of these findings, and makes suggestions for further research on the topic.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Chapter one of this paper examines the inherent incongruence in our society's tradition of separating youth from the greater society in the institution of school for the purpose of preparing them for participation in the very same society. Would it not make more sense to prepare youth to actively participate in our democracy and the cultures of the United States by actively including them in that democracy and those cultures? Would there be other benefits to close ties between schools and the families and communities that make up the rest of children's lives outside of school? This leads to the guiding question of this paper, which is: What are the motivations for creating school, family, community partnerships and how do secondary teachers do so effectively? Chapter one presented a rationale for this question as well as discusses controversies and definition of terms surrounding the topic.

Chapter two explored the history of family and community interactions with schooling in American schools. The original purposes of schooling in colonial America did not require the participation of families and communities in schooling, as educators were charged with teaching students to read, write, and obey. As the purposes of schooling and the fabric of our modern multicultural society developed, the demands on schools changed. Social and educational theory evolved to our modern understanding of the complexity of social systems that influence children as they develop and prepare themselves for the adult roles they will play in our society. In light of this, modern learning theory which promotes the advantages of concrete experience, and other contextual factors, there has been increased focus on including families and community in education over the last several decades. Schools are receiving increased funding for creating partnerships with families and communities and research has shifted from investigating if these partnerships are beneficial to how they can be created and maintained effectively.

Chapter three reviewed current literature on school, family, community partnerships with a specific focus on (a) students engaging with community through school organized community service projects, (b) family involvement in school, (c) community members as volunteers in schools, and (d) methods for effective creation and maintenance of quality partnerships. Each of the studies presented in chapter three is summarized and analyzed to provide perspective on the findings presented by the researchers.

Chapter four concludes this paper by reexamining the research question in light of the body of research presented in chapter three. Research into the multiple ways that schools can invite active participation of families and communities in the education of youth reveals a very wide variety of goals for such partnerships as well as many key elements of programs proven to be effective. Chapter four summarizes the findings about these goals and key elements as well as the implications for classroom practice in an attempt to provide helpful perspectives to educators looking to increase school, family, community partnerships in their own districts. It also discusses possible areas for further research on the topic, which is relatively new in educational research.

Summary of Findings

The research on family, school, and community partnerships is clear that they can provide positive benefits for students, schools, and communities, and that certain structural, strategic, and social aspects of such programs improve the probability of such benefits. Schools' motivations for initiating and maintaining partnerships range from improving student test scores and developing civic awareness to improving school climate and leveraging support and resources for the school. Table 1 includes the motivations for partnering with families or community examined in each of the studies in chapter three. From this table one can see the diversity of goals that schools are working toward when they decide to focus on partnerships. A wide variety of types of partnerships also emerges from these goals. Some of these partnership

programs have been evaluated and found to be effective, while others are less so. One general

key finding is the importance of the elements of successful programs which include: school-

and/or district-wide support, implementation, or training; positive communication with families

and communities about student achievements; provision of meaningful roles for partners in which

they are contributing to the decision-making as well as daily processes of the school; and

willingness to truly listen to and negotiate with family and community partners. This section will

review the patterns represented in the research findings of those studies in chapter three.

Table 1:

Study:	Goals motivating school, family, community partnerships:
Brent, 2000	improve school climate, school-community relations, and perceived student achievement in reading/math
Castro et al., 2004	not seeking purpose (study looked at how a volunteer program operated and what characteristics lead to more volunteers – effectiveness)
Catsambis, 1998	increase student achievement (measured by test scores and credits completed)
Dauber & Epstein, 1995	increase student skill/knowledge of art and social studies
Dymond, 2007	integrate students with disabilities
Dynarski et al., 1998	reduce dropout rates; increase student progression in school
Gutman & McLoyd, 2000	increase student academic success, socialization, moral development, community awareness
Hickman et al., 1995	increase student achievement (measured by GPA)
Invernizzi et al., 1997	improve student reading and attendance
Irvine & Lupart, 2006	increase effectiveness of inclusion of students with disabilities
Keith et al., 1998	improve grades (including high school)
Kielsmeier et al., 2004	increase academic achievement and school engagement
Mapp, 2002	improve student learning; improve parent involvement (assumes positive effects of parent involvement based on previous

	research)
Marcon, 1999	improve early-child development and behavior
Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009	invite/integrate values and models of minority students to community; gain support/resources for school; demonstrate to students that their community cares and provide an authentic audience for student work through community involvement
McNeal, 1999	reduce absenteeism (truancy) and drop-out rates; improve academic achievement (measured by test scores)
Michael et al., 2007	improve curriculum; increase parent understanding of school programs; increase community relations
Muller, 1998	increase math achievement (measured by test scores on standardized test and reported grades)
Rademaker, 2003	various goals on arts education: build involvement/appreciation of the arts, increase art's role as part of core curriculum, improve student art appreciation
Raskoff & Sundeen, 1999	increase civic participation ; youth socialization
Sanders 2005	improve student academic and personal success; enhance school quality; support community development
Sanders, 2008	increase family support of 'at risk' struggling students
Seitsinger, 2005	engage higher-level thinking skills
Sheldon & Epstein, 2004	reduce absenteeism
Sheldon, 2005	improve school climate, student achievement, and community support for school
Simon, 2004	increased support for student academic achievement, increase

	family involvement regardless of student background
Soslau & Yost, 2007	improve student achievement (measured by test scores), increase attendance, increase motivation/behavior due to interest
Taylor & Trepanier-Street, 2007	develop civic awareness/value democracy; benefit young learners; build student leadership skills toward change; improve attitudes on diversity; increase understanding of community
Van Voorhis, 2003	improve accuracy and quality of homework, increase science achievement
Volkmann & Bye, 2006	increase reading scores, improve attendance, promote lifetime love of reading, boost children's self-esteem through mentor-relationships

Research in the first section of chapter three focused on school community partnerships in which students connected with the community through school organized volunteer opportunities. Volunteering and service learning as a school community partnership can have a wide range of goals for students, schools, and communities as motivators for their formation. The studies of this section showed that the goals of such partnerships included: (a) improved community perception of youth, especially urban students with low socio-economic backgrounds (Sosau & Yost, 2007); (b) socialization toward civic engagement and social development (Kielsmeier et. al., 2004; Raskoff & Sundeen, 1999; Taylor & Trepanier-Street, 2007; Dymond, 2007); (c) community building goals (Raskoff & Sundeen, 1999; Seitsinger, 2005; Kielsmeier et. al., 2004); and (d) academic engagement, motivation, and achievement through providing students in valuable ways to contexts related to what they are learning (Soslau & Yost, 2007; Kielsmeier et. al., 2004; Seitsinger, 2005).

Generally, the programs studied were found to be successful toward their goals and provided strong evidence to support service learning as a viable instructional strategy. The success of such volunteer or service learning programs was not automatic, however, and certain program elements were shown by these studies as essential to successful, sustainable programs. These elements include: (a) creating clear links and meaningful connections to academic curriculum (Raskoff & Sundeen, 1999; Dymond, 2007; Soslau & Yost, 2007); (b) giving students time for reflection on their experience and how it relates to a larger system and/or to their curriculum (Dymond, 2007; Taylor & Trepanier-Street, 2007); (c) providing opportunities for students to see and celebrate the outcomes of their work (Taylor & Trepanier-Street, 2007; Kielsmeier et. al., 2004); and (d) support of more formalized school community partnerships from the school or district in the form of finances, manpower, and structure (Dymond, 2007; Raskoff & Sundeen, 1999). There are many ways that schools can partner with communities, only one of which is to encourage students to work in communities as volunteers. While some results on community service programs are mixed, these studies demonstrate that well established and supported service learning programs can be very successful toward academic and socialization goals as well as improving school and youth relations with the community.

The second section of studies examined in chapter three relates to schools that partner with families to increase the positive effects on students of family involvement in education. Family involvement as a school family partnership is perhaps the area that has the largest body of research under the topic of school, family, community partnerships. Most recent research has moved from the term 'parental involvement' to 'family involvement' in recognition of a wider set of family roles and supports represented in a variety of cultures as well as family circumstances. The studies in this section strongly suggest that programs are more successful at helping students and involving families when they work within a broadened definition of 'parent involvement' to include all of the ways that families support their children's education. Several studies investigated which parent involvement strategies were correlated with academic success at the

secondary level. These studies found that supportive discussion at home focused on educational advice or guidance had the strongest link to academic success (Catsambis, 1998; Hickman et al., 1995; Gutman & McLoyd, 2000), especially for girls (Muller, 1998). Schools that have a record of success in teaming with parents to create improved educational outcomes tend to recognize that family support of children takes on different forms in different communities (Keith et al., 1998; Hickman et al., 1995) but that families from all ethnicities, educational backgrounds, and SES care deeply about their children's success and want to be involved in helpful ways (Mapp, 2002; VanVoorhis, 2003; Gutman & McLoyd, 2000; McNeal, 1999). The studies presented here add to an already well established body of research demonstrating that family involvement does have positive effects on student outcomes, such as reducing truancy and dropout rates (McNeal, 1999), increasing academic success (Hickman et al., 1995; Keith et al., 1998), and building resiliency to other barriers to success that students face in school or their community (Marcon, 2000; Gutman & McLoyd, 2000). Schools sometimes choose to work with families to strengthen the overall health of the student by improving circumstances in the other spheres of influence in their lives and linking families to community resources or services and encouraging their participation in a variety of activities in which they can be successful (Gutman & McLoyd, 2000; Mapp, 2002; Dymond, 2007).

The generally accepted understanding that family involvement has positive effects on student behavior and academic outcomes at the elementary school level has been questioned at the secondary level. Results of several studies in this section, however, indicate that parent involvement does remain important through high school but a change occurs in the type of involvement strategies that are useful and effective (Hickman et al., 1995; Catsambis, 1998; Keith et al., 1998; McNeal, 1999). Lastly, these studies on family involvement as school family partnerships indicate that schools are more successful in encouraging effective family involvement in education when the school works as a whole (Mapp, 2002) to communicate with families and inform them of school expectations and schooling options and opportunities in the

family's first language so that the family can guide decision making (McNeal, 1999; Van Voorhis, 2003). They are also more successful when that contact is positive, supportive, and inclusive in nature (Mapp, 2002; Gutman & McLoyd, 2000).

The third section of studies examined in chapter three looks at school community partnerships in which schools use community volunteers to improve academic and school organized extracurricular activities that in turn improve student outcomes. The studies represented here demonstrate the wide range of reasons a school might welcome community members as volunteers. Some used volunteer manpower with the aim of improving student achievement in a specific subject area (Invernizzi et al., 1997; Brent, 2000; Volkmann & Bye, 2006; Dauber & Epstein, 1995), improving student attendance or reducing dropout rates (Invernizzi et al., 1997; Volkmann & Bye, 2006; Dynarski et al., 1998); boos t children's self esteem and positive experiences with and connection to school (Volkmann & Bye, 2006; Castro et al., 2004), and to improve school climate and community relations (Brent, 2000). Research has demonstrated that use of volunteers in quality programs has strengthened school programs and ties to the community (Dauber & Epstein, 1995; Brent, 2000; Volkmann & Bye, 2006; Invernizzi et al., 1997) and Brent (2000) even asserts that these improved community relations can result in increased funding for schools through levies and bonds that these same volunteers work to pass. Other questions of cost are addressed in this body of research as well. Volkmann & Bye (2006) found volunteer programs can be very cost effective when compared to programs with similar goals that do not utilize volunteers and Inverenzzi et al. (1997) demonstrated that when programs are successful at increasing attendance they can save districts even more money. While much of the research on volunteer programs at the elementary school level, the Dauber and Epstein (1995) and Dynarski et al. (1998) studies demonstrate that students at the secondary level still benefit from and appreciate additional interaction with positive adult role models.

School programs that use adult volunteers have been shown to be successful when certain key elements are in place. The studies represented in the volunteer programs as school

community partnerships section of chapter three show that higher income communities enjoy more volunteer participation (Brent, 2000). Significantly, however, they also show that when schools work to reach out to recruit, overcome barriers to participation, and provide a variety of volunteer roles that volunteers come from all walks of life and age groups (Castro et al., 2004; Brent, 2000; Dynarski et al., 1998; Volkmann & Bye, 2006; Invernizzi et al., 1997). Programs that were well planned, responsive to student needs, and well supported by the school and/or district in the form of funding, coordinator positions, or even advisory boards have greater degrees of success at recruiting volunteers and sustaining programming (Volkmann & Bye, 2006; Dauber & Epstein, 1995; Invernizzi et al., 1997; Castro et al., 2004). Another successful element of volunteer programs was training and supervision of the volunteers by an education specialist (Invernizzi et al., 1997; Dynarski et al., 1998; Dauber & Epstein, 1995; Volkmann & Bye, 2006). This was achieved by some programs through school community partnerships with local universities that aided with volunteer programming (Dynarski et al., 1998; Invernizzi et al., 1997). Overall, the studies in this section show that schools are able to positively impact student outcomes by engaging community volunteers to help improve programming when the programs are well designed and well supported.

The last section in chapter four that discusses research, school's responsibility and capacity in partnership creation, examines studies that investigated the school's role in partnering with families and communities and how schools can successfully draw together the three spheres of influence of family, school, and community, into increased alignment for the benefit of students. Schools that are creating successful partnership programs are working with a variety of partners within their community and functioning as the hub of community interests, resources, values and goals surrounding youth (Sanders & Lewis, 2005; Irvine & Lupart, 2006; Rademaker, 2003; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). By working with multiple partners and increase clarity and consistency of community values and goals around raising children schools improve multiple environments and developmental and academic opportunities for all youth. Another benefit of a

wide range of partnerships is that the school does become overly dependent on any one partnership. Rademaker (2003) points out that when schools create honest partnerships with organizations they incorporate not only their resources but also their opinions and perspectives, which creates potential for issues of power stemming from differing agendas. A wide variety of community partners also provides a broader variety of learning and developmental opportunities for students that schools could not provide in isolation (Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009).

Another common thread among schools studied that are creating successful partnerships within their communities that benefit students is strong leadership and support within the district to do so. Individual teachers are not as able to create sustainable and beneficial partnerships without such school support. Schools and districts create sustainable programs by providing strong, quality leadership, creating district partnership specialist positions, providing training for teachers and staff for partnering strategies, and investing resources in school or district wide programs that make clear to the community that they are invited into the educational process (Sanders & Lewis, 2005; Michael et al., 2007; Sanders, 2008; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). Schools that are more successful also tend to take on ownership of their role as organizer of these partnerships and initiate the relationships and the work of aligning values and goals surrounding youth. School efforts to reach out to families and community are met with increased interest and involvement in communities of all SES backgrounds, ethnicities, and in both rural and urban locations (Sheldon, 2005; Simon, 2004; Sheldon & Epstein, 2004; Rademaker, 2003; Sanders, 2008; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). Similar return on school investments of time and effort in including families were seen in the section on family involvement. The research there showed that schools working to include and inform parents in their native language, communicating clearly what the needs and goals of the school are, and provide meaningful roles for family members resulted in increased participation and families that were grateful for the inclusion and the knowledge on what was helpful for their child's education (Dauber & Epstein, 1995; Sheldon

& Epstein, 2004; Simon, 2004; Sanders, 2008; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; Rademaker, 2003).

In the same way that multiple partners within the community are important to thriving schools, these studies show that multiple methods for engaging families and communities also create environments and partnerships that allow schools to be more effective toward their goals (Simon, 2004; Michael et al., 2007; Sheldon & Epstein, 2004). Examples of some methods used by schools in these studies include parent liaisons (Sanders, 2008), community volunteers who serve as student mentors (Sheldon & Epstein, 2004), increasing contact with families in ways that meet family needs and not those of the school (Michael et al., 2007), and teaming up with local business and nonprofits to increase opportunities for scholarships, job shadowing, curriculum development, and more (Sanders & Lewis 2005; Rademaker, 2003). Differences in urban and rural communities may change how schools go about forming effective partnerships (Sheldon & Epstein, 2004; Irvine & Lupart, 2006; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). The results of the studies in this section indicate that school, family, community partnership programs can operate as a network within the community and that by expanding this network to new partners or improving aspects of the networks communication, schools can effectively raise the capacity to help kids in other parts of the network as well.

Schools do not only partner with families and communities for the direct benefit of students, however. The research also indicates that the partnerships benefit schools, teachers, and the community as well. Financial benefits to the school created by increased community involvement and commitment was discussed earlier, but teachers also benefit from partnership programs that give them increased understanding of the backgrounds of their students and can sometimes save them time and energy in reaching out to families, as with parent liaisons (Sanders & Lewis, 2005; Sanders, 2008; Michael et al., 2007; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). Many schools also find they can benefit their communities by partnering to provide trainings and community education events, allowing facilities use, hosting student projects for the community,

and encouraging positive connections between youth and local organizations and businesses (Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; Sanders & Lewis, 2005).

Implications for Teaching

Individual teachers at the secondary level are somewhat limited in the ways that they can create effective school, family, and community partnerships. Since the research demonstrates that support from principles and school wide programs are key factors of successful programs, those teachers at schools or in districts that do not support partnerships with funds and training will have a more difficult time. These individual teachers will not be able to form as many or as diverse partnerships as a school or district wide team or program. Perhaps the strongest thing an individual teacher can do, then, is to work with school leadership toward creating the support for such programs within the structure of the school and the district.

If teachers are in districts that are not actively working toward partnerships, they still have options for encouraging such partnerships. Especially in communication with parents and guardians, individual teachers do have the power to create school family partnerships. Communication with parents has been shown as one of strategies most highly correlated with parent involvement. Teachers should focus on positive, frequent communication with families that invites them to take part in children's education both in school and at home. Focus on participation in education that does not require formal education, such as the TIPS interactive homework (Van Voorhis, 2003), best engages parents of all backgrounds. Parents need to feel welcomed, listened to, valued, and to feel that they are considered partners in their student's education. This is true even at the secondary level, where their role may be more one of advising and guiding students, so teacher communication should focus on giving information that may be important to guidance as well as communicating directly with students so they are empowered to make positive decisions for their own education.

Teachers at the secondary level, with over 100 students in their classrooms each day, might find the task of creating these connections daunting. Luckily, studies have also shown that targeted work with families of students who are identified at risk can be effective (Sanders, 2008). In addition to targeting specific families to increase communication with, teachers can make use of class websites and school newsletters or newspapers to disseminate information that may be key to family support of students. The research does show that there is no one way that will reach all families, however, so teachers should focus on using multiple modes of communication with educational partners at home including direct communication at times and in ways that are convenient for the family.

Teachers should also create assignments that incorporate interaction with family and community members, such as the TIPS program (Van Voorhis, 2003) that requires discussion of the assignment with a partner at home but does not place this person in the position of 'helping' with something they may not be formally educated in. Other homework can include interactions with community members outside of the home, such as interviewing a community member who lived through a certain time period, surveying natural or social conditions in local neighborhoods for a local organization, or practicing a second language with a native speaker. These types of assignments will demonstrate to students how tightly what they are learning in school relates to the world outside of school and provide opportunities for them to positively interact with adults outside of school in relation to their education. These experiences align the overlapping spheres of influence in their lives and give opportunities for them to experience and demonstrate their own educational success and play valuable roles themselves within the community.

Many of these school, family, community partnerships are easier for teachers to create or maintain if they themselves stay connected to a community that will inspire them to keep up their efforts. For example, even teachers without consistent district support in creating such partnerships can stay up to date on current research through educational journals, work of the National Network of Partnership Schools, or pair up with education specialists at local

universities for projects with education students. The research is clear, however, that the most effective partnerships that benefit students, families, the school, and the community are those that are school or district wide and have paid experts who coordinate them. Considering the incredible breadth of benefits linked to school, family, community partnerships it is certainly worth the time and effort for teachers to work toward them in whatever ways they can.

<div align="center">Suggestions for Further Research</div>

This is a relatively new field in education and there are still many questions about how effective partnership programs work and what schools need in order to create them within their communities. More research needs to be conducted to investigate the differences between rural and urban environments, as it is clear that partnerships in these places can be engaged in different ways and may be needed to help counteract different difficulties. Not enough is understood at this point about how the various factors interact and how this urban/rural difference plays out in the systemic network of partnerships of effective programs.

Though a difficult task given the number of formal and informal partnerships as well as direct and indirect financial advantages of partnerships, cost analyses of partnership programs also need to be conducted. While several studies examined the cost effectiveness of targeted programs, more research needs to be done on the cost effectiveness of comprehensive programs, such as those associated with NNPS. Cost benefit analysis would be a valuable contribution to the body of research guiding district and school leaders in their decisions to create such programs.

Research could also be done to determine how much and in what ways No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has influenced schools to include families and communities in education. Are Title I schools, which are required by NCLB to include families and communities through strategic plans doing so in ways that are true partnerships, or are they simply communicating more? How have efforts to partner with families and communities developed or changed since NCLB was put into place? Have Title I schools made improvements that can be directly linked to

work partner more often with families and communities and to align the three overlapping spheres of influence of family, school, and community? Further research into these questions could help demonstrate if the federal legislation has in fact had a positive impact on the nation's educational system and opportunities for our youth.

Future researchers would also do well to design their studies on the ways that schools interact with and engage families and communities within a theoretical construct that other studies also use. School, family, community partnerships can take on so many forms and have such a broad range of goals that a common framework for research allows for easier comparison of results. Multiple studies examined in this paper, for example, have used Epstein's (1996) framework of six types of involvement, which allows educators to interpret findings of the studies in relation to one another with an assurance that researchers had similar concepts of involvement. The theoretical construct need not be Epstein's, but if researchers were to utilize a framework and theory common to other researchers and were clear on which they used and why, it would create a more solid body of research. The study results would better reinforce each other because they would be related to similar measurements within the same conceptual framework and would thus be easier to compare.

Lastly, more clarity is needed on the ways in which middle and high schools can create partnerships that are effective for their older students. Research demonstrates that what students need from parents and community members may change as they mature, but is not clear and consistent in which ways schools can best utilize partnerships with the community to benefit these students. There is now evidence that support and interaction with families and community is still very important to middle and high school students even as they begin to make their own educational decisions and become more independent. New research could help educators to better understand what parent and community roles are key to students and how to encourage and elicit such partnerships.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the motivations for creating school, family, community partnerships and the ways in which educators and schools can effectively create partnerships. Chapter one introduced the research question and the reasons this question is important to educators along with terminology related to the topic and a brief discussion of the limitations of this paper. Chapter two examined the history of American schooling as it relates to community and family involvement in educational experiences and decisions. It also examined the historical purposes of schooling and learning theory as it developed toward today's educational climate, which calls for schools to initiate partnerships with families and communities at higher rates than ever before. Chapter three has reviewed current peer-reviewed research relating to school, family, and community partnerships including an examination of common goals for partnership formation and what makes them successful, especially at the secondary level. The studies examined were grouped into four sections and brief summaries were given. The four sections were (a) Volunteering and Service Learning, (b) Family Involvement, (c) Community Volunteers, and (d) Schools' Role and Capacity in Partnership Creation. The findings of the studies in each section were analyzed with consideration for study design and the researchers' analysis of their results. Chapter four has given the reader a summary of the findings of research presented in the previous chapter as well as some implications for teaching and suggestions for further research.

Of the three overlapping spheres of influence in a child's life, home, school, and community, schools are in the best position to organize and align efforts to educate children and prepare them for their future lives. Schools can leverage resources in the community for the benefit of students while simultaneously incorporating the cultural values and community goals for youth by partnering with families and community. When this occurs students have more contexts in which to apply the knowledge and skills they learn in school, meaningful roles to play in their communities, and a widened circle of engaged, caring adults who support their

educational opportunities. Schools have moved slightly from the professionalization of education that dominated educational theory during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and most of the twentieth centuries. They have begun not only to incorporate but to recruit valuable contributions from the multicultural communities they serve.

Theory, research, national policy, and increasing numbers of educators now provide a basis for the building of strong school, family, community partnerships that will benefit all parties. Students are benefitting from overlapping spheres of influence that encourage them in multiple realms of life to stay in school and work toward their own education while learning valuable roles as contributors to their communities. Hopefully, this will translate to increases in the American education system's capacity to prepare youth for an increasingly interconnected world and engage with community both as givers and receivers and as adults playing productive roles in a our democracy.

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