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Parental Involvement: Perceptions and Participation at Critical Moments Throughout the Middle School Transition

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by

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to compare the perception scores and the frequency of parental involvement for parents of students who have most recently completed elementary school (entering 6th grade) with parents of students who have most recently completed middle school (entering 9th grade) in a northeast Tennessee public school district.

Data were collected by surveys containing a short demographic section, a perceptions section, and a participation section. The population consisted of the parents of 544 sixth grade students from the district's 2 middle schools and the parents of 578 ninth grade students from 1 district high school. From that population 115 sixth grade parents and 105 ninth grade parents responded. This study took place at the onset of the school year to address parents as their children were either entering 6th grade in middle school or 9th grade in high school.

Findings from the study indicate that there were significant differences between the parents of newly entering 6th graders and the parents of newly entering 9th graders in terms of home-based perception scores and frequency of participation. Specifically, parents of newly entering 6th graders had higher home-based perception scores and frequency of participation than parents of newly entering 9th graders. However, findings indicate that there was not a significant difference between the parent groups in terms of school-based perception scores and frequency of participation. When examined collectively (home-based and school-based combined), no

significant differences were noted between the parent groups in terms of perception scores and frequency of participation. For each of these cases, independent samples *t* tests were used to determine if there were significant differences.

Findings from the study also indicate that positive relationships are present between parents' perception scores and their frequency of participation. This was true for both home-based and school-based involvement at both grade levels. Pearson *r* tests revealed these relationships.

This study was important to help understand the perception scores and frequency of participation for parents of students who are in the middle school transition. Recommendations are made with the hopes of helping schools better tailor their parental involvement strategies to the families they serve.

DEDICATION

To my mother Nancy and my husband Tony.

Thanks for always pushing me to be my best (and for putting up with me while I wasn't).

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Next, I would like to thank those who helped with my study. The school and district leaders who allowed me access to the parents of the district were essential in the success of the study. I would also like to thank the parents who gave their time to participate in my study. Without you, none of this work would be possible. You are much appreciated!

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The educational climate is changing throughout the United States. In an attempt to become more competitive in the job market world leaders are seeking ways to improve the quality and content of elementary and secondary school curricula. Included in the reform is a push toward a more rigorous set of curriculum standards (Common Core State Standards) intended to prepare students for the demands of college and career. Already adopted by a large number of states, the standards have become a catalyst for debate and conflict. This is especially true in regards to the standardized testing component, which uses a less traditional format and is completely technology based.

A result of the changing climate has been a deepened interest by parents to investigate the standards and become aware of what students would be taught in classrooms. Their interest has led to further conflict among parents, teachers, and policymakers. In order to address parents' growing concerns schools are relying on parental involvement programs to inform parents about the new standards and support them as they prepare to help their children outside of the classroom.

Parental involvement is not a new concept. Throughout history schools have used the help of parents both in and out of the classroom in order to boost student achievement and behavior outcomes. These methods typically include the National Standards of Parent and Family Involvement and Epstein's framework, which includes six types of involvement: communicating, parenting, student learning, volunteering, school decision making, and collaborating with community (Michigan Department of Education (MDOE), 2004).

Nearly 3 decades of research into parental involvement lead up to the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act and provided evidence that parents are an important influence on their children's educational outcomes (US Department of Education (USDOE), 2004). Furthermore, Epstein and Sheldon (2006) maintained that parental engagement could boost self-esteem and increase student motivation. In practice parental involvement is typically strong as a student enters kindergarten and stays strong throughout the elementary years. However, even with the wealth of literature supporting involvement throughout elementary and secondary school, by the time a student moves into the secondary setting (early adolescence) parental involvement becomes less consistent (Jeynes, 2007).

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the participation and perception of parents at both the elementary and middle school level in regard to parental involvement. This study will provide information to schools to assist in designing parental involvement activities that benefit parents and students. It will also provide information to help enhance existing programs. The study will contribute to research on parental involvement by addressing participation levels for parents of children at both the elementary and middle school levels. A final contribution will help lawmakers differentiate policies regarding parental involvement activities based on whether the school serves elementary or secondary students.

Research Questions

Nine research questions were used to guide this quantitative study.

RQ1. Is there a significant difference between the perception scores of parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders concerning parental involvement (home-based or school-based)?

RQ2. Is there a significant difference between the frequency of participation (number of activities) of parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders?

RQ3. Is there a significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in home-based activities of parents of newly entering sixth graders?

RQ4. Is there a significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in school-based activities of parents of newly entering sixth graders?

RQ5. Is there a significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in home-based activities of parents of newly entering ninth graders?

RQ6. Is there a significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in school-based activities of parents of newly entering ninth graders?

RQ7. Is there a significant difference in the mean scores for participation in home-based activities between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders?

RQ8. Is there a significant difference in the mean scores for participation in school-based activities between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders?

RQ9. Is there a significant difference in the mean scores for participation in both home- and school-based activities between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders?

Definition of Terms

To clarify meaning, several terms used during the study have been defined here.

Frequency of Participation – Participation is the measurement of how often a parent indicates involvement in activities as determined by part 2 of the Parental Involvement Survey (Appendix A).

Parent – The natural parent, legal guardian, or other person standing *in loco parentis* who is legally responsible for the child's welfare (USDOE, 2004).

Parental Involvement – Involvement includes parental attitudes, behaviors, style, and activities that occur inside or outside the school setting that support children's academic or behavioral success in school (Abdul-Adil & Farmer, 2006). This term encompasses both parental involvement and parental engagement when used throughout the study.

Perception – Perception is the measurement of how a parent thinks about or understands parental involvement, as determined by part 1 of the Parental Involvement Survey (Appendix A).

Significance of the Study

Parental involvement initiatives are now at the forefront of school agendas because of Title I requirements, NCLB requirements, curriculum changes, and state legislative measures. As a result, schools offer a multitude of parental involvement activities based on the needs of their students. A review of the literature suggests that parental involvement may positively influence students in both academics and overall well-being (Herrell, 2011). There is also evidence to suggest that parents perceive their involvement as important (Jeynes, 2007; Yoder & Lopez, 2013). While this study addresses parental involvement on a general level, it does not examine the development of parental involvement perceptions as students move from elementary to middle school. Teachers have reported observing a lack of participation in parental involvement

activities once students reach middle school, but minimal research has been conducted to see if this observation is accurate.

This study is significant because the results can be used to compare the frequency of parental involvement in parents of students who have most recently completed elementary school with parents of students who have most recently completed middle school in a Northeast Tennessee public school district. This study is important as it compares the perceptions of parental involvement for two groups within the same school district.

Limitations

A limitation of this study is the sample size. Because this is a self-selected sample, the sample size was determined by responses of parents who chose to participate in the study.

Another limitation is that the self-selected sample may only represent parents who are involved with school home communication. In this case the nature of the results may be slanted toward study participants and not represent parents who participate in other ways. This may affect the generalization of this study across the school district.

A final limitation of this study is the timing of data collection. The data were collected at the midpoint of the fall semester. While this is still early in the school year and families have had an opportunity to establish routines, students may have developed poor habits regarding the delivery of school papers to their parents. These habits may lead to lost or forgotten papers, which in turn may lead to a lower response rate resulting in multiple distributions of materials and extending the study time frame.

Overview of the Study

Chapter 1 of the study provides an introduction to the study, along with research questions, operational definitions, the significance of the study, and limitations. Chapter 2

provides a review of the literature including a brief history of policy, benefits, methods, barriers, definitions and perceptions, and differences between elementary and secondary school involvement. Chapter 3 provides information on the research methodology for the study. Chapter 4 provides the results, and Chapter 5 provides a discussion, summary, conclusion, and future research recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Beginning in the 1950s researchers and educational leaders began to focus their work on comparing the education systems of the United States with those of other countries. This work led researchers to discover differences in the education practices and outcomes of the United States and comparable countries. It was discovered that a student's socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and other demographics played a part in achievement.

To address this discovery President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA] into law in 1965 (US Department of Education (USDOE), 2015). Within this law federal Title I funds were allocated to schools considered in need based on the low socioeconomic status of the students who attended. Along with the Title I funds came a federal presence in the form of guidelines that did not apply to schools with a higher socioeconomic status. These measures were intended to close the achievement gap between students of diverse backgrounds (Standerfer, 2006).

The ESEA, with its increased focus on school performance, shifted concerns to accountability. In an attempt to address these mounting concerns researchers sought ways to close the achievement gap. National achievement tests were produced, and after poor test results educational reform became the norm for schools. When *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) was published the public was presented with less than desirable information about student performance. The report led to a decline in federal funding and a shift toward more accountability that continued for more than a decade (Standerfer, 2006).

In 2002 the ESEA was reauthorized as No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The law placed strict parameters on schools in regard to education. Achievement gaps were exposed and highlighted the needs of underserved populations. The NCLB (2002) act brought about change within schools, although some believe it to be a negative force within the education system (Standerfer, 2006).

In 2012 public opinion for NCLB became increasingly negative. In response to the outcry the government offered states flexibility within the law in exchange for the implementation of state developed plans that clearly outlined strategies for student progress and achievement. This flexibility led to a bipartisan effort to replace NCLB with a law more focused on college and career readiness. The new *Every Child Achieves Act* (ECAA) (US Department of Education, 2015) focuses on state work rather than national mandates.

Throughout history studies have identified a positive relationship between parental involvement and student performance. Because of this relationship the ESEA, NCLB, and ECAA all contain requirements specifically related to the involvement of parents in the education process. In 1965 one of the guidelines of the ESEA was to formally involve parents and community members in the education process. In the 1970s, this goal led to the establishment of parent councils as part of the regulations. The creation of parent councils was the starting point for an increased presence of parents within all aspects of a child's education (US Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1972). Research into education reform strategies identified parental involvement as a key strategy for closing the achievement gap. This led to strict guidelines for parental involvement to be outlined in NCLB. Under the NCLB law all schools receiving Title I funds were required to implement a parental involvement policy with input from the parents of the children served by the school.

The ECAA maintains guidelines for parental involvement, but there are some notable changes. One change is that parental involvement is now referred to as parental and family engagement. While in much of the literature the terms involvement and engagement are used interchangeably, the words have two very different definitions. Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary (2015) defines *involve* as "to cause (someone) to be included in some activity, situation, etc." (Involve, para. 2) thus focusing on participation, whereas *engage* is defined as "to take part in or cause to take part in something" (Engage, Section *Verb* para. 2) that focuses more on a responsibility. This difference in wording could be an indication that there will also be a change in what happens in schools. Rather than language specifically limiting involvement to those in a parental role, the entire family is now considered part of the partnership. This may allow strategies implemented by schools to have a wider reach. Other language throughout the law is also more generic and inclusive in order to include strategies and other methods not explicitly stated within the law.

Whether by mandate or through school choice, parental involvement and engagement opportunities are readily available at schools across the country. Additionally, parents employ their own strategies outside of school; although these may be discounted or overlooked by schools and organizations. This wide usage has led to an extensive amount of literature on the topic of parental involvement and engagement.

Benefits of Parental Involvement

As parental involvement programs have been implemented in schools throughout the nation, numerous studies have sought to identify the benefits of these programs. These studies have investigated not only academic benefits to children but also the behavioral and psychological benefits of involvement. In general, parental involvement was found to be a better

predictor of school adjustment and involvement than other measures of parenting behavior (Simons-Morton & Crump, 2003). Furthermore, it has been found that when schools collaborate with parents and parents participate in activities, children achieve at higher levels (USDOE, 2004). When broken down into specific categories, such as behavior and academic performance, the literature confirms these benefits.

Behavior

Parental involvement has been found to have an effect on children's behavior and much of the literature focuses on the effects of parental involvement on adolescent behavior. Adolescent behavior is often driven by psychological changes and motivations; positive effects on the psychological well being of a child may lead to improved behavior.

Cripps and Zyromsky (2009) used a meta-analysis of research data to study how adolescents determine self-worth, self-efficacy, and self-esteem based on their perceptions of parental involvement. The study found that the psychological well being of adolescents is positively affected when coupled with high levels of perceived parental involvement. Specifically, adolescents pointed out that it was not just that their parents were involved but how they were involved that mattered most. Involvement included parenting style, physical actions, and participation in school activities.

Simons-Morton and Crump (2003) acknowledged the difficulty for parents to remain involved in the lives of their early adolescent children but found that this involvement is critical. In a longitudinal study of 1,081 US sixth grade students, the researchers investigated factors that are commonly associated with school adjustment and engagement. In a survey administered at both the beginning and end of sixth grade student opinions on *school adjustment, school engagement, parent involvement, parental monitoring, parent expectations, school climate,*

social competence, and feelings of *depression* were collected and analyzed. The results revealed associations between the factors of *school adjustment* and *school engagement* and the influences of *parent involvement* and *social competence*. These findings suggest that *parent involvement* offers some protection from maladjustment and becoming disengaged from school during the middle school years.

Fite, Cooley, Williford, Frazer, and DiPierro (2014) investigated parental school involvement as a moderator of the association between peer victimization (bullying) and academic performance. The study surveyed 37 classroom teachers in an elementary school consisting of kindergarten through fifth grade. The teachers assessed 704 students from the school to determine if there were any correlations on several factors including *gender, grade level, aggression, parental involvement, peer victimization, overt victimization, relational victimization,* and *academic performance*. The results suggested that *peer victimization* could lead to poor *academic performance*, but that *parental involvement*, specifically high levels, could lower the levels of *victimization* and improve *academic performance*.

Parental involvement has also been found to have an effect on the behavior of students during high school transition. Gottfredson and Hussong (2011) conducted a longitudinal study of students throughout the high school transition. The study consisted of 436 students and their parents. Initially the students and parents were surveyed for perceived parental involvement. After beginning high school, the students were asked to keep track of their negative feelings and alcohol use for 21-days. The study found that adolescents who had a lower perception of parental involvement were at a higher risk of engaging in alcohol abuse. On the other hand those who perceived that their parents were involved in some manner had a lower risk of alcohol use. These

results suggested that the high school transition is an important time for parents to be involved with their adolescent children.

Wang, Hill, and Hofkens (2014) investigated the effects of parental involvement on behavior in secondary school students. A longitudinal study of 1,452 students from European-American descent as well as minorities including African-Americans from a range of socioeconomic statuses was conducted at three times during secondary school. The study assessed *demographics*, student *grade point average*, *problem behaviors*, symptoms of *depression*, *parent involvement*, and *parental warmth* during the 7th, 9th, and 11th grades. The researchers tracked how *parent involvement* changed over the years and the relationship the level of involvement had on *grade point average*, *problem behaviors*, and symptoms of *depression*. Of those assessed the African-American and European-American students provided enough results for statistical analysis. Overall, both ethnicities reported a slight decline in *parent involvement* but the results suggested that parental involvement constructs such as preventative communication and attitudes linking education to future success decreased *problem behaviors* as students progressed from middle to high school. Additionally, the results suggested that parental constructs including quality of communication, scaffolding independence, and linking education to future success had the potential to reduce symptoms of *depression* in the adolescents studied.

Wang and Sheikh-Khalil (2014) examined the effect of multiple constructs of parental involvement (home-based, school-based, and academic socialization) that were present during 10th and 11th grades. The researchers collected multiple forms of data from 1,056 students at three points throughout the fall of 10th grade into the spring of 11th grade. Data were collected through surveys, parent interviews, and school records and provided information about *parent involvement*, *academic engagement*, *academic achievement*, and *depression*. Results suggested

that while there were many ways parents were involved in their child's education, there were emotional benefits for students whose parents were involved in school-based activities. Involvement in these activities is also thought to support adolescent mental health by providing a sense of caring and support to students through a physical presence at school-based functions.

Fan, Williams, and Wolters (2012) conducted a longitudinal study to investigate how different dimensions of parental involvement including *parental advising*, *parent participation* at school functions, *parent-school communication about problems*, *parent-school communication about benign issues*, and *parental aspirations for student success* were linked to constructs of school motivation such as *academic self-efficacy*, *intrinsic motivation*, and *engagement* across various ethnic groups. In the study, 12,721 students and their parents across four ethnic groups were surveyed three times during 6 years beginning in the 10th grade. The four ethnic student groups included African-American (7,829), Caucasian (7,829), Hispanic (1,919), and Asian-American (1,275).

Results suggested that across the four ethnic groups studied one aspect of parental involvement – *parental aspirations for student success* and postsecondary education – had a positive relationship to student *intrinsic motivation*. *Parent-school communication about benign issues*, such as being in the building for nonacademic reasons, had the lowest correlation to *intrinsic motivation* for the group overall. However, *parent-school communication about problems* could negatively predict *intrinsic motivation* (Fan et al., 2012).

Fan et al. (2012) also found that within each ethnicity there were aspects of parental involvement that led to either positive or negative predictors of *intrinsic motivation*. For Caucasian and African-American students *parent participation* at school functions had a sporadic effect on *intrinsic motivation*. For Asian-American students *parental advising* had a

negative relationship on *intrinsic motivation* in terms of mathematics. For Hispanic students *parental advising* and *parent-school communication about benign issues* were positively related to *intrinsic motivation* in English classes. These connections may or may not be based on culture, but they are important to consider when designing programs and catering to a target audience (Fan et al., 2012).

Departing from the traditional research regarding the behavioral benefits of parental involvement Johnson (2012) examined the effect that a student's *perception of parent involvement* rather than the actual involvement had on *goal orientation*. In the study 102 sixth grade students were surveyed to determine overall student *goal orientation* and *perception of parent involvement*. Three student *goal orientations* – mastery, performance approach, and performance avoid – were used to describe the behaviors of students in the ways they worked toward academic outcomes. The student's *perception of parent involvement* was determined through three subscales – achievement value, interest in schoolwork, and involvement in school functions. Results of the study revealed that student *perception of parent involvement* had a predictive relationship with both mastery and performance approach *goal orientations*. In terms of mastery, there was a significant predictive relationship between perception and eventual development of mastery *goal orientations*. In terms of performance approach, there was a low to moderate predictive relationship between *perception of parent involvement* and eventual development of performance approach *goal orientations*. No relationship was observed between student *perception of parent involvement* and performance among *goal orientations*. The results suggest that there is a positive relationship between a student's *perception of parent involvement* and student *goal orientation* and motivation as they move toward positive academic outcomes.

Academic Performance

While no study has conclusively found that parental involvement ensures or causes academic achievement, studies over the past 30 years indicate that parental involvement positively influences academic achievement (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2012; Niven, 2012; Porumbu & Necşoi, 2013; Taliaferro, DeCuir-Gunby, & Allen-Eckard, 2009; USDOE, 2004;). Furthermore, it has been found that collaboration between the school and parents, parent participation in activities, and decision-making opportunities with children can lead children to achieve at a higher level (USDOE, 2004). Students whose parents are involved tend to receive more attention from teachers, making it possible to identify potential learning problems earlier. In turn, parents and teachers are then able to work together to support individual student needs and provide family services that promote academic success (Bracke & Corts, 2012).

Through an extensive literature analysis Dail and Payne (2010) found that early exposure to literacy at home through practices such as shared reading was one of the most widely cited parent activities to positively affect a young child's literacy development. These researchers also found that in later years discussion at home about reading led to greater retention. Furthermore, the researchers found that a close alignment of reading and writing experiences between home and school led to greater student success. Based on their literature review, Dail and Payne (2010) recommended continued parental involvement and support for families seeking to implement early literacy practices in their homes.

Redding, Langdon, Meyer, and Sheley (2004) investigated the effect of comprehensive involvement on student learning outcomes. Their study was an examination of a combination of interventions including regular clear communication, home visits, family nights, conferences,

and open houses. It was found that students in schools that offered a comprehensive involvement program saw a 4.5% increase in test scores compared to a 2.5% increase in schools that did not use a comprehensive involvement program.

Ashbaugh's (2009) results when investigating the link between parental involvement and student success on high-stakes state tests were similar to Redding et al.'s. (2004). Ashbaugh's study involved an evaluation of the effectiveness of a parental involvement program with 267 fourth, fifth, and sixth grade student's test scores by comparing scores from previous test years to scores received after implementation of the parental involvement program. The parental involvement program covered 18 weeks and required parents to help students with test prep and study at home. Surveys were used to provide data about the type of help being given at home, student progress, and perceptions. Results of the study showed that proficiency levels in reading and math were better for students who participated than those who did not participate.

Wang et al. (2014) conducted a longitudinal study of the effects of various parental involvement constructs on both African-American and European-American adolescents' development across grades 7, 9, and 11. Positive academic outcomes were reported throughout the study. Parental involvement constructs including preventive communication, quality of communication, scaffolding independence, structure at home, and linking education to future success were found to prevent a decline in grade point averages for students as they progressed from 7^{th} to 11^{th} grade.

Wang and Sheikh-Khalil (2014) examined the effect of multiple constructs of parental involvement (home-based, school-based, and academic socialization) on academic achievement in 11^{th} grade students. All constructs were found to improve academic achievement in the sample

group. The improvement was related to an increase in behavioral and emotional engagement with school that comes from experiencing involvement.

While much of the literature supports the idea that parental involvement improves academic achievement, there is also evidence to the contrary. Bibo (2012) analyzed data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988-1992 to investigate the impact of parental involvement on academic preparedness for college with a group of eighth grade students by the time they reached 12th grade. Some results showed that an increase in parental involvement was associated with a decrease in college readiness. Based on these findings the researcher surmised that, although there may be positive effects of parental involvement throughout schooling, these conclusions could not be extended to academic preparedness for college.

Wehrspann (2014) found that some types of parental involvement did not affect academic achievement. In this study 106 students in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades were surveyed in the fall and again in the spring of the school year. In the fall survey the students were asked about parental involvement (home-based and academic socialization) as well as their perception of academic competence; students were asked about intrinsic motivation in the spring survey. Additionally, the researcher accessed student grades from school records in the spring and sought to determine if there was a relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement. In general, the data suggested that there were only limited associations between parental involvement and academic outcomes. Furthermore, neither home-based involvement nor academic socialization had a statistically significant effect on academic achievement.

There is literature to suggest that the academic effects of parental involvement can differ based on grade level. A meta-analysis by Jeynes (2007) highlighted parental involvement as a better predictor for academic achievement at the elementary level than at the secondary level.

The researcher suggested that this phenomenon may have had several contributing factors. One factor was related to the tendency for children to be more easily influenced by their parent's values about education at an early age. Another factor was that parents may be more motivated to be involved at younger ages. A final factor was that students may already be convinced of their academic strengths and weaknesses by the time they reach secondary school, thus making the impact of parental involvement much less.

Parental Involvement Methods

Parental involvement includes a wide variety of behavior patterns and practices including parent aspirations for success, how the aspirations are shared with children, communication between parents and teachers, communication between parents and children, participation at school functions, and home rules that promote academic success (Fan & Chen, 2001).

Epstein and Associates are credited with creating a framework of parental involvement that is widely used in schools to guide the development and success of parental involvement programs. This framework includes six broad categories of parental involvement that include hundreds of practices including *parenting*, *communicating*, *volunteering*, *learning at home*, *decision making*, and *collaborating with community* (Epstein, 2010). Within Epstein's framework the *parenting* category focuses on creating home environments to support students and helping all families understand child and adolescent development. The *communicating* category concentrates on building effective forms of two-way communication about school programs and child progress. The *volunteering* category addresses gaining parent support and help at school to support the schools and student activities. The *learning at home* category spotlights assisting families with ideas about how to help children with homework and other curriculum related activities. The *decision making* category centers on involving parents in

school decisions through sharing their voice or acting as a representative. The *collaborating with community* category targets obtaining resources from the community to support student learning opportunities. Each of the six categories of parental involvement contains activities that can be categorized into either a formal or informal domain (Taliaferro et al., 2009).

Formal parental involvement traditionally consists of school-based activities and is noted by a physical presence at school functions. Informal parental involvement consists of traditionally more home-based participation; these behaviors are typically reported rather than observed by school personnel. When discussing parental involvement most research definitions include a combination of both formal and informal activities (Abdul-Adil & Farmer, 2006; Deslandes & Cloutier, 2002; USDOE, 2004; Yoder & Lopez, 2013).

Formal Methods

Formal methods of parental involvement are typically observed in a school-based setting because schools offer parents formal opportunities to be involved in the education process. Epstein, Coats, Salinas, Sanders, and Simon (1997) identified these activities as academic support nights, open houses, volunteer opportunities, and decision-making meetings. At the elementary school level parents are typically involved in activities that provide interaction with teachers, whereas at the secondary level participation shifts from assistance to attendance (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

The literature supports the idea that formal activities lead to positive outcomes. Akimoff (1996) asked elementary school teachers in a private California school about their perception of the effects of parental involvement in school-based activities such as attending conferences, open houses, and other events. The teachers reported that parental involvement in activities such as these led to positive outcomes in student behavior and achievement. Amato (1994) had similar

findings in regard to a formal middle school parental involvement program. The program included school-based activities such as teacher interaction, participation in school activities, and membership in the school parent-teacher organization. Parents with low involvement and interest were invited to participate, and after which, not only did discipline problems decrease but student grades were also found to improve.

Niven (2012) investigated the effect that formal parental involvement programs have on academic achievement. In a mixed-methods study of 185 Latino families in New Mexico, the researcher investigated the opinions on parental involvement from parents who were either involved in a formal parental involvement program or were not involved. From the 185 survey responses, all participants gave positive responses regarding the importance of parental involvement; parents who had longer participation (more than 1 year) in the group had a higher average of positive responses than other parents. From the group of 185 participants, 15 interviews were conducted to provide the researcher with more information about survey questions. The survey results suggested that the involvement program gave parents increased feelings of responsibility and confidence in their role in their child's education. Furthermore, the frequency of communication between parents and the school was also increased from the parents who participated in the involvement program. Based on survey and interview data, the researcher concluded that the parental involvement program used had a positive impact on parent's perceptions.

Hallstrom (2011) examined the effect of parental participation in a mathematics workshop on the ability to assist students with homework. The researcher used a well-designed program developed by Epstein that focused on building communication skills and boosting parents' ability to promote learning at home. Over a 10-week period, 27 seventh grade parents of

pre-algebra students participated in a teacher led workshop. Throughout the study the researcher collected qualitative data through parent journals, preprogram and postprogram surveys, and field notes. At the end of the program, results from analysis of the data suggested that parents who participated demonstrated a change in their involvement, a sense of helplessness went away progressively over the span of the workshops, and the parents reported a greater sense of confidence, empowerment, and gratitude. These findings led researchers to conclude that the program provided an effective approach that promoted an increase in communication not only between the school and parents but also between parents and their child. As a result, this school-based measure led to increased home-based measures to further parental involvement beyond the study.

Informal Methods

Informal methods of parental involvement are usually experienced at home and are related to parental style, expectations, and values. Informal involvement opportunities are numerous and include activities that provide academic socialization, achievement assistance, autonomy support, emotional responsibility, and structure (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Karbach, Gottschling, Spengler, Hegewald, & Spinath, 2013). These methods of parental involvement are often specific to the parent's individual style or family dynamic.

While some aspects of informal parental involvement can be identified, there is one broad concept within informal involvement that encompasses a wide variety of parent behaviors. Academic socialization combines parental style, expectations, and values to become a vital part of informal involvement. Taylor, Clayton, and Rowley (2004) proposed a conceptual model of academic socialization that focuses on parents using their individual experiences, social and cultural characteristics, and behaviors to set the stage for their child's early academic

experiences. This process begins as parents focus on school readiness and continues throughout elementary and secondary school. There are minor changes in the process as students mature physically, academically, and emotionally, but the concept of shaping outcomes based on the sharing of values and expectations does not change.

Academic socialization is a broad concept. Hill and Tyson (2009) described academic socialization as a myriad of home-based parental involvement methods that include "communicating parental expectations for education and its value or utility, linking schoolwork to current events, fostering educational and occupational aspirations, discussing learning strategies with children, and making preparations and plans for the future" (p. 742). When these activities are conducted consistently over time, they are a critical component for success because they have a strong positive relationship to achievement.

Academic socialization also includes the sharing of parent values and expectations. These components play a critical role in predicting student academic values and achievement (Gniewosz & Noack, 2012; Jeynes, 2005, 2007; Porumbu & Necşoi, 2013). In a two-part longitudinal study, Gniewosz and Noack (2012) examined the transmission of values from parent to child. The researchers surveyed 1,014 students, 878 mothers, and 748 fathers about their values at the onset of fifth grade and at the midpoint of sixth grade in an attempt to track parent-to-child value transmissions. By tracking *parent values*, *student values*, and *student perceptions of parent values* in a parallel manner, the researchers found direct associations. One association noted was between *parent-reported academic values* and *student-reported academic values* in mathematics. In this case the more that parents valued mathematics, the more the student did as well. A second association was noted between *student-perceived parental values* and *student values*. In this case the researchers concluded that *parent values* must be perceived in order to be

transmitted to their children. A final association was observed between the actual amount of involvement and *perception of values*. In this regard the researchers concluded that the less involvement parents had in their child's education, the fewer the opportunities for children to infer values. Inversely, the greater the involvement the more opportunity a child had to infer values and adopt similar ones.

Cooper and Smalls (2010) investigated the influence of *academic socialization* and *cultural socialization* on the *academic adjustment* of 144 middle school African-American adolescents. Through the use of a survey the researchers collected data from students regarding the level of *academic socialization* and *cultural socialization* experienced at home. The data suggested that while *cultural socialization* does not play a large role in *academic adjustment*, *academic socialization* has a positive relationship with several aspects of *academic adjustment* including academic competence and school engagement. More specifically, within the concept of *academic socialization* the area of educational encouragement was found to be more effective than academic involvement. Cooper and Smalls (2010) theorized that this positive relationship may be due to the growing need for autonomy in adolescents and the possibility that educational encouragement may offer proper support for this need.

Academic Achievement Supports

While academic socialization encompasses a large part of informal involvement methods, informal involvement can also include academic achievement supports. These supports can be implemented through training or may be developed by the parent individually and typically include a variety of home-based activities.

One home-based activity found to have a positive effect on academic success is shared reading. Shared reading involves the parent and child reading together outside of school. Some

instances of shared reading may be supported by teachers with discussion questions, but others may only involve the act of reading together. In a meta-analysis of 41 studies regarding parental involvement and the academic achievement of urban elementary school students, Jeynes (2005) found that parental involvement in general had a significant relationship with academic achievement. While not the most statistically significant, reading with a child (whether it was by the mother, father, or both parents) was found to be an important predictor of academic success.

Later Jeynes (2012) continued the 2005 research with a meta-analysis of 51 studies that examined the relationship between several types of parental involvement programs as they related to pre-kindergarten to 12th grade academic achievement. Jeynes (2012) similarly found that parental involvement as a whole was associated with academic achievement. However, in the 2012 study shared reading presented the most significant positive relationship with academic achievement. Jeynes (2012) noted that in the meta-analysis, many of the studies regarding shared reading practices involved an element of teacher support that may contribute to a high level of effect. Regardless of whether there is teacher support, shared reading has been found to be an effective method of academic support within parental involvement.

Schefter (2001) investigated the effect of parental involvement on student achievement. She surveyed 204 parents of students in kindergarten through second grade about parental involvement beliefs and practices specifically pertaining to reading at home. Once data were collected, they were compared with the reading scores for the students and the teacher perceptions. The results suggested that students who have average and above average reading scores come from homes where the parents are involved in the education of their children in a variety of ways. On the contrary, children with below average reading scores came from homes

with low parental involvement. Based on these results the researcher concluded that parental involvement does affect student reading achievement.

Assistance with Homework

While the literature supports the idea that some methods of informal parental involvement show positive outcomes, there are also methods that are more controversial. One such method is help with homework. Help with homework has been found to have a variety of effects on achievement and typically a low statistical significance; these effects are thought to be influenced by a number of factors.

Jeynes (2005) investigated the effects of parental involvement on urban elementary students' academic achievement. Through a meta-analysis of 41 studies regarding parental involvement, Jeynes (2005) found that even though parental involvement is viewed as the primary way of elevating achievement, involvement with homework was not a statistically significant factor in student achievement. Jeynes (2005) cautioned that this does not mean involvement is ineffectual, but rather it is not as effective as some may believe. Instead, at home activities such as reading with the child were much more influential in elevating academic achievement.

Through a synthesis of research studies regarding the effects of parental involvement in homework, Patall, Cooper, and Robinson (2008) found a wide range of effects related to parental involvement with homework. One aspect of the study investigated the effects of parental involvement on homework when the manipulation of parent training was implemented, whereas another aspect of the study examined effects of parental involvement with no training manipulation. Within all aspects, researchers found that parental involvement with homework, regardless of manipulation, yielded small effects that were not statistically significant. Patall et

al. (2008) noted that the level of significance may be related to a wide array of variations between assignments. Additionally, the age of students throughout the study varied and included elementary, middle, and high school students whereby the significance varied because of these factors. The variances lessened the overall reliability of involvement with homework as a predictor of achievement.

Hill and Tyson (2009) found evidence that parental involvement with homework was not a predictor of achievement. The researchers conducted a meta-analysis of 50 studies of parental involvement at the middle school level to assess strategies that promote achievement. Consistent with similar studies, the researchers concluded that at the middle school level parental involvement as a whole was a consistent predictor for academic achievement. However, when broken down into individual methods, assistance with homework was the only method that yielded inconsistent relationships with achievement. While parental involvement in homework was observed to occasionally rescue a failing student, the majority of the studies found weak associations between achievement and homework help. Therefore, Hill and Tyson (2009) considered homework help an unreliable form of parental involvement.

Some researchers have conducted studies that led to the conclusion that homework help is a reactive behavior; Silinskas, Niemi, Lerkkanen, and Nurmi (2013) uncovered this relationship. The researchers examined parental assistance with homework and its effect on the academic performance of children. The longitudinal study of 2,261 children measured reading and math skills at points during first and second grade as well as both the mother and father's level of homework involvement at those points. The researchers observed that when performance in reading and math worsened, the amount of monitoring and helping with homework increased at home. This reactive behavior was not found to enhance later development in reading or math

and actually inhibited autonomous motivation and led to poor performance in school. This negative relationship did not specify the type of involvement used by parents but suggested that homework assistance did not have a positive influence on a child's performance.

Dumont, Trautwein, Nagy, and Nagengast (2014) noted that parental involvement in homework appeared to be a reactive behavior. Their longitudinal study examined the academic functioning and parental homework support of 2,830 students from lower-socioeconomic levels first in the fifth grade and later in seventh grade. The results suggested a reactive relationship in which student academic functioning predicted the quality of parental involvement with homework. The reactions – either parental *responsiveness* (positive) or parental *control* (negative) – led to correlating positive or negative academic performance outcomes. For example, when students exhibited lower academic functioning in the fifth grade, their parents responded with high levels of parental *control* in the seventh grade. In contrast, when parents in the fifth grade exhibited high levels of parental *responsiveness* and structure, better academic functioning was reported in seventh grade.

While some of the literature illustrates the negative aspects and effects of homework involvement, there is evidence that homework involvement can have a positive impact. Gonida and Cortina (2014) found that the type of effect may be related to the type of involvement used by the parent. The researchers examined the effects different types of homework involvement practices (*autonomy support*, *control*, *interference*, *cognitive engagement*) had on achievement by surveying the parents of 282 fifth and eighth grade students. Of the involvement types investigated, *autonomy support* was found to be the most beneficial and parental *interference* was the most detrimental to student achievement. Parental *control* was also found to have a detrimental effect on achievement but was not consistent throughout the data.

In addition to the findings related to involvement type and achievement, Gonida and Cortina (2014) also found connections between types of involvement and the achievement goals parents have for their children. Results from analysis of the data suggested that parents with lower beliefs and goals for their children's education used more detrimental involvement styles such as interference and control that resulted in lower academic achievement. However, in contrast to this, the results suggested that parents with higher beliefs and goals used more beneficial methods of involvement that resulted in higher achievement.

While much of the research indicated that help with homework is not highly regarded as a parental involvement method that leads to greater academic achievement, Silinskas et al. (2013) noted that there may be positive outcomes from help with homework. These could include increased achievement related behaviors, increased overall school effect, and a decrease in problem behaviors at school.

Communication

Within both the formal and informal domains of parental involvement communication is an important and wide-ranging component for both teachers and parents. Lam and Ducreux (2013) found that while many aspects of parental involvement did not have a significant relationship with academic achievement, the area of communication had a significant relationship. Furthermore, Hill (2001) found that positive relationships existed between parent-teacher relationships and the pre-reading performance of kindergarten students.

Teachers and parents view communication as a valuable tool. Epstein (2010) found that 95% of the teachers surveyed reported participating in communication with parents. Joshi, Eberly, and Konzal (2005) found that 95% of teachers surveyed reported that various methods of communication had a high influence on learning. Similarly, parents frequently identified

communicating with teachers as one of the most important and frequent practices they could employ (Joshi et al., 2005).

Communication can include parent-child and parent-teacher interactions (Williams & Sánchez, 2012) and these interactions can be either one-way or two-way depending on the purpose and intent (Joshi et al., 2005). Parent-child communications typically take place at the home level while parent-teacher communications can take place either at the school in a face-to-face model or may extend beyond the school day with the use of technology such as e-mail, websites, and social media.

Parents and teachers are mixed in their usage and appreciation of the various communication techniques available. When researching the effects of a planned parental involvement program on Latino parental involvement, Niven (2012) discussed that the parents involved within the program found direct face-to-face contact to be preferable to indirect methods such as emails, telephone calls, and notes. The parents reported that face-to-face contact made for a more personal exchange. Additionally, face-to-face contact helped bridge the language barrier between the parents and school, which in turn made the communication much more meaningful and effective.

In a study of communication between teachers and diverse families, Joshi et al. (2005) found that early elementary school teachers also value face-to-face interactions such as conferences along with written communication over other forms of parent-teacher communication. It was also found that of the wide array of involvement opportunities available to parents of students in the teachers' classrooms, parent conferences had some of the most frequent participation.

A rise in the ownership of mobile devices and widespread access to email has led to a greater appreciation of technology-based communication (Horace Mann Educator Advisory Panel, 2007). Robbins and Searby (2013) found that many middle school parents, especially those living in poverty, would participate more regularly and be more involved at the school if communications were conducted through technology rather than by more traditional means. These parents reported that while they may have restricted access to email and technology at home they have access to email at work and would respond by email when needed. This commentary led the researchers to conclude that the use of technology in communication could dramatically alter parental involvement.

Regardless of format, the literature supports the concept that communication between the school and parent has a positive effect on student performance. However the content of the communication plays a factor in the effect the communication has on student outcomes. In a multilevel analysis of student perceptions, Fan, Williams, and Corkin (2011) indicated that the content of school-parent communication made a significant difference in the association between school-parent contact and adolescents' academic self-efficacy as well as adolescent involvement and motivation in math and English. Specifically, communications about school problems were found to have strong negative associations with motivational outcomes, whereas communication that included more positive information had positive associations with motivational outcomes.

Overall Involvement

Parents chose their method of involvement based on a combination of factors. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) developed a model (Parents Decision to Become Involved in Children's Education) to suggest that involvement is based on a combination of three considerations that included a parent's personal ideas and experiences along with actual

opportunities available. The literature suggests that the type of parental involvement used by parents is crucial to its overall effect (Jeynes, 2012; Kaplan-Toren, 2013; Karbach et al., 2013). Therefore, it is important to understand not only the benefits of each type of involvement but also the consequences that may lead to more focused and relevant offerings for parental involvement strategies throughout a child's education.

While many studies reviewed throughout the literature report significant results that contribute to the overall impression that parental involvement practices are beneficial to students, there is some discussion as to the validity of reported findings. Mattingly, Prislin, McKenzie, Rodriguez, and Kayzar (2002) reviewed 41 studies of parental involvement programs to determine the quality of the evidence of effectiveness. The researchers found what they described as significant flaws in study designs as well as an inattention to demographics and socioeconomic status. Because of these threats to validity, they cautioned the acceptance of study findings at face value and encouraged interested parties to examine the studies further before determining the actual effectiveness of a parental involvement method.

Barriers to Parental Involvement

Because parents and guardians are a diverse group, there will certainly be challenges encountered by parents as they attempt to be involved. For more than a decade, legislation from the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002) has sought to ensure that parents are provided with information to help them make choices about their child's education and support schools in the education process (USDOE, 2004). As a result schools have provided numerous opportunities for parents to be involved at both the school building and at home. Unfortunately, even with these opportunities many parents face barriers that prevent involvement.

Yoder and Lopez (2013) identified several tangible and intangible barriers to parental involvement. The tangible barriers include transportation, childcare, finances, time, and access to technology. The intangible barriers include not knowing how to be involved, not feeling welcome based on prior experiences, marginalization, and jumping through hoops. Tangible barriers can be addressed and many times parents are able to overcome these; schools make efforts to provide assistance in order to get parents to attend the various activities throughout the school year. However, it is the intangible barriers that hold much more weight in a parent's decision whether or not to be involved.

Bracke and Corts (2012) recognized significant intangible barriers as feeling unwelcome at the school, past negative experiences, a lack of trust, low self-esteem, and a misunderstood role. Individually or in combination barriers can negatively impact a parent's level of involvement. Of the intangible barriers parents face, Yoder and Lopez (2013) pointed out that the feeling of marginalization was the biggest barrier. This barrier, characterized by a feeling as if one does not matter or is powerless, can lead parents to cease making an attempt to participate.

Diversity Barriers

Baquedano-López, Alexander, and Hernandez (2013) proposed that all parents have been subjected to perceptions about their backgrounds and these perceptions have guided parental involvement initiatives. Most of these perceptions were guided by "White and middle-class values and expectations" (Baquedano-López et al., 2013, p. 150) that do not take into account race, culture, or class and negatively affect families from other backgrounds. This effect usually involved a perception that these families were "lacking and in need of support" (Baquedano-López et al., 2013, p. 150) that may not have been the case. Consequentially, those from either a minority group or with diverse backgrounds may have experienced extra barriers to being

involved in their children's education that are due to a lack of understanding of the race, religion, or culture of a student and his or her family (Joshi et al., 2005). Therefore, when promoting involvement with parents from diverse backgrounds, it was important for schools to take steps to understand the family background, including the parent's heritage and cultural norms, so that extra barriers would not prevent involvement (Joshi et al., 2005).

Understanding is paramount to preventing and breaking down barriers between schools and diverse families. One clear understanding is with language. Language barriers can prevent involvement from being maximized (Joshi et al., 2005; Niven, 2012). Learning a foreign language, using translators, and offering face-to-face meeting opportunities are all methods that can help increase parental involvement rather than preventing it.

Differences in cultural views on schooling can also lead to barriers. Because some cultures view schooling differently, parents may misunderstand their role in an American school (Bracke & Corts, 2012). For example, Olvera and Olvera (2012) found that when parents of Hispanic or Latino heritage are approached, it is important to know that, for some, involvement in the child's life is considered by that culture to be valuable parental involvement and should not be discounted. Additionally, Asian-American families who typically infuse involvement in their culture may appear to be uninvolved at the school level. For this reason, these families may need special consideration to assure that assumptions about a lack of involvement are not implied (Jeynes, 2003).

It is important to understand racial differences when preventing barriers. African-American families have a unique belief and value system. Even though this culture places a value on education, mistrust has developed as a result of civil rights violations throughout history (Hill & Tyson, 2009). As a result there can be a feeling of what Bracke and Corts (2012) called

the sting of racism. Racism is not the only barrier that African-American students face. Bias and discrimination based on presumed class and status can also lead to barriers based on these elements (Baquedano-López et al., 2013). Cooper and Smalls (2010) noted that there are also culturally specific expectations and a cultural identity that many African-American youth feel must be upheld. These are promoted by dominant figures in the child's life and can lead to negative connotations with academic success.

Although families with diverse backgrounds may be presented with barriers, there is still a drive to be involved (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014) and involvement can lead to increased achievement (Jeynes, 2005). Therefore, it is important for educators to provide all parents with an equal opportunity to access the rights and benefits of participating in their child's education in order to help promote success in school (Taliaferro et al., 2009).

Young, Austin, and Growe (2013) suggested that in order to promote parental involvement activities must be personalized. Furthermore, a specific definition developed though parental input is instrumental to bringing about an increase in parental involvement. Additionally, Taliaferro et al. (2009) also suggested that educators reexamine the traditional framework of parental involvement to provide a range of proactive and compensatory activities that promote participation at any level and regardless of barriers. If not addressed parental perceptions may turn out to be negative and decrease participation. It is the educator's responsibility to be aware of and work to eliminate barriers in an attempt to make parental involvement open and accessible to all.

Differing Definitions, Differing Perceptions

The published literature is consistent in reporting that there is a relationship between parental involvement and success in school. However, when it comes to agreeing on a definition

of parental involvement, each group of stakeholders has developed its own interpretation of what constitutes parental involvement (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014). Young et al. (2013) noted that parents, teachers, and administrators each define and perceive parental involvement differently based on personal experiences or position. This multitude of perceptions has led to multiple definitions of parental involvement throughout research and practice. Part of the reason this has occurred is because of the interchangeable use of the terms *involvement* and *engagement* (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014). Because the words are used interchangeably, Bracke and Corts (2012) pointed out that there was little consensus among schools and parents about what constituted participation, which has led to various interpretations.

For example, many parents perceive their involvement as covering a span of activities both at home and at school (Bracke & Corts, 2012); however, school definitions are not always as inclusive of home-based activities. Instead, schools tend to define parental involvement in *school-centric* terms, meaning they tend to value parental involvement they can see over more informal practices (Flessa, 2008; Taliaferro et al., 2009). Perceptions can vary based on age, education level, gender, race, experiences, assumptions, motivation, and other outside influences (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014; Herrell, 2011; Young et al., 2013).

Parent Perceptions

Parental perceptions influence a parent's level of involvement. When a child enters school, many parents are motivated to be an integral part of their child's education and have good intentions to be involved in activities both at school and at home (Bracke & Corts, 2012; Hill & Tyson, 2009). Although formal programs throughout the school year often encourage good intentions, there are influences that can both hinder and bolster parental involvement. These influences include attitudes and beliefs, subjective norms, and other factors that include

control by the parent, motivation, invitation, and power (Bracke & Corts, 2012; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2007; Huang & Mason, 2008; Robbins & Searby, 2013). Any combination of these influences can affect a parent's perception and frequency of involvement.

Attitudes and beliefs. Attitudes and beliefs about parental involvement can lead parents to adopt both positive and negative perceptions. Virtually all parents say it is important to be involved in their child's education (Bracke & Corts, 2012). However, research has found that factors such as the socioeconomic and education levels of parents can affect attitude and beliefs about education (Jeynes, 2007; Lam & Ducreux, 2013). Additionally, some parents may consider that education is the school's responsibility rather than the parent's and be uninvolved. Some parents may feel unqualified to help and say *I can't* to excuse their lack of participation. However, some parents feel empowered when given the opportunity for parental involvement and use it as a chance to make a difference in their child's life (Bracke & Corts, 2012).

Subjective norms. Subjective norms that parents may be influenced by are related to personal experience. Bracke and Corts (2012) found that childhood and adulthood experiences both play a part in determining participation. If a parent had positive experiences with involvement, and if that parent's parents were involved, he or she may be more likely to replicate those memories. On the other hand, if a parent lacks exemplars for how to be involved due to cultural differences or the absence of a role model growing up, he or she may be less likely to participate. Additionally, parents who have more experience being involved, whether it is due to multiple children or the length of time participating, may also be more likely to continue with their involvement practices.

Other factors. In addition to the influence of attitudes, beliefs, and subjective norms, parents are also influenced by other factors. One factor is perceived controls. These controls include income, work schedule, childcare, transportation, and any other factor that may affect availability. All factors have the power to promote or inhibit parental involvement (Bracke & Corts, 2012; Yoder & Lopez, 2013).

Although there is no exact correlation between the behavioral intentions and actions of parents (Bracke & Corts, 2012), motivation is a key factor that influences parental involvement (Young et al., 2013). Robbins and Searby (2013) investigated the involvement level of middle school parents whose children were on interdisciplinary teams. While the focus of the study was not to determine why parents became involved in their children's education, it was noted that of the contributing factors to parental involvement motivation to be involved was one of the highest-ranking factors (Robbins & Searby, 2013).

The invitation to be involved can come from either the school or the child. Robbins and Searby (2013) found that the parents' perception of the invitation could also be a factor in the decision of whether or not to be involved. If the parent perceives the invitation to be genuine, he or she may be more likely to participate in activities. However, if the parent feels dismissed or swept aside as a result of the invitation, participation may not occur (Flessa, 2008).

The type of activity also has the power to influence parental perceptions. In a study of parental involvement Herrell (2011) found that parental perceptions vary based on the type of activity offered. Of Epstein's six types of parental involvement, communication was found to be the type of involvement with the highest perception of effectiveness. On the other hand, parenting style carried the least amount of effectiveness, which is inconsistent with previous findings that parenting style has a great effect on achievement and behavior.

School Personnel Perceptions

Teachers and administrators work with students on a daily basis. Jeynes (2003) acknowledged that teachers are among the first to recognize and appreciate parental involvement efforts. Although teachers are the first to recognize parental involvement efforts, few educators rate parental involvement as excellent (Horace Mann Educator Advisory Panel, 2007). This rating was affected by the level of perceived cooperation teachers experienced with the family (Jeynes, 2003). When broken down by grade, elementary teachers usually rate parental involvement as excellent or good, whereas middle and high school teachers usually do not (Horace Mann Educator Advisory Panel, 2007).

The views of school personnel regarding the participation and the success of programs may be influenced by assumptions about the surrounding community rather than a true evaluation of the program or the school itself (Flessa, 2008). In fact, these views can come from a deficit framework that blames parents for their lack of involvement and ignores the social and political context in which families reside (Dail & Payne, 2010). Flessa (2008) found that educators were quick to explain away a lack of involvement through the excuse that "[parents] don't have time because they're working weird shifts, or two jobs, or they're single parents or if they don't understand how to help their kids" (p. 19). These views, coupled with the mindset that poor families build incomplete children may be a cause of low involvement rather than an effect (Flessa, 2008).

Perceptions by school personnel of parental involvement may also be influenced by the school's governance model. Addi-Raccah and Ainhoren (2009) highlighted four predominant types of school governance including *parent empowerment*, *professional*, *partnership*, and *bureaucratic*. The *parent empowerment* governance model is characterized by high parental

involvement in all aspects of the school except for teaching, and teachers typically have a low level of empowerment. The teacher *professional* model of governance gives teachers a high level of empowerment in the classroom and allows parents to participate in some activities that are teacher dictated and usually involve social activities. A balance of *empowerment* and collaboration between parents and teachers on all aspects of the school's functions characterizes the *partnership* governance model. Finally, the *bureaucratic* model of governance is characterized by low empowerment by both teachers and parents where teachers have some classroom autonomy and parents have a passive role in the education process.

A study of 318 teachers across 11 schools suggested that each of these governance models influenced different teacher perceptions of parental involvement. Addi-Raccah and Ainhoren (2009) designed the partnership model in which teachers and parents had a balance of empowerment and was the model of governance that produced the most positive teacher attitudes regarding parental involvement. In contrast, the parent empowerment model, in which parents possessed more empowerment than the teachers led to negative feelings about parental involvement. "The ambivalent attitudes toward parents that characterized teachers in the professional and bureaucratic modes of governance can be explained by the gap between their expectations from parents in SBM and the actual opportunities for cooperation offered at schools" (Addi-Raccah & Ainhoren, 2009, p. 811).

In a survey study of 316 teachers and administrators Watts (2011) sought to determine if personal perceptions about parental involvement influenced actions. Watts (2011) found that those teachers and administrators with higher perceptions of parental involvement typically participated in a higher number of parental involvement related actions, whereas those with lower perceptions participated in a lower number of parental involvement related actions. This

leads to the conclusion that the way school personnel feel about parental involvement has some influence on the actions of personnel.

A low level of involvement can be caused by many factors. Williams and Sánchez (2012) found that parents who were uninvolved were either unconcerned, busy, or were previously involved but due to a negative experience became less involved. Teachers have also reported that too little time and differing priorities are often blamed for a low level of parental involvement (Horace Mann Educator Advisory Panel, 2007). It is often unclear about the reasoning behind a choice to be uninvolved. In fact, most schools are not fully aware of what leads parents to be uninvolved as they simply observe that no involvement is taking place (Williams & Sánchez, 2012). While parental involvement can be school-based, home-based, or a combination of the two types of activities, only about half of school personnel acknowledge that parental involvement is more than school-based activities (Taliaferro et al., 2009). Furthermore, methods outside of commonly observed parental involvement (both in and out of school) are rarely discussed by school personnel (Williams & Sánchez, 2012).

Negative attitudes may not only influence the behaviors of school personnel, but they may also act as barriers to involvement. Research shows that when parents are present there is a great potential for positive impact (Bracke & Corts, 2012) so schools provide a multitude of opportunities for students and parents throughout the school year. While many parents are faced with barriers or mitigating factors that may prevent them from participating, Yoder and Lopez (2013) found that parents could find ways to overcome barriers like time, financial need, transportation, and access to technology in order to attend special events. However, they may be marginalized and dismissed from their attempts for involvement. In turn, parental involvement at these activities can be low. This lack of visible participation has led schools to blame parents for

student underachievement (Taliaferro et al., 2009). Furthermore, in terms of accountability and achievement, schools are quick to place blame on parents rather than accepting the responsibility (Taliaferro et al., 2009). Schools must be careful to limit negative attitudes regarding implementing parental involvement initiatives because these attitudes will affect the ultimate success of school-based programs.

Although negative attitudes surrounding parental involvement have the power to influence school personnel beliefs and involvement, there is a desire for involvement along with an understanding that involvement can also come from outside the school. Young et al. (2013) found that many school administrators desire involvement based on concepts related to good parenting. Similarly, Herrell (2011) found that teachers perceived several parenting practices as effective methods of parental involvement including reading with the child, helping with homework, checking the planner or folder, ensuring the child is on time to school, and volunteering. Additionally, the Horace Mann Educator Advisory Panel (2007) found that many teachers agree that teaching good work habits and stressing the value of education are extremely important kinds of parental involvement.

Elementary and Secondary Parental Involvement

Parental involvement can be present from the onset of preschool and elementary school until high school graduation. Some involvement may begin before kindergarten when parents adopt early literacy strategies at home or enter their children into a preschool program (Dail & Payne, 2010). When a child enters the elementary school setting parents are introduced to multiple opportunities for involvement. They are encouraged to visit the school, volunteer in classes, join a parent teacher organization, and participate in home-based parental involvement activities (Hill & Tyson, 2009). For some parents involvement continues through secondary

school although there is some evidence that when students transition to the secondary school (traditionally around the sixth grade) formal parental involvement tends to decrease (Boyd, 2005; Horace Mann Educator Advisory Panel, 2007).

Change in Building

The physical change of building is often the reason for a decline in parental involvement. The structure of the building shifts from a self-contained or team-teaching model to a departmentalized approach and this change alone can lead to less involvement. In fact, Boyd (2005) found that many parents cite school size as a factor that influences their involvement. These parents reported that the physically larger school (both in size and population) resulted in a lack of community, which led to less involvement. Parents also reported that increased security measures at some schools made for a less welcoming environment that also deterred parental involvement.

With the change in building there may also be a change in the perceptions and actions of teachers. Watts (2011) investigated the relationship between teacher perception and action. Significant differences were found in both the perceptions and actions of elementary and high school teachers. Watts (2011) suggested that the differences may have been due to a cultural difference in the schools as well as the personal beliefs of school personnel regarding parental involvement. Parental involvement is affected by teacher attitudes. Boyd (2005) noted that teacher attitudes and actions could make parents feel excluded from the middle school environment. Parents and principals who were interviewed reported that when teachers stopped inviting parents into classrooms and limited feedback at parent conferences parents reported feeling as though they were not wanted and consequentially limited their involvement.

In addition to attitude teacher effort may also play a factor in the decline of parental involvement at the middle school level. In a survey of elementary and secondary school parents, Epstein (2010) found that the parents of elementary school students indicated they were more involved with their children's schooling than middle school parents. When probed deeper the reason for this outcome was that parents believed that elementary school teachers made more effort to involve parents in the education of their children. This difference may be due to differing requirements by teachers at the elementary and secondary level or it may be related to teachers individually. Regardless of the reason teacher effort has an impact on the level of parental involvement.

Another reason for a decline in involvement is that school-based opportunities may be more effective at the elementary school level (Epstein, 2010; Hill & Tyson, 2009). This decline may be because throughout the elementary years, involvement is often associated with achievement and therefore includes many school-based activities such as class visits, interactions with teachers, and volunteering. It may be related to the structural differences between elementary and middle schools, which may affect how involvement is supported and promoted within each setting (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

Change in Self

Another proposed reason for the difference in involvement at the elementary and secondary levels is adolescence (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Wolvek, 2011). The shift of students from elementary to secondary school traditionally occurs during adolescence and the timing of this transition brings about many changes for students. Not only is there a change in physical location, but students also undergo many physiological and psychological changes that may

contribute to the reasons why there are differences in involvement at the elementary and secondary levels.

One reason for a shift in involvement is the adolescent's growing need for autonomy. Wolvek (2011) characterizes this by a need for self-awareness, self-assurance, and independence that parents seek to support in their children as they develop. When children begin to develop their personal sense of autonomy, they tend to push away from their parents and reject help or involvement. Parents and schools have the opportunity to either support or hinder a student's quest for autonomy with their actions and reactions to student behavior.

Change in Family

Another change that may contribute to a decline in involvement is a realignment of both parent and child roles within the family. During adolescence parent and child roles realign, which usually causes a shift in home-based involvement (Boyd, 2005; Gonida & Cortina, 2014; Hill & Tyson, 2009). Wolvek (2011) noted that, as students transition from elementary to secondary school parents begin to believe that their children are capable and may employ fewer previously used parenting techniques. Hill and Tyson (2009) suggested that this occurrence may be related to the observation that students in secondary school tend to play a more active role in their education and that may lessen their requests for assistance.

Another reason parental involvement may appear to decrease during secondary school is that during transition the values of students and parents change considerably. Not only do student values about education change but their perceptions of their parent's values also change. Parents who use academic socialization techniques better transmit their values to their children, which in turn influences student values (Gniewosz & Noack, 2012). Furthermore, Wong (2008) found that children of parents who highly valued and used autonomy support techniques such as fostering

independent problem solving techniques, choice, and self-determination (which are similar to academic socialization) had better academic performance.

Secondary School Parental Involvement

Within the secondary grades there are also differences in the types of parental involvement used most. Epstein (2010) reported that parents of sixth and seventh graders are more likely to be involved at home while the parents of eighth graders are more likely to be involved at the school building. These differences may be because sixth and seventh graders are still acclimating to the formal change of building and changes within themselves. As a result the sixth and seventh graders may still feel insecure and unsure enough to ask for help. On the contrary, eighth graders may have reached a sense of independence and security with their location and may feel more knowledgeable than their parents, thus reducing the amount of help they ask for at home.

Even though research suggests there is a decline in the amount of parental involvement at the secondary level, the decline does not necessarily diminish the positive connection between parental involvement and achievement at the middle school level (Epstein, 2010; Kaplan-Toren, 2013). There is evidence that the specific mode of involvement matters. Some researchers propose that formal parental involvement is not the most successful method for students in secondary school (Jeynes, 2007; Kaplan-Toren, 2013; Karbach et al., 2013). Informal methods such as parental style, expectations, autonomy support, and academic socialization are more successful for students in this level of schooling. Through a meta-analysis of parental involvement studies Jeynes (2007) found that by the time students reach middle school they have a mindset about their personal academic strengths and weaknesses. This can lead some highly regarded methods of parental involvement to have less of an impact at the secondary level.

Instead, elements of involvement such as style and expectations could have a greater impact than other more traditional methods.

Karbach et al. (2013) provided support to Jeynes's (2007) proposition. When examining the effects of various predictors of academic achievement on a large group of adolescents, Karbach et al. (2013) found that even when implemented with good intentions, certain types of parental involvement could be detrimental to the academic success of adolescents. For example, well-meaning, highly supportive parents may have actually interfered with their adolescent's need for autonomy and caused a decline in initiative and persistence. As a result, it is important for parents to be aware of consequences and respond to the needs of their children. They should also avoid excessive control and pressure during adolescence because children have a hard time telling the difference between structure and control.

When examining how the many methods of parental involvement available to middle school parents affect student academic achievement, Kaplan-Toren (2013) indicated that school-based involvement was not the most effective method for adolescent and secondary school students. Instead, results from the study suggested that parental involvement that builds an understanding of the meaning of academic performance, communicates expectations, and provides support and strategies for success had the strongest positive relationship with achievement in both boys and girls. This type of involvement typically took place at home, leading the researchers to conclude that home-based involvement was more effective in increasing academic achievement than school-based strategies.

Summary of the Literature

Parental involvement has been at the forefront of education for more than 50 years. Throughout this time the nature of involvement has been influenced by political, social, and

philosophical forces and this is certain to continue to evolve as new legislation and research reaches stakeholders. Nevertheless, there is evidence throughout the literature to suggest that parental involvement has a positive influence on student outcomes. These outcomes may be behavioral or academic and they may manifest themselves in a variety of ways. There is also evidence throughout the literature to suggest that some forms of parental involvement are more effective than others.

The available literature is consistent in reporting that the approach to parental involvement is key at both the home and school level. Parental style and approach play a large part in effectiveness and these elements can be influenced by a number of factors such as background, demographics, and attitude; school approach plays a large part as well. Schools can both encourage and prevent parental involvement through their explicit and implicit actions and communication with parents. It is important to consider these findings when planning a parental involvement program.

What also must be taken into consideration is the grade level and age of the student because there are key differences in the approach that must be taken to achieve maximum benefits; this is especially true throughout adolescence. The literature suggests that parents and schools must take physiological, psychological, and value changes into account when making decisions about which parental involvement strategies to use. If these considerations are made, parental involvement will be more likely to have a positive effect on students during this critical time.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to compare the frequency of parental involvement for parents of students who have most recently completed elementary school with parents of students who have most recently completed middle school in a Northeast Tennessee public school district. This study was an examination of the perceptions of parental involvement for the same two groups within the same school district. This chapter includes the research methodology, including the population, data collection, and data analysis procedures.

Population

The population for this study included parents of sixth and ninth grade students in a Northeast Tennessee public school district. Based on enrollment at the time of the study, the population consisted of the parents of 544 sixth grade students assigned to 24 homeroom classes at two middle schools and the parents of 578 ninth grade students in 25 homerooms at one district high school. The population included participants from a wide range of demographic and socioeconomic statuses. This can make the future generalization of results to similar samples more credible. From this population, a self-selected sample was used. If there were parents who had students in both grade levels, they were instructed to complete the survey for only one of the children. This stipulation ensured that the family submitted only one survey and prevented a duplication of responses.

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected using a survey. The survey was available both online and in paper form. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained (Appendix B) and permission was granted from the district and each participating school (Appendix C) prior to data collection. After permission was obtained, each parent in the population was given a packet containing the study materials; an electronic version of the packet was emailed to all parents who had an email on file with the district. The packet of study materials contained an informative letter (Appendix D), instructions for participation (Appendix E), and the survey (Appendix A).

The letter explained the task, indicated that participation was voluntary, and guaranteed anonymity. The instructions for participation provided guidance for completing the survey either online or by hand, as well as instructions for submitting the survey; a paper copy of the survey was included. To ensure the largest sample possible, reminders and duplicate packets were sent home throughout the collection process. Participating parents completed the survey either on paper or online and returned the survey to the school either electronically or in the envelope provided. Submission of the survey designated informed consent and, because no identifying data were collected, there were no significant ethical concerns.

Research Methodology

Data gathered from the surveys were used to calculate a perception and participation score for each respondent. The perception score was calculated from answers to part 1 of the survey; the participation score was calculated from answers to part 2 of the survey. These scores were used in the data analysis to answer the research questions.

The data were analyzed using the IBM-SPSS program. Before the analysis was conducted, all incomplete surveys, those with multiple answers, and any otherwise unusable

surveys were discarded. When this process was complete, the surveys were analyzed for descriptive details, perception scores, and participation scores.

Research Questions and Corresponding Null Hypotheses

The purpose of this study was to investigate the participation and perception of parents at both the elementary and middle school levels in regard to parental involvement. Nine research questions and corresponding null hypotheses will guide the study.

RQ1. Is there a significant difference between the perception scores of parents of newly entering sixth graders and newly entering ninth graders concerning parental involvement (home-based or school-based)?

H_o1_1. There is no significant difference between the perception scores of parents of newly entering sixth graders and newly entering ninth graders concerning home-based parental involvement.

H_o1_2. There is no significant different between the perception scores of parents of newly entering sixth graders and newly entering ninth graders concerning school-based parental involvement.

RQ2. Is there a significant difference between the frequency of participation (number of activities) of parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders?

H_o2. There is no significant difference between the frequency of participation (number of activities) of parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders.

RQ3. Is there a significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in home-based activities of parents of newly entering sixth graders?

H_o3. There is no significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in home-based activities of parents of newly entering sixth graders.

RQ4. Is there a significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in school-based activities of parents of newly entering sixth graders?

H_o4. There is no significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in school-based activities of parents of newly entering sixth graders.

RQ5. Is there a significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in home-based activities of parents of newly entering ninth graders?

H_o5. There is no significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in home-based activities of parents of newly entering ninth graders.

RQ6. Is there a significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in school-based activities of parents of newly entering ninth graders?

H_o6. There is no significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in school-based activities of parents of newly entering ninth graders.

RQ7. Is there a significant difference in the mean scores for participation in home-based activities between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders?

H_o7. There is no significant difference in the mean scores for participation in home-based activities between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders.

RQ8. Is there a significant difference in the mean scores for participation in school-based activities between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders?

H_o8. There is no significant difference in the mean scores for participation in school-based activities between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders.

RQ9. Is there a significant difference in the mean scores for participation in both home- and school-based activities between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders?

H_o9. There is no significant difference in the mean scores for participation in both home- and school-based activities between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders.

Data Analysis

An initial step in the data analysis was to separate questionnaires by grade level. Once separated, data were entered into the IBM-SPSS program for analysis. During this process both inferential and descriptive statistics were used.

Data were analyzed using a *t*-test. A *p*-value of <.05 was used for a confidence level of 95%. For research questions 1, 2, 7, 8, and 9, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between groups. For research questions 3, 4, 5,

and 6, a Pearson *r* test was conducted to determine if there was a correlation between scores for a grade level. All findings were placed into graphs for ease of understanding.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to compare the frequency of participation in parental involvement by parents of students who had most recently completed elementary school with parents of students who had most recently completed middle school in a northeast Tennessee public school district. This study was also an examination of the perception scores of parental involvement for the same two groups within the school district. Data were gathered from parents of 115 newly entering sixth grade students and 105 newly entering ninth grade students.

Results of Research Questions

This chapter contains data findings as they relate to nine research questions. The results of those nine questions are reported here.

Research Question 1

RQ1. Is there a significant difference between the perception scores of parents of newly entering sixth graders and newly entering ninth graders concerning parental involvement (home-based or school-based)?

H_o1_1. There is no significant difference between the perception scores of parents of newly entering sixth graders and newly entering ninth graders concerning home-based parental involvement.

H_o1_2. There is no significant different between the perception scores of parents of newly entering sixth graders and newly entering ninth graders concerning school-based parental involvement.

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to evaluate whether the home-based perception score for parents differs between sixth grade and ninth grade parents. The home-based perception score was the test variable and the grouping variable was grade level. The *t*-test was significant, $t(218)= 3.23$, $p=.001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Parents of newly entering sixth graders ($M= 45.19$, $SD=4.96$) had perception scores of home-based parental involvement that were significantly higher than parents of newly entering ninth graders ($M= 42.68$, $SD= 6.56$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was .98 to 4.05. The η^2 index was .05, which indicated a small to medium effect size. Parents of students entering sixth grade tended to have higher perceptions of home-based involvement than parents of students entering ninth grade. Figure 1 shows the distributions for the two groups.

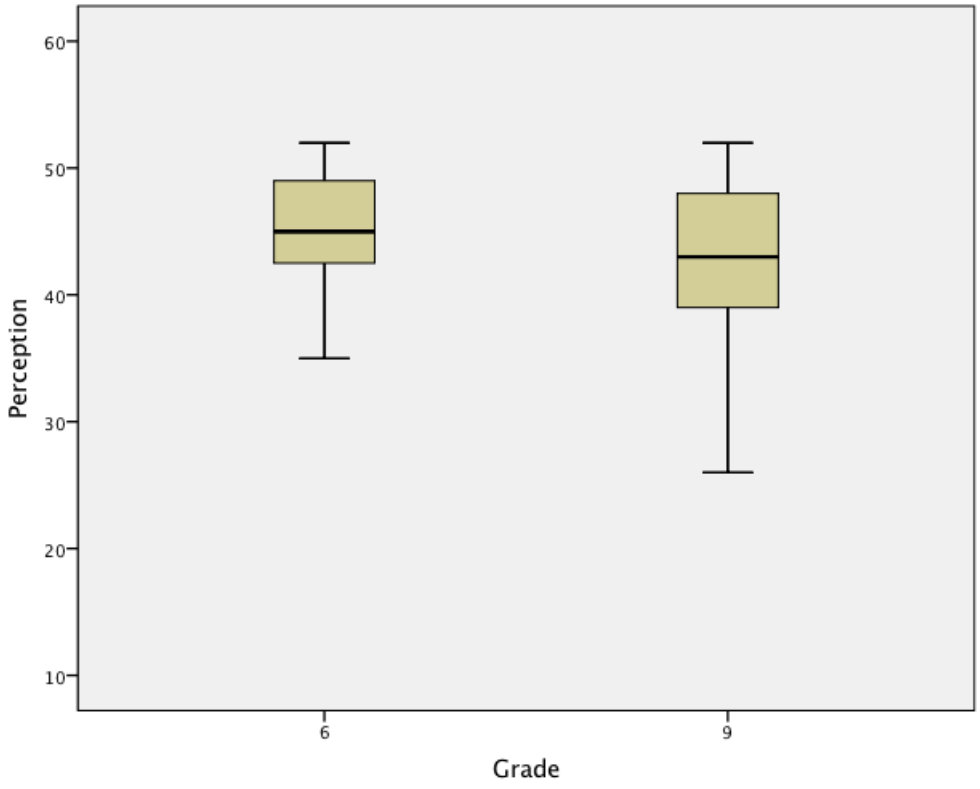

Figure 1. Distribution of home-based perception scores for sixth and ninth grade parents.

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to evaluate whether the school-based perception score for parents differs between sixth grade and ninth grade parents. The school-based perception score was the test variable and the grouping variable was grade level. The *t*-test was not significant, $t(218)= 1.35$, $p=.179$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. Parents of newly entering sixth graders ($M= 42.36$, $SD=8.45$) had perception scores of school-based parental involvement that were not significantly higher than parents of newly entering ninth graders ($M= 43.79$, $SD= 7.20$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was -3.53 to .662. The η^2 index was .008, which indicated a small effect size. Parents of students entering sixth grade did not have higher perceptions of school-based involvement than parents of students entering ninth grade. Figure 2 shows the distributions for the two groups.

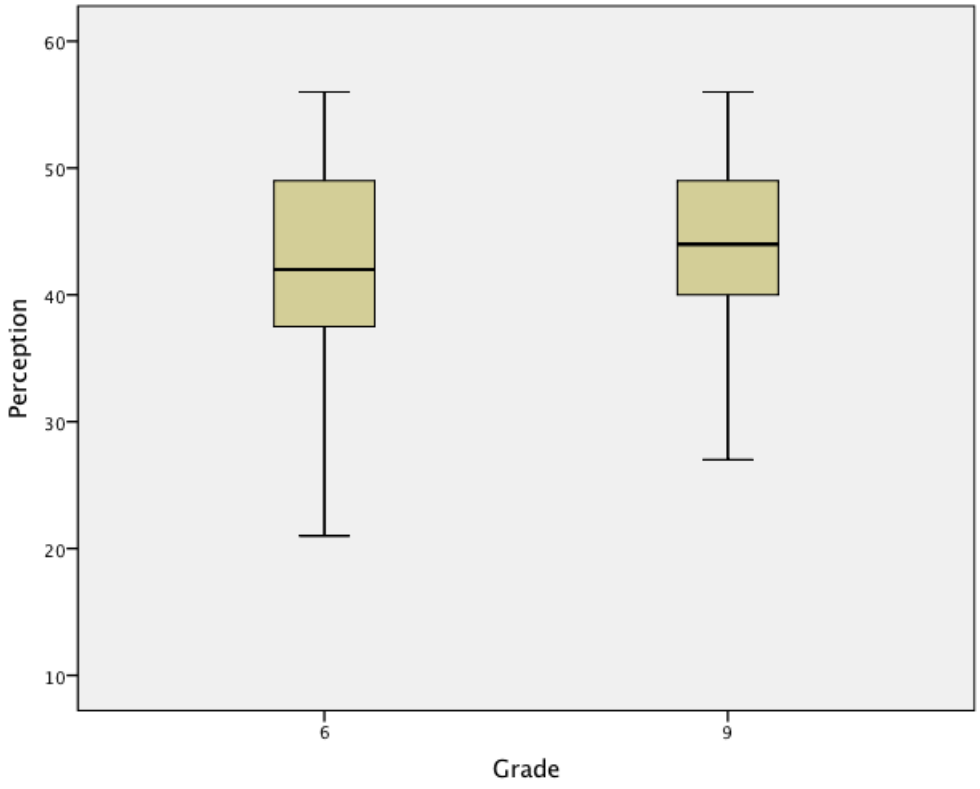

Figure 2. Distribution of school-based perception scores for sixth and ninth grade parents.

Research Question 2

RQ2. Is there a significant difference between the frequency of participation (number of activities) of parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders?

H_o2. There is no significant difference between the frequency of participation (number of activities) of parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders.

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to evaluate whether the frequency of participation (number of activities) differs between parents of newly entering sixth graders and newly entering ninth graders. The number of activities was the test variable and the grouping variable was grade level. The *t*-test was not significant, $t(218)= 1.57$, $p=.118$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. Parents of newly entering sixth graders ($M= 1{,}889.96$, $SD=612.74$) did not have a significantly different frequency of participation than parents of newly entering ninth graders ($M= 1{,}726.13$, $SD= 917.01$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was -45.70 to 373.34. The η^2 index was .01, which indicated a small effect size. Figure 3 shows the distributions for the two groups.

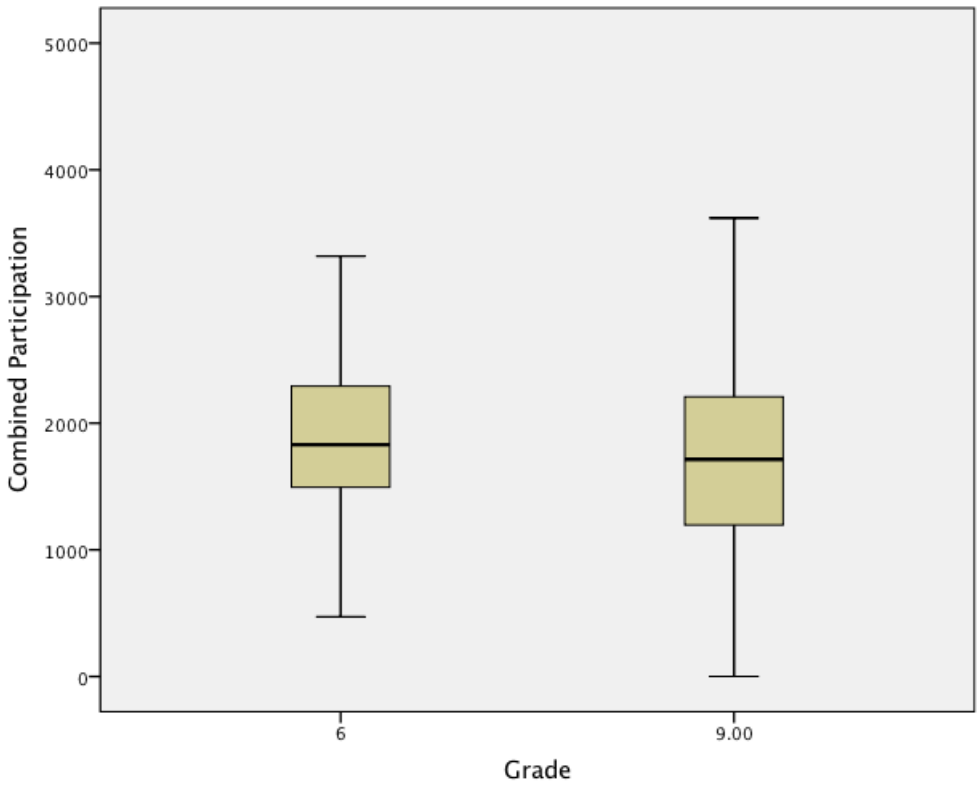

Figure 3. Distribution of the frequency of participation for sixth and ninth grade parents.

Research Question 3

RQ3. Is there a significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in home-based activities of parents of newly entering sixth graders?

H_o3. There is no significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in home-based activities of parents of newly entering sixth graders.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between perception scores and the frequency of participation in home-based activities (number of activities) of parents of newly entering sixth graders. The correlation was statistically significant. There was a strong positive relationship between the two variables, $r(114) = .976$, $p < .001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The perception scores ($M = 45.19$, $SD = 4.96$) and

the frequency of participation in home-based activities (M = 1,577.40, SD = 341.05) showed a statistically significant positive correlation. In general, the results suggest that parents of newly entering sixth graders who had a high home-based involvement perception score also tended to have a high frequency of participation in home-based activities. Figure 4 displays the bivariate scatterplot.

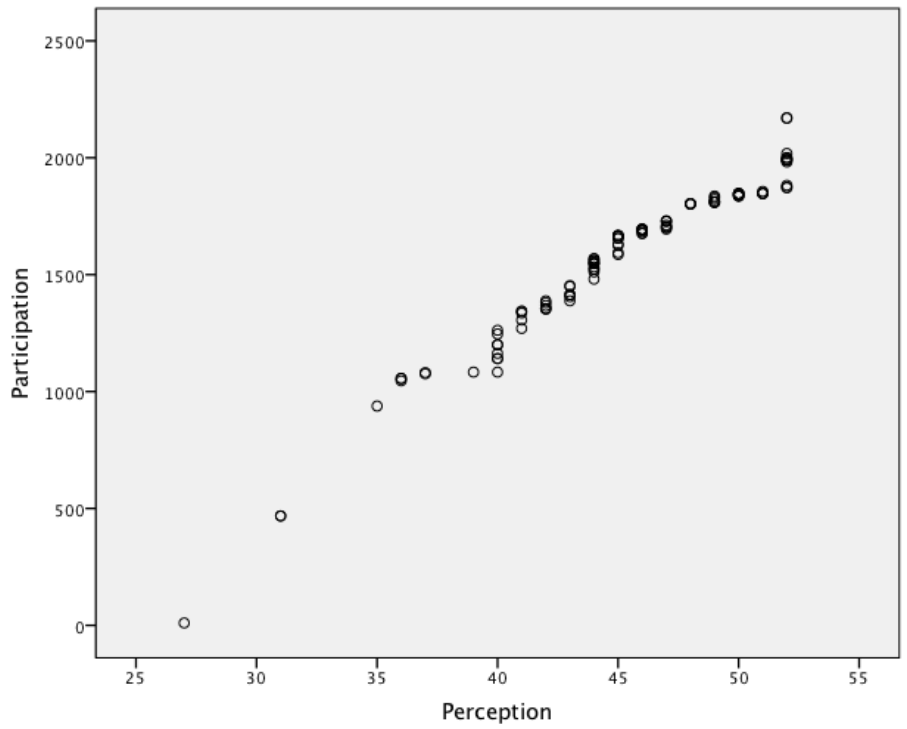

Figure 4. Bivariate scatterplot of home-based perception scores and home-based frequency of participation in parents of newly entering sixth grade students.

Research Question 4

RQ4. Is there a significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in school-based activities of parents of newly entering sixth graders?

H_o4. There is no significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in school-based activities of parents of newly entering sixth graders.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between perception scores and the frequency of participation in school-based activities (number of activities) of parents of newly entering sixth graders. The correlation was statistically significant. The results revealed a strong positive relationship between the two variables, $r(114) = .679$, $p < .001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The perception scores ($M = 42.36$, $SD = 8.45$) and the frequency of participation in school-based activities ($M = 312.56$, $SD = 350.95$) showed a statistically significant positive correlation. However, the r^2 value should be viewed with caution due to the curvilinear relationship represented in Figure 5. Figure 5 displays the bivariate scatterplot.

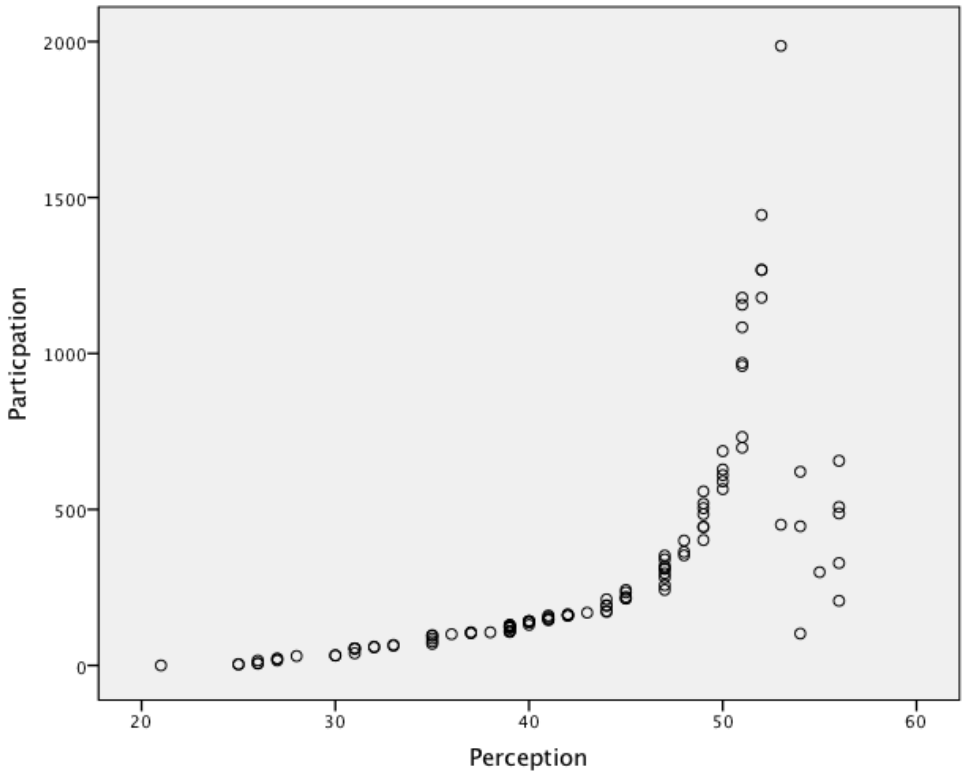

Figure 5. Bivariate scatterplot of school-based perception scores and school-based frequency of participation in parents of newly entering sixth grade students.

Research Question 5

RQ5. Is there a significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in home-based activities of parents of newly entering ninth graders?

H_o5. There is no significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in home-based activities of parents of newly entering ninth graders.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between perception scores and the frequency of participation in home-based activities (number of activities) of parents of newly entering ninth graders. The correlation was statistically significant. Results of the analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between the two variables, $r(104) = .950$, $p < .001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The perception scores ($M = 42.68$, $SD = 6.56$) and the frequency of participation in home-based activities ($M = 1{,}341.82$, $SD = 525.29$) revealed a statistically significant positive correlation. In general, the results suggest that parents of newly entering ninth graders who had a high home-based involvement perception score also tended to have a high frequency of participation in home-based activities. Figure 6 displays the bivariate scatterplot.

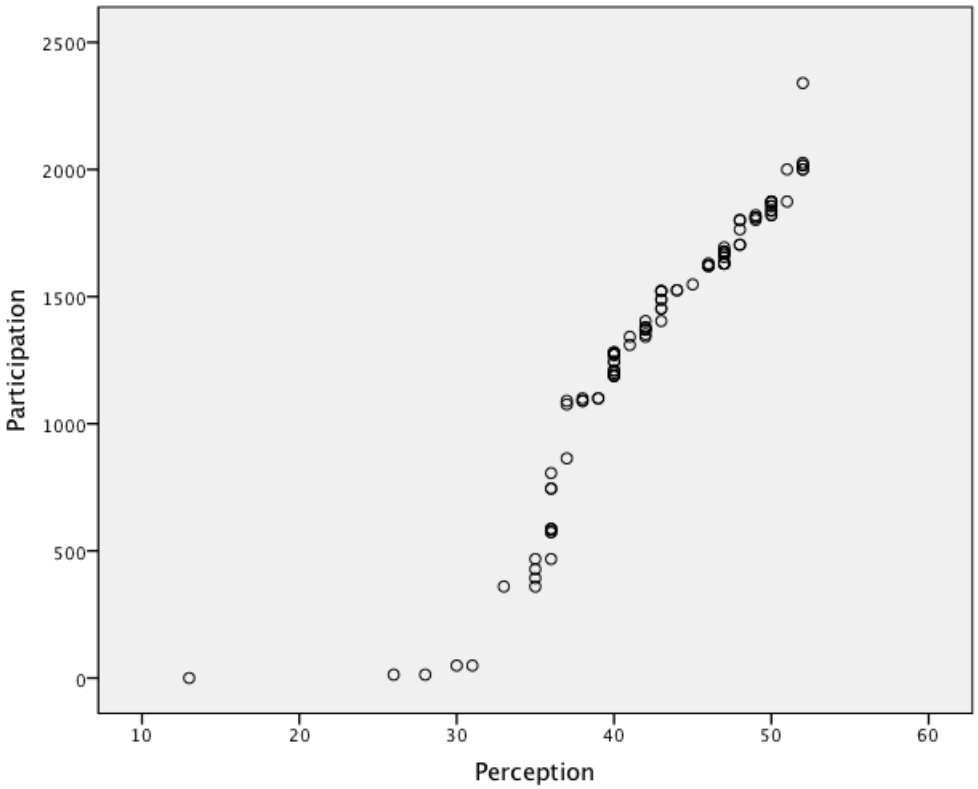

Figure 6. Bivariate scatterplot of home-based perception scores and home-based frequency of participation in parents of newly entering ninth grade students.

Research Question 6

RQ6. Is there a significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in school-based activities of parents of newly entering ninth graders?

H_o6. There is no significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in school-based activities of parents of newly entering ninth graders.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between perception scores and the frequency of participation in school-based activities (number of activities) of parents of newly entering ninth graders. The correlation was statistically significant. There was a strong positive relationship between the two variables $r(104) = .745$, $p < .001$.

Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The perception scores (M = 43.79, SD = 7.20) and the frequency of participation in home-based activities (M = 384.31, SD = 472.77) had a statistically significant correlation. The coefficient of determination r^2 value should be viewed with caution due to the curvilinear relationship represented in Figure 7. Figure 7 displays the bivariate scatterplot.

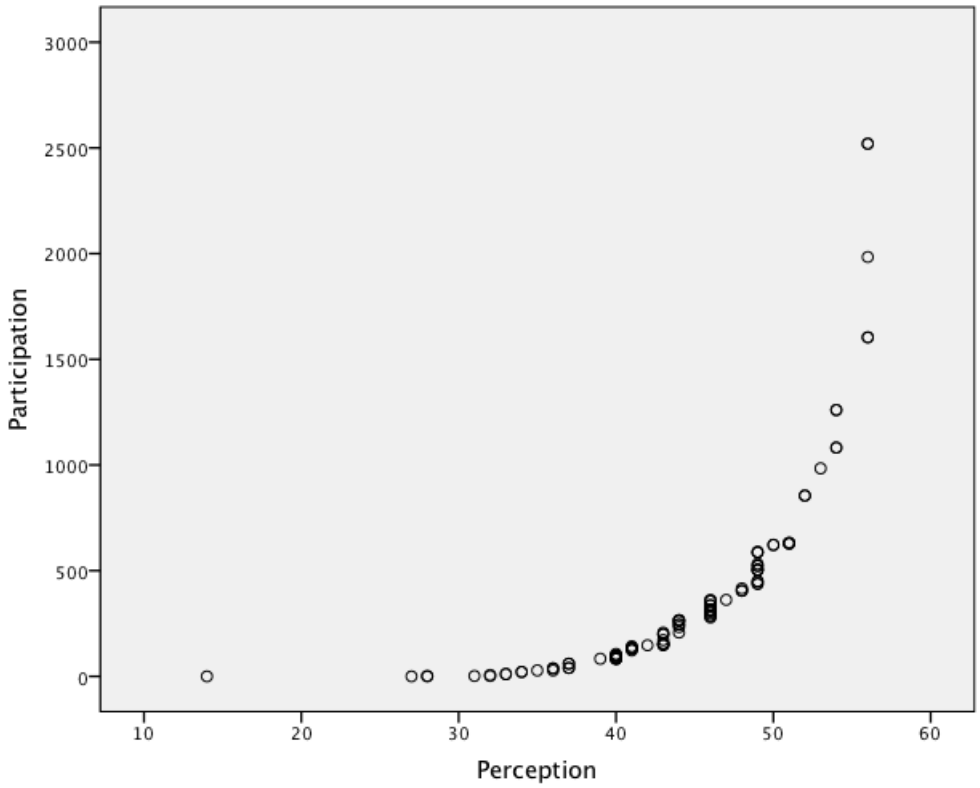

Figure 7. Bivariate scatterplot of school-based perception scores and school-based frequency of participation in parents of newly entering ninth grade students.

Research Question 7

RQ7. Is there a significant difference in the mean scores for participation in home-based activities between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders?

H_o7. There is no significant difference in the mean scores for participation in home-based activities between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders.

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to evaluate whether the mean scores for participation in home-based activities differ between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders. The mean home-based participation score was the test variable and the grouping variable was grade level. The *t*-test was significant, $t(218)= 3.98$, $p<.001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Parents of newly entering sixth graders ($M=$ 121.51, $SD=26.19$) tended to participate in more home-based activities than parents of newly entering ninth graders ($M= 103.39$, $SD= 40.36$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was 8.97 to 27.27. The η^2 index was .08, which indicated a medium effect size. Figure 8 shows the distributions for the two groups.

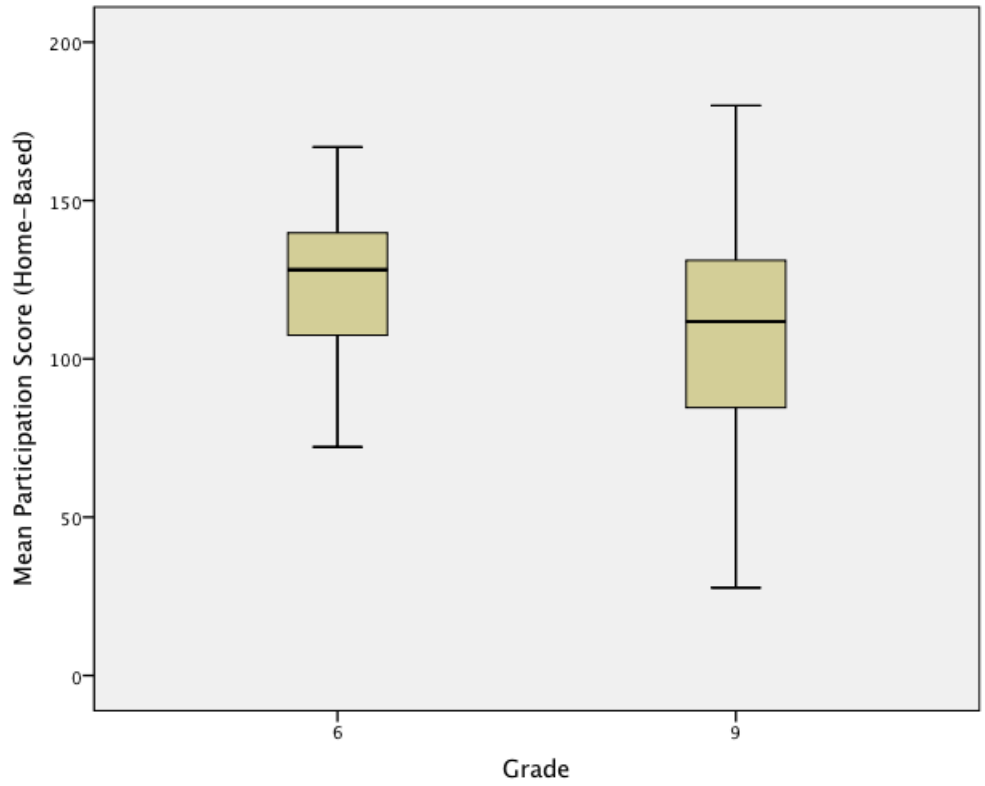

Figure 8. Distribution of the mean scores for participation in home-based activities between sixth and ninth grade parents.

Research Question 8

RQ8. Is there a significant difference in the mean scores for participation in school-based activities between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders?

H_o8. There is no significant difference in the mean scores for participation in school-based activities between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders.

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to evaluate whether the mean scores for participation in school-based activities differs between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders. The mean school-based participation score was the

test variable and the grouping variable was grade level. The *t*-test was not significant, *t*(218)= 1.29, *p*=.200. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The school-based involvement of parents of newly entering sixth graders (*M*= 22.32, *SD*=25.07) did not appear to differ from that of parents of newly entering ninth graders (*M*= 27.45, *SD*= 33.7). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was -12.98 to 2.73. The η^2 index was .01, which indicated a small effect size. Figure 9 shows the distributions for the two groups.

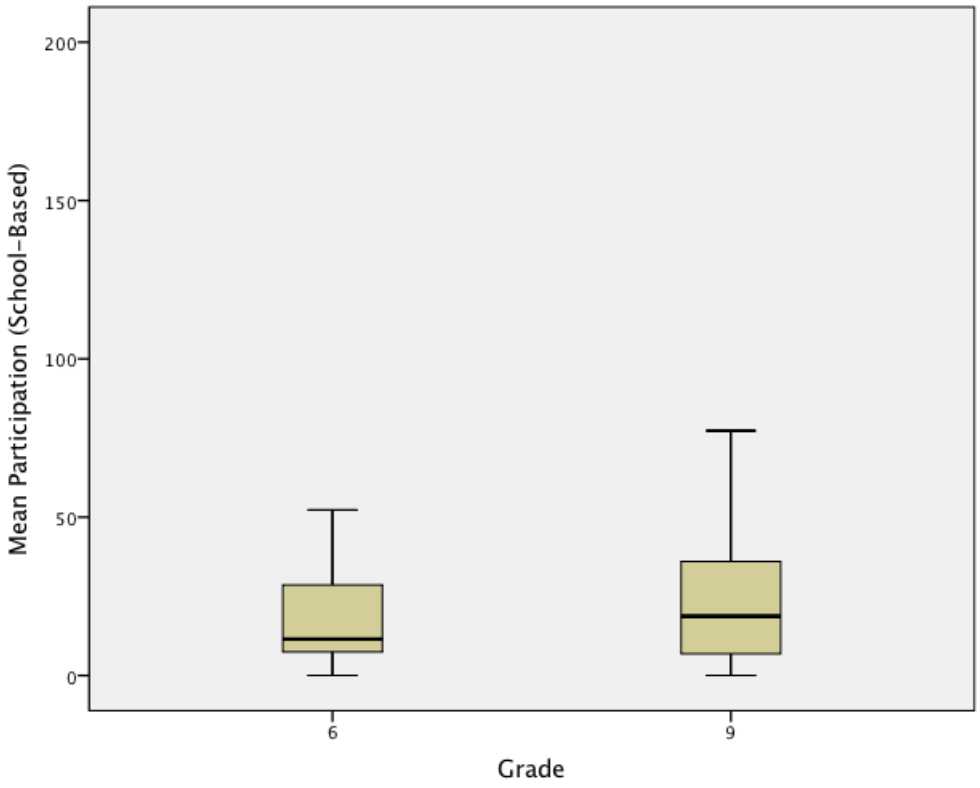

Figure 9. Distribution of the mean scores for participation in school-based activities between sixth and ninth grade parents.

Research Question 9

RQ9. Is there a significant difference in the mean scores for participation in both home- and school-based activities between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders?

H_o9. There is no significant difference in the mean scores for participation in both home- and school-based activities between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders.

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to evaluate whether the combined mean participation score for home- and school-based involvement of parents differs between parents of newly entering sixth graders and newly entering ninth graders. The mean of the combined home-based and school-based participation scores was the test variable and the grouping variable was grade level. The *t*-test was not significant, $t(218)= 1.57$, $p= .118$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The combined home- and school-based participation of parents of newly entering sixth graders ($M= 70.04$, $SD=22.67$) did not appear to differ from that of parents of newly entering ninth graders ($M= 63.97$, $SD= 33.95$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was –1.69 to 13.81. The η^2 index was .01, which indicated a small effect size. Figure 10 shows the distributions for the two groups.

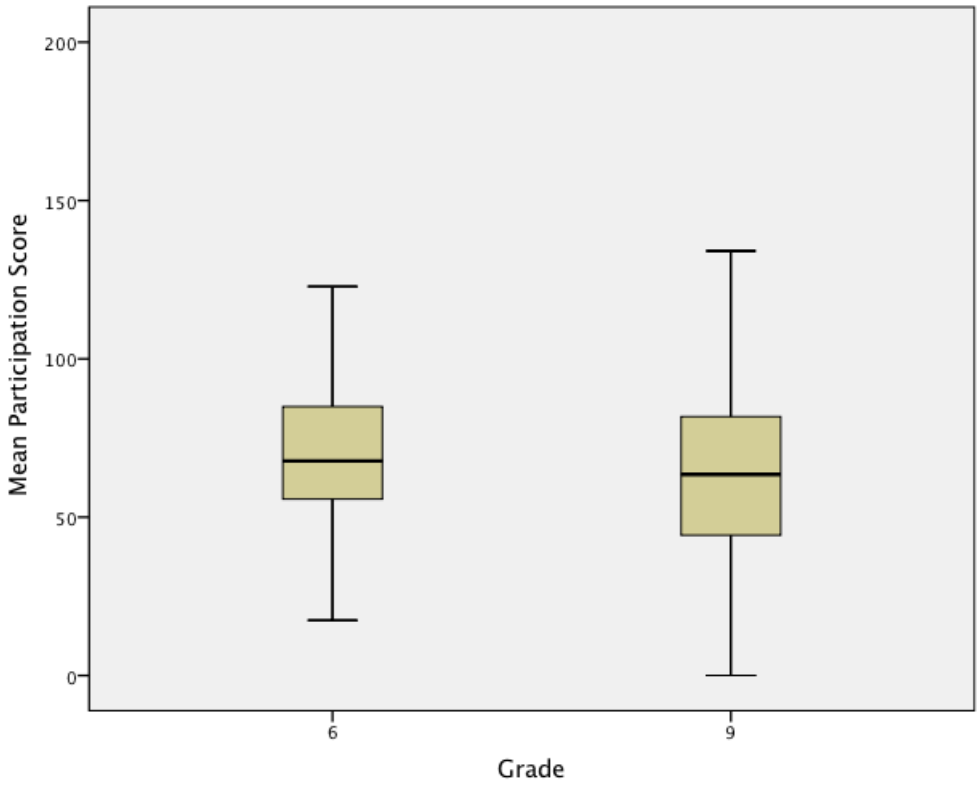

Figure 10. Distribution of the mean scores for participation in combined home- and school-based activities between sixth and ninth grade parents.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Because of Title I requirements, NCLB requirements, curriculum changes, and state legislative measures, parental involvement continues to be at the forefront of school agendas. As a result, schools offer a multitude of parental involvement activities based on the needs of their students. Researchers have found that parental involvement may positively influence students in both academics and overall well being (Herrell, 2011). There is also agreement among researchers that parents perceive parental involvement as important (Jeynes, 2007; Yoder & Lopez, 2013).

While previous research addressed parental involvement on a general level, it did not examine the development of parental involvement perceptions and participation as students moved from elementary school to middle school and then on to high school. Teachers have reported observing a lack of participation in parental involvement activities once students reach middle school, but minimal research has been conducted to see if this observation is accurate.

Data for this study were gathered from 115 sixth grade parents and 105 ninth grade parents using a survey. The analysis focused on the perception scores of parents on the benefits of various parental involvement activities as well as the frequency of parental participation in both home- and school-based activities. This chapter contains a summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations for practice, and recommendations for future research.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to compare the frequency of parental involvement participation by parents of students who have most recently completed elementary school with parents of students who have most recently completed middle school in a northeast Tennessee public school district. This study was also used to examine the perception scores of parental involvement for the same two groups within the same school district.

Analysis of Findings

This chapter contains data analyses as they relate to nine research questions. The analyses of those nine questions are reported here.

Research Question 1

RQ1. Is there a significant difference between the perception scores of parents of newly entering sixth graders and newly entering ninth graders concerning parental involvement (home-based or school-based)?

H_o1_1. There is no significant difference between the perception scores of parents of newly entering sixth graders and newly entering ninth graders concerning home-based parental involvement.

H_o1_2. There is no significant different between the perception scores of parents of newly entering sixth graders and newly entering ninth graders concerning school-based parental involvement.

Teacher observations indicate that as students go through the transition from elementary school to middle school and then on to high school parental involvement begins to decline. This decline can be characterized by less interest as well as less participation by parents. This research explored whether or not these observations could be supported in this school district. After

performing an independent samples *t*-test on the perceptions of parents of newly entering sixth graders and newly entering ninth graders, it was determined that there was a difference in the perceptions of parents regarding home-based parental involvement. Specifically, parents of newly entering sixth graders had higher perception scores on the importance of home-based involvement than the parents of newly entering ninth graders. However, in terms of school-based parental involvement the parents of newly entering sixth graders did not have significantly different perception scores than the parents of newly entering ninth graders.

Research Question 2

RQ2. Is there a significant difference between the frequency of participation (number of activities) of parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders?

H_o2. There is no significant difference between the frequency of participation (number of activities) of parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders.

Research Question 2 was designed to examine participation as it is a factor noted by teachers to decline throughout the years of school. This research question combined both home and school activities into one participation score. Contrary to observation, there was not a significant difference in the frequency of participation between the parents of newly entering sixth graders and newly entering ninth graders. This means that when examining both home- and school-based activities combined, parents at both the onset and exit of the middle school participate in relatively the same number of activities.

Research Question 3

RQ3. Is there a significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in home-based activities of parents of newly entering sixth graders?

H_o3. There is no significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in home-based activities of parents of newly entering sixth graders.

Logic suggests that if a parent has a high perception of parental involvement he or she will, in turn, participate to the same degree. Research Question 3 was focused on determining if such a relationship existed between the perception scores and frequency of participation by parents of newly entering sixth graders in terms of home-based involvement. After performing a Pearson *r* correlation, the results suggest that there is a positive relationship between perception and involvement. Specifically, the higher the perception score, the more frequent the involvement. This relationship suggests that in terms of home-based parental involvement logical reasoning holds true for the parents of newly entering sixth graders.

Research Question 4

RQ4. Is there a significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in school-based activities of parents of newly entering sixth graders?

H_o4. There is no significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in school-based activities of parents of newly entering sixth graders.

Research Question 4 was also designed to examine whether logical reasoning held true, but in this case the question focused on the frequency of participation and perception scores of parents of newly entering sixth graders in terms of school-based involvement. After performing a

Pearson *r* correlation, the results suggest that there is a positive relationship between perception scores and involvement. However, this relationship should be examined with caution. When represented in a scatterplot, a curvilinear shape is present, which suggests something more than a simple positive relationship. The curvilinear relationship indicates that there are changes over the range of both variables. In this instance the frequency of participation remains relatively low even as perception scores increase. This relationship remains constant but there is a point in the perception scores where the frequency of participation takes a sharp upturn.

Research Question 5

RQ5. Is there a significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in home-based activities of parents of newly entering ninth graders?

H_o5. There is no significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in home-based activities of parents of newly entering ninth graders.

Research Question 5 was designed to examine whether logical reasoning held true, but in this case the question shifted focus from the participation and perception scores of parents of newly entering sixth graders and instead examined the home-based involvement participation and perception scores of parents of newly entering ninth graders. After performing a Pearson *r* correlation, the results again suggest that there is a positive relationship between perception scores and participation. Specifically, the higher the perception score, the more frequent the participation. As with the other similar research questions, this positive relationship suggested that, in terms of home-based parental involvement, logical reasoning held true for the parents of newly entering ninth graders.

Research Question 6

RQ6. Is there a significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in school-based activities of parents of newly entering ninth graders?

H_o6. There is no significant relationship between the perception scores and the frequency of participation in school-based activities of parents of newly entering ninth graders.

Research Question 6 was also designed to examine whether logical reasoning held true in terms of parents of newly entering ninth graders, but in this case the question shifted focus to school-based involvement participation and perception scores. After performing a Pearson *r* correlation, the results suggested that there is a positive relationship between perception scores and participation. However, as in research question 4, this positive relationship should be examined with caution. There is a relationship between the two factors, but when represented in a scatterplot, a curvilinear shape is present that suggests something more than the simple positive relationship represented in research questions 3 and 5. Instead, this curvilinear relationship indicates that there are changes over the range of both variables. In this instance there is not a lot of activity on the scatterplot at the lower end of the perception axis. Activity is clustered around the middle of the axis and is characterized by a slight gradual increase in participation as perception scores increase. There is also not a lot of activity at the latter end of the perception axis. Increases in participation come more sporadically and do not appear to be influenced by an increase in the perception score. This accounts for the clear positive curve in the scatterplot.

Research Question 7

RQ7. Is there a significant difference in the mean scores for participation in home-based activities between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders?

H_o7. There is no significant difference in the mean scores for participation in home-based activities between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders.

Because this study focused on parental involvement throughout the middle school transition, it was necessary to determine if there were differences between involvement at the beginning of the transition (entering sixth grade) and the end of the transition (entering ninth grade). Research Question 7 was designed to determine if there was a difference between the mean home-based parental involvement participation scores of parents of newly entering sixth graders and newly entering ninth graders. An independent samples *t*-test determined that there is a difference in the home-based participation scores of the two groups. Parents of newly entering sixth graders participated more in home-based activities than parents of newly entering ninth graders. This indicates that there is a difference in home-based participation from the beginning to the end of the middle school transition.

Research Question 8

RQ8. Is there a significant difference in the mean scores for participation in school-based activities between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders?

H_o8. There is no significant difference in the mean scores for participation in school-based activities between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders.

Research Question 8 continued the rationale behind Research Question 7. However, instead of determining a difference in home-based parental involvement participation, Research Question 8 was designed to determine if there was a difference in school-based parental involvement participation between the parents of newly entering sixth graders and newly entering ninth graders. An independent samples *t*-test was used to determine that there was not a difference in school-based participation. Parents of newly entering sixth graders did not participate any more in school-based activities than parents of newly entering ninth graders. This indicates that there is not a difference in school-based participation from the beginning to the end of the middle school transition.

Research Question 9

RQ9. Is there a significant difference in the mean scores for participation in both home- and school-based activities between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders?

H_o9. There is no significant difference in the mean scores for participation in both home- and school-based activities between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders.

Research Question 9 continued the rationale behind Research Questions 7 and 8. However, instead of being designed to examine home-based and school-based participation separately, this research question was designed to examine if there was a difference between the combined participation scores of parents of newly entering sixth graders and newly entering

ninth graders. An independent samples *t*-test determined that there was not a difference in the combined participation. Parents of newly entering sixth graders did not appear to participate any more than parents of newly entering ninth graders in overall parental involvement activities. This lack of a difference indicates that there is not much of a difference in parental participation in educational matters throughout the middle school transition.

Recommendations for Practice

The perception scores and frequency of participation in parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders included in this study were not intended to represent the perception scores and participation of all parents of newly entering sixth graders and all parents of newly entering ninth graders. However, some of the conclusions drawn from this study may be useful as a starting point for schools to address parental involvement during middle school transition. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations for practice are offered.

1. The findings from this study suggest that parents of newly entering sixth graders have a higher perception of home-based involvement than parents of newly entering ninth graders, but it did not indicate that there was a difference between the two groups in terms of school-based involvement. Middle school leaders should use these perceptions to their advantage by maximizing the quality and number of home-based involvement activities offered to parents of newly entering sixth graders in order to promote participation. This may allow for these positive perceptions to carry forth into later grades.
2. Parents in this study indicated a relationship between perception and participation especially in terms of home-based involvement. School leaders may wish to recognize

and focus on this relationship in order to have the opportunity to explore ways to maximize the involvement that takes place at home.

3. Parents of newly entering sixth graders and newly entering ninth graders indicated no difference in their perceptions of school-based involvement. Also, there is a relationship between perception and participation at both grade levels. What schools should consider is that this participation is usually low to moderate and may come from scheduled events and parental obligations that bring them to the schools regardless of their perception. It may not be worth the time and effort to promote a wide range of school-based activities and instead focus on home-based involvement.
4. Overall, this study suggests that parents are involved in relatively the same number of parental involvement activities. It may be that the schools do not see this participation at the school-based level, but it is happening. Therefore, it should be encouraged and celebrated in either format. This may foster stronger relationships between the parents and schools, which may lead to increased participation in the future.

Recommendations for Further Research

Future research regarding this topic should be focused on the following areas.

1. The population for this study was one small district in northeast Tennessee. It should be expanded to include populations that are larger and more diverse. By doing so, it will be easier to draw conclusions and generalize the findings to a larger group.
2. This study examined two grade levels (six and nine) within the middle school transition. It may be interesting to examine all three traditional middle school grades or to examine all transition points throughout school. This may highlight more differences and relationships between grade level, perception, and participation.

3. It may be interesting to expand the demographic data of the parents taking the survey to include items such as gender, marital status, education level, and race. This information could help disaggregate the results and allow the researcher to draw further conclusions about parental involvement. This information may make it possible for recommendations to be tailored to suit the needs of the specific parents a school serves.
4. This study has no connection to student performance outcomes. It would be interesting to study if parent perception or participation has any impact on student performance.
5. A future study may allow parents to provide qualitative feedback regarding their answers to survey questions. By having a chance to elaborate beyond a standardized option, the researcher may learn more about the reasons motivating perception and participation.

Conclusion

Parents have an important influence on their child's education (USDOE, 2004). There are countless ways to be involved that include communicating, parenting, student learning, volunteering, school decision making, and collaborating with community (Michigan Department of Education, 2004). No matter the method chosen parental involvement can positively affect behavior and academics and is a better predictor of school adjustment (Simons-Morton & Crump, 2003). It is an advantage for students when their parents are involved in their education from the onset of schooling until graduation. This study was designed to explore parental involvement both at the beginning and at the end of the middle school transition in a small northeast Tennessee school district. A focus was given to parental involvement as a whole and a separate focus was given to home-based and school-based involvement independently. Some significant differences in both perception scores and frequency of participation were observed between parents of newly entering sixth graders and parents of newly entering ninth graders.

Additionally, relationships were noted between perception scores and frequency of participation. From these results recommendations were made with the purpose of helping schools tailor their parental involvement initiatives to better meet the needs of the families they serve.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Parental Involvement Survey

Demographic Information

Student Grade Level (circle one): Beginning 6th grade Beginning 9th grade

Part 1

Please rate the level of importance* you feel each activity has on student success
(*Values: Not Important=1, Somewhat Important=2, Important=3, Very Important=4).

Setting aside a time for homework	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Creating a designated place to complete homework	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Providing assistance with homework	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Sending emails to the teacher	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Calling the teacher	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Checking grades online	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Making sure student attends school regularly	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Enforcing a regular bedtime	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Limiting video game/ computer/ TV time	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Ensuring student eats breakfast (home or school provided)	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Making sure the child has appropriate school supplies	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Making sure the child is reading	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

Checking daily planner or folder	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Attendance at Subject related information sessions (Including: Literacy Night, Math Night, Book Club, Lunch and Learn)	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Parent initiated conferences	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Teacher initiated conferences	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Attendance at school functions (Including: Band/Orchestra/Chorus Concerts, Athletic Events, Art Shows, Technology Night, Walk to School Day, Restaurant Family Night)	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Joining PTA/PTSA	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Participating in PTA/PTSA (Including: Attendance at meetings, Chaperoning Events, Participation on committees)	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Teacher sent e-mail communication	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
School sent email communication	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Emailed Newsletters	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Print Newsletters	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Teacher Phone Calls	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
School Phone Calls	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Student Phone Calls (discipline related)	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Taking advantage of tutoring opportunities (Before or After School)	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

Part 2

Select how often you participate* in the following activities
(*Values: Never=1, Daily=2, Weekly=3, Monthly=4, Semester=5, Yearly=6).

Setting aside a time for homework	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
Creating a designated place to complete homework	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
Providing assistance with homework	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
Sending emails to the teacher	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
Calling the teacher	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
Checking grades online	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
Making sure student attends school regularly	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
Enforcing a regular bedtime	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
Limiting video game/ computer/ TV time	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
Ensuring student eats breakfast (home or school provided)	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
Making sure the child has appropriate school supplies	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
Making sure the child is reading	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
Checking daily planner or folder	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
Attendance at Subject related information sessions (Including: Literacy Night, Math Night, Book Club, Lunch and Learn)	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
Parent initiated conferences	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
Teacher initiated conferences	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly

Attendance at school functions (Including: Band/Orchestra/Chorus Concerts, Athletic Events, Art Shows, Technology Night, Walk to School Day, Restaurant Family Night)	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
Joining PTA/PTSA	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
Participating in PTA/PTSA (Including: Attendance at meetings, Chaperoning Events, Participation on committees)	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
Teacher sent e-mail communication	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
School sent email communication	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
Emailed Newsletters	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
Print Newsletters	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
Teacher Phone Calls	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
School Phone Calls	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
Student Phone Calls (discipline related)	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly
Taking advantage of tutoring opportunities (Before or After School)	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Semester	Yearly

Thank you for your participation. Please place this survey in the attached envelope and return to the front office at your child's school.

APPENDIX B

IRB Approval

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
Office for the Protection of Human Research Subjects • Box 70565 • Johnson City, Tennessee 37614-1707
Phone: (423) 439-6053 Fax: (423) 439-6060

IRB APPROVAL – Initial Exempt

September 24, 2015

Rachel Heaton
5 Kensington Court
Johnson City, TN 37601

RE: Parental Involvement: Participation and Perception
IRB#: c0915.22
ORSPA#: ,

On **September 22, 2015**, an exempt approval was granted in accordance with 45 CFR 46. 101(b)(2). It is understood this project will be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Policies. No continuing review is required. The exempt approval will be reported to the convened board on the next agenda.

- 107 xForm, PI CV, references, School permission letter, ICD, Participant instruction sheet, Survey, Methodology/Protocol

Projects involving Mountain States Health Alliance must also be approved by MSHA following IRB approval prior to initiating the study.

Unanticipated Problems Involving Risks to Subjects or Others must be reported to the IRB (and VA R&D if applicable) within 10 working days.

Proposed changes in approved research cannot be initiated without IRB review and approval. The only exception to this rule is that a change can be made prior to IRB approval when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the research subjects [21 CFR 56.108 (a)(4)]. In such a case, the IRB must be promptly informed of the change following its implementation (within 10 working days) on Form 109 (www.etsu.edu/irb). The IRB will review the change to determine that it is consistent with ensuring the subject's continued welfare.

Sincerely,
Stacey Williams, Chair
ETSU Campus IRB

Full AAHRPP Accreditation
Accredited since December 2005

APPENDIX C

Site Approval

Kingsport City Schools
Approval Form for Research Proposals

Please complete the top section of this form and submit it with the information requested on the Kingsport City Schools Research Proposal Guidelines form to the Director of Performance Excellence.

Researcher's Name: Rachel Heaton Agency/Institution: ETSU/KCS

Researcher's Email: rheaton@k12k.com Phone Number: 423-676-2696

Title of Research Proposal: Parental Involvement: Participation and Perception

Type of Research Proposal (Check): ✓ Dissertation ____ Thesis ____ Independent

Step 1:

✓ Read the Research Proposal Guidelines and submit the appropriate paperwork to the Department of Performance Excellence.

✓ Submit questionnaires, surveys, and/or interview questions in advance for review.

____ Submit a copy of the IRB approval. This must be completed before final approval will be granted.

Step 2:

✓ The research proposal and any supporting documentation will be reviewed by the Department of Performance Excellence.

✓ The researcher will be notified via the phone or email of the approval status.

Approval Status:

____ The research proposal is denied. You may contact the Director of Performance Excellence for further clarification.

____ The research proposal has been approved. You may proceed with the research in accordance with the Kingsport City Schools Request for Research Proposal Guidelines.

✓ The research proposal is approved pending the receipt of the IRB.

____ The research proposal is pending upon the resolution of the following condition(s) :

Michael Hubbard
Superintendent of Schools or Designee

9-11-15
Date

Director of Performance Excellence 400 Clinchfield Street, Suite 200 Kingsport, Tennessee 37660 Ph.: (423) 378.2125

APPENDIX D

Parental Involvement Informational Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian,

This is a request for your participation in a research study of parental involvement participation and perceptions. My name is Rachel Heaton and I am a graduate student at East Tennessee State University. As part of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree, I am currently working on my dissertation entitled "Parental Involvement: Participation and Perception." The purpose of this study will be to compare the frequency of parental involvement participation of parents with children at the start of middle school with parents of students at the start of high school. The study will also examine the perceptions of parental involvement for the same two groups. The results of this study will be used to inform others about parental involvement at the beginning of both middle school and high school.

In order to accomplish this, I am asking you to complete a short, non-invasive survey. Participation is *voluntary*, and if you choose to participate, please feel confident that no identifying information will be asked of you. If you choose not to participate, there will be no penalty. Submission of this survey will indicate that you have read this letter, you understand the terms stated within this letter, and you consent to participate.

This survey will be offered both on paper and online. Your confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the inception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties. I ask that you complete only one version of the survey *and* only one survey per family. If you have children in both sixth and ninth grade, please complete the survey for your oldest child. If you choose to participate, please review the next page of this packet for more detailed instructions.

Thank you in advance for support and participation in this research.

Sincerely,

Rachel R. Heaton
East Tennessee State University
Zrrt2@goldmail.etsu.edu

APPENDIX E

Parental Involvement Survey Instructions

Online Version

1. To complete the online survey, please go to the following web address:

   https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6RL89ZW

   Or scan the QR code below:

   

   Complete the survey by October 30, 2015.

2. Click Submit!

Thank you for your participation!

Paper Version

1. Fill out the paper survey. *Be sure to mark the grade level of your child*!
2. Review the survey to be sure all questions are answered.
3. Seal the survey in the provided envelope.
4. Return the completed survey, in the sealed envelope, directly to the front office of your child's school. Please do not give this to your child's teacher. Please return by October 30, 2015.

Thank you for your participation! Please remember that submission of this survey indicates that you have read the attached letter and these instructions, and you consent to participate.

VITA

RACHEL REBEKAH HEATON

Education:	East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN, Ed.D., Educational Leadership, May 2016.
	Milligan College, Johnson City, TN, M.Ed. Elementary Education K-6, May 2009.
	East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN, BS. Child and Family Studies and Human Development and Learning, December 2005.
Professional Experience	Kingsport City Schools, Kingsport, TN. Classroom Teacher, 6th Grade.
	Hamblen County Schools, Morristown, TN. Classroom Teacher, 4th Grade.
Professional Affiliations:	NCTE.
	ASCD.
Awards and Honors:	Spring 2016, Thesis and Dissertation Scholarship, ETSU.
	2009, Intern of the Year, Milligan College.