Fall 12-1-2020

The Language of Parental Involvement: A Document Analysis of Parent Involvement Plans (PIP's) of Title I Elementary Schools

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The Language of Parental Involvement: A Document Analysis of Parent Involvement Plans

(PIP's) of Title I Elementary Schools

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

Department of Education, Management, Leadership, and Policy

Seton Hall University

2020

APPROVAL FOR SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE

Jacqueleen M. Bido has successfully defended and made the required modifications to

the text of the doctoral dissertation for the Ed.D. during this **Fall Semester 2020**.

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DEDICATION

To my children Cristina, Alecc Jr., Aleccia, Mackaiyah, & Mackennah

may you forever seek knowledge to make the world a better place.

doing something new.

To these amazing women, I call my sisters from another mother, Elizabeth Delacruz, Nichole Moore, Andrea Osei, Aileen Matias, Shennell McCloud, Meka Sinclair, and Rashida Billups, thank you for your constant encouragement and support during the many times I called or text, feeling as if I was not going to make it through this arduous journey towards this degree.

To Wilfredo Jones and Alecc Thomas Sr. for supporting me through achieving my BS and MA. To James Gibbs and Paula Gibbs for your constant support and words of encouragement. To Mack Toscano for supporting me in achieving my doctorate degree. You made sure our children were taken care of, as I would have to fly from Florida to New Jersey for two years to make this goal a reality. You would press upon me the importance of just getting it done, which I leaned on during the long nights of typing and coding. To Mrs. Joy Thomas for driving me to Seton Hall when I did not have transportation to school to make sure I wouldn't miss my class or have to take the bus in the snow.

To Dr. Stephen Webb for planting the seed many years ago to go after my degree no matter how long it took. To Musa Abdullah for the many conversations during my academic journey that pushed me to go deeper in my search for knowledge and to always remember that "I am a giraffe." To my dissertation Chair Dr. Reid, thank you for your support in accomplishing this monumental goal. You made one of the most stressful assignments in my academic career achievable through your constant words of encouragement and guidance. To Dr. Blissett and Dr. Agard, I appreciate you taking the time to be on my dissertation committee. The feedback you provided and the questions you posed during my dissertation process played a pivotal role in this document's manifestation. To Kathleen "Kat" Gordon, I thank you for being a role model for me as I witnessed the dedication and hard work you put into achieving your doctorate. Seeing you

right after you put in a full day of work to stay later to achieve this goal reminded me that I have no excuse and that with God coupled with hard work, it can and will be done.

To Dr. James Lawson, few people have impacted my life how you have. Explicitly, you have impressed upon me as a woman, mother, and educator to always strive for excellence in all I do. To acknowledge and grow from my mistakes. To put my words to action and, above all, never forget my community and who I am no matter what I achieve in this life.

I thank everyone who played a role in the attainment of this lifelong goal. An African proverb says, "If you educate a man, you educate an individual. But if you educate a woman, you educate a nation." I am the first in my family to achieve this milestone. Through this achievement, I hope to educate a nation that will ultimately pay it forward.

ABSTRACT

Research indicates that parent involvement increases student achievement. This qualitative research examined 30 elementary Title I schools' Parent Involvement Plans (PIPs), seeking roles parents played in urban settings. This document analysis reviewed the descriptive language presented in each school's plan and examined for fidelity. Using Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement and the Sample Practice, the researcher coded the Plans. Data displayed compliance with the mandated requirements of the Plans. Still, they indicated incongruencies with fidelity and alignment to proven best-practices research.

Keywords: Joyce Epstein's Six Types of Parental Involvement, Title I, parental involvement, partnership schools, student academic achievement, family engagement, transformation schools, parent involvement plans, compliance

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

For many years, laws and policies have been put in place to address the schools' achievement gap. One of the rules that impacted the education front for decades is the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. This law promoted and governed quality and equality in education. It was signed into law by President Johnson to support those most in need. Also, this law allowed states to receive funding for implementing programs and policies aligned with the goals of ESEA. As ESEA evolved throughout the year's parental involvement was mandated to address the student's social needs and was linked to student academic achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001; Desimone, 1999; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

Specifically, for schools with high poverty levels, 1% of the school's budget is allocated for parental involvement funding under Title I Part A. As a Title I Part A component, the government established compliance for parental involvement by completing the Parental Involvement Plans (PIPs) by funded Title I schools. Although these compliance measures are met yearly by creating PIPs, they do not ensure the implementation's fidelity as written. Thus, an analysis of the PIPs became necessary to determine if parental involvement strategies and activities transpired. Also, to assess the PIPs alignment to researched-based best-practices for evaluating the fidelity in written language to parental involvement in schools.

Background of the Problem

Researchers studied the impact of parental involvement and researched in-depth on various academic levels. Researchers found that parental involvement increases student academic achievement (Barnard, 2004; Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012; Desimone, 1999; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Vellymalay, 2012). This research cultivated a trend in conversations focused on

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increasing parent involvement in elementary, middle, and high schools (Aldridge, 2015; Baharudin, Chi Yee, Sin Jing & Zulkefly, 2010). Subsequently, in Title I funded schools, parent involvement has been mandated within funding policies and laws to include developing and implementing the Parent Involvement Plan (PIP). The PIP is a document that establishes how parent involvement will take place within schools to comply with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESEA) (2015) and Title I funding guidelines. The PIP addresses various strategies and methods of parent involvement, ranging from communication methods to school advisory board participation. As students transition from elementary to middle and middle to high school, parent involvement decreases. Researchers have found that this decrease may occur because parents seek to make students independent learners the older, they get. Another is that some parents continue to remain uninvolved throughout the student's academic journey for reasons yet defined.

This lack of involvement must be understood (Szente, Hoot, & Taylor, 2006), and educators must develop ways to encourage parental involvement. To understand what promotes parental involvement, an in-depth look at elementary schools' Parent Involvement Plans (PIPs) will focus on research. The elementary grade levels are the foundation of parental involvement that filters into ascending academic settings. At this level mainly, parents and students alike are being conditioned to the academic rigor and engagement needed to succeed, as research has shown. Parent involvement is positively related to student academic performance. Increasing this involvement may reduce the achievement gap between high- and low-performing students (Lee & Bowen, 2006).

The Parental Involvement Plan can affect school culture if what school officials delineate within the plan is not aligned to researched-based best-practices. When this drafted plan fails

fidelity, it directly impacts the students both socially and academically. Also, poorly drafted plans can lead to the mismanagement of Title I funds allocated to increase parent involvement in schools. Subsequently, PIPs are an integral part of cultivating a positive school culture. Some schools are not as inclusive or welcoming as noted in "Beyond the Bake Sale" (Henderson, 2007) as Fortress Schools.

Literature has shown the various roles parents have played in the lives of their child's academic journey. From infancy, parents are considered the first teachers. Parents serve as the first and most enduring teachers who play a crucial role in helping their children learn (Miller, 2001). Day in and out, they model behaviors and actions children absorb. Over time, children transition into school settings where they become responsible for ensuring students attain academic success. As students begin underperforming, teachers start to feel the backlash of the student's lack of achievement (Lewis-Antoine, 2012). Teachers received more compliance and higher expectations for student academic achievement. Teachers provided feedback that pointed the finger back at parents for students' academic performance (Espinosa, 1995; Weaver, 2005; Lattimore, 2013). This feedback resulted in educators questioning the parent's role in ensuring and supporting their own child's academic proficiency in school. This question led researchers to define the meaning of Parental Involvement and its impact on academic achievement. The Parental Involvement Plan (PIP), as mandated by law, defines what parental involvement looks like for each Local Education Authority (LEA). Although a myriad of research on parental involvement, there is a gap in the study for assessing the documentation that solidifies its existence, programmatic funding, and the fidelity in Title I Schools.

In Sun County Public Schools (pseudonym), a Large Urban District, teachers reflect on their experiences with schools; the first thing that comes to mind is the teacher. Often, the first

interaction with a teacher comes during an Open House or Meet the Teacher. This event offers parents the opportunity to see the school, their child's classroom, and meet their teacher. The word meet is what this means, as traditionally, teachers go through a predetermined slideshow presentation of their classroom rules, students' expectations, and contact information. All of this happens in 15 to 20 minutes in some schools. In elementary schools, teachers recall how packed the event was. Still, as the year progressed, the attendance to other events such as Report Card Nights, Title I meetings, and School Advisory Committee meetings was bleak. Teachers began to wonder where did all the parents go?

From the local school level as an educator, teachers cannot recall how many times they ever saw, developed, or read the PIP. Often there were only certain people within the school responsible for its development or implementation. Other than parent-teacher conferences, there were few events or resources available to engage with the parents truly. Though research showed the impact parents played in students' academic achievement, it was indeed up to the administration to include the role parents would play within the school in reality.

From a district-level, the PIP was very compliance-driven. There was no framework directly tied to the development from a district level. There was no evidence of the specific vital stakeholders responsible for its development nor any knowledge of their expertise of parental involvement best-practices. To this end, whoever tasked reviewing these documents was merely looking to check a box to say "completed." Also, accessibility to this document would vary from online to in the school office for a copy to read. There was no formal announcement to parents to say the PIP was signed and uploaded to the website for their review. There was no link shared via any means for parents to access the document without navigating the school site, which may or may not have a parent tab or section highlighting the PIP. Does one document describe how to

involve them in the school? What activities have school officials planned to apply them? And most importantly, what resources are available at the school? It has been consistently disregarded as a document of importance as there is very little evidence of its analysis.

From the state perspective, the mandated document supports parent involvement at the school level in alignment with student achievement. The State offers little direction on the document's development but does submit questions that require answers. These questions' responses can vary yet are not mandated to support the key stakeholders' references or expertise in developing the document. With no concrete expectations, districts and specifically Title I schools remain responsible for creating a PIP that will increase parental involvement and directly impact student achievement.

Statement of the Problem

For years researchers have identified the role of parent involvement and its impact on student achievement (Epstein, 2009). Researchers have identified specific roles that parents should play within the academic setting (Swap, 1993). Principals identified parents' roles as it pertains to the school setting. Principals assess the inclusion of those roles and the written language used to describe parental involvement in PIPs. The school officials or principals develop these documents as guiding principles for schools. Still, they are not necessarily depicting how schools operate. Thus, document analysis is needed of the PIPs of Title I schools because the achievement gap continues to exist despite the research showing parental involvement supports student achievement. We must ensure that the mandated PIP is not just done to meet compliance but written in the language that aligns with what research has proven as best-practices for overall parent involvement within schools.

Research Questions

This study addresses two primary questions. The questions are as follows:

1. How does the language that is written in the Parent Involvement Plan (PIP) describe the ways parent involvement will take place within elementary Title I schools? and

2. In what way does the language written in elementary Title I schools Parent Involvement Plans (PIPs) align with the six components of parental involvement identified by Epstein's Model of School Family and Community Partnerships Framework?

Significance of the Study

There is a dual significance for this study. The first is to shed light on the importance of Parent Involvement Plans (PIPs) as mandated by ESSA and Title I, writing plans with fidelity. By conducting a document analysis of 30 elementary Title I schools Parent Involvement Plans (PIPs), the researcher anticipates finding a trend in strategies and language found in them. The study's second significance is to determine whether plans, written with fidelity, clearly align parents' roles in the parent involvement landscape to support the research.

Definitions of Terms

Academic Achievement refers to student performance at or above the state's measure of Proficiency (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Community refers to local stakeholders, including but not limited to private citizens, organizations, businesses, political leaders, agencies, and universities (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Curriculum is everything taught in the school mandated by the state or any other local school authority (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

English Language Learner (ELL) refers to the student who qualifies to enter ESL

(English as a Second Language) Program to learn English as a Second Language (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Family involvements refer to the formal or informal ways family members assist with the children's education at school or home (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Parent refers to a natural parent, legal guardian, or another person or caregiver, including a grandparent, stepparent, or person legally responsible for the child's welfare (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Parental Involvement refers to the formal or informal ways family members assist with the children's education at school or home (Henderson, Mapp, 2002).
(Bloom, 1980, Fan & Chan 2001).

Partnership refers to a parent-teacher relationship that focuses on trust, respect, and communication and extends across racial and ethnic boundaries. It involves the collaboration of effective school programs and activities that enrich the academic performance of K-12 students (Berger, 2003; Jeynes, 2005; Morris & Taylor, 1998).

School community refers to the school personnel, students, families, and members of the larger community. The larger community is bound by a common spirit of involvement for maximum social, emotional, intellectual, and academic growth and development for all students. (Henderson & Mapp, 2002)

Shared Decision Making refers to a process that includes parents, teachers, administrators, community members, and possibly students in the decisions that affect how a school or school district operates (Epstein, 2009).

Student achievement refers to the process of applying uniform measurements of varying stages of accomplishment during the study. The education community uses letter grades (A-F)

and grade point averages (GPA) as academic measurements of student achievement (Hawes &

Plourde, 2005).

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter serves as a literature review for this qualitative study that delves into the topic of parent involvement. It provides insight into the history of parent involvement, policies, and accountability. Also, it contains a review of conceptual frameworks to include the theoretical framework of Epstein's Model of School Family and Community Partnerships. Joyce Epstein of John Hopkins University researched, identified, and incorporated six critical types of parental involvement: parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Readers will receive a summary of barriers to parent involvement. The final section of this review will give an overview of the conceptual framework for Parent Involvement. This review will support the need for this document analysis. It will provide a need to assess the written language of parent involvement in Parental Involvement Plans (PIP) since research has shown its impacts on academic achievement.

The History of Parental Involvement in the U.S.

Throughout history, the role of the parent in support of academic achievement has varied over time. From the birth of a child, parents are considered a child's first teacher (Pulliam, 1987). Parents passed on their beliefs through daily experiences that cultivated a child's moral compass, the standard of hard work, and a host of other essential skills needed for survival within society. This education level was incorporated within the family's daily interactions rather than publicly in public institutions (Berger, 2003). As children developed in their learning, they would seek knowledge aligned with a specific trade that, in essence, was instilled by their parents (Hiatt-Michael, 2001). As governance became the focal point within townships and religious beliefs defined social circles, education became the focal point in determining people in power. The

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composition of Educational Boards was local parents within the townships, which heavily influenced schools and educational decision-making (Hiatt-Michael, 2001). Although parent involvement existed, it was not all-inclusive. During this period, what involvement looked like was as research has shown authoritative and only for a select few. No one mandated parent involvement in law nor in school documentation for compliance as it is today.

Evolution of the Education Landscape

As colonies continued to evolve and grow, the education landscape saw a change in public education and parental involvement around the early seventeenth century. There was a distinction among the colonies separated from British rule about education, and laws enacted those distinctions. These laws governed and established the colony's needs, which dictated what education looked like (Hiatt-Michael, 2001). The introduction of taxes supporting education did not focus until the Revolutionary War era (Pulliam, 1987). Key players arose to bring about the birth of American education, such as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. They found value in reading, writing, and rhetoric. Parents assumed that their role, in essence, was to educate their children in those areas of importance. It became evident that parents were not on the same proficiency level to be effective teachers. It was necessary for some at the time to implement the establishment of free public education for all children in Virginia. There was also a gap in the laws and documentation that governed such expectations of parents. Although needed, it was not supported by the legislature at the time. The nineteenth century would see this notion come to fruition. Providing education for all would be embedded in American society (Hiatt-Michael, 2001).

A New Era in Public Education

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century, education for all was prevalent.

By 1860, almost every state housed a public school system. Horace Mann, a pioneer in the public education system, established a vision of public education that was coming to life and would ultimately decrease the level of parental involvement. As much as Mann's vision established the typical school for all, historian Lawrence Cremin in *Transformation of the American School* gave credit to the public school administrators for building. Researchers also attributed him to the twentieth century's public school system (Cremin, 1961). William Torrey Harris, Superintendent of St. Louis Public Schools and later U.S. Commissioner, indicated that education settings would be scientifically managed, graded elementary and secondary schools. In turn, public education became "a melting pot of education" for all native, poor, minority, or immigrant parents in the United States (Hiatt-Michael, 2001). At this point, educators or legislature did not mandate policies that engaged parents in students' academic success. Even more prevalent was the ideology that it was not necessary for the academic success of students. Parent Involvement would soon take shape in the nineteenth century.

Education and the Industrial Revolution of America

As America went through industrialization, the nineteenth century's education scene cultivated a new view of public education and parental involvement. Children were entering the workforce at ages not seen before. Families tried to make ends meet; children worked in mines, mills, and factories (Rippa, 1988). Also, children of farmers rathered that their children stayed home to help with farm duties. The legislature enacted the establishment of child labor laws so that families could not circumvent these and other human injustices. In conjunction with these labor laws, Congress also enacted attendance and truancy laws to keep kids in school and not in the workforce (Hiatt-Michael, 2001). By 1918, all states had passed compulsory school attendance and truancy legislation (Rippa, 1988). These laws created a shift in control as parents

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could no longer keep children out of school without the school's permission. This law made it very difficult for strong parent relationships with schools to exist (Hiatt-Michael, 2001).

The Bureaucracy of Education and the Decline of Parent Involvement

American education had been a system that, at its foundation, was surrounded by cloud bureaucratic practices. This bureaucracy indirectly led to the forcing of parents out of the education of their children. This loss of parental connection and control was due, in large, to the growing American population, the growth of the industrial centers, the urbanization of the nation, and the utilization of scientific management techniques in business and industry (Hiatt-Michael, 2001). Educational leaders pushed for the establishment of structure and hierarchy. They created procedures and roles that were unknown to them. It then transcended time and continued to be the essence of the public school structure today. Graded schools, children classified by grade and grade-specific curriculum, were first established in 1848 in Massachusetts and quickly spread across the United States (Hiatt-Michael, 2001). Graded schools were a far cry from one teacher's original school environment, in one room, with all the community children.

This era legitimized the sentiment that education is to be implemented and controlled by professionals and administrators. Educators came with a particular skill set needed to cultivate the future society in an ever-changing world. This notion voided parents' belief as first teachers and created an emerging one that parents place was at home, not in the schools. Davies (1992) believed that administrators' and teachers' professionalism led to keeping parents out of power influence. Educators continued to aspire for higher professional growth levels, which widened the gap between parents and educators. Educators' aspiration of higher degrees and the consistent bureaucracy reinforced the decrease in parental involvement across the board due to the

numerous grade levels in schools (Hiatt-Michael, 2001).

The Resurrection of Parent Involvement in Schools

The resurrection of parent involvement in schools was due to a group of middle and upper-class women. These women formed the National Congress of Mothers (NCM) in 1897. At its core, this organization of mothers was concerned with the growth and development of students. They spoke with teachers and discussed education. These women's work formed the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) (Hiatt-Michael, 2001). The PTA helped to "Americanize newcomers to the country and taught middle-class parenting" (Davies, 1992). During the early part of the twentieth century, the PTA helped foster the connection between home and school.

This resurrection of parent involvement impacted schools locally. It pushed for the equity that was needed for all students to receive an education. With parents' assistance, researchers were able to bring the gaps that existed in American academia to the forefront. The Education for All Handicapped Act in 1974 established the need for all disabled students to receive an individualized plan that mandated the inclusion of parents. Head Start, a program that targeted early childhood, also educated and required parent participation within the scope of their funding requirements. The research was proving that there was a place for parents within the academic setting in many ways. Forms of parent involvement included volunteering in the classroom, attending meetings, working at schools, and participating in school-wide activities (Hiatt-Michael, 2001).

Parent Involvement Policies and Accountability

As the achievement gap in education continually increased, the federal government sought to address the issue with policies that would change the face of how students received an education. These policies not only impacted how students received an education but outlined and

mandated parent involvement. The No Child Left Behind Act (2001) was the foundation of the amendments to address student achievement. Still, most of all highlighted the accountability of all stakeholders in the education of children in America. Following the NCLB (2002), the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) continued to define the expectations and the need for parent involvement through the increase in mandates and accountability at the school level.

The No Child Left Behind Act (2001)

In 2001, parent involvement caught the attention of many when the federal government passed the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. With NCLB's parental involvement support requirements to existing Title I efforts, it became mandatory for schools to establish ties with the community actively. The NCLB Act (Public Law 107–110) was an amendment to the Administration's Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) passed in 2001 and signed into law in 2002. The act intended to close the achievement gap through the work of flexibility, accountability, and choice, so all students would have the potential to succeed (New York Times, 2012). It mandated individual efforts so families, educators, and communities could work together to further the impact of teaching and learning.

NCLB highlighted for many the role they were accountable for to support more significant student achievement. Not only did it identified shared responsibility, but it brought about a series of necessary services for students within low-performing schools. It mandated building a parent's capacity to support their child's academic achievement (NCLB 2002). Over time the theme that had become prevalent was that children benefited academically when parents and educators worked together (Hiatt-Michael, 2001). Also, parent involvement in existing schools under NCLB came to understand that one size does not fit all. NCLB ultimately operationalized parent involvement to implement active communication with parents about their

child's academic progress. NCLB aligned with the pre-existing initiatives outlined by Title I.

The United States Department of Education (2012) describe the rationale for The Title I Act as,

> "The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant
>
> opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on
>
> challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments"
>
> (Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies (Title I, Part A).

Nearly, the policy leveled the playing field for parents' capacity to support their children despite

their parenting barriers. Thus, parents' support included additional education, parenting advice,

and finding ways to incorporate the parents in their student's education (Patrikakou, 2005).

Title I aligned with NCLB and mandated that parental inclusion in the school culture. It

required that schools embed parents in the school culture. Still, parent-school liaisons had to be

designated to bridge the ever-present gap between home and school. Again, research showed that

parent involvement positively impacted students' academic and social success when parents and

teachers collaborated for their well-being (Hammack, Foote, Garretson, & Thompson, 2012).

These benefits existed due to the impact of academic performance when school officials

involved parents in their children's education (Reece et al., 2013). Thus, parent involvement

transcended from school to the home and impacted students' academic journey in school.

The Every Student Succeeds Act

Parent Involvement continued to take central focus, and the Every Student Succeeds Act

(2015) continued to remain in alignment with the previously enacted laws. Under ESSA, the

government required that every student in America get high learning standards to prepare them

for college and a career (Every Student Succeeds Act versus No Child Left Behind, 2016). The

Act's purpose was to provide all children, regardless of demographics, socioeconomics, or ability

level, an impartial and high-quality education, focusing on closing the achievement gaps. If parents' voice resonated in impacting the academic environment, it did so in ESSA's establishment. Under ESSA, the school district's purpose was to educate key stakeholders, especially parents, on what was needed to support rigorous instruction for each child truly.

Henderson and Mapp (2002) and some of the leading researchers of today noted in "*A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement*" though their studies that identified that students with involved parents, no matter their income or background, were more likely to:

- earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs;
- be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits;
- attend school regularly;
- have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school; and
- graduate and go on to postsecondary education.

These findings spawned from over two decades of research. Besides, it defined that by diversely providing support, it would ultimately equip the parent, family, and community with the necessary skills and tools to impact the student (Kimaro & Machumu, 2015; Flynn, 2007). Ultimately, the school district administrators should design PIPs to include strategies to drive these best-practices' compliance to impact student achievement.

Barriers to Parent Involvement

Though researchers continued to confirm the strong correlation between parent involvement and student achievement, some districts still did not prioritize it in schools, as noted by Epstien (1992). She observed that there still lacked established parental involvement programs at the local school level. In conjunction with the lack of parental involvement

programs, other barriers interceded as it pertained to parent involvement. According to Burns (1993), there were four identified barriers: Constraints on Parent's Availability, Disparities between Home and School Culture, Feeling of Inadequacies, and Parent and Teacher Attitude. These barriers continue to be prevalent despite the research and best practices that exist for parent involvement. Parent availability negatively impacted parent involvement due to the existence of single-parent homes or low-income families. These constraints limit parents' ability to participate in activities during regular school hours, including volunteer opportunities, as well as teacher conferences. These socioeconomic changes directly impact the type of parental involvement a parent may have at the school site (Trotman, 2001).

Culture has consistently impacted parent involvement in schools due to the disparity between parents and teachers (Burns, 1993). Often, when schools do not implement communication processes in their parents' native language, it impacts parents' ability to be involved. Studies conducted by Mannan and Blackwell (1992) determined that two-way communication was often challenging when the school environment was not sensitive to the home language and culture. Many parents were discouraged from initiating any dialogue with the teacher. Beyond the Bake Sale noted that successful methods to build cultural and social capital included providing parents with information and knowledge as the key to bridging the gap between home and school (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007). Access to resources impacts parents' ability to be involved in school because parents are not well versed in helping. This lack of knowledge created a cyclical chain of events that continued to impact parent involvement and, subsequently, student achievement. The implementation of school and community resource centers have been able to address these issues. Authors have noted that showcasing local businesses enables them to offer additional resources to both the parents and

the school. (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007).

Both parents and teachers have identified several barriers to parent involvement (Vellymalay, 2012; Wyche, 2010). The National PTA (1996) described the most common obstacles as the lack of time, not being valued, and not knowing how to contribute. Further barriers to parent involvement include not understanding the educational system, childcare difficulties, language, cultural differences, and transportation difficulties. Additionally, parents often do not feel welcomed. Low literacy levels, academic jargon, snobbery, boring meetings, and parents who have unmet needs themselves are also barriers to parent involvement.

Gaps In the Literature

Since these barriers, as mentioned earlier, exist, a closer look at the Parent Involvement Plan (PIP) is necessary to assess the written language utilized to involve parents in these plans. Thus far, the studies that have taken place have not reviewed this document from the written lens, specifically in Title I Elementary Schools. Through an analysis of Parental Involvement Plans (PIPs), current gaps in parental involvement strategies can be addressed and align plans to research-based best-practices. This will support the school in creating a culture where parents play an active role in their education. The analysis could also expose a lack of fidelity because the writing of plans did not directly impact an influential parent involvement culture at the local school level. Ultimately, effectively written and implemented (PIPs) are the first step in removing these barriers and shifting the culture at the local school level.

Overview of Conceptual Frameworks for Parental Involvement

Coleman (1966), with the Coleman Report, was the catalyst for parent involvement research. This report led to the development of multiple frameworks to understand parental involvement and its intricacies. Gordon (1979) developed one of the first conceptual frameworks

to assess parents' role, specifically in early childhood education Head Start. Gordon explored parent involvement that included three areas of focus: (a) Parent Impact Model, (b) School Impact Model, and (c) Community Impact Model. These models explored the interaction between home and school (Bauch, 1994). In the first model, the research identified parent impact through parents' interactions with students in their home environment. The School Impact was through volunteerism, advisory roles, as well as other in-school participation. The Community Impact analyzed parents' roles within their community and any additional capacity outside of the school. Gordon was able to suggest roles for parents who would impact student academic achievement.

Eugenia Berger (1991) described a model of parental involvement that identified six roles for parents within schools, which included:

- Parents as teachers of their children,

- Parents as volunteer resources,

- Parents as employed resources,

- Parents as temporary volunteers,

- Parents as volunteer resources,

- Parents as policymakers,

Unlike other frameworks, Berger's (1991) framework was not inclusive of parents as learners. Although it was not included, it remained in alignment with the impact of parental involvement in student academic achievement.

Chavkin and Williams (1993) researched the attitudes and practices of parents. This research led to the understanding of parent involvement from the perspective of parents. Through the survey of 3,013 parents from a total of six states (Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New

Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas), the researcher divided the identification of parent roles into seven categories:

- *Paid school staff.* working in the district as an aide or employee

- *Audience.* attending school performances and conferences

- *Decision-maker.* serving on an advisory council or committee

- *Program supporter.* going to school to assist with special events

- *Advocate.* meeting with administration to speak on behalf of others for the change in policy and practice

- *Home tutor.* helping at home with homework and other educational tasks

- *Co-learner.* attending professional development with school staff

This report emphasized parents' role in a way that made it possible for involvement in many ways. Economic disadvantages and academic inequity among parents would not keep them from participating in some form as an audience, decision-maker, or any of the seven roles mentioned above.

Exciting research conducted by Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994) identified three dimensions of parent involvement:

- *Behavior.* Going to school and attending conferences

- *Cognitive intellectual.* Exposing children to enriching books, environments, and activities

- *Personal.* Belief by children that parents support and encourage school and the activities associated with school

The researcher surveyed over 300 sixth-, seventh-, eighth-graders and their teachers. This framework introduced students' voices and their understanding and belief that their parents impacted their academic achievement and behavior.

Joyce Epstein (2001) developed a different framework known as the School-Family-Community Partnership Model, composed of the Six Types of Parent Involvement (Appendix A). The six types are (a) Parenting, (b) Communication, (c) Volunteering, (d) Learning at Home, (e) Decision-making, (f) Collaborating with the Community. Of the frameworks that existed, Epstein (2001) addressed the following components:

Parenting. This section focused on topics that would address child-rearing to acknowledge the need for parents to understand the importance of the home environment in student development. It incorporates activities that may strengthen parents' understanding of evolution, assist with parenting skills, and improve home conditions. The conditions may support learning and include but are not limited to family support programs, parent education workshops, and home visits (Epstein, Sanders, Sheldon, Simon, Salinas, & Jansorn, 2009; Manz, 2012).

Communication. This type addressed the necessity for reciprocal communication from the home-to-school and the school to home regarding both school activities and student progress, both negative and positive. There are multiple ways to produce effective communication between the family and the school. This communication includes conferences, meetings, handbooks, parents' pick-up report cards, notes, emails, newsletters, phone calls, and websites (Epstein et al., 2009). Any time communication is involved, there will likely be challenges. Contact must be clear and useful. Schools need to consider language barriers and families' literacy that could affect understanding the information shared (Epstein et al., 2009).

Volunteering. This type referred to parents taking an active role within the school setting in events and activities. Research shows the effectiveness of volunteer programs. With volunteer programs in schools, students may be tutored or taught by volunteers, emphasizing the importance of educational success (Epstein et al., 2009). Students may learn more effective

communication skills with adults (Epstein et al., 2009).

Learning at Home. This type incorporated the need for quality exposure to learning in the home environment. When families encourage their children, children are more likely to be actively involved in setting educational success goals (Epstein et al., 2009). Learning at home activities may escalate discussions within the home regarding school, classwork, homework, and future educational plans (Epstein, 2009). Parents can be an essential tool by encouraging students to complete homework assignments and other activities. The parent also can help by setting personal goals for success in school and preparing for postsecondary education or work (Epstein, 2009). Educators and schools may also profit from these activities by boosting family involvement and supporting the educational process (Epstein, 2009). Educators and schools may even recognize a rise in students' motivation from all racial and ethnic backgrounds with reinforcement in the home (Epstein et al., 2009).

Decision-Making. This type addressed school governance participation through school organization memberships, committees, and advisories that guide the school. As schools involve parents in decision-making activities, it is important to include parents from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and other sectors within the school population (Epstein et al., 2009). Families become more aware of policies, programs, and activities and gain a sense of respect within the school when involved in the decision-making process. This process increases a parent's self-confidence, encouraging their ability to support their child's education (Epstein, 2009).

Collaborating with the Community. Finally, this type of involvement refers to the impact on the community via community-based organizations. Effectively collaborating with the community supports the school and reinforces relations with businesses in the local community (Epstein, 2001; Belenardo, 2001). Epstein (2009) defines community as those interested in or

influenced by education quality, not just those families with children in the school. Community activities integrate additional resources, programs, and services with school programs to support learning (Epstein, 2009). Often, students gain self-confidence and ownership of the community they live in by collaborating in activities within the community (Epstein et al., 2009). Families may benefit from schools collaborating with the community by experiencing increased knowledge and gaining community resources to develop skills and obtain services for their families (Epstein, 2009).

Epstein (2001) explained that overlap and separation as students evolved through grade levels and students' age. She cited the distinct separation of spheres during infancy. The various spheres began overlapping precisely in preschool and first grade but then continued to decrease as time progressed. Alternatively, she established that this pattern varied depending on the interplay of pressure between parents and teachers. Joyce Epstein's School-Family-Community Partnership Model examined and defined three key groups in identifying the relationships. They are (a) schools, (b) families, and (c) communities.

Epstein's framework will be the theoretical model utilized in this study. Researchers support this model because it is replete with best practices in effectively bridging parental support and student academics (Bower & Griffin 2011; Martinez, 2004; Uludag 2008; Smith, Wohlstetter, Kuzin & DePedro, 2011; Abel, 2012). It will help build evidence and insight into the importance of PIPs written in parents' language. Epstein's (2001) model acknowledges the importance of the rationale and strategies embedded in school Parental Involvement Plans (PIPs) and its impact on student achievement.

Epstein's theory confirmed that there are multiple ways to interact on an individual and institutional level. The various ways to interact are essential for this study as PIPs can vary in

nature and still achieve the intended outcome needed to increase parent involvement. These interactions can be as simple as implementing PTAs in schools or as intricate as Parent Partnership Training Nights aligned to student data. From an individual perspective, Epstein speaks to parent-teacher conferences as activities that are equally as beneficial. PIPs mandate all school officials say to their mission and vision. Epstein (1995) acknowledged the need for the mission and vision to promote and include school, family, and community involvement. The inclusion of these key groups is the foundation for the Six Types of Parent Involvement that need to exist within the school's culture to increase parental involvement and support academic success.

It is necessary to refer to the findings that researchers have validated over the years that thoroughly assess the language of parental involvement delineated within the Parent Involvement Plan (PIP). For this study, the researcher will utilize Epstein's Model of School Family and Community Partnerships (Epstein, 2001) as the framework as a point of reference. The need for a model is to do the following:

- to conduct a Parent Involvement Plan (PIP) analysis,

- to review and utilize elements to include data collection, and

- to establish a validated standard/reference for what criteria could or should exist in plans.

A framework will enable the plans to be reviewed in alignment with evidence of parental involvement best-practices in schools for impacting student achievement.

This study's researcher will utilize the components identified in Epstein's framework as the foundation of the research and support in answering the research questions. Each of the six components should appear in the Parent Involvement Plans (PIPs). School officials can validate the components within a school's PIP, ensuring that language and practices align to researched-

based best-practices for parent involvement.

Of the frameworks available, Epstein highlights parent involvement "in school," not just at home. The rationale behind utilizing this model comes from "A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement. Annual Synthesis, 2002," where the Southwest Educational Development Lab (SEDL) staff identified 80 research studies and literature reviews. Researchers conduct studies and use Epstein's six types or variations as an assessment tool in parent involvement studies. Epstein's model defined the role of parents' practices for parent involvement in elementary school. Some researchers condensed this list into parent involvement at home and school, using definitions like the following:

1. Engaging in learning activities at home, including helping with reading skills and checking homework;

2. Supervising children and monitoring how they spend their time out of school;

3. Talking about school and what children are learning; and

4. Attending school events, going to parent-teacher conferences, meeting with teachers, and volunteering in the classroom or school.

Many researchers found using the Six Types of Parent Involvement to be valid and reliable. It has been used in many studies worldwide when evaluating studies. Below are several studies conducted using Epstein's Six Types of Parental Involvement. They are as follows:

- *The Implementation of the Epstein's Model as a Partnership Framework at Saudi Kindergartens.* According to Epstein's Model, the study aims to reveal the implementation of a partnership framework at Saudi kindergartens, considered from kindergarten' female teachers' perceptions (Gahwaji, 2019). According to

Gahwasji, This model provides a comprehensive perspective and an integrated framework in the fields of partnership that include parenting, communicating, volunteering, decision-making, learning at home, and collaborating with the community. The Epstein's model is one of the most popular models of partnership and is considered as a comprehensive model (Gahwaji, 2019)

- *Latino Parents of English Learners in Catholic Schools: Home vs. School-Based Educational Involvement.* This study sought to expand the field's understanding of Latino parents' educational involvement whose children were English Learners and also attended Catholic schools. In addition to assessing involvement, the researchers set out to assess factors that promote involvement (e.g., teachers encouraging involvement), parents' educational aspirations for their children, and reasons that parents might not be involved based on the literature on immigrant parents. The types of involvement included within the original survey follow the typology of Epstein (1995) with the exception of decision making involvement and collaboration with the community (Vera, Heineke, Carr, Camacho, Israel, Goldberger, Clawson & Hill, 2017).

- *Parents' Perceptions of Their Involvement in Schooling.* This study's objective was to examine rural Turkish parents' perceptions about their schooling involvement with elementary school students based on Epstein's (1995) Six Types of Parent Involvement. This study also investigated the differences among parent demographic characteristics (education level, income, marital status, and age) and parent involvement at the elementary grade level in Turkey's rural areas. The researcher states that Epstein conducted research over several decades using a

model of parent involvement that she based on Bronfenbrenner's (1977) social ecological model (Epstein, 1985; 1987). This supported the use of her model as the typology for the survey developed and conducted in Turkey's rural areas (Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018).

- *A Comparative Study on Parental Involvement.* Epstein's model of parental involvement guides this study. This study has two research questions about teachers' perceptions of the efficacy of current attempts at parental involvement and teachers' suggestions for improving parental involvement at the research site. The researcher states that Epstein's model of parental involvement has been found to be effective in increasing parental involvement in school (Paulynice, 2020).

- *Epstein's Model of Parental Involvement: Parent Perceptions in Urban Schools.* This study was to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in parents' perceptions of frequency and effectiveness regarding parental involvement among various demographic groups (e.i., ethnicity, education level, socio-economic status, number of children). The researchers acknowledge Epstein's expertise as a rationale for the use of her framework and state that Epstein established the National Network for Partnership Schools to assist in connecting research, policy, and practices in education. The Epstein typology was utilized to develop and create the survey that would be used in the research. (Newman, N., Northcutt, A., Farmer, A., & Black, B., 2019)

Although her aforementioned peers accepted the Joyce Epstein Model, other studies critique its inclusivity. For example, a case study by Bower and Griffin (2011) concludes, "The Epstein Model may not fully capture how parents are or want to be involved in their children's education,

indicating that new ways of working with parents in high-minority, high-poverty schools are warranted". Some researchers noted concern with approaches to parental involvement that construct restricted roles for parents in the education of their children (Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis, & Goerge, 2004). In addition, though researchers found that engaging families can improve student achievement (Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Doan Holbein, 2005; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991) it is not enough to overcome low-quality schools' deficits.

Some of the empirical research that uses the Epstein Model suggests this is a good framework to use when examining parental involvement. The National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 was originally conducted to assess the critical transitions experienced by students as they leave middle or junior high school, and progress through high school and into postsecondary institutions or the work force (NELS: 88). Later, the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS: 88), sponsored by the National Center of Education Statistics, examined the effects of Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement in the high school setting (see Appendix A). It found that the most substantial impact on 12th-grade student achievement stemmed from parents' actively encouraging their children to plan for and attend college. The effects are weakest for reading and most significant for math. As a result of these findings, this study focuses only on elementary schools. That is where the highest levels of parent involvement exist. Despite some of the critiques of the Epstein's framework, researchers like Garrett (2008), Gordon and Louis (2009, and Hornby (2011) in alignment with her framework found that students who had regular parental involvement earned higher grades and test scores. Thus, Epstein's work serves as a useful model to examine parental involvement in schools, and specifically the language of parent involvement.

Summary

In summary, researchers like Epstein (1991) noted several benefits to parent involvement that directly impact students. Other benefits include having more positive attitudes toward school; much higher achievement, particularly in reading; higher quality, more level-appropriate work; completion of more homework in less time; and observing a closer relationship between family and school in general. Not only are students impacted by parent involvement, but teacher morale is higher. Schools garner a better reputation, and there is more generous support from businesses and families (Henderson, 1994). School officials classify fewer students as having special needs. They maintain positive self-esteem and exhibit the appropriate behaviors expected within the academic setting. Also, as students' progress to high school, parent involvement directly impacts graduation rates, according to Henderson (1994). Research supports the impact of parental involvement, and laws mandated PIPs to increase parent involvement. The only questions remain whether these plans are merely written for compliance or written with fidelity through language aligned to research-based best-practices. The following chapters will identify the answers to these questions and more.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

Although the frameworks were above-identified and defined parental involvement in many ways, the fidelity in which Parent Involvement Plans (PIPs) remained in question. Some school administrators, staff, and parents had a different perception of parental involvement. More so, some Title I Schools continued to exhibit low parental involvement, and student academic performance had yet to align with Parent Involvement Plans (PIPs). Two research questions guided the study:

1. How does the language in the Parent Involvement Plan (PIP) describes the ways parent involvement will take place within Elementary Title I schools?

2. In what way does the language in the elementary Title I schools Parent Involvement Plans (PIPs) align with the six components of parental involvement identified by Epstein's Model of School Family and Community Partnerships Framework?

Overview of Research Design

The study's researcher will utilize a concept-driven coding scheme aligned with the Six Types of Parent Involvement through the qualitative document analysis process. A Document Analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents, both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted). Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis required that data be examined and interpreted to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; see also Rapley, 2007; Creswell, 2009). This study's researcher selected to analyzed 30 Parent Involvement Plans (PIP) of Title I elementary schools. By utilizing the Parent Involvement Plans (PIP), this study's researcher compared written language and trends among the plans.

This method provided a written description of how parent involvement embedded in their culture at the local school level. Also, the ability to see an alignment between plans and researched-based best-practices was codable. Conducting a document analysis was best suited for the study because PIPs delineate in writing how parent involvement will take place to engage parents at the school level. As per district protocol, the schools' team (assistant principal, teachers, counselors, parents, and community members) developed PIPs. The school officials then read, edit, approved, and signed PIPs. School officials reviewed, edited, and approved plans at the start of each year, entering school plans by the designated vital stakeholders. The PIPs become public information on the schools' websites, providing access to this research method. As a result, this method allowed for the proposed questions of the study to be answered.

Rationale

This research design allowed for the assessment of Parent Involvement Plans (PIP) from elementary Title I schools to find research-based best-practices and trends of the written language utilized within the (PIPs). The documents also supported the determination of written alignment with Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement Framework. This method provided examples of the types of activities described within PIPs. The Parent Involvement Plans (PIP) were accessible to the public, which offered access to these documents without interference. The background knowledge gained as a former District Administrator of Parent and Family Engagement offered the expertise needed to conduct and analyze the research.

The rationale behind this study's researcher's selecting the Epstein's Framework over other frameworks stemmed from Epstein's delineation of the Six Types of Parent Involvement. Other researchers also supported this model because it compiled best practices to bridge parental support and student academics (Bower & Griffin 2011; Martinez, 2004; Uludag 2008; Smith,

Wohlstetter, Kuzin & DePedro, 2011; Abel, 2012). Of all the researchers conducted regarding parent involvement, many researchers have highlighted her framework more than others as the leading model for parental involvement within the local school. Lastly, Epstein offers participation and speaks to students, parents, and teachers' challenges and results. Suppose the study's researcher found that the PIPs aligned with these actions, then the researcher suggested that the products in school should validate the impact of parent involvement on academic achievement.

The Researcher

This investigation's interest stemmed from the study's researcher's background in parental involvement and the passion for seeing parents involved in their child's academic achievement in school. The study researcher chose a document analysis that aligned with the many trends that the researcher used previously. The document analysis was best suited for this study because the PIPs delineated the written language in which a school intended to implement to engage parents at the school level. Throughout the research, this study's researcher's role was guided by the pre-established criteria that allowed for clear guidelines for interpreting the documents.

The effects that arose during the research were mainly in how this study's researcher coded the information. Initially, this study's researcher anticipated coding each document independently across all pre-established types and sample practices. This study's researcher chose to analyze each section identified in the PIPs for all 30 schools at a given sweep instead of moving to the next action. Because of this writer's curious nature, the researcher questioned the validity of the language. It genuinely aligned based on the written language used rather than this study's researcher's pre-existing knowledge of the school selected and previous participation in

various school activities.

Proposed Setting

Sun County Public Schools (pseudonym) is a Large Urban District. The rationale for selecting the district was due to its designation as an A-graded school district in the state. The Sun County Public Schools' demographic makeup is diverse, which allowed for the assessment of written language directly speaking to parents' inclusion from diverse backgrounds and other sub-groups. The district has a high population of English Language Learners (ELL). Sun County Public Schools dedicated funding to focus on parent involvement, specifically in Title I elementary schools, by implementing Parent Involvement Liaisons. The district also established a department specifically for providing support and resources focused on parent involvement in both Title I and non-Title I schools.

Sun County Public Schools mandates that all Title I schools write and implement Parent Involvement Plans (PIP) within their schools. Key stakeholders, such as administration, teachers, staff, and community partners, developed the plans. These people are also members of the School Advisory Council (SAC) elected by the parents and staff at the beginning of each school year. This committee assists the principal in addressing the school's needs and providing the parent voice to various topics. The selected schools were Elementary Title I schools. The rationale for assessing elementary schools' PIPs was parental involvement being the highest in these grade levels versus middle and high school.

Sampling Plan

This study's researcher selected from a single district due to the accessibility of the data and this district's focus on increasing parental involvement in Title I Schools. The chosen district implemented school liaisons specifically to increase parent involvement in Title I Schools. The

analysis consisted of 30 PIPs of elementary Title I schools. This selection allowed for a document analysis at the grade levels. Research showed some of the highest percentages of parent involvement than middle and high school. The document dates ranged from the 2015-2016 school year through the 2019-2020 school year. These documents were the only data resources used throughout this data analysis.

Data Gathering and Data Analysis

This study's researcher used Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Parent Involvement as the standard to assess the plans to analyze the data. This study's researcher pulled initial data via the schools' websites via links found on the schools' homepage, Parent tab, or School Improvement Tab. Of the 64 possible elementary schools' PIPs, only 30 schools had a PIP available on their website for download. The schools that had plans readily available online encouraged parental involvement by the mere availability of the PIPs. The schools' selection was not random but based on the district's published list of Title I schools. The selected PIPs did not include any Charter Schools.

This study's researcher downloaded documents for each school, labeled them according to their actual school name, and then provided a numerical pseudonym to ensure district and school confidentiality. Because less than half of the district's elementary schools' PIPs were available online, this study's results showed influences in various ways. For example, the simple fact that these 30 schools chose to post their PIP online indicated a belief about how those schools felt about parental involvement. In this way, they influenced the data and analysis. They cannot speak to what all schools across the district did regarding parental involvement.

This study's researcher conducted the initial coding; initial coding defined what was present in the data. Because of the pre-existing framework, the study's researcher conducted the

coding process in a way that minimized bias interpretation of the data (Charmaz, 2006; Glesne, 2011; Merriam, 2009).

Coding Scheme

The study's researcher implemented a concept-driven coding scheme aligned with Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement Framework. This implementation allowed for initial guidance for the document analysis of the PIPs. This study's researcher followed the delineated coding processes:

1. The researcher obtained a list of Title I Schools of the designated district.

2. The study's researcher selected the schools based on the availability of the Parent Involvement Plan online by going to the school's homepage and looking for the PIP Link on the homepage, Parent tab, or School Improvement tab. In some cases, this study's researcher had to enter a google search to find the most recent document version.

3. The researcher created a spreadsheet for assessment. This spreadsheet was the researcher's method of recording and coding data. The researcher developed a rubric to glean how each school performed when restricted to the Six Types of Parent Involvement and the 35 Sample Practices. Specifically, each school received one point for each type for the six types if there was written evidence within the PIP to support the definition of that type. Once the researcher tallied all sections, the school could receive a score ranging from 0 to 6. Similarly, each of the Sample Practices received one point if there was written evidence within the PIP to support the suggested Sample Practice. Once the researcher tallied all sections, the school could receive a score ranging from 0 to 35.

4. The researcher filled in the numeric identifier.

5. The researcher entered the year of the document.

6. The researcher coded for signatures of the document

7. The researcher coded for the current year

8. The researcher obtained a copy of Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement (see Appendix A) and added the Type and Sample Practices to the Data Sheet.

9. The researcher highlighted the school's row that the researcher previously coded as being done for the right school.

10. The researcher entirely coded one PIP to establish a baseline for how the researcher coded the information.

11. Each PIP has the following sections: (a) Mission Statement, (b) Involvement of Parents, (c) Coordination and Integration with Other Federal Programs, (d) Annual Parent Meeting for Title I Programs and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), (e) Flexible Parent Meetings, (f) Building Capacity, (g) Staff Development, (h) Other Activities, (i) Communication, (j) Accessibility, (k) Discretionary Activities, (l) Barriers, (m) School-Parent Compact, and (n) Adoption.

12. The study's researcher coded one section entirely across all Types of Involvement and sample strategies.

13. The researcher checked to see if the PIP has a signed signature page.

14. The researcher sectioned off each Type on its spreadsheet. The researcher analyzed the data in a compartmentalized state for the second round of coding. The study's researcher coded by highlighting or underlining statements that stood out.

15. The researcher greyed out any sections that did not have any language to affirm the item.

16. The researcher calculated each school's score and percentage and created data charts

to reflect the data for only sections with data sets available.

17. Finally, the researcher compared the data across all sections to ensure the figures' validity.

Validity and Credibility

The study's researcher utilized Epstein's Framework of Parental Involvement to validate the document analysis. Epstein is one of the leading researchers in the field of parent and family involvement. From the study, the researcher assessed the data for its alignment to the six components delineated in Epstein's Framework, (a) Parenting, (b) Communicating, (c) Volunteering, (d) Learning at Home, (e) Decision Making, and (f) Collaborating with Community. Also, the researcher conducted a second round of coding, separating the data into individual sections. In these sections, the research led consistency checks of fields to ensure that data corresponded to the designated question and the identified school.

Limitations

The researcher found a few limitations to the document analysis approach that the researcher anticipated as delineated in the following:

1. *Insufficient details*. The researcher found some documents that school officials produced for purposes other than the research. They were created independent of a research agenda; consequently, they did not provide sufficient detail to answer a research question.

2. *Low retrievability*. School officials produced irretrievable or poorly retrievable documents. Yin (1994) has noted that school officials possibly deliberately block accessibility to documents.

3. *Biased selectivity*. An incomplete collection of documents suggests "biased selectivity." (Yin, 1994, p. 80). In an organizational context, the available (selected) documents

are likely to be aligned with corporate policies and procedures and with the agenda of the organization's principles. However, they may also reflect the particular organizational unit's emphasis that handles record-keeping (e.g., Human Resources).

4. *Document Reviewer Bias*. A researcher can introduce bias in data analysis by analyzing data to give preference to the conclusions in favor of research hypotheses (Simundic, Ana-Maria 2013, p. 12). This type of bias was due to former affiliation with the district or department in charge of monitoring this focus area.

6. *The Parent Involvement Plans (PIPs)*. These documents outline the intent of the schools regarding parent involvement. These documents only detailed the schools' implementation, not an assurance on accountability.

Given its efficiency and cost-effectiveness, in particular, document analysis offered advantages that outweighed the limitations.

Summary

This study's researcher utilized the document analysis methodology to address the two research questions that guided the study. The researcher used Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement as a baseline for coding and validating (see Appendix A). The researcher completed a formulation of findings to address the hypothesis of the study. This study's researcher explained Chapter III's results in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

The Study and the Researcher

This chapter aimed to provide the results and analysis of the study's research gleaned from the data collection described in Chapter III. Here, the researcher shared the outcome of a deductive analysis using Epstein's Model of School Family and Community Partnerships Framework and Sample Practices. The data described the examples of the language used within the Parent Involvement Plans (PIPs) and tables and charts to give an overall perspective of the findings. This chapter is essential to the general dissertation as conclusions, supported, and validated regarding the researcher's original hypothesis. It answered the research questions that guided the study.

Presentation of Data and Results of Analysis

Documentation School Year

The study's researcher obtained documents from the Sun County Public Schools' school websites and analyzed the results. The researcher assessed the records via the school home page, Parent, or School Improvement Tabs/links. Only 11 (36.7%) of 30 schools reflected the current school year of 2019-2020 as featured on their websites (see Figure 1).
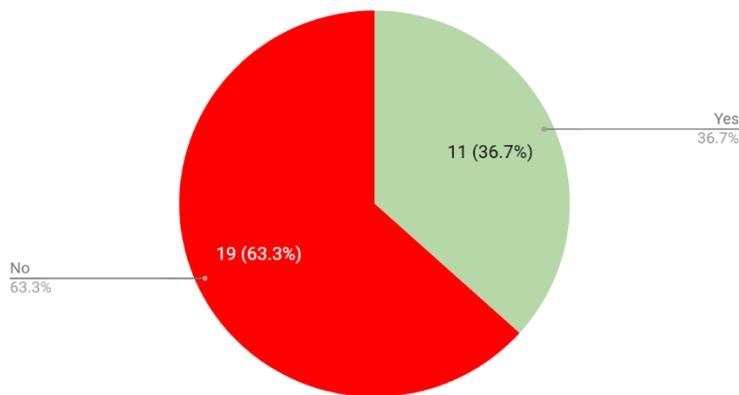
Figure 1. Schools with Internet Information Regarding PIPs

Mission Statement

When reviewing the document's mission statement, the researcher specifically looked for parents' or families' inclusion in the language. All schools mentioned the words parent or family in the mission statement. Within this section, the researcher indicated that schools made a specific connection to affirm the belief in parental involvement as a proponent to student achievement. Figure 2 depicted that 27 of 30 schools wrote that parents would support students' academic success. Examples of this language were:

"*to create partnerships between the school, families, and our community, which is a shared responsibility, to help students reach their highest level of academic and social achievement.*"

and

"*to foster a positive learning environment that will lead our students to success with the support of students, teachers, parents, and the community, with an emphasis on strengthening parent partnerships by encouraging involvement in all school activities, and regular communication between school and home.*"
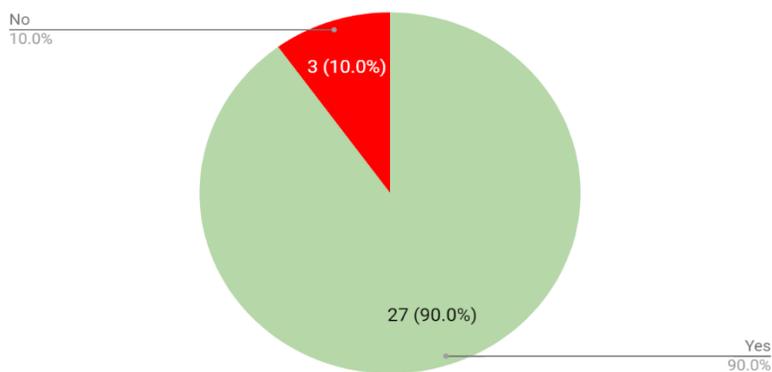
Figure 2: Schools indicated Parents in support of Students Academic Success.

There was language utilized that spoke to how parental involvement would take place. Providing readers of the Parent Involvement Plans (PIPs) a preview of what to expect throughout the plan is beneficial. Twenty (20) of 30 schools added language in their mission statement describing how parental involvement would occur. School officials used words such as workshops, curriculum nights, and family-centered events to convey parent participation. One school used the following statement in its PIP. It stated that the school was "committed to providing our parents and students with a culturally responsive environment that will impact their academic and social-emotional needs." The need to emphasize culture is vital in creating a welcoming environment for parents and students alike. Specifically, in districts with a diverse make-up, this culturally responsive setting will help parents overcome the barriers that have historically kept them away.

Overall, this researcher indicated that the Mission Section of the PIPs reflected a language that described how parent involvement would occur. They aligned with Epstein's Model of School Family and Community Partnerships Framework.

Results Relating to Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement

The following data sequence highlighted the school's alignment to Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement and discussed some of the 35 Sample Practices' findings identified by Epstein. The researcher coded the Sample Practices to assess Sun County Public Schools. The research looked for schools' alignment to the framework and the language used to describe ways parent involvement occurred within the schools. The researcher also used the Sample Practices in this research as a rubric for what schools did regarding parent involvement.

Parenting

In alignment with Epstein's Framework, the Parenting section spoke to helping families

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establish home environments to support children and students. The researcher observed that 30 of 30 schools utilized language in alignment with the framework.

The language utilized in this section highlighted Parent-Teacher Conference Nights, Curriculum Nights, and Open House to preview grade-level expectations for the year. Eleven schools gave specific expectations for Open-House. "Explain education terminology so that all can understand (i.e., instead of just using word fluency, fact family. etc.). One school accompanied these terms with a definition and model strategies accordingly. Frequently in-school educators and staff are accustomed to language that they understand. Schools implemented procedures in the PIPs that allowed all parents to become active supporters for their child(ren) at home regardless of academic achievement. Another school highlighted the need for weekly previews as a support for learning at each grade level. See an example below:

> *"...students take home (parent/student-friendly) weekly previews, which include skills, vocabulary, and homework for the week. To foster an understanding of the content for both students and parents, definitions, examples, and sample problems are included."*

Twenty-two (22) of 30 schools identified conditions that support learning at each grade level (see Figure 3). Parents could seek ways to prepare their students for learning by offering parents packets that previewed the forthcoming work. By utilizing YouTube or other online resources, parents could lookup resources to align with the outlined expectations to support student academic achievement.

A total of 5 out of 30 schools wrote about training for parents (see Figure 4). The language utilized for this item was to provide parents with *"(Hispanic and Haitian Creole) ESOL Classes for Parents"* as well as Family Literacy Nights. There was no other language utilized in the PIPs that spoke to GED or college credit for parents. Observing a low percentage

of written language to address parents' training was concerning. There are opportunities to

support parents' capacity to help their children better.
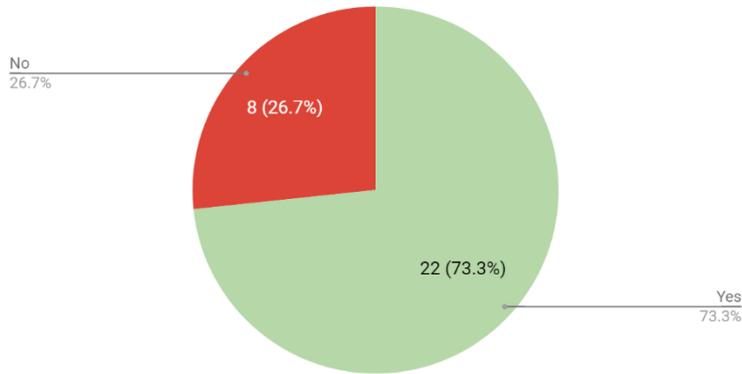
Figure 3. Suggestions for conditions that support learning at each grade level
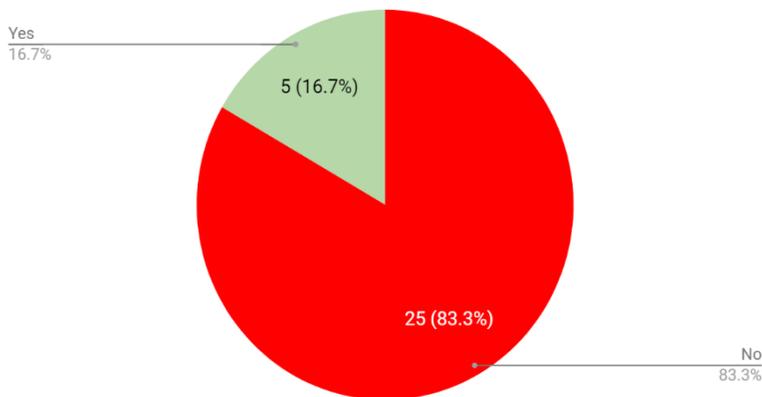
Figure 4. Parent education and other courses or training for parents (e.g., GED, college credit, family literacy, etc.

Throughout this section, there was a high dependency on the ESE, Guidance, and Parent

Engagement Liaison to assist families with health, nutrition, and other services. Regarding the

ESE and guidance, the school officials used the following language: Cover the cost of staffing a

childcare room with an OCPS staff member(s) for parents to utilize during parent activities. See

an example below:

"… will use various school resources to assist parents and families with their needs. The

following are some of the school resources available to parents and families:

-The ESE and Guidance office has a resource center that includes information about but not limited to the following: Homeless Education, Retention, Counseling Services, Exceptional Education Services, Behavioral Support Services, and other resources outside of the school."

This language highlighted many subgroups that some parents identified. Many schools identified the Parent Engagement Liaison as the main point of contact for parent support. See an example below:

"Our Parent Engagement Liaison (PEL) will be the main point of contact for parents to receive resources, support, and information about activities that engage parents and family."

In some cases, schools suggested covering the cost of staffing childcare rooms with a staff member(s) for parents to utilize during parent activities. Schools committed to providing transportation to *"a minimum of 1 Parent Academy offered throughout the year."* Of the 30 schools, five schools utilized language that affirmed home visits' implementation to enable "a relationship with the school staff, *which will promote a positive school and home partnership to increase student achievement."*

Overall, school officials wrote their PIPs with language that described how parent involvement occurred and aligned with Parenting Type identified by Epstein's Model of School Family and Community Partnerships Framework. As for the Sample Actions under the Parenting Type, the sample failed to reflect language for P2 on the Framework, which reads follows: Workshops, videotapes, computerized phone messages on parenting and child-rearing at each age and grade level.

Communicating

The Communicating section of Epstein's Framework spoke to designing effective school-to-home and home-to-school communication about school and children's progress. The researcher observed that 30 out of 30 schools utilized language aligned with the framework type.

Epstein used specific language in this type to focus effectively on conferences, communication, and translation. When identifying the language used regarding conferences with every parent at least once a year, the data was consistent across all school PIP samples. The most common language identified was Meet the Teacher, Open House, Report Card Nights, and Conference Nights. School officials further clarified these terms with supporting language such as:

> *"At parent conferences, parents, teachers and parents will discuss how to ensure the child's academic success and what the parent can do at home to help their child/children succeed."*

or

> *"Teachers and other staff members will support parents' understanding of curriculum, forms, and assessments used to measure progress and expected achievement through the following: School Compacts, Report Card Nights, Progress Book Planners, Parent Conferences Connect Orange Messages Class Dojo."*

and

> *"Parents will be included in the formulation of suggestions and decision making through the following: One on one meetings with teachers, administrators, and/or support personnel."*

One description stood out as it spoke to conferences being utilized to target the students' specific

needs, outlining expectations, and goals while using data to drive the discussion. Schools must engage parents with data. This engagement allowed parents to have a visual to assess their students compared to where they need to be. Data such as assessment scores, report card grades, and benchmark diagnostic results are beneficial to having clear communication with parents. Many of the PIPs suggested the utilization of technology, school personnel, and third party vendor services.

> *"At events, parents also have the option to check out a " talk system" monitor. if the*
> *information is being presented in English, parents who wear the earpiece will hear the*
> *same information translated into their language (ex. Spanish) by a staff member."*

Some schools highlighted the use of Language Line Solutions, which *"allows parents and teachers to communicate in the parent's native language when a staff member is unable to translate*. "Some schools made sure to specify the variations of translations for parents as needed.

> *"Disabled parents will be provided necessary accommodations on an as-needed basis.*
> *Example: A conference for a hearing-impaired parent is coordinated with an American*
> *Sign and Language interpreter from the district."*

Not only was translation addressed from an auditory manner but a visual one as well. *"Provide documents translated into Spanish, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole"* and *"provide translation and materials in a comprehensible language."* Overall, 28 out of 30 schools spoke to language translators' uses to assist families as needed in Figure 5.

As it pertained to communicating through notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters, and other communications, 30 out of 30 schools fulfilled this item in their writing. Examples of these comments were

"We will ensure the organized, ongoing, and timely manner of involving parents through

the following methods: (a) Home-to-school and school-to-home communication in English or,

(b) other languages, (b) Student planners (d) Flyers, (e) Newsletters (f) Connect messages, (g)

School Website, (h) Twitter, (i) Facebook, and (j) Emails."
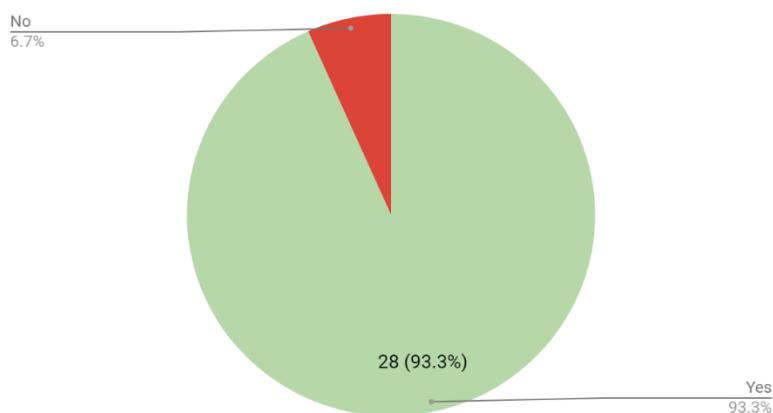
Figure 5. Language translators to assist families as needed

The array of communication came in the form of *"distributing year-long calendars in the*

first week of school" Some schools included the intended goal for the various forms of

communication, such as *"we will share information through various best-known practices in*

multiple languages in order to reach the highest number of parents and families." Most schools

shared information about parental rights and school choice at the yearly Title I meeting.

Overall, school officials wrote the PIPs in language that described how communicating

with parents would occur. The language aligned with the Communicating Type identified with

Epstein's Model of School Family and Community Partnerships Framework. Sample Actions

under the Communicating Type failed to reflect language for the C3 section. It reads, "Weekly

or monthly folders of student work sent home for review and comments."

Volunteering

The Volunteering type of parental involvement sought to affirm the existence of

recruitment and organized parent help and support. Overall, 21 of 30 schools had a language that spoke to this item. (see Figure 6)
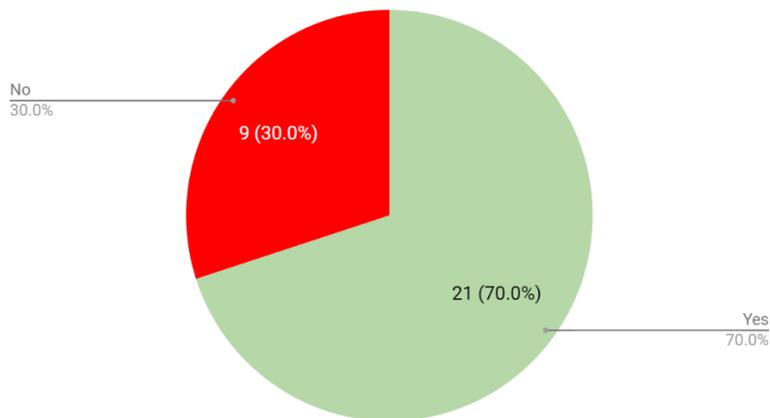
Figure 6. Recruit and organize parents help and support

The school officials used language to address schools and classroom volunteer programs. I was clear and consistent for those who utilized it. For example, the researcher identified statements like the following:

> *"Our doors are open to the community through the implementation of activities during and after school that community members and organizations can volunteer to support through our Partners In Education (PIE) coordinators as well as our ADDitions coordinators."*

and

> "*Events are planned during and after school, so that community members can volunteer and support the school as Partners In Education (PIE) and ADDitions.*"

Though straightforward language, only 18 of 30 schools spoke to having a volunteer program. (see Figure 7). Parents' ability to volunteer at the school was essential. It supported a positive school culture and partnership between home and school.
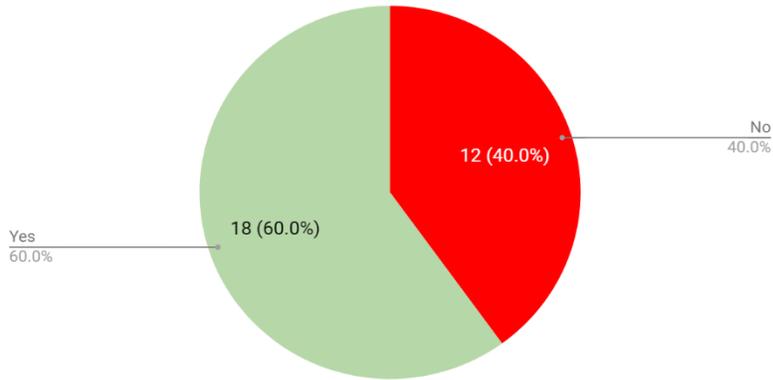
Figure 7. School and classroom volunteer program to help
teacher, administrators, students, and other parents

As it pertained to having a parent room or family center, only 7 of 30 schools utilized language

identified with this item's existence (see Figure 8). The language used in this case were

prominent. The first example of language expressed was, "*Our parent center will be open every*

school day from 8:00 am until 3:30 pm for parents to select material or meet with the parent

liaison."
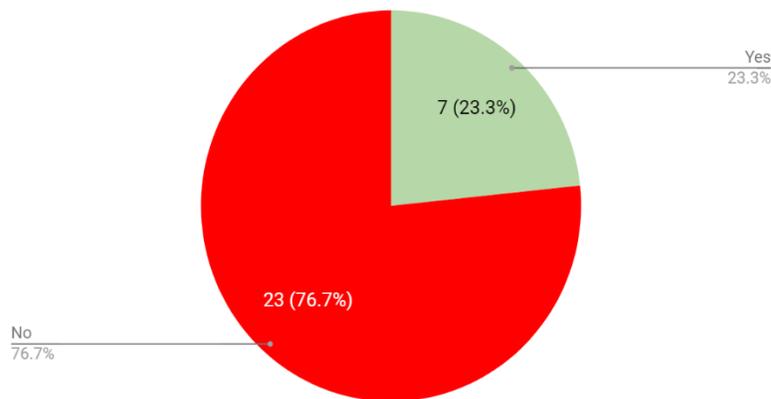
Figure 8. Parent room or family center for volunteer work,
meetings, resources for families

The second example was, *"The Parent Resource room will be accessible Monday through*

Friday from 8:30- 3:30 for parent training, use of parent resources, use of computers and

opportunities for parents to volunteer." In both cases, the language included the time of

49

availability. Through the specificity of times where the resource center was available, parents could make arrangements considering their availability.

Overall, a significant number of school officials failed to include language about parent rooms or family centers for volunteers in their PIPs. Those school officials who welcomed the language described how volunteering for parents happened. The researcher found the language to align with Volunteering Type as identified by Epstein's Model of School Family and Community Partnerships Framework. As for Sample Actions under the Volunteering Type, the sample failed to reflect language for the following items in V3: Annual postcard survey to identify all available talents, times, and volunteers' locations. Schools also were unable to capture V4: Parent patrols or other activities to aid school programs' safety and operation.

Learning At Home

The following data delineated the language found in the sample PIPs related to the information parents and families received to help students at home. Parents could help their children with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning. The keywords that guided the evidence was "at home." The researcher indicated that 30 of 30 schools utilized language in alignment with this type.

School officials used key language that stood out in some PIPs. They ensured that the language "linked to learning."

> *"Activities will teach parents how to help their child(ren) at home through the implementation of various best-known practices that are linked to learning."*

In another example, the school official was intentional and explicitly stated:

> *"Teachers will provide short lessons to parents and students with the expectation that parents will use these strategies to help their students at home."*

or

> *"We will host multiple evenings where we expose our parents to the curriculum and*
>
> *grade-level standards which must be mastered by our students."*

and

> *"Curriculum PLCs - Teachers will discuss expected grade-level skills in reading, writing,*
>
> *or math. Parents will be given strategies and resources to assist their students in*
>
> *developing these skills at home."*

Of the 30 schools, 29 spoke to parents and families on required skills, as depicted in Figure 9.
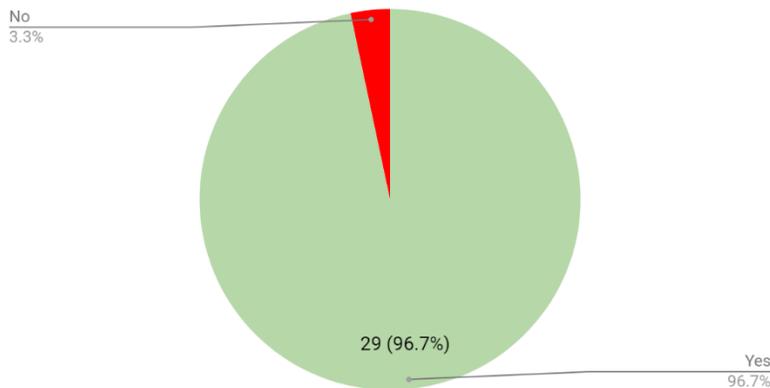
Figure 9. Information for families on skills required for
students in all subjects at each grade

This study's researcher found language to support information to improve students' skills in various class and school assessments varied among the samples. Some languages identified the review of state assessment information along with resources to support the student at home.

Events such as *"Close Reading Night - Educate parents on close reading strategies to help their students with their academics."* were mentioned along with *"State Assessment (SA) Parent Night - Teachers discuss requirements of SA and specific in reading, math, science, and writing that are required to meet grade-level requirements."* An additional comment, *such as "Parents are*

given sample questions and resources to use with their student at home," was a good example used in the PIPs. Throughout the review of PIPs, the researcher found language aligned with the Existence of Family math, science, and reading activities at home.

As examples, the researcher identified statements like the following:

> *"Literacy Night (Reading and Writing) Provide workshops for students and parents - topics to include homework strategies, study skills, iReady, Class Dojo, Writing strategies."*

or

> *"Build-A-Book - Teachers will demonstrate skills and strategies that parents can use at home to help their student with reading comprehension and vocabulary development"*

or

> *"Math/Science Nights - Builds parent capacity to understand state standards in math and science and how to implement strategies at home that will increase student achievement."*

and

> *"ELL Parents Night - Provide parents with effective ESL strategies to help their students study at home and make the transition to the English Language."*

Some schools utilized language that was descriptive as to how parents could teach the activity for at-home use, such as:

> *"Academic Parent Partnership Night - Teachers hold class meetings to discuss expectations of assessment results for both reading and math. Parents will receive their individual child's test results, expectations, progress toward benchmarks, and establish a goal for their child's progress as well as learn and activity that will improve their child's*

academic success."

Overall, 24 of 30 schools utilized language aligned with this item. (see Figure 10). The specificity of these activities' outcome allowed parents to prepare themselves mentally for supporting their child at home. Taking the time to explain to parents these best practices would help the increase of student academic achievement.
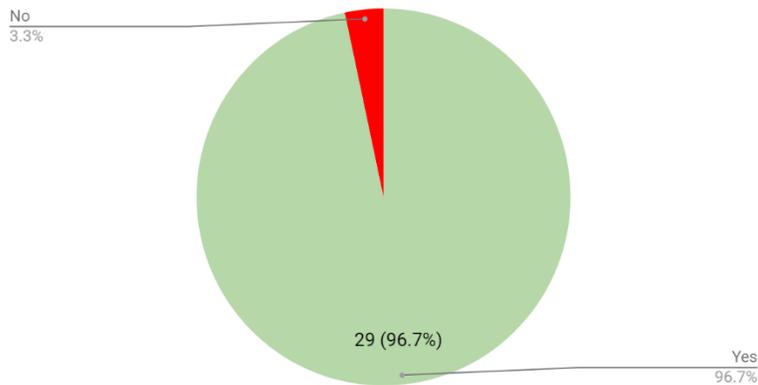
*Figure 10*. Information for families on skills required for
students in all subjects at each grade.

The researcher found that the PIPs with language that described how learning at home would take place for parents. The research saw alignment with the Learning At Home Type identified by Epstein's Model of School Family and Community Partnerships Framework. As for Sample Actions under the Learning At Home Type, the sample failed to reflect language for the following items:

- LAH4: Regular schedule of homework that requires students to discuss and interact with families on what they are learning in class.

- LAH5: Calendars with activities for parents and students at home.

- LAH7: Summer learning packets or activities.

- LAH8: Family participation in setting student goals each year and in planning for college or work.

Decision Making

The study's researcher noticed that this section's data highlighted how school officials involved parents in schools' decision-making process. Upon assessing the samples, the researcher noted that 30 of 30 schools had language in their PIPs that confirmed this item's existence. An obvious answer for this section included the participation of parents serving on the school advisory committee. Having a school advisory team was mandatory in all schools. Others have comments like *parents are included in the decision-making process. We are developing parent leaders*, or *our parents serve representatives.*

The language described as Active PTA/PTO or other parent organizations, advisory councils, or committees for parent leadership and participation were evident and consistent throughout the sample. Consistently, the school officials used the following language:

> *"Parents and families are involved in planning, review, and improvement of Title I Programs by attending School Advisor Council (SAC) meetings, Multilingual Parent Leadership Council (MPLC) meetings, Annual Title I Meetings, Participating in Parent/Teacher Association (PTA) activities."*

Some language specified the importance of parents' role in the decision-making process, like *"If the schoolwide plan is not satisfactory to parents, feedback will be presented at the SAC meeting for discussion, review, and needed updates to the plan."* In other cases, the language mentioned the frequency of parental input, for example:

> *"Parents are asked to give input into all aspects of our school through these meetings as well as informal discussions throughout the school or at evening events."*

The researcher also noted in language that the opportunities to participate in these organizations and committees would "increase the level of parental engagement and become active in the

decision making process at the school."

In addition to those mentioned above, there were instances when language specified dates, times, and additional onsite resources to support parent participation in decision making, such as:

> *"Monthly SAC meetings will be held on the first Tuesday of each month at 5:45 pm with the monthly PTA meeting to be held immediately following. Childcare will be provided for each of these meetings. Two SAC meetings, specifically at the beginning and end of the year, will be devoted to evaluating and revising the Parent and Family Engagement Plan."*

Though the language was specific, school officials failed to define SAC, PTA, and PLC to clarify for parents unfamiliar with the abbreviations and acronyms.

Overall, school officials wrote the PIPs in language that described how parents participated in the decision-making process. It included parents and aligned with the Decision-Making Type identified by Epstein's Model of School Family and Community Partnerships Framework. As for Sample Actions under the Decision-Making Type, the sample failed to reflect language for the following items:

- DM2: Independent advocacy groups to lobby and work for school reform and improvements.
- DM3: District-level councils and committees for family and community involvement.
- DM4: Information on school or local elections for school representatives.
- DM5: Networks to link all families with parent representatives.

Collaborating With Community

As it pertains to schools, the officials wrote the language that identified the community's resources and services to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning.

Nineteen (19) of 30 officials (see Figure 11) indicated that language within the sample of PIPs. The PIP reflected the following languages identified as,

> *"...will use various school resources to assist parents and families with their needs. The following are some of the school resources available to parents and families: The ESE and Guidance office has a resource center that included information about but not limited to the following - Homeless education - Retention - Counseling Services - Exceptional Education Services - Behavioral Support Services - and other resources outside of the school."*
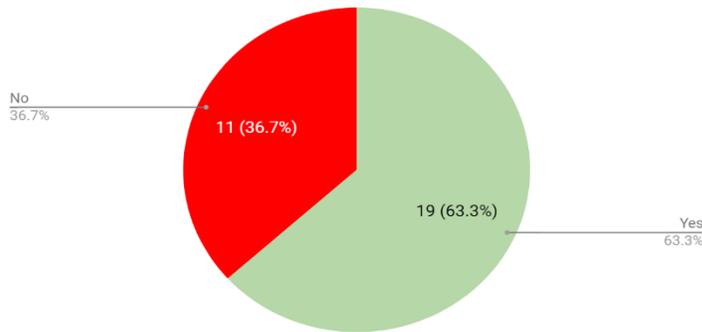
Figure 11. Collaboration with Community: Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs

A few of the school officials provided evidence that they used language in their PIPs that said they offered support outside the school. There were only 5 out of 30 (Figure 12) that confirmed. Those services included health, recreational, social support, and other programs. As it pertained to language to support the existence of service to the community, 19 out of 30 schools (see Figure 13) utilized language like the following:

> *"...provide opportunities for parental involvement at school, home, and in the community."*
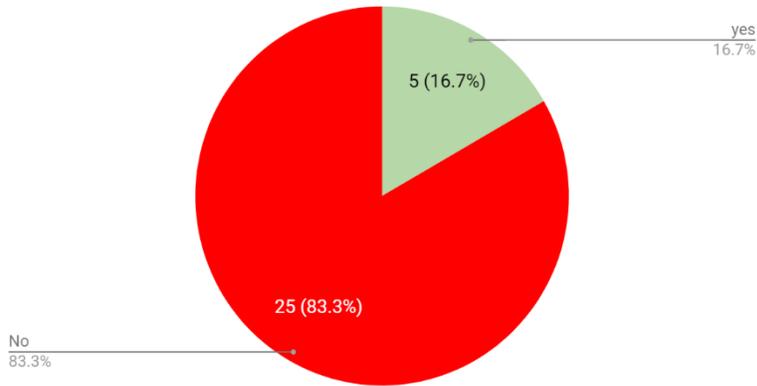
Figure 12. Information for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other programs
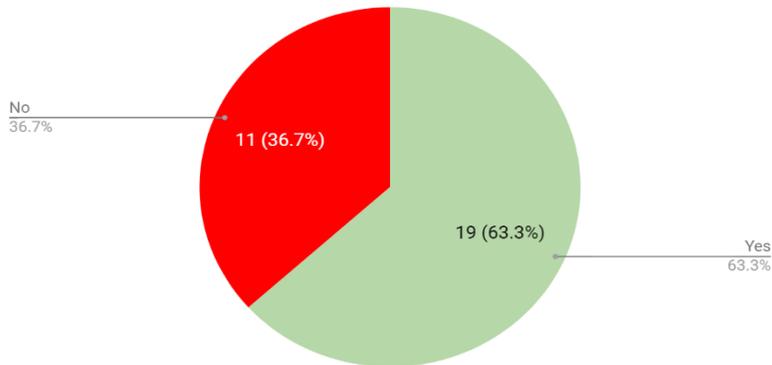
Figure 13. Service to community by students, families, and school (e.g., recycling, art, music, drama, and other activities

Though the language mentioned opportunities in the community, school officials failed to specify what services they provided to the parents. The researcher conjectured that they could be musical or dramatic performances in which many parents attend.

Overall, the researcher found language in the PIPs that described how collaborating with the community took place. The researcher also identified how schools involved parents and aligned with the Collaborating with the Community Type determined by Epstein's Model of School Family and Community Partnerships Framework. As for Sample Actions under the Collaborating with the Community Type, the school officials failed to provide samples to reflect

language for the following items:

- CWC2: Information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including summer programs for students.

- CWC3: Service integration through partnerships involving school; civic, counseling, cultural, health, recreation, other agencies, and organizations; and businesses.

- CWC5: Participation of alumni in-school programs for students.

School-Parent Compact

Upon reviewing the sample PIPs from the identified schools, the researcher identified only four of 30 schools (see Figure 14) had a language that provided evidence via a link to the website or embedded information online.
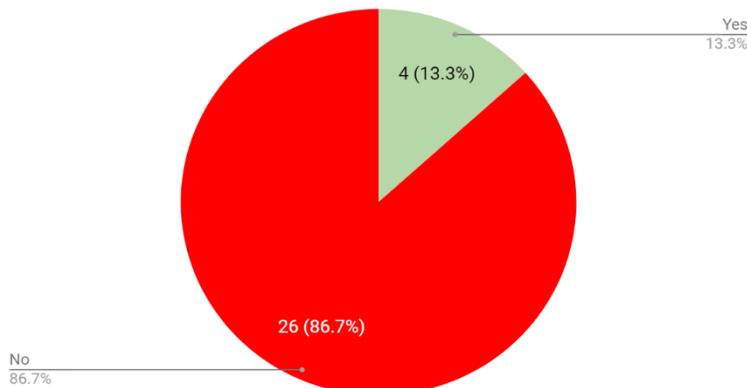
Figure 14. School-Parent Compact Link or Document is Present
Yes or No

Adoption

The Adoption section of the PIP is the final section. The school principal is the only person who signs the PIP to make the document official. Of the 30 schools, only 16 PIPs had signatures (see Figure 15). The researcher experienced consternation and interpreted this action as a message about the fidelity of the document. The researcher felt that all school officials should be mindful that the Parent Involvement Plan's final copy reflects the school: having the

principal's signature is vital.
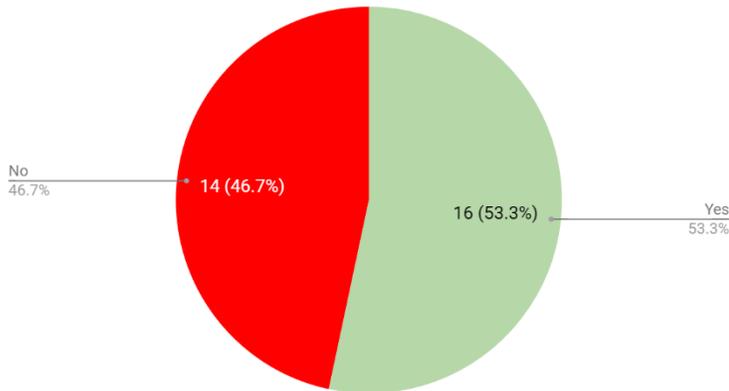
Figure 15. Adoption: Does the PIP have a Signed Signature Page

Summary

Overall, the data analysis revealed that the PIPs described how parent involvement operated within the Sun County Public School District's elementary Title I schools. The researcher found that PIPs, written by school officials, aligned with the six components of parental involvement identified by Epstein's Model of School Family and Community Partnerships Framework. The researcher found evidence, in many instances, that the schools presented evidence of alignment if the school officials addressed the 35 Sample Practices. The researcher scored the evidence using a rubric. No school scored higher than 50% percent—all plans aligned with the overarching typology (see Appendix B). The descriptions failed to exhibit languages that captured a majority of the Sample Practices that support the existence of the six types identified by Epstein's framework (see Appendix A).

Appendices C, D, and E further shed light on the information previously discussed. Appendix C shares the scores, from greatest to least, the individual school received based on the Six Types of Parent Involvement. Appendix D reflects the scores, from greatest to least, the individual school received based on the Sample Practices. Appendix E reproduces the global performances of the schools' PIPs based on the Six Types of Parent Involvement and the Sample

Practices. This concludes the data collection results in regard to Epstein's Framework of Six

Types of Involvement. This study's researcher will delineate an interpretation in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER V: THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher will address the study's purpose, its results, and recommendations for future research. This chapter will help the reader draw his or her conclusions from the data as presented. It will inspire that reader to look at parental involvement from a new lens.

Purpose of The Study

For years, researchers have identified the parents' role and its impact on student achievement. Researchers have identified specific roles that parents should play within the academic setting. Though researchers identified parents' roles related to the school setting, the researchers saw parent roles. They failed to assess the support within Parent Involvement Plans. This study's researcher conducted a document analysis of 30 Parent Involvement Plans of Title I elementary schools. This analysis's inspiration was that the achievement gap continues to exist despite research that shows parents support student achievement. The study's researcher assessed whether school officials complied and wrote the mandated Parent Involvement Plans (PIPs) with fidelity. The researcher also looked to see its alignment with what research has proven best-practices for overall parent involvement within schools.

Specifically, the researcher compared the PIPs to Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Parent Involvement to gauge how these plans aligned with the research. There was a dual significance for this study. The first significance spotlighted the importance of Parent Involvement Plans (PIP). With the document analysis administration on 30 Elementary Title I schools' PIPs, the researcher anticipated a trend in strategies and language. School officials understood the requirements of having procedures for involving parents. The second significance

was to determine if the school officials wrote the PIPs with fidelity. There should also be an alignment of the roles parents play in the parent involvement landscape to support the research further.

The researcher conducted the study with a pre-existing understanding that parental involvement directly impacted student achievement. As noted in Chapter 2 by Henderson and Mapp (2009) and some of the leading researchers in *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement*, many studies found that students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, were more likely to

- earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs;
- be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits;
- attend school regularly;
- have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school; and
- graduate and go on to postsecondary education.

Henderson and Mapp, and other researchers derived these findings from over two decades of research. The research indicated that by diversely providing support, it would ultimately equip the parent, family, and community with the necessary skills and tools to impact the students (Kimaro & Machumu, 2015). Finally, school officials intended to use the PIPs to drive these best-practices' compliance about parental involvement to impact student achievement. Thus, two questions guide the research. The first question asks, how do vital stakeholders describe the ways parent involvement will take place within Elementary Title I schools PIPs? The second question in the study asks, "In what way does the elementary Title I schools Parent Involvement Plans (PIP) align with the six components of parental involvement identified by Epstein's Model of School Family and Community Partnerships Framework?"

The study's researcher anticipated the research would speak clearly to how key stakeholders described the ways parent involvement would take place within the schools. On the other hand, I did not believe that the research would support Epstein's Framework's alignment. The first reason is that my knowledge of PIPs questions and sections is not aligned to theoretical frameworks when given to schools. The second is my own experiences as an educator, parent, and community member within various school districts. Frequently, documents like the PIPs, or similar to them, lead to people checking off a compliance box for Title I Funds rather than an actual description of parent involvement in schools. The following results from the study provided the study's research to be pleasantly surprised.

Implications

After reviewing Chapter IV's data, the results confirmed that language described parent involvement throughout the Parent Involvement Plan (PIP). As the PIP began with the school's mission, the language immediately spoke to the parents and family's inclusivity to attain students' academic success. Out of 30 schools sampled, all 30 included statements that resonated with the understanding that a collaborative partnership is integral to maintain a culture within schools and at home that is conducive to learning. By having words like "*parent partnerships*" and "*leading students to success with the support of students, teachers, parents, and the community*," there is an immediate understanding by the school officials of critical stakeholders' role. When parents and families know their expectations ahead of time, they can plan to play an active role within the school setting.

Epstein identified six specific types of involvement in her framework, and school officials should use them as a standard. The language should guide in determining how parent involvement should occur. The study's researcher began to assess where the language that was

already in the PIP aligned with this framework. Epstein provided a broad definition of what each type meant or should include and then supported them with examples of Sample Practices. Reviewing the data for the Parents, the researcher found that language plays an important part. It showed how the school officials should support the parent through Parent-Teacher Conference Nights, Curriculum Nights, and Open House. This support directly aligned to student achievement best-practices for parent involvement in many of the schools. The language that stood out was using the words "parent/student-friendly" previews that would go home with students so that parents could support students at home.

Some words utilized affirmed the necessity for schools to Explain education terminology so that all can understand when speaking to parental involvement. According to Burns (1993). there were four identified barriers to parental involvement: (a) Constraints on Parent's Availability, (b) Disparities between Home and School Culture, (d) Feeling of Inadequacies, and (e) Parent and Teacher Attitude. The fact that school officials emphasized the words "parent-friendly" could remove some parents' inadequacies in supporting their children academically. The more parents can help their students, the higher their probability of supporting their child's academic success.

The next type focused on how schools spoke about how they would communicate with parents. The first sample practice identified the need for parent conferences at least once per year. When specifying the language used regarding conferences with every parent at least once a year, the data was consistent across all schools' PIPs samples. The most common language identified the following as moments where conferences would take places, such as Meet the Teacher, Open House, Report Card Nights, and Conference Nights.

The next sample question would resonate deeply with bilingual parents. Throughout the

sample of PIPs, there was language in assisting families with language translation through the utilization of technology, school personnel, and third-party vendor services. Some schools highlighted the Language Lines (2020) Solutions use, which allowed parents and teachers to communicate in their native language. Language Line Solutions is a translation service. It breaks down language and cultural barriers. That schools used when a staff member cannot translate or speak the language of the parent. Some schools made sure to specify the variations of translations for parents as needed.

Not only was translation addressed from an auditory manner, but a visual one as well. Overall, 28 out of 30 schools spoke to language translators to assist families as needed. The language translators directly impact parental involvement. It expresses the cultural consciousness required to establish a welcoming environment for all. Within this district and others across the nation, diversity continues to thrive, and PIPs should include transparent processes for making the learning environment inclusive and welcoming to all cultures.

As this study's researcher reflected on schools' makeup and the many facets of their success, it came as no surprise that "volunteering" was the next type of parent involvement. The sample practices identified the need for a volunteer program for parents to support the school. Twenty-one schools utilized the following language "Our doors are open." The language lets parents and community members know that they are welcome and needed support for their child's academic success. Although this district used that statement, it did not have an open-door policy for volunteerism. All volunteers must pass a background check. This background check can impede parents' participation with prior felonies who may have turned a new leaf. Also, this impacts parents who are affected by the lack of identification or citizenship. With this in mind, schools should look at including language that speaks to collaborating with community centers

and community partners to host events where all parents can engage with their child off-campus.

The type of involvement Epstein identifies next is that of "Learning At Home." The data confirmed language that described how parents receive resources to help guide their students with homework and studying for assessments. It speaks to the support one would receive but the parent's expectation to implement the strategies at home with their child(ren). Some languages identified the review of state assessment information along with resources to support the student at home. Events such as Academic Parent Partnership Night - Teachers hold class meetings to discuss expectations of assessment results for both reading and math. Teachers provided parents with the training needed to support their students at home. When schools establish activities linked to learning, parents can impact learning directly.

When it came to parents' involvement in the 5th type of involvement, Decision Making, schools utilized language that directly identified various ways parents could and should be involved. For instance, Parents and families are involved in planning, review, and improvement of Title I Programs by attending School Advisor Council (SAC) meetings, Multilingual Parent Leadership Council (MPLC) meetings, Annual Title I Meetings, Participating in Parent/Teacher Association (PTA) activities.

Some schools went as far as to include the dates and times for particular committees and additional resources available to ensure parent involvement in this area. By utilizing specific dates and times, parents can make an informed decision to rearrange their schedule to attend school functions, both formal and social. The researcher recommends that PIPs define what these committees do and how involvement looks. When parents are clear of their expectations, they can decide how their involvement can look. Schools should also utilize virtual meetings to increase the number of participants who cannot make it. Often, parents participate in multiple

student pick-ups, work schedules, and or transportation needs.

The final type that Epstein speaks to regarding parental involvement is the Collaboration with the Community. The language for this type identified school and district departments' utilization to offer additional support to the parent. That support may be the following:

1. The Exceptional Students Education (Special Education in some regions) and Guidance office has a resource center that included information about but not limited to the following,

2. Homeless education –

3. Student Retention –

4. Counseling Services, supporting social and emotional needs, and

5. Behavioral Support Services - and other resources outside of the school.

Although the language used in this area identified various entities' collaboration, there was a minimal language that spoke to parents and students' ability to participate in community service activities. When students can participate in community service activities, it supports a positive school and community culture. Schools should also consider hosting parent job fairs and resource fairs that address parents' and families' socio-economic needs. The fairs are especially necessary for Title I schools. They encompass 50% or more students who qualify for free or reduced lunch. When a school offers wrap-around services for students and their families, it will positively impact the child's overall life.

As noted, the language for parental involvement was visible throughout multiple sections or the Parent Involvement Plan in the schools in the Sun County Public School. The primary research question asks, "In what way does the Elementary Title I schools PIPs align with the six components of parental involvement as identified by Epstein's Model of School Family and

Community Partnerships Framework? " The results of this question were not as clear-cut as in

Research Question 1. The study's researcher initially anticipated that the PIPs would not align

with Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement. The study researcher thought that because the

Sun County Public Schools did not mandate the PIPs to any framework. As a result, the

researcher observed two things in the analyses of the data. The school officials used samples in

the PIPs aligned with the Six Types of Parent Involvement compared to the definitions of the Six

Types of Parent Involvement (see Appendix A). The schools' scores ranged from 4 to 6, with an

average score of 5 and an average percentage of 89% (see Appendix B). Schools' PIPs ranged

from 9 to 17 of a possible 35. When measured to the Sample Practices in Epstein's Framework,

schools averaged a score of 13 and an average percentage of 38%. (see Appendix B) Although

the sample practices are examples of the many ways schools can utilize parent involvement, it is

not all-encompassing. What districts should consider is mandating schools to align all PIPs to a

framework. The Local Education Authority can then create a rubric to gauge when schools may

need additional parent engagement support. The proposed change affirmed the inconsistency and

the caution in analyzing the existence of best-practices from broad parental involvement terms,

measures, and practices. Suppose we look at these types from a general sense. In that case,

schools may risk excluding parents because of a lack of methods that remove parent involvement

obstacles due to translation, transportation, and parent work schedules. Thus we must utilize

language within Parent Involvement Plans (PIP) that depicts a school environment that values

the impact of parent involvement on academic achievement.

Limitations

Some of the limitations of this study stemmed from a couple of places. One is the

inability to survey the key stakeholders in charge of creating the parent involvement plan. The

interviews would have allowed gleaning a unique understanding of the importance of the document to the creators. Also, because of the lack of interviews, the ability to gauge their knowledge of parental involvement best-practices is restricted. Another limitation of the researcher is the impact that the interpretation of meaning has on document analysis. There is no one to confirm or negate the coded information. This limitation can affect the results when it pertains to aligning written language to researched-based frameworks. Lastly, public documents' utilization lends to the need for a larger initial sample as some schools did not have a parental involvement plan uploaded to their website. Consequently, the researcher excluded those schools from the research.

Delimitations

Although it was not this study's researcher's intention to observe this occurrence, only four schools included a link to a copy of a Parent Compact requirement. Also, the Parent Involvement Plans' fidelity came into question as only 11 of the 30 plans uploaded to the school website reflected the current school year. Of the 30 PIPs, 14 reflected the administration's signature yet were on the school's website. Some school leaders possibly refused to sign off because of security measures for the administration's signature's protection and confidentiality. If this is the case, then there is a need for another validation or electronic time stamp. This use could authorize the document in place of the signature for validating the authenticity of approved and uploaded Parent Involvement Plans (PIP).

Implications of the Study

The implications of this research align with the importance of parental involvement to increase student achievement. When parents equip themselves with the tools to assist and support their children in school and at home, it is conducive to their academic success. Also, it helps a

positive school climate for all key stakeholders as they partner in educating all children.

This research can help implement the necessary language within the Parent Involvement Plan (PIP) that identifies best-practices for parents and families to support students' social and emotional needs. This research should give the Department of Education a reflective pause about the lack of research-based standards for the written documentation utilized to hold School Districts accountable for parental involvement in schools. Ultimately, this research should move administrators to assess the language within their parental involvement plans from a school-based perspective and how they align with researched-based best-practices.

Recommendations for Further Research

Several recommendations emerged from the study's implications and limitations. The study's discussion on language within the PIPs would contribute to building capacity with parent involvement. Thorough research in this area would significantly improve how schools recruit and offer opportunities for parental involvement. Four future studies that can result from the finds are as follows:

- Research the fidelity by which the written language of Parent Involvement Plans (PIPs) happens at the school level.
- Research the quantitative increase in student achievement aligned to parent involvement activities and programs outlined in the Parental Involvement Plan (PIP).
- Research and compare the parent involvement practices/plans and student achievement of Non-title I schools and compare them to Title I schools.
- Research the Impact of the Coronavirus or any other pandemics in developing the Parent Involvement Plans (PIPs).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research affirmed the rich and valuable use of words to give a clear picture of parent involvement practices in 30 Title I Schools. Also, there is value in aligning parental involvement language and approaches to researched-based frameworks. This alignment ensures meeting the needs of parents in support of the students' academic, social, and emotional success. Lastly, if nothing more, critical stakeholders within the educational setting must hold themselves accountable for the words spoken and written in parents' engagement on every level for all students' success.

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Appendix A

Epstein's Types of Parent Involvement

Parenting: Help all families establish home environments to support children as students. Yes, and Total number from columns H-L lowest option Y0 highest Y5 (example: Y2 or Y5)

- P1: Suggestions for conditions that support learning at each grade level.
- P2: Workshops, videotapes, computerized phone messages on parenting and child-rearing at each age and grade level.
- P3: Parent education and other courses or training for parents (e.g., GED, college credit, family literacy.)
- P4: Family support to assist families with health, nutrition, and other services.
- P5: Home visits at transition points to pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school. Neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools understand families.

Communicating: Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress. Yes, and Total number from columns N-T lowest option Y0 highest Y7 (example: Y2 or Y7)

- C1: Conferences with every parent at least once a year, with follow-ups as needed.
- C2: language translators to assist families as needed.
- C3: Weekly or monthly folders of student work sent home for review and comments.
- C4: Parent/student pickup of the report card, with conferences on improving grades.
- C5: Regular schedule of useful notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters, and other communications.
- C6: Clear information on choosing schools or courses, programs, and activities within schools.
- C7: Clear information on all school policies, programs, reforms, and transitions.

Volunteering: Recruit and organize parent help and support. Yes, and Total number from columns V-Y lowest option Y0 highest Y4 (example: Y2 or Y4)

- V1: School and classroom volunteer program to help teachers, administrators, students, and other parents.
- V2: Parent room or family center for volunteer work, meetings, resources for families.
- V3: Annual postcard survey to identify all available talents, times, and locations of volunteers.
- V4: Parent patrols or other activities to aid the safety and operation of school programs.

Learning At Home: Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning. Yes, and Total number from columns AA-AH lowest option Y0 highest Y8 (example: Y2 or Y8)

- LAH1: Information for families on skills required for students in all subjects at each grade.
- LAH2: Information on homework policies and how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home.
- LAH3: Information on how to assist students in improving skills in various class and school assessments.
- LAH4: Regular schedule of homework that requires students to discuss and interact with families on what they are learning in class.
- LAH5: Calendars with activities for parents and students at home.
- LAH6: Family math, science, and reading activities at home.
- LAH7: Summer learning packets or activities.
- LAH8: Family participation in setting student goals each year and in planning for college or work.

Decision Making: Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives. Yes and Total number from columns AJ-AN lowest option Y0 highest Y5 (example: Y2 or Y5)
- DM1: Active PTA/PTO or other parent organizations, advisory councils, or committees (e.g., curriculum, safety, personnel) for parent leadership and participation.
- DM2: Independent advocacy groups to lobby and work for school reform and improvements.
- DM3: District-level councils and committees for family and community involvement.

- DM4: Information on school or local elections for school representatives.
- DM5: Networks to link all families with parent representatives.

Collaboration With Community: Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development. Yes, and Total number from columns AP-AT lowest option Y0 highest Y5 (example: Y2 or Y5)
- CWC1: Information for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other programs or services.
- CWC2: Information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including summer programs for students.
- CWC3: Service integration through partnerships involving school; civic, counseling, cultural, health, recreation, other agencies and organizations; and businesses.
- CWC4: Service to the community by students, families, and schools (e.g., recycling, art, music, drama, and other activities for seniors or others.)
- CWC5: Participation of alumni in-school programs for students.

Appendix B

Individual Schools by Framework Types nad Sample Practices

School Number Identifier	School Individual Score out 6 Epstein Framework Types	School's 6 Expstein Framework Types Percentage	School Individual Score out of 35 Sample Practices	School's Expstein Framework Sample Practices Percentage
1	6	100%	13	37%
2	5	83%	15	43%
3	6	100%	14	40%
4	6	100%	14	40%
5	6	100%	17	49%
6	6	100%	15	43%
7	5	83%	10	29%
8	5	83%	14	40%
9	4	67%	12	34%
10	6	100%	16	46%
11	5	83%	13	37%
12	6	100%	11	31%
13	6	100%	16	46%
14	5	83%	11	31%
15	5	83%	12	34%
16	5	83%	12	34%
17	5	83%	14	40%
18	5	83%	14	40%
19	6	100%	13	37%
20	5	83%	9	26%
21	4	67%	10	29%
22	6	100%	14	40%
23	4	67%	9	26%
24	6	100%	14	40%
25	6	100%	14	40%
26	6	100%	13	37%
27	5	83%	10	29%
28	6	100%	14	40%
29	4	67%	11	31%
30	5	83%	13	37%
	Average Score 5	Average 89%	Average score 13	Average 38%

Appendix C

Schools Scores from Greatest to Least Based on the Framework

School Number Identifier	School Individual Score out 6 Epstein Framework Types	School's 6 Expstein Framework Types Percentage
	Average Score 5	Average 89%
1	6	100%
3	6	100%
4	6	100%
5	6	100%
6	6	100%
10	6	100%
12	6	100%
13	6	100%
19	6	100%
22	6	100%
24	6	100%
25	6	100%
26	6	100%
28	6	100%
2	5	83%
7	5	83%
8	5	83%
11	5	83%
14	5	83%
15	5	83%
16	5	83%
17	5	83%
18	5	83%
20	5	83%
27	5	83%
30	5	83%
9	4	67%
21	4	67%
23	4	67%
29	4	67%

Appendix D

Schools Scores from Greatest to Least Based on Sample Practices

School Number Identifier	School Individual Score out of 35 Sample Practices	School's Expstein Framework Sample Practices Percentage
	Average score 13	Average 38%
1	13	37%
3	14	40%
4	14	40%
5	17	49%
6	15	43%
10	16	46%
12	11	31%
13	16	46%
19	13	37%
22	14	40%
24	14	40%
25	14	40%
26	13	37%
28	14	40%
2	15	43%
7	10	29%
8	14	40%
11	13	37%
14	11	31%
15	12	34%
16	12	34%
17	14	40%
18	14	40%
20	9	26%
27	10	29%
30	13	37%
9	12	34%
21	10	29%
23	9	26%
29	11	31%

Appendix E

Six Types of Parent Involvement and Sample Practice Scores All Schools

Parenting

Help all families establish home environments to support children as students.

Yes, and Total number from columns H-L lowest option Y1 highest Y5 (example: Y2 or Y5)	P1:Suggestions for conditions that support learning at each grade level.	P2: Workshops, videotapes, computerized phone messages on parenting and child-rearing at each age and grade level.	P3: Parent education and other courses or training for parents (e.g., GED, college credit, family literacy.)	P4: Family support to assist families with health, nutrition, and other services.	P5: Home visits at transition points to pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school. Neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools understand families.
30	22	0	5	28	23
30 out of 30	22 out of 30	0 out of 30	5 out of 30	28 out of 30	23 Out of 30

Communicating

Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress.

Yes, and Total number from columns N-T lowest option Y1 highest Y7 (example: Y2 or Y7)	C1: Conferences with every parent at least once a year, with follow-ups as needed.	C2: language translators to assist families as needed.	C3: Weekly or monthly folders of student work sent home for review and comments.	C4: Parent/student pickup of a report card, with conferences on improving grades.	C5: Regular schedule of proper notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters, and other communications.	C6: Clear information on choosing schools or courses, programs, and activities within schools.	C7: Clear information on all school policies, programs, reforms, and transitions.
30	29	28	0	23	30	23	25
30 out of 30	29 out of 30	28 out of 30	0 out of 30	23 out of 30	30 out of 30	23 out of 30	25 out of 30

Volunteering

Recruit and organize parent help and support.

Yes and Total number from columns V-Y lowest option Y1 highest Y4 (example: Y2 or Y4)	V1: School and classroom volunteer program to help teachers, administrators, students, and other parents.	V2: Parent room or family center for volunteer work, meetings, resources for families.	V3: Annual postcard survey to identify all available talents, times, and locations of volunteers.	V4: Parent patrols or other activities to aid the safety and operation of school programs.
20	19	7	0	0
21 out of 30	19 out of 30	7 out of 30	0 out of 30	0 out of 30

Learning at Home

Provide information and ideas to families about helping students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning.

Yes, and Total number from columns AA-AH lowest option Y1 highest Y8 (example: Y2 or Y8)	LAH1: Information for families on skills required for students in all subjects at each grade.	LAH2: Information on homework policies and how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home.	LAH3: Information on how to assist students in improving skills in various class and school assessments.	LAH4: Regular homework schedule requires students to discuss and interact with families on what they are learning in class.	LAH5: Calendars with activities for parents and students at home.	LAH6: Family math, science, and reading activities at home.	LAH7: Summer learning packets or activities.	LAH8: Family participation in setting student goals each year and in planning for college or work.
30	29	6	14	0	0	24	0	0
30 out of 30	29 out of 30	6 out of 30	14 out of 30	0 out of 30	0 out of 30	24 out of 30	0 out of 30	0 0f 30

Decision Making

Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.

Yes and Total number from columns AJ-AN lowest option Y1 highest Y5 (example: Y2 or Y5)	DM1: Active PTA/PTO or other parent organizations, advisory councils, or committees (e.g., curriculum, safety, personnel) for parent leadership and participation.	DM2:: Independent advocacy groups to lobby and work for school reform and improvements.	DM3: District-level councils and committees for family and community involvement.	DM4: Information on school or local elections for school representatives.	DM5: Networks to link all families with parent representatives.
30	30	0	0	0	0
30 out of 30	30 out of 30	0 out of 30	0 out of 30	0 out of 30	0 out of 30

Collaboration With Community

Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

Yes and Total number from columns AP-AT lowest option Y1 Highest Y5 (example: Y2 or Y5)	CWC1: Information for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other programs or services.	CWC2: Information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including summer programs for students.	CWC3: Service integration through partnerships involving school; civic, counseling, cultural, health, recreation, other agencies and organizations; and businesses.	CWC4: Service to the community by students, families, and schools (e.g., recycling, art, music, drama, and other activities for seniors or others.)	CWC5: Participation of alumni in-school programs for students.
19	5	1	0	19	0
19 out of 30	5 out of 30	1 out of 30	0 out of 30	19 out of 30	0 out of 30