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University of San Francisco

# **Supporting Parents in Title I Schools: A Qualitative Study of Parent Engagement**

A Thesis Proposal Presented to  
The Faculty of the School of Education  
International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in International and Multicultural Education

By  
Vanessa Sanchez  
December 2019

# Supporting Parents in Title I Schools: A Qualitative Study of Parent Engagement

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS


in

INTERNATIONAL AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

by  
Vanessa Sanchez  
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UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this field project (or thesis) has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.  
Approved:

  
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Instructor/Chairperson

December 4, 2019

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## ABSTRACT

This qualitative study focuses on how to improve parent engagement in Title I schools from parents' point of view. The purpose of this project is to understand parent involvement in a Northern California school and how to improve it. This paper offers insights from parents' perspectives how parents view the education process. The focus is on their experiences and how to support all parents. The lenses of the study is viewed through a critical pedagogy and social cognitive theory. All five of the parents being interviewed had suggestions on how to improve parent engagement in Title I Schools. The three research questions for this study were: (1) How do parents perceive their engagement with the school community? (2) What factors contribute to increased parent engagement at this school? (3) What factors contribute to decreased parent engagement at this school? In conclusion, due to the high cost of living in the Bay Area, many parents have to work longer hours and make much less compared to other years. Schools need to provide support for parents working long hours. One recommendation is for schools to provide workshops to support parents and to offer school activities on different days and times so that more parents can be active in school participation.

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Parent involvement is one of the most crucial factors for students to succeed in the public education arena (Schueler, McIntyre & Gehlbach, 2017). According to Ouimette, Feldman & Tung (2006), parent involvement is defined when parents are active with school activities, communicating with teachers, home support such as helping with homework, and setting clear expectations for students to be successful in their education. Urban K-12 schools across the United States still have low parent involvement, according to the National Center for Education Statistics and the American Institute of Research (Snyder, de Brey & Dillow, 2019). There has been research on how to improve parent involvement in public education. Yet, urban schools have not improved significantly in terms of parent involvement. Given that parent involvement is a crucial factor of student success, educators in urban schools, and specifically Title I schools, need to know how to best encourage parent involvement. According to the United States Department of Education, a Title I school is a school that receives economic support due to a high number of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Although Title I schools receive extra funding, less than one percent is used on parent involvement (National PTA, 2009).

### **Statement of the Problem**

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, parent engagement is when parents and schools work together to support student learning and student development (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018). Within the existing literature, there is valuable data on barriers to engagement that parents of minorities experience in their children's schools. For example, parents' lack of a sense of belonging in the school system can cause them to feel unwelcome (Schueler, McIntyre & Gehlbach, 2017). Another barrier to parent engagement is a

lack of clear expectations. According to Jeyens (2005), the clearer the expectations are for parents, the more positive the overall impact on students, teachers, and parents. Teamwork is what is needed between schools and parents, with a focus on improving communication and providing consistent feedback (Jeynes, 2005). When parents are not given a role or clear expectations, they do not feel included in their children's education (Elbaum, Blatz & Rodriguez, 2016; Jeynes, 2005; Schueler, McIntyre & Gehlbach, 2017). Other challenges include the inefficient manner in which communication between parents and schools is organized, and other social and cultural differences (Schueler, McIntyre & Gehlbach, 2017). The result is that the feeling experienced by various families in the public educational system is one of being oppressed (Gilbert, Spears Brown & Mistry, 2017).

Many studies have suggested different remedies for these barriers, yet the absence of real progress toward the goal of parent engagement persists. Parent engagement can be measured by school based activities, learning support at home and family community based learning (Schueler, McIntyre & Gehlbach, 2017). For example, one case-study that focused on how to improve support for families concentrated on the following problems: stresses that families might be going through, cultural differences, and linguistic barriers (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2012). The authors suggest solving these problems by (a) having one on one meetings with parents that can help reduce parents stress levels (b) speaking to families in their own languages (c) giving families calendars with times and dates of certain events they could go to with their families (d) going door to door to meet families in their communities, all of which helped the researchers get to know the families and better support them (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2012).



Similarly, several more recent studies include recommendations such as frequent positive communication between parents and teachers/administrators, and giving each parent a role in their child's education, in order to make them feel that they are included and that the school constantly takes them into account (Yull, Wilson, Murray & Parham, 2018). Despite such valuable scholarship, parent involvement in urban schools is still very low (Smith, Wohlstetter, Kuzin & De Pedro, 2011). An important gap identified in the literature is a thorough analysis of specific reasons these recommendations are not working. Almost every study acknowledged little to no improvement in parent involvement. Although many researchers have tried different methods to improve parent engagement, multiple factors are missing. Consequently, the fundamental problem of low parent engagement persists and has only intensified in many places.

### **Background and Need**

Studies show that parent involvement can increase student success (Schueler, McIntyre & Gehlbach, 2017). If parents are more aware of students' grades, school activities, back to school night and other events, they are better able to support their children (Barton, Drake, Perez, Louis & George, 2004). Parents who are more involved in their children's education tend to have children with higher grades who opt to continue their education (Jeynes, 2005). For example, if parents were more aware of students' grades, school activities, back to school night and other events, parents would be more aware if the students needed more support in certain subject areas (Barton, Drake, Perez, Louis & George, 2004). Parents who are more involved can also feel more connected to their communities (Gilbert, Spears Brown & Mistry, 2017). Through parent involvement, parents can support and build strong communities, especially in urban areas (Gilbert, Spears Brown & Mistry, 2017). Jeyens (2005) claims that it is even more crucial for

parents in urban areas to be involved, due to the socio-economic stress of having two parents working full time, which adds stress to the students' lives.

When families feel supported in their communities, they feel supported socially and emotionally (Gilbert, Spears Brown, & Mistry, 2017). Schools and communities need to be working together to better support families so that families can feel included in their children's education.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this project is to understand parent involvement in a Northern California school. Parent involvement has been shown to improve students' educational results, which is why it is important that parents have a clear understanding of how to better support their children (Schueler, McIntyre, & Gehlbach, 2017). Although there have been studies on how to improve parent involvement in urban schools, there is still a low number of parent involvement in this school. Through a series of interviews of parents, I will attempt to determine the weaknesses and strengths of one particular schools' outreach to parents. The primary focus of this case study will be to listen and interview parents in order to define new strategies that teachers/administrators at a particular school can use to improve parent engagement.

### **Research Questions**

This study addresses three research questions to understand how to improve parent engagement:

1. Research Question One: How do parents perceive their engagement with the school community?
2. Research Question Two: What factors contribute to increased parent engagement at this school?

3. Research Question Three: What factors contribute to decreased parent engagement at this school?

### **Theoretical Rationale**

This thesis uses both the critical pedagogy of Freire (1972) and Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory as the main theoretical lenses. They are the two theories through which the data collected for this thesis is analyzed. The idea is to ultimately guide schools to evolve their methods in order to improve parent involvement. These frameworks will support the effort to assist this Northern California school to have better communication between parents and educators.

### **Critical Pedagogy**

Freire (1972) states that education systems have opposed the idea of telling students what they need to know and developing their critical-thinking skills. Freire argues that critical consciousness happens where students are taught to think for themselves. His theory states that teachers are to blame for not using critical pedagogy in the classroom (Freire, 1970). Freire believes students should be given a voice in the classroom, in terms of what they are learning. Many teachers are reluctant to give their students a real voice, fearing that this dynamic would undermine their authority. Freire states that by using the "banking method" of teaching, educators are only depositing information, yet no information is being withdrawn (Freire, 1970). The education system is using the banking method with parents as well because, generally speaking, they are simply being told when and what to do. Meanwhile, there is no real parent input being encouraged or demanded. This dynamic makes parents feel intimidated and hesitant to become active players in their children's education (Ferrara, 2015). The solution, according to Freire, was to use critical pedagogy in the classroom. I used Freire's (1972) theoretical

framework of *conscientizacao* to frame my research on how this Northern California school can become a welcome space for parents to be more involved in their children's education and improve the communication between parents and teachers/administrators.

### **Social Cognitive Theory**

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) developed from Social Learning Theory (SLT) and is a theory by Albert Bandura (1986), who argues that a person is influenced and shaped by their environment. Modeling and performing behavior are the most important variables for self-regulation (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007). As a theoretical framework, SCT examines how human beings are influenced by their surroundings. Students are influenced and their education is shaped by models. Models can teach and inspire observers (Schunk, 2001). This study will use SCT to further understand how schools are modeling behavior and language towards parents.

### **Summary**

Examining institutional language and culture through a critical pedagogy lens will inform investigating and evaluating the opportunities for improvement in parent involvement at this Northern California Title I school. SCT was used to evaluate and understand how to assist parents to transcend language barriers and cultural differences while identifying positive means of communication between teachers/administrators and parents. SCT was used to understand the manner in which parents are treated unwelcomely at this school, making them feel unwanted. The theoretical frameworks implemented, specifically critical pedagogy and SCT, was used to comprehend and analyze the need for positive communication change between the parents and the school, intended to improve parent involvement at this location.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design: Methodology and Methods**

The research methodology used in this project is a case study. It is informed by three previous case studies that sought to understand parent engagement at other Title 1 schools (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). My case study was conducted with parents. The research methods in this study will be interviews, observations and documentation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

### **Research Site**

The school that I work at and will use this study is a secondary institute and a Title I school in Northern California. The city is a major metropolitan area with a pronounced gap in wealth. The school reported 1,021 students enrolled for the 2017-2018 school year (SARC, 2018). According to the School Accountability Report Card (SARC), 83.1 percent of the student population is Latinx, 2.0 percent is Black or African American, 3.3 percent is Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 4.1 percent is White and the remaining is other. SARC's website reports that 83.3 percent of the student body is socioeconomically disadvantaged, 29.8 percent are English-language learners and 11.9 percent are students with disabilities.

### **Participants**

In order to develop an in-depth analysis, I will conduct a number of in-depth interviews with parents at this Northern California school. All parents being interviewed will be from the same high school in Northern California. A total of five families will be interviewed individually. Two of the families are Vietnamese-American. Vietnamese is the primary language at both homes. One of the families is Philipino-American. This family speaks both English and Tagalog at home. The last two families are Mexican-American. One of the families speaks Spanish as their primary language at home. The other family only speaks English at home.

All five families face low socioeconomic status. In three out of the five families, the children are first-generation students in the United States. The Mexican-American family, who only speaks English at home, are fourth generation Mexican-American. The children in the Philipino-American families are second generation.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The objective of the data collection is to gather documentation of the observations, interviews, and artifacts of parents in order to have these documents that provide in-depth descriptions of the parents' perspectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Once coded, the information was grouped around themes. I analyzed the data to learn new strategies to support increases parent involvement.

I interviewed parents whose students I have had for the last two years in my own class. Consequently, the parents in the interview felt more comfortable, for the following reasons: they have gotten to know me for the last two years; the majority speak the same language as me (Spanish); their students also feel more comfortable because they have been my students for the last two years. Some of the parents that I interviewed will be coming to my classroom to be interviewed one on one. For some of the parents that cannot come to my class to be interviewed, I met with them outside the school, on locations in their communities such as their homes, public libraries, and even family gatherings. I used the interview questions to help parents start the conversation. Nevertheless, they were allowed to freely express their views on how our institution can improve in terms of supporting each family to be more engaged with the school.

Each family was recorded using a recording app. Participants had access to see the entire interview after it was transcribed. Each interview was with one family or parent at a time. Each parent was given the following discussion norms: there is no correct or wrong answer; this is a

safe zone to express their experiences and views; they can tell me as little or as much as they would feel comfortable expressing. The interviews were scheduled depending on each parent schedule.

### **Protection of Human Subjects**

I have used pseudonym names for each of the parents being interviewed, unless they wanted to use a specific name. All the notes were taken on my notebook. Then I copied everything on a Google doc, which is secured by a username and password. At the beginning of each interview, family members could ask any questions they might have. They also could choose not to answer any question they feel uncomfortable with. The parents also had the option of withdrawing from the interview/consent at anytime. Any questions the families had were answered before signing the consent form. I also went over the process of the interviews before families sign the consent form.

### **Limitations of the Study**

#### **Sample Size**

One of the limitations of the study has to do with the reduced sample type and size. I only interviewed five families from the same school. Since the families are a convenience sample from the same school community, and the number of participants are small, the findings from this study will not be easily generalized. Also since the IRB process took much longer five new families interviewed due to the previous families could no longer interview due to other commitments.

#### **Cultural and Other Bias**

The majority of the school community is represented by families from minority backgrounds. I speak Spanish and English fluently. I also grew up with Mexican traditions and customs, and maintain a positive relationship toward the Spanish-speaking families, both of which will help the Spanish-speaking families feel more comfortable in my presence. The five new families all speak English as their primary language. Three out of the five families also spoke Spanish at home. Two of the families speak both English and Portuguese.

### **Significance of the Project**

Data from this research can be used by educators and administrators in the K-12 system. Findings may inform methods to better support family involvement and to improve the percentage of parents who are actively communicating with the school. This may be done in part by changing the language used towards parents by the school and having clear expectations for parents as to how they can better support their children. Another function of this study would be to support parents and to make them feel welcomed in the process to improve students' grades and achieve higher educational goals. This research may also be used for supporting first-generation families. Finally, this research project may be used for student-teachers and new educators to learn new strategies to better connect with students and their families.

### **Definition of Terms**

- Individual Educational Plan (IEP): An education individual plan which is for students who qualify as Special Needs Students under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Tran, Patton, & Brohammer, 2018).
- Title I Schools: According to the United States Department of Education it relates to Every Student Succeeds Act (ESEA). This act provides economic support to schools with high numbers of students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds.



- Urban School: In 2016, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) published a report on rural education in America. In this article, the NCES defines the ‘urban centric’ classification system and within this system there are four categories: city, suburban, town and rural. Using this system, in this thesis, ‘urban school’ will refer to a school in a large city, as defined by the NCES as having a population of 250,000 (Exhibit A).

## CHAPTER II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### **Introduction**

Parent engagement has been linked to student success (Snyder, de Brey & Dillow, 2019). Although there are many studies that provide suggestions for improvement, parent engagement in urban and Title I schools is still low (Snyder, de Brey & Dillow, 2019). There is a need to see why these studies are not working. Due to different factors, parents feel isolated from their children's schools. Stresses that families might be going through, such as cultural differences, language barriers, and unwelcoming attitudes used by schools are some of the challenges facing parents (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2012). In order for students to succeed, parent engagement must improve. This may require new strategies and repairing relationships so that parents feel welcome in schools.

The claim for this literature review is that there needs to be more case study research on parent involvement in Title I schools. Four types of evidence support this claim. The evidence consists of (a) current research on parent engagement that provides examples of how successful parent involvement has a positive impact on student learning, (b) research that demonstrates the need for parents to feel involved in their students education, (c) a body of evidence that suggests that there is still low parent involvement in Title I schools, and (d) research that articulates the numerous barriers parents in Title I schools face in their children's schools.

### **The Positive Impact of Parent Engagement**

Research demonstrates that when parents are involved in their children's education, their children are more likely to succeed in school (Jeynes, 2005; Ouimette, Feldman & Tung, 2006; Schueler, McIntyre & Gehlbach, 2017). This includes research that illustrates that parent engagement can have a positive impact on homework, study habits, academic performance, and

participation in school-based activities. Research that articulates parent engagement can come in several different forms including at-home support, in-school volunteering, and participating in school-based events (Jeynes, 2005; Ouimette, Feldman & Tung, 2006; Schueler, McIntyre & Gehlbach, 2017). The following sections describe parent engagement and its benefits.

In a meta-analysis of 41 different studies, Jeynes (2005) concludes that student achievement is higher for students whose parents have a high rate of parent involvement. In lower socioeconomic areas, parent engagement can have an even larger influence on students' academics (Jeynes, 2005). The author also states that studies indicate that educational psychologists and teachers also see the importance of parent involvement for students to have higher educational outcomes, especially with students who are facing adverse circumstances (Jeynes, 2005). The results of the meta-analysis conclude that parent involvement can have the largest impact on student success, especially with students of minority background (Jeynes, 2005). The results indicate that parent involvement is positive and equal for both boys and girls (Jeynes, 2005). Although the results state that it is positive for both boys and girls, there is variation between the types of parent involvement. Parents who are involved with the communities and school-based events show an even higher number of students with higher grades. (Jeynes, 2005). Lawson & Alameda-Lawson's (2012) results state the importance of parent engagement in low socio-economic schools. One important distinction is that this study states that parents also need support on how to be involved in school activities (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2012). The study designed a program to support parents to increase their parent engagement by providing workshops, community support, and counseling. Parents felt it was also a safe place to ask questions when unsure of how or when to support student needs (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2012).

Parent engagement can have a positive impact on student success in several ways. For example, a case study by Ouimette, Feldman and Tung (2006) interviewed teachers, administrators, students and parents/families over the course of two years, and collected documentation such as sign-in sheets, school publications and parent attendance at events such as orientation, parent council meetings and student performances. The data from this case study demonstrate that parent involvement improves both academic success and increases student involvement within the school. Similarly, Schueler, McIntyre & Gehlbach (2017) find that parent involvement can increase student academic success (Schueler, McIntyre & Gehlbach, 2017). The study shows that when parents have clear open communication with teachers it provides more support for both parents and students to feel more comfortable in the school environment. The clear communication between teachers and parents can help support parents learn new strategies to increase their own involvement. This is important because many parents at times can feel confused and not know how to get involved in school involvement. When there is low parent involvement there is no support for either parents or students. The clearer the expectations are for parents, the more they will want to increase their parent involvement which will increase parent learning (Schueler, McIntyre & Gehlbach, 2017).

Parents who are more involved in the school's culture tend to have higher achieving students (Jeynes, 2005). According to the Meta-Analysis, parents who are more involved reduce the achievement gap (Jeynes, 2005). The goal is to get 100% of parents/guardians involvement in order to have 100% of students succeed in public urban education. Further research needs to be done to close the achievement gap. For example, Yull, Wilson, Murray & Parham (2018) and Jeynes (2005) agree that if all parents were involved there would be a decrease in the graduation gap. Schueler, McIntyre & Gehlbach, (2017) also add that it can be possible to

improve student achievement with an increase on parent participation. The authors Yull, Wilson, Murray & Parham (2018), Ouimette, Feldman & Tung (2006), Jeynes (2005) and Ferrara (2015) agree that change needs to happen because parent engagement is one of the most important factors for student success. It can be difficult for students to close the achievement gap without parent support (Jeynes,2005).

### **Forms of Parent Engagement**

Parent engagement can come in different forms. For example, according to Ouimette, Feldman, and Tung (2006) parent engagement can include (a) being active in school activities (b) having clear communication with children (c) setting home and school boundaries (d) communicating with administrators and teachers (e) supporting students with homework help. Schueler, McIntyre & Gehlbach (2017) echo the findings of strong communication between parents and educators, as well as the positive impact of parent participation in school activities. Parents who engage in these types of activities have a positive impact on student success. Ways to measure engagement include parent involvement with the school and communication with educators. However, measuring parent engagement can be difficult due to different factors such as parents' availability or the schools' manner of communication (Schueler, McIntyre & Gehlbach, 2017).

In a bilingual study spanning grades K-12 Schueler, McIntyre and Gehlbach (2017) used the Gehlbach and Brinkworth (2011) six-step survey to analyze parent engagement through (a) classroom involvement (b) home-based activities such as homework help (c) volunteering after school hours (d) joining clubs that had activities outside the school. In the findings, the authors mention how valuable and impactful the approach of welcoming parents to school can be on families (Schueler, McIntyre & Gehlbach, 2017).

## **Roadblocks to Parent Engagement**

According to Jeynes (2005), Schueler, McIntyre & Gehlbach, (2017) communication between parents and educators is one of the most important factors that promotes parent engagement. Ouimette, Feldman & Tung (2006) also agree that without communication between teachers and parents, parent engagement will remain low. This has a negative impact on student achievement. However, measuring parent engagement can be difficult due to different factors such as parents' availability or the schools' manner of communication (Schueler, McIntyre & Gehlbach, 2017). It is not that parents do not want to be active in their children's education but due to work life balance it can be difficult for parents to be active.

It is important to emphasize that one major roadblock for parent engagement is the lack of schools making it a welcoming environment for parents (Schueler, McIntyre & Gehlbach, 2017). When parents feel welcomed into the life of their child's school, they are more likely to be engaged. Because each school community is unique, the plan for welcoming families and increasing parent engagement will be unique to each school.

If parents feel unwelcomed by their children's schools, they will not have an increase in parent engagement (Jeynes, 2005; Yull, Wilson, Murray & Parham, 2018). Parents have so much going on at home and work and to feel unwelcomed by schools does not make it easier for parents to want to be involved and support their child's education (Jeynes, 2005; Yull, Wilson, Murray & Parham, 2018). There have been many studies done yet parent engagement remains low mainly in Title I Schools. Public education's primary objective is meant for all students to receive an equal education, not just certain students (Jeynes, 2005). Which is why parent engagement is so important in Title I Schools (Jeynes, 2005). The authors Yull, Wilson, Murray & Parham (2018) and Jeynes (2005) know that this is not a new issue in Title I Schools

(Jeynes, 2005; Yull, Wilson, Murray, & Parham, 2018). That although there has been much research on the topic, parent engagement still remains low.

According to the author two main factors why parent involvement remains low in Title I schools are due to financial hardship and sociable exclusion (Alameda-Lawson, 2014).

Another argument is that the expectations are not clear for parents and there are multiple barriers parents face, including not enough school support (Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis & George, 2004). Clear expectations and an explanation on how to support their children in education must be a requirement for all students especially in Title I schools to succeed (Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis & George, 2004). Also, schools need to create a welcoming space for parents to feel comfortable and ask questions openly (Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis & George, 2004).

Parents from low income families can feel intimidated by who holds the power in a school setting, be it an administrator, a teacher or a staff member. The person who holds the power can make parents feel unwanted in the school setting (Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis & George, 2004). The cultural policies that the education system might have can also affect parents, such as the language being used between teachers/administrators and parents (Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis & George, 2004).

### **Parents Who Feel Involved Are More Engaged**

Parents who feel welcomed by their children's schools want to be active in their children's education. The Parent Mentor Program (PMP) in New York City focuses on parent active involvement in the classroom (Yull, Wilson, Murray & Parham, 2018). The parents chosen for The Parent Program are parents of color who face financial struggles (Yull, Wilson, Murray & Parham, 2018). The program's objective is to connect families with their children's school. The PMP focuses on trainings which support teacher and parent positive communication, culture and

climate setting, and strategies for how to deal with trauma. Another focus is adding frameworks which help support the detachment between white teachers and students of minority backgrounds (Yull, Wilson, Murray & Parham, 2018). They also offer a training program called family engagement 101 (Yull, Wilson, Murray & Parham, 2018). Since parents have active roles in the schools, they feel more comfortable and want to be part of the school climate.

### **Parent Engagement is Well-Researched But Remains Low in Title I Schools**

Title I schools still have low parent engagement (Alameda-Lawson, 2014). Even with multiple studies done on how to improve parent involvement, not much has changed (Alameda-Lawson, 2014).

One case study that focuses on urban schools worked with parents and trained them on how school-home conversations can have a large impact on both parents and students (Ferrara, 2015). This case study also worked with Parental Involvement Facilitators (PIFs) to assist parents (Ferrara, 2015). The study focused on students who were struggling in school. The focus of the case study was to see how much the PIFs impacted students' grades and parent involvement. The study unfolded over five years at twelve different schools, in order to see if the program could make a difference with parents and students. One finding from the PIFs interview was that many parents could not finish their education, which made it harder for them to support their children's education due to limited resources (Ferrara, 2015). The families with older siblings were able to provide support for their younger siblings when it came to school (Ferrara, 2015). The case studies findings showed that having these types of support at students schools can be very successful (Ferrara, 2015). The most effective support was having facilitator to be able to support them with any questions parents had (Ferrara, 2015).



Parent engagement is a topic on which much research has been done, yet the situation in the majority of lower socio-economic schools has not improved. One study shows that without community, parent engagement will still remain low (Warren, Hong, Rubin & Uy, 2009). Services such as after school programs, health services open to the community, or night classes can have a large positive impact on parent involvement (Warren, Hong, Rubin & Uy, 2009). By making those services open to the public, parents would be made to feel more welcomed and wanting to participate and be more active in both the school and community (Warren, Hong, Rubin & Uy, 2009). Since many families are disconnected from their children's school and from the community, such services would increase participation (Warren, Hong, Rubin & Uy, 2009). A problem is when families feel excluded from schools, which can cause them to not want to be included with anything the school has going on (Warren, Hong, Rubin & Uy, 2009).

It is evident that something has to change (Barton et al., 2004; Warren et al., 2009; and Ferrara, 2015). That we need to new approaches to support parents and improve parent engagement in our schools. For example, parent involvement is not a new issue that we are now realizing that has a positive impact on student learning. This information has already been established yet parent engagement is still low in Title I schools. All students have the right to an equal education and the opportunity to continue higher education if they chose.

In summary, the authors know that although there are many studies that have been done on how to improve parent engagement there is still low in parent involvement in Title I schools (Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis & George, 2004). All the authors Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis & George (2004), Ferrara (2015) and Warren, Hong, Rubin & Uy (2009) agree that the language used by schools needs to improve. Parents should feel welcomed by schools instead of being felt

like outsiders. These are only some of the barriers parents face which make it difficult for them to increase parent involvement.

### **Barriers Parents Face**

The type of language used towards parents by the schools can impact the degree to which families feel welcomed and comfortable in their children's schools. When parents have questions, teachers and administrators may see them as 'problematic' parents (Saltmarsh, 2015). Instead of schools focusing on parent welcoming, parent language, or parent engagement, they are focused a lot more on policies and which policies affect their schools (Saltmarsh, 2015). We need to start focusing from inside the school then out. Our communities and students need to come first, before school policies (Saltmarsh, 2015). The author suggest schools prioritize start with students then families and finally policies (Saltmarsh, 2015)

Schools need to prioritize families and communities to help students have high educational expectations (Saltmarsh, 2015). Without family support, it is difficult for students to excel and continue higher education. Parent involvement is one of the most important factors for students to succeed.

Although many parents want to be active members in their children's education, many do not have the communication skills or lack the ability to network in their children's schools (Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis & George, 2004). When parents are already knowing there are some barriers between them and the schools, many of them feel like it is not worth trying to be more involved with schools (Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis & George, 2004). Feeling unwelcome, no matter what other barriers there are, is a large factor. Parents need to feel welcomed and supported by their children's schools (Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis & George,

2004). Parents should feel like their ideas and proposals are validated by the schools (Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis & George, 2004).

Another study explored the how large Latino based schools often have parents dealing with financial distress and or depression which can affect student achievement (Gilbert, Spears Brown & Mistry, 2017). If parents are already dealing with stress from outside the home and do not have the schools support it can be difficult for them to want to be active participants in their children's school (Gilbert, Spears Brown & Mistry, 2017). The study measured how much do these factors impact parent involvement which did have a large impact on student engagement. Parents stress can also affect student learning. Students who are seeing parents struggle financially or deal with depression also have deal more with stress. Which can cause students to not perform well in school. The authors (Gilbert, Spears Brown & Mistry, 2017) agree with Saltmarsh (2015) and Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis & George (2004) that schools need to provide more family support. For example, counseling for both parents and students and having more school based activities to have safe places for students to succeed.

All families are dealing with different issues. According to Saltmarsh (2015), Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis & George (2004) and Gilbert, Spears Brown & Mistry (2017) all agree that language is one of the largest factors as to why parents in Title I schools still have low parent engagement. It could be language barriers between teachers/administrators and parents. Or schools using unwelcoming language and making parents feel like there input is not important. With parent barriers still present it can make it difficult for parents to be engaged in their child's education. All authors Saltmarsh (2015), Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis & George (2004) and Gilbert, Spears Brown & Mistry (2017) agree that the lack of communication between parents and educators needs to improve if we want to increase parent engagement.

## Summary

All of the literature reviewed concludes that parents do want to be involved but, due to certain circumstances, this can be difficult. There is more research needed to close the gap between schools and parents. Research shows the **positive impact of parent engagement** has on students (Jeynes, 2005). How **parents who feel involved are more engaged** and have better communication with school staff especially teachers (Yull, Wilson, Murray & Parham, 2018). However, **parent engagement is well researched but remains low in Title I Schools** (Alameda-Lawson, 2014). There are still so many barriers parents face in today's schools (Saltmarsh, 2015). With so much happening in our communities, parents do not want to feel excluded but included by teachers and administrators. Which is why there needs to be an improvement in communication between educators and parents. Also, the language used by schools towards parents needs to improve. Parents should feel welcomed and asked for their input from schools instead of feeling like outsiders. The lack of communication over time has made parents feel unwanted in their child's education.

The data shows how parent engagement can increase students' academic success. That is why it is so crucial to get all parents involved with their children's schools. Many studies have been done to show how parent engagement is crucial for student success. Yet, even with all these studies we still have low parent involvement in Title I schools. The evidence shows that higher parent involvement can lead to higher grades and student's student learning. These are only some of the reasons why we need to find out new strategies to support parent's engagement in Title I schools.



## CHAPTER III

### **Introduction**

Despite all the current literature about parent engagement, there is still low-parent involvement in Title I schools. This problematic reality can be attributed to several factors. One factor is parents feeling like outsiders when communicating with staff at their children's schools (Schueler, McIntyre & Gehlbach, 2017). Parents also feel that unclear expectations can make it harder for them to be active in school programs (Jeynes, 2005). Lack of communication between parents and schools has to be remedied in order to improve parent involvement (Jeynes, 2005). Parents' roles have to be clear and supported by their children's school (Elbaum, Blatz & Rodriguez, 2016; Jeynes, 2005; Schueler, McIntyre & Gehlbach, 2017). Lastly, the feeling of not feeling wanted by their children's school can be oppressive towards parents (Gilbert, Spears Brown & Mistry, 2017).

Even before embarking on this thesis project, I started to realize that the gap in parent involvement needed to be remedied. I have been teaching at the same high school for four years. Throughout this period, I would call, email and ask parents to meet for a conference or get the proper support for students. Due to different barriers, some parents could not meet due to their work schedule or other similar commitments. Other parents were very surprised by how often I would update them on student progress. This would help parents see how students were doing in my class. I was fortunate to become familiar with some of the parents over the next two years.

Chapter III focuses on findings from data collected using parent interviews. The purpose of this study is to examine why Title I schools still struggle with parent engagement. The research questions posed in this study were formulated from the standpoint of parents and designed to identify what schools can do to improve their parent engagement. Semi-scripted

interviews were conducted with five families. Four out of the five families elected to have their interviews in their homes, while the last family was interviewed at the local high school, in a classroom. All the interviews will be transcribed and will focus on common themes. The families' themes are highlighted beneath. I used specific research questions when interviewing parents. I found common themes brought up by all interviewees.

The research questions for this study were :

1. How do parents perceive their engagement with the school community?
2. What factors contribute to increased parent engagement at this school?
3. What factors contribute to decreased parent engagement at this school?

### **Institutional Review Board Approval**

This study required an approval from the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) because parents would be interviewed. The IRBPHS insures that the people in the study will not be harmed. Before submitting the application, I had five families waiting to be interviewed. I had the advantage of having the same students for two years, which helped me get to know some of their parents. Before starting the IRB process, I had asked five families if they would like to be part of my research project. To my surprise, all five families agreed and seemed excited to be supporting me in my own studies.

Unfortunately, the IRB took much longer than expected and three of the families could no longer participate. One of the parents had changed work hours, which made it more difficult for her to be interviewed. One family was moving to a different city and could no longer be interviewed. Also, many of the families got impatient, which is completely understandable. Due to work life and busy daily schedules, many of the families could no longer participate.

I had to resubmit the IRB application. Once the parents being interviewed could no longer be interviewed. I also had to modify the documents for the IRB. Since the IRB is only checked once every few weeks, the process took much longer than anticipated.

I had to ask new parents if they would be able to participate in my research project. Three of the new parents I had just met this year, since their children are freshmen in my class. My goal was to obtain information about different levels of parent engagement. One of the mothers is very active in her children's educational journey. Due to work and a busy life schedule, the second parent struggles with parent involvement, but was open to giving teachers suggestions on how we can be supportive to all parents, especially parents with more than one child in school.

The IRB application was sent in early September. I had to resubmit the application twice. With the resubmitting of forms the approval took over six weeks to get approved. I understood why the committee needed to be clear on the questions the parents were being asked. The process made me realize how careful I had to be with my questions. I needed to make sure I would not offend any parents.

### **Interviews**

Since the IRB took much longer than expected I interviewed all five families in one week. Each day I would meet with a new family so that the parents could take as much time needed to answer the questions and anything they wanted to add to the study. I met with each family for 38 to 65 minutes. Four out of the five interviews took place in my classroom, which is the same classroom that their children attend every other day. Although it was ultimately the families' decision on when and where to be interviewed, the idea of interviewing them in the same environment that their children are taught in had a major impact. Parents sitting in the same chairs and talking to the same teacher as their children allowed the former to put themselves in



the shoes of their kids. The fifth family was interviewed at the location of the business they own. Luckily, it is conveniently only a block away from campus.

I immediately sensed the relief of the parents when I told them that I would meet them at their store. This was for three different reasons. First, they did not have to leave work to meet with me. Second, they were in the comfort of their everyday environment. Finally, they were excited to show me what they work on a daily basis. Furthermore, every parent was reminded that we could stop the interview at any point. They were informed that if for whatever reason they chose to no longer participate in the thesis, their portion of the interviews would be immediately removed.

Due to the IRB taking longer than expected, I had to interview completely new parents than intended in chapter I. The five new families included: a mother and her partner who both work full-time and have five children, a married couple who both work full-time and have one child, a married couple who both work full-time and have two children, a single mother who has two children in secondary education and finally, a single mother with three children whose ages range from four to fourteen years old. All of the families trusted me with their truths. The second they began their interviews, I sensed their frustration, stemming from the lack of communication between school administration and families and, unfortunately, the lack of communication between families and teachers.

It is important to acknowledge the process of how these interviews were conducted. Each and every family answered the same open-ended questions, which were seven in number. These questions were specifically chosen to explore how their communication with teachers and administrators has been over the course of their children's education. Furthermore, the objective was to identify how this type of communication should look and feel like. Furthermore, they

were also questioned on how and what they would specifically change to improve the connection between schools and families. The parents were asked to answer the following questions.

Question One: How would you define what is an active parent?

Question Two: What are some ways a parent can be active in their child's school?

Question Three: Why do you think it is difficult for some parents to be active in their children's education?

Question Four: Why do you think it is difficult for some parents to be active in school activities?

Question Five: What can schools do to improve parents being more active?

Question Six: Do you feel welcomed at your child's school? Why or why not?

Question Seven: What are things schools can improve for parents to feel more welcomed?

## **Results**

### **Family Backgrounds**

#### **Family One.**

The first family has a very unique circumstance. Their teenagers are triplets, all of whom are my students this year. The family also has two younger children who currently attend elementary school. In her previous relationship, the mother had the triplets and one other child. When she left that relationship, she had her fifth child with her current partner. Both the mother and her partners were answering the questions. In her interview, she described the hardship of raising five young children, in particular how difficult it was having three children of the exact same age. For instance, ensuring she spent sufficient time with each individual child was a major challenge. Fortunately, she is close to both her family and her ex-husband's family. She

mentioned that without his family, she would not have been able to raise her amazing children. The father's family has always been involved in their school activities. The trio make it a priority to never miss an event. Whether it is the mother and her boyfriend or even just the ex-husband, or one of the three, they never miss any school activity.

### **Family Two.**

The next family is incredibly active in the community and with school activities. They are involved in the Boosters Club, after school activities, and the PTA to support raising money for different sports at the school. There are two noteworthy aspects to mention in order to fully understand how the family remains astonishingly involved. First, the family's socioeconomic status; even they acknowledge that they would not be able to be so active as participants if they were single parents or if they had multiple children. The next and possibly most important finding is how these relationships were created and maintained up-to-date. The parents make it a point to know the principals, the teachers, the students, and other families. They do this by visiting the school frequently and by ensuring they know everyone who interacts with their child.

This positively impacts the amount of communication they have been able to successfully maintain with school administration and teachers, which then impacts the child to perform well and be a well-rounded student. This family has an advantage over others due to these relationships. They are the first to know what is going on at the school because they are either at the school, a phone call away, and/or are able to see what is going on through social media.

### **Family Three.**

This family owns a business close to the school. Upon their request, I interviewed the mother in the back of the business while the father worked in the front of the business. They have a daughter who graduated from the current school I teach at and is currently enrolled at one

of the University of California institutions. The mother spoke about hardships and how expensive it is to survive in the current economic climate with high home and rent prices and small wages. Due to this tension, they are forced to work longer hours making it almost impossible to attend school site events. However, she makes it a point to know and have relationships with school administration and teachers. For instance, one of the school administrators actually goes and does a few store visits per year. The administrator makes it a point to know the family to ensure that they are informing the family of updates or anything necessary to ensure this child stays at a 4.0 grade average.

**Family Four.**

Family four has two daughters. Both of the daughters are very active in school sports and clubs. The parents are advocates for their communities and believe community participation starts young and continues throughout life. They believe that being an active parent can help support students. They also stated how they still keep in contact with many of their children's teachers. Both parents are alumni of the secondary school their daughters go to. The mother was the only one interviewed because her husband had to work.

**Family Five.**

The last family interviewed is comprised of a single mother with three children. She works full time at her first job and a part time job. Her goal is for her three children to excel in school and learn from her experiences. Out of all the parents, she is the one with less communication with teachers and administrators. Her work schedule makes it difficult for her to be active in school events, so she uses other methods to stay involved with her children's education, such as having the school's app, which shows attendance and grades, and emailing teachers. She also is an active reader of the school's weekly email updates.

## Findings

### Common Themes

A major theme that all five families shared was the need for **open communication** and the importance for parents and students to maintain positive communication. **Socioeconomic strain** was the second theme brought up, given that half of the families in Title I schools in the Bay Area are dealing with financial strains. The third theme was the need for **clear expectations** to be established, not just with students but also with parents. The final theme was **the importance of nurturing** and how all schools, especially Title I schools, need to be inclusive to all families.

### Open Communication

One of the first themes brought up by parents was the need to ensure **open communication** with their children and with teachers and administrators about everything that is happening in school. In their interviews, all five parents stated how important it is to make students feel comfortable and make them feel how important each one of their children is as an individual. All five parents went beyond just asking: "How was your day?". Instead, each parent added more specificity to the questions they would ask their children. One mother even said that there are different resources online with questions that parents can ask their children every day. All five parents also gave examples of how to be more supportive of their students, such as asking the following questions: "Do you need help with your homework? How was the exam? What do you need from me to help you? Is there something that I can help you with? What type of homework do you have today?" The parents used open-ended questions to start a dialogue

with their children. There needs to be open communication with students *and* with teachers and administrators.

The parents also talked about the importance of feeling comfortable to email, call or meet with teachers for any questions or concerns they might have. One of the families also articulated the need to have open communication with administration. The parents stressed that they feel part of the community when people know their names during visits to the school campus.. Names are part of a person's identity. If school staff knew and remembered these families' names, it would have a great impact on how parents and students view the school, allowing them to have a deeper connection and a more positive experience.

### **Socioeconomic Strain**

Another theme was **socioeconomic strain** and how difficult it is to currently make ends meet in The Bay Area. Many more families have to work longer hours and cannot be going to school events when they have to be at work. All of the five families spoke about the reality of how expensive it is to live in California. Families are working more hours than ever before, yet they are still making less due to living expenses. The reality is that many parents no longer just work one job but may be working multiple jobs, which keeps them away from home. Work conditions and long hours can take a toll on parents and diminish school participation..

### **Clear Expectations**

**Clear expectations** was another theme found while interviewing parents. All parents were clear about teacher expectations in the classroom and how to communicate with teachers if they had any questions. This was due to the teachers requiring students to get parents to sign and go over their classroom syllabus. According to the parents, the syllabus included: overall curriculum for the year, cell phone policy, homework policy, contact information. Those were

the common ingredients that all five parents shared. Each syllabus had different components, depending on the teacher's policy, but the ones listed above are the common items that appear on all of the syllabuses. Whenever teachers provided clearer expectations for both students and parents, this helped parents feel more informed about their children's education.

All five families interviewed also had clear expectations about their children's school commitments. All of the five families let their children choose which school activity they wanted to be part of. Some of the after-school activities mentioned were folklorico, sports, leadership, ASB (Associate School Body), and heavy involvement in clubs. All parents also stated how important it is for students to stay active in school events. Four out of the five families had a child in leadership and in a sport. Four out of the five families also had their children in active roles in ASB.

According to the parents all of them stated that you could find the teachers' emails on the school website. Some teachers also had links to personal web pages, where there were listings of the curriculum for each unit. This is important because parents can look on the websites and personally see what students are learning.

### **The Importance of Nurturing**

The final theme has to do with **the importance of nurturing**. All of the parents interviewed spoke about how schools need to know when families go through hardship, if students are moving or going through family emergencies or trauma. Schools need to be aware of what is happening in students' lives. If a family is going through homelessness, or a death in the family, that will most likely change the student's learning environment. The fact is nurturing benefits everyone. It keeps teachers and administrators updated on what is going on with

families, so that they know what support they can provide. It also benefits students and parents, because the schools are aware of what they are going through.

### **Importance of Daily Communication**

#### **Family 1.**

Since they were little we always told them you guys we are here for you.

Yes, he (mother's boyfriend) always says that to them as I like I'm here, I'm like your friend anytime you want to talk about it. I'm your friend. I'm not your dad. Talk to me as a friend or talk, talking is key. I remind them that if they want to talk about anything that I will always listen, no matter how tired I am.

Letting our kids know how important they are to us also helps them be more open with us. No matter how tired we are, we will ask all five of them how they are doing (Interview, October 22, 2019).

Both parents focus on expressing the importance of communicating with their children every single day. Even though both of the parents work full time and have five children, they will ask how they can be supportive. The mother stated that even on the days when she is exhausted, she will take time to ask her five children questions. She will go around the house asking open-ended questions to truly find out what was impactful about their day. Both the mother and the mother's boyfriend stated in the interview that they work at an institute where teenagers who are not doing well are sent. Both of the parents said that sometimes their patients just want to be noticed or seek someone that would acknowledge them. That was one of the reasons why both stated how important it is to check in with each child. Their goal is for each of their children to feel wanted and loved. They do this by checking in with each child every day for a minimum of ten minutes each.

#### **Family 2.**

I heard that asking questions about how was your day or what do you have to do for homework, or what they have to complete. Just asking how did all her activities go today. She's in cheer, Girl Scouts, leadership, clubs. Yeah, we're involved in all that. Well she's involved. She's the troop leader. We ask her everyday how was your day? There's a list of 20 questions that you can ask your child on Pinterest which resonated with me



because it's, especially as they grow older, it's like if you just say like, how was your day, you're going to get fine or good. Your children need to feel like you care and you have to remind them each day that you do care.

I always ask her what does the dinner plan look like? We usually grab something if she is cheering. What do you have for spirit week? Do we need to go shopping the week before? Do you need me to buy you materials for that project? The whole like what are you doing next week? Cause we have to plan for it this weekend or you know, it was finding time during the week to do it (Interview, October 23, 2019).

Both parents believe that open communication is key for students to be successful in school, no matter how busy they are in school activities. For family 2, both parents had open communication with their daughter. Both parents work full-time and create time to ask their daughter what she needs from her parents to be successful. The parents would ask their daughter what her homework schedule was in order to accommodate her. For example, the mother said if her daughter had a lot of homework they would not go out for dinner; instead, they would stay home to ensure she had sufficient time to finish with little to no distraction. The father mentioned that if she has to study, often times he will take her to Starbucks. That way she can focus on her studies and he could be there reading a book. This allows her to get in the habit of studying for high school and beyond.

### **Family 3.**

The first thing I ask my kids when they come home, how was your day? Whether I'm busy, whether it's been a crazy day, even if I have a bad day, they're first. My children are my priority. I remind them both that they can be open with us. That we will always be here for them. We have always been open with our kids, even when we went through finance issues. They know what was happening. Our house may be smaller now but we are very happy as long as we are together.

Since elementary school I've tried spending as much time as I could even if it was helping the class. Making copies for the teachers if they needed it. I also have taught my children how to talk to teachers. I think some kids do not know how to ask for help because they have never learned how to talk to adults. I teach my kids how to ask questions, or even if they need help how to ask for help.

Both of my daughters are good students, no, they are exceptional. They're not perfect. So, I feel like too, one thing is just your communication is clear with all of you before and then the expectations are very clear for your daughters. Yeah. I mean, we don't push

them that they have to be the best, but we pushed them to strive to do their best. Whether if that, if their best is a B+ or B- is fine, as long as they try it and strive for their best not to be you know the best or to out achieve everyone else (Interview, October 23, 2019).

The mother was interviewed while the father was working in front of the store. While she was interviewed, she asked if she could work while responding. She apologized but said she wanted to be done by the time her children got out of practice so she could spend quality time with them. Both parents use oral communication to see how their children are doing. This family is also focused on how to communicate with teachers. This family does this by modeling and then practicing how to communicate when they have questions. For example, they practice how to ask for help, or where can you find the teachers' office hours in order to go and ask for help.

#### **Family 4.**

I ask my daughters every day, How was school? How was your day? What happened at schools today? I don't care if they get mad at me because I have to make sure my daughters always feel like they can talk to me or my husband. I've been asking them those questions since they were in kindergarten. Even when they are having a bad day I ask what happened? Do you want to talk about what happened? (Interview, October 24, 2019)

During the interview with family 4, the parent spoke about mental health and letting their children know that they are their first priority. The mother emphasized the importance of letting her daughters know that it is okay if they had a bad day. If something happened in school they could always let their parents know without having to be worried about being judged. This is important because if the student had a bad day, then the last thing they want to worry about is homework. Parents' awareness of these circumstances allows them to better support their children. For instance, if the student mentions that she had a bad day due to failing a test, then the parent knows that the child is falling behind, which in turn allows them to create an action plan for the student with the teacher. Teachers also know about other resources outside of the classroom that could be used to better support students who are not at the level they need to be.

### **Family 5.**

I just talk to her and tell her how I used to be and you don't want to be like that. You know what I mean? Why do you want to worry me more than what I need to be worried about? I remind them they can talk to me about anything. About 8:30pm is usually when we have our time to talk and unwind from work I still ask all three of them: How was school? What happened today? What's happening in school? I always know if they have an exam or a project coming up. Just asking and being open reminds them you care (Interview, October 25, 2019).

The last parent interviewed worked two full time jobs and even though it was late when she would get home, she still questioned her children about how their day went. She still makes it a point to ask every day. She stated that no matter how late it gets, she still talks to her children.

### **After School Activities**

#### **Family 1.**

All of my children have such different personalities, all of them are involved in different activities. The older three are all involved in leadership. All of my children have been involved in after school activities since elementary. We let them choose something that they want to do. Our daughter is on the football team our son is on the cheerleading team, our daughter takes singing classes and is a class officer, the younger one is very involved in karate and my baby who is four years old is starting gymnastics. It can be difficult to keep up with all my children's schedule but all of them have different passions but all always try their best. Sometimes the older three stay late after school because all three of them are in leadership. The older three go to the same high school and all three of them always call me individually to see how late they will be staying after school and for which activity (Interview, October 22, 2019).

The first family interviewed has all five of the children involved in after-school activities. Both of the parents believe that it is important for children to start being involved in extracurricular activities since elementary school. They stated how it helps students build confidence and of the importance to learn how to treat others with respect. They also explained

that they do not force any of their children to do a certain activity, giving them instead the option to join whatever makes them happy.

### **Family 2.**

Our daughter has been involved in multiple things since she was four. She is a cheerleader, girl scouts and is involved in leadership. Yeah, we're involved in all that. Well she's involved. She's the troop leader. This year she's her class Vice President. I'm a firm believer that students need to stay active in school so that they can be ready for the real world when they graduate (Interview, October 23, 2019).

The second family started school activities when their daughter was very young. She was only four when she began being an active leader in Girl Scouts. Today she is still very active in Girl Scouts. This family also lets their child choose which type of activity they wanted to be in. The expectation was clear that they can choose any sports or after school activity.

### **Family 3.**

We have always kept both of them very active. My oldest played softball in high school and field hockey and then she played travel ball, which was after school practice. Weekends were tournaments plus she was senior class president. She was also part of leadership and my other daughter is playing volleyball at school right now. She plays travel ball for softball. She'll be playing softball at school when the season starts. She was the only freshman on varsity last year. She's also the treasurer for CCU(Central Caribbean Union) Club. We encourage them to stay active. I don't want my kids at home getting into trouble and I don't know what they're doing on their phone so I tell them they need to stay active. I think it's better if their bodies are active and their minds active and they're not active just for a semester. It's just the whole year pretty much. Right now, she's in volleyball then conditioning for softball starts. Her volleyball coach asked if she could keep conditioning for volleyball to prepare for next season.

The coach wants her to do some tournaments too during the off season. My daughter wants to do it. As long as wants to we will keep encouraging her. We don't force them because I don't have time. I work a lot as long as 10 hour days. We encourage them to always put 100% into whatever they are doing. We have always gone to their games, we take them to their practices. We are their number one fans every softball game we are there, especially my husband, he loves watching his daughters play softball. Even when both of us can't go we alternate. There's a lot of work to do, but there's always one of us. We try for both because I don't want to miss anything. My husband doesn't want him to

say anything because we feel like, you know, we're not going to have these moments anymore and we want to be there. We want to be present for every, every moment, every special moment (Interview, October 23, 2019).

This family was similar to the second family, whereas both parents are equally involved. Although the parents never forced their children to be that active in a specific sport or club, the expectations are clear. Their children can choose whichever activity they want as long as they stay active. The mother in the interview stated how important it is for students to stay not just physically busy but mentally busy as well. She stated that she worried if her children are not active they will get into trouble.

#### **Family 4.**

My mother got very sick when I was young and I went from school straight home. Or if I was in a sport it would still be to go straight home after practice. I was not involved in leadership like my children are or other after school events. I love seeing how involved both of my kids are in school. It helps them learn how to work with other students. I didn't push my kids to join all the activities they are in but I am glad because it is getting them ready for college (Interview, October 24, 2019).

This was the first parent who spoke about her own experience with after school activities. Even though this parent did participate in sports, they did not think it helped them connect to the school. This parent wanted their children to be active members in school activities and stay active in the community. She stated how she did not feel part of the school and that is not what she wants for her children.

#### **Family 5.**

In middle school she did basketball and volleyball for the three years. My middle one does basketball at school and boys volleyball team. My youngest also plays basketball and plays softball. Here in high school I tried to get her to do the basketball. She tried but she told me she doesn't want to do it this year. I said, okay, you don't want to, that's cool, but you have to do something. So, give me something. So, softball is the next day. I told her it's either sports or clubs. I remind my kids just give me one thing. I'm cool with that. You know because I think sometimes parents think its better for kids to stay at

home and I disagree with that. I believe that is when kids start to get into trouble (Interview, October 25, 2019).

The last parent interviewed focused on her children not getting into trouble. Since the mother works full time, she stated that the more active children are, the less they are likely to get into trouble. She wants to make sure all her children are successful although she works long hours. Her goal is for her children to do well in school and be happy.

### **School Support**

All five families stated that they felt welcomed by the school. When asked what they would change to improve the school, all of them said the same thing. Specifically, the school was very welcoming but if they were to provide suggestions, these would be:

#### **Family 1.**

Some parents cannot come to back to school night or any school events because they work late. The Bay Area has gotten so expensive to live in that many parents have more than one job to try to pay for rent. Or the principal's coffee events are only in the morning so I can never make those. Maybe they could rotate the principal's coffee. Maybe one month it is in the morning, then the following month it can be in the afternoon or later after 6:00pm. They used to have this thing elementary and middle school called Eat With Your Child where parents would come on campus and have lunch with their kids. The parents had the option of bringing food or eating food from the cafeteria. While we ate lunch with our kids teachers and the principal and the vice principals would come and talk to us. I also got to meet my kids friends parents which is a plus. My kids would love it because I brought them whatever they wanted Chipotle, McDoanld's you name it. For me I got to see who their friends where and I am still friends with some of the parents because some parents have been doing it since elementary. I think it is important to know your kids teachers and who the principals are (Interview, October 22,2019).

When parents were asked about ways schools can improve, both parents struggled to think of any changes schools could make. Instead they focused on things they liked about the school, such as weekly reminders from the principal, which are sent every Friday. After a few minutes they said that they do know if the Eat With Your Child event would work at the high-school level but they wanted to suggest it because they loved participating in it since elementary

school. They did state that the event can be difficult for most parents because it is in the middle of the day and not all parents can participate.

### **Family 2.**

Since our daughter had gone to private school for elementary when we put her in public middle school were shocked. They had robo calls that included events and information for parents I love those. We also would get monthly flyers which I also love and emails. The instagram post were also helpful especially for sports events. The instagram might not work for all parents because they would have to be on social media to receive those updates. One thing I would recommend is having administrators outside so when parents drop off their children can start to get to know the administrative team. Or teachers can also be out there greeting parents. It is so hard for parents because many parents work so much here in the Bay Area due to high living costs and may not know why is the school principal or the school vice principals. I think it would help me feel more connected and welcomed(Interview, October 23, 2019).

The second family also focused on more positive aspects they liked about the school. One aspect was the presence of administration or teachers in the drop-off area. That way all parents or families who drop off their children can speak to them or they can be greeted by administration, so that teachers would help parents feel more welcomed. The second family also stated being active members on social media and using it as a platform to know what activities are happening in their children's school. According to the second family, updating the school's social media can help parents feel more involved and active in school events. The use of weekly phone calls done by the principal to all parents has also helped parents feel more involved, given that they know what are the events for the following week.

### **Family 3.**

One of the biggest issues parents are having is living in such an expensive area. It definitely adds to the stress of daily life. Nowadays it is so much harder to survive in the Bay area than it was 20 years ago. The economy was so much better. I tell this to my husband all the time that when we first got married we worked less and we had more time off and we had more money.

Nowadays we work more for less money. I think that's the main part for parents they feel overworked. They are so overstressed out. It is not that they do not want to communicate with their kids or be more active, they just can't. I think that's the problem. And it's unfortunate. Parents are only getting phone calls when their kids are behaving badly or failing classes. Teachers should also call parents when their children are doing well in school. That way parents don't feel bad when the school calls them to talk to them about their children's progress in school. Or even texting parents to let them know positive things about their school. When my daughter was a freshman a teacher called me. The first thing when the teacher said if she could talk to me I was frightened. I remember thinking no teacher has ever called me personally because my kids do not get into trouble. When I said that I could speak to her she told me how amazing my daughter was and what an amazing parents we are because she does so well in school. I remember crying afterwards because as parents we are never thanked for all the work we put in. Teachers should also focus on making positive positive phone calls instead of just negative phone calls. I think many parents would appreciate it and want to reach out more to the school. Even an email or text would in my opinion help parents feel more wanted (Interview, October, 23, 2019).

The third interview stated that adding more positive calls, instead of focusing on just negative phone calls, would make parents feel more welcomed by teachers. According to this parent, it would help build better relationships between staff and parents. It also helps parents to meet teachers if they have not been able to attend school functions, such as back to school night or after school events.

#### **Family 4.**

The daily stress of parents life is so hectic. It is such an expensive city to live in. I think that's the main problem for parents it's so hard to survive. Parents, they're just so overworked. Not that they don't want to communicate with their kids or be more active, they just can't. I think that's the problem. And it's unfortunate. One recommendation I would give the school is having longer office hours. Two years ago I had to submit paperwork to my daughters school. The school closed and locked the campus at 3:30pm. I get out of work at four everyday. I tried leaving work early a few times and still would be late and unable to submit some documents. I know I am not the only parent who works during the day. Many parents who need to go to the office for different things. I get they have to close the campus but even if the office where to stay open until a later time maybe five or six would really help many parents. At this school the secretary speaks spanish and english but what about the other students? Families who speak vietnamese or chinese or any other families also that need translation. Every school should have translators for all families (Interview, October 24, 2019).



The fourth interview focused on parents' availability with office needs. Although the incident happened two years ago the parents still remember how frustrating and unpleasant the experience was.

#### **Family 5.**

I work more than one job which makes it difficult for me to attend school functions. My kids do very well in school and I do want to be more of an active parent but due to my work it makes it very hard for me to attend anything. Once I leave my first job I have an hour to get ready for my second job. I don't know how families are surviving right now. Everything is so expensive. One recommendation I would have for schools is to change the hours of certain events. My younger daughter always tells me that her friends parents always go to the Principal's Coffee and is always asking me if I can go. I feel horrible telling her I can't because those are the hours I am at work. Maybe they can have different schedules for the Principal's Coffee. Maybe some can be in the morning and later in the afternoon. I am off on Tuesdays so if it were to be on a Tuesday I could try to go. Maybe by also switching the days of the event instead of just on Mondays for more parents to go. I have not been able to attend any back to school nights. Also maybe having one in the afternoon and maybe a second one on weekends or maybe a later time. That way parents have more than one option (Interview, October 25, 2019).

The last parent interviewed provided recommendations which stemmed from personal experience. The parent was sad during the interview when talking about not being able to attend a Back to School event due to her work schedule.

#### **Summary**

All five families shared their own experiences and thoughts on how to support other parents. Many of the families shared similar difficulties, especially with the increased living cost of the Bay Area. All also agreed that the lack of parent involvement is not the parents' fault, but instead happens due to working long hours, which prevents many parents from participating in school function events. Several of the interviewees also reinforced certain themes, such as **open communication** with children, teachers and staff. **Clear expectations**, students being active in school activities and striving for the children's best, but not forcing students to do anything they

did not want to. The **Socioeconomic Strain** that many families go through not just in the Bay Area but all over the United States. Finally, the **Importance of Nurturing** schools need to be aware of what is happening with students' lives and provide support to the families. During the interview all of the families were extremely open to supporting other parents.

## CHAPTER IV DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to see why Title I schools have such a low parent engagement, and what changes schools can make to improve parent engagement from parents' perspectives. It was an honor being able to interview five families and listen to their experiences and what they believe are some amazing changes schools can do to improve parent involvement. The time and effort is greatly appreciated to the families in the interviews. It was very brave for these families to share personal experiences and reflect and discuss changes that need to be made in schools to improve parent engagement in Title I schools. The themes found from the parent interviews reflect how much work parents are putting forward to improve their children's education. Furthermore, the importance of the relationship between parents, students and teachers is essential for students to be successful.

In this chapter, I will be discussing the findings of Chapter III viewed from a critical pedagogy and social cognitive theory lens. Both of these frameworks will be used to analyze four themes: Open communication, Socioeconomic Strain, Clear Expectations, and The Importance of Nurturing. The themes will focus on negative and positive experiences from the parents' interviews. The analysis will focus on how to improve parent engagement.

### **Discussion**

Chapter III presents data from interviews with five families, and the findings reveal parent perspectives. Parent engagement remains low in Title I schools (Snyder, de Brey & Dillow, 2019). During the interviews, I asked parents questions on how to improve parent engagement. The discussion focused on how schools need to add more support for parents living in the Bay Area. Due to multiple factors such as high rent and long work hours, it is difficult to have parents available at all times, especially during business hours. Most programs or meetings

with teachers are designed around the schools availability rather than that of the family. Parents need to have options available such as online meetings or later meeting times.

### **Critical Pedagogy and Social Cognitive Theory**

All the parents interviewed were from the same diverse secondary school, and all of the parents brought up the issue of inequality. This study was seen through a critical pedagogy and social cognitive lens. Freire(1972) states that teachers cannot treat students as banks; constantly depositing information with no regard of how and if the student is learning and interpreting the information properly. Instead, they should acknowledge that each student has their own identity and that not every student will accept and contain the information given to them. This theory also works for parents and families. Parents cannot be expected to be told when meetings are and what time they need to show up. They should have a voice in the K-12 educational system. Parents cannot just be told when to arrive to certain events or be told information. Their opinions and experiences should be brought into schools.

Social Cognitive Theory also places an importance for parent engagement in schools. If schools include parents, the environment for parents will be more welcoming. In the classroom teachers often call on students to answer questions, or break into groups to discuss topics. Parents also need to be asked questions to get them more involved. The five parents gave suggestions on how to improve schools. Many of the suggestions are achievable in all schools. One parent suggestion was that administrators be outside greeting parents when students are being dropped off. The parent explained that this would help create a bond between parents and administrators. That by greeting parents or a smile can go a long way. Other parents suggestion was to have more events throughout the year and that they should be at different times. For example, Eat With Your Child could be one event secondary schools can include. This would

help parents meet their children's friends and school staff. Another parent suggested having translators in the office that spoke more languages than just Spanish and English to be able to support more families.

### **Conclusions**

Parents are always placed into two categories: active parents and non-active parents. The non-active parents are perceived as though they do not put the same effort as active parents. This study shows that conclusion to be false by all five parents agreeing that socioeconomic and trauma have a large influence on parent engagement. In the study, the parents who were not active at the school still put effort into their children at home. Going over homework, asking questions, and making sure the children were busy with some kind of extracurricular activities. All parents want their children to succeed, but due to multiple factors it can make it very difficult for many parents, especially in Title I schools. In this study, parents expressed ideas of change on how to not only improve parent engagement, but also the importance of educators realizing how much work parents are dealing with everyday. This study focused on three main questions: (1) How do parents perceive their engagement with the school community? (2) What factors contribute to increased parent engagement at this school? (3) What factors contribute to decreased parent engagement at this school? The parents interviewed shared personal experiences, suggestions, and belief that schools can keep evolving to better support parents to increase parent engagement in Title I Schools. There were many themes brought up during parents interviews such as: **Open Communication, Socioeconomic Strain, Clear Expectations and finally The Importance of Nurturing.**

The families all gave suggestions on how to improve schools and make them more welcoming for parents. The first was having events at different days and times. For example, most schools have Back to School Night for parents every year at the same time and date. This

can be difficult for many parents due to conflicting work schedules. Back to School Night is when parents can come and meet teachers and staff. For example, if the event was always on the last Thursday of August every year at 7:00 pm, this would only allow the same families to attend every year. It's very difficult for families that work at night or that just got off work to make this event if it's always done at the same time. Since so many families in the Bay Area work more than 40 hours a week, it is nearly impossible for these families to come to these types of events. It would be more prudent to have multiple days and times available so that parents had options and the school would be showing they are trying to be accommodating.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Research**

Education keeps evolving and the way we communicate with parents also needs to keep developing and growing. In the literature, there is not enough research for schools to use in order to grow parent engagement in Title I Schools. When looking at future studies one focus can be on developing curriculum to include parents. Also to learn new ways to communicate with families possible creating parent workshops. Another research opportunity can also be counseling for parents. Many parents feel overwhelmed and need emotional support or just someone to talk to. Another research focus can be professional development for how teachers communicate with parents. Many teachers want to have open communication with parents but may not know or lack how to speak to parents. As a teacher fresh out of school you are prepared to deal with students and the challenges of trying to teach students. In truth the hardest part of the job is trying to communicate with parents. No parent is the same and they all want to see their child succeed. The hard part is trying to relate to each parent on an individual basis while trying to relay information on mass scale.

Due to the IRB being approved at a much later time than expected, I was unable to interview parents whose students were not doing well in school. By the time the IRB got approved the parents I interviewed all had children with a 3.6 gpa or higher. With more time I could have interviewed parents who needed more support with their children's academics. Due to time I was unable to meet with the families for multiple interviews instead each family was interviewed only once.

### **Parents**

The focus of this study was to learn from parents' point of view on how to improve parent engagement focusing on Title I Schools. Schools are always trying to add, change and develop how to keep improving. This study was able to give parents a small voice. Another recommendation is that schools give parents a platform to be able to express and have a voice in K-12 education. If schools listened to the parents in this study, then these families would be given a voice in a larger platform. They would finally be given equality in the sense that they can be given equal opportunity to be more engaged in their children's education.

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## APPENDIX

**Revised Application****APPLICATION FOR IRB REVIEW OF NEW RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

Complete the following form and upload this document to the online IRB system in Mentor. **In addition to this application, you will also need to upload any survey/interview questions and informed consent documents for your protocol.**

**1. RESEARCH PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Provide, in lay terms, a detailed summary of your proposed study by addressing each of the following items:

Clearly state the purpose of the study (Usually this will include the research hypothesis)

Within the existing literature there is valuable data on barriers to engagement that parents of minorities experience in their children's schools. Studies show that parent involvement can increase student success (Schueler, McIntyre & Gehlbach, 2017). For example, if parents were more aware of students' grades, school activities, back to school night and other events, they would be better able to support their children (Barton, Drake, Perez, Louis & George, 2004). Parents who are more involved in their children's education tend to have children with higher grades, who opt to continue their education (Jeynes, 2005). The research methodology used in this project is a case study, based on interviews. It will be informed by three previous case studies that sought to understand parent engagement at other Title 1 schools (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). My case study will be conducted based on a series of interviews with parents. The research methods in this study will be interviews and content analysis of other documentation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study will take place at San Jose High School located in San Jose, California. The duration of the study will be from September 20th 2019-November 30th 2019.

Background (Describe past studies and any relevant experimental or clinical findings that led to the plan for this project)  
Parent involvement is one of the most crucial factors for students to succeed in the public education arena (Schueler, McIntyre & Gehlbach, 2017). Urban K-12 schools across the United States still have low parent involvement, according to the National Center for Education Statistics and the American Institute of Research (Snyder, de Brey & Dillow, 2019). There has been research on how to improve parent involvement in public education. Yet, urban schools have not improved significantly in terms of parent involvement. Although Title I schools receive extra funding, less than one percent is used on parent involvement (National PTA, 2009).

Research plan (Provide an orderly scientific description of the intended methodology and procedures as they directly affect the subjects)

I will be recording the families on audio. Families will not have to give names or location of what school their children go to. The audio will be password secured. After I transcribe the audio it will be transcribed on googledoc which will require username and password to be able to locate it. Once the audio is transcribed the audio will be deleted for parent's privacy. I will use the data collected to analyze themes to support all parents in Title I Schools.

Give the location(s) the study will take place (institution, city, state, and specific location)  
**San Jose High School, San Jose, California.**

Duration of study project  
**September-November**

## **2. PARTICIPANTS**

### **2(a) Participant Population and Recruitment**

Describe who will be included in the study as participants and any inclusion and exclusion criteria.

In order to develop an in-depth analysis, I will conduct a number of in-depth interviews with parents at this Northern California school. All parents being interviewed will be from the same high school in Northern California. A total of five parents will be interviewed individually. Two of the families are Vietnamese-American. Vietnamese is the primary language and English is secondary at both homes. One of the families is Pilipino-American. This family speaks both English and Tagalog at home. The last two families are Mexican-American. One of the families speaks Spanish as their primary language and English as their secondary language at home. The other family only speaks English at home. All five families face low socioeconomic status. In three out of the five families, the children are first-generation students in the United States. The Mexican-American family, who only speaks English at home, are fourth generation Mexican-American. The children in the Pilipino-American families are second generation.

What is the intended age range of participants in the study?

**35-50**

Describe how participant recruitment will be performed.

**They are the parents of my former students which I had in Spanish level 1 and Spanish level 2.**

Do the forms of advertisement for recruitment contain only the title, purpose of the study, protocol summary, basic eligibility criteria, study site location(s), and how to contact the study site for further information?  Yes  No

\*If you answered "no," the forms of advertisement must be submitted to and approved by the IRB prior to their use.

### **2(b) Participant Risks and Benefits**

What are the benefits to participants in this study?

**To improve parent engagement in Title I Schools**

What are the risks (physical, social, psychological, legal, economic) to participants in this study?

**Minimal Risk**

If deception is involved, please explain.

Indicate the degree of risk (physical, social, psychological, legal, economic) you believe the research poses to human subjects (*check **the one** that applies*).

- MINIMAL RISK:** A risk is minimal where the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the proposed research are not greater, in and of themselves, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.
- GREATER THAN MINIMAL RISK:** Greater than minimal risk is greater than minimal where the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the proposed research are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. **If you checked "Greater than Minimal Risk"**, provide a statement about the statistical power of the study based on intended sample size, design, etc. to test the major hypotheses)

### 2(c) Participant Compensation and Costs

Are participants to be financially compensated for the study?  Yes  No If "yes," indicate amount, type, and source of funds.

Amount:

Source:

Type (e.g., gift card, cash, etc.):

Will participants who are students be offered class credit?  Yes  No  N/A

If you plan to offer course credit for participation, please describe what alternative assignment(s) students may complete to get an equal amount of credit should they choose not to participate in the study.

Are other inducements planned to recruit participants?  Yes  No If yes, please describe.

### 3. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA SECURITY

Will personal identifiers be collected (e.g., name, social security number, license number, phone number, email address, photograph)?  Yes  No

Will identifiers be translated to a code?  Yes  No

Describe how you will protect participant confidentiality and secure research documents, recordings (audio, video, photos), specimens, and other records.

I will be using pseudonym names for each of the families being interviewed, unless they want to use a specific name. The families will be recorded so that they take their time answering questions. Then I will transcribe everything on a Google doc, which is secured by a username and password. At the beginning of each interview, family members can ask any questions they might have. They also can choose not to answer any question they feel uncomfortable with. The families can also withdraw from the interview/consent at anytime. Any questions the families have will be answered before signing the consent form. I will also be going over the process of the interviews before families sign the consent form.

Once I have everything transcribed on the googledoc I will be deleting the voice recordings.

**4. CONSENT****4a. Informed consent**

Do you plan to use a written consent form that the participant reads and signs?  Yes  No

**\*If "no," you must complete Section 4b or 4c below.**

If "yes," describe how consent will be obtained and by whom.

**The form that will be used is uploaded on the IRB website.**

If the participants are minors under the age of 18 years, will assent forms be used?  Yes  No  N/A

If "no," please explain.

**No minors will be interviewed only parents.**

**Upload to the online IRB system the consent form(s) that the participants and/or parent/guardian will be required to sign, and the assent forms for children under the age of 18, if applicable.**

Note: All consent forms must contain the following elements (quoted directly from Office for Human Research Protections regulations, available at: <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm#46.116>). The University of San Francisco IRB has consent templates containing all required elements, **and we strongly recommend you use these templates.**

If you believe it is important to create your own consent form, you are free to do so but please ensure that your consent form has each of the following elements and indicate you have done so by checking this box:

- I have chosen to create my own consent form and have ensured that it contains the 8 essential elements listed below:
- (1a) A statement that the study involves research, (1b) an explanation of the purposes of the research, (1c) the expected duration of the subject's participation, (1d) a description of the procedures to be followed, and (1e) identification of any procedures which are experimental;
  - (2) A description of any reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts to the subject;
  - (3) A description of any benefits to the subject or to others which may reasonably be expected from the research;
  - (4) A disclosure of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to the subject;
  - (5) A statement describing the extent, if any, to which confidentiality of records identifying the subject will be maintained;
  - (6) For research involving more than minimal risk, an explanation as to whether any compensation and an explanation as to whether any medical treatments are available if injury occurs and, if so, what they consist of, or where further information may be obtained;
  - (7) An explanation of whom to contact for answers to pertinent questions about the research and research subjects' rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research-related injury to the subject; and
  - (8) A statement that participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled, and the subject may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled."

#### **4b. Waiver of documentation of written informed consent (Complete only if answered "no" to 4a)**

The regulations allow instances in which the IRB may waive the requirement for documentation of informed consent, that is, the collection of a signed consent form. If you are requesting a waiver of written documentation (signed) of informed consent, please answer the following questions:

Will the only record linking the participant and the research be the consent document and the principal risk to the participant would be from breach of confidentiality?  Yes  No

Do you consider this a minimal risk study that involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of research (see 2B above for definition)?  Yes  No

Explain why you are requesting waiver or modification of documentation of written (signed) informed consent and how you plan to obtain consent.

#### **4c. Waiver or modification of informed consent (Complete only if answered "no" to 4a)**

The regulations also provide an opportunity for the IRB to waive the requirement for informed consent or to modify the informed consent process, provided the protocol meets the following criteria:

- (1) The research involves no more than minimal risk to subjects (see 2b above for definition);
- (2) The waiver of alteration will not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the subjects;
- (3) The research could not practicably be carried out without the waiver or alteration; and
- (4) Whenever appropriate, the subjects will be provided with additional pertinent information after participation.

If you are requesting a waiver or modification of informed consent (e.g., incomplete disclosure, deception), explain how your project meets the requirements for waiver or modification of informed consent, as outlined above.

## **Parent Consent Form**



## **CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY**

Below is a description of the research procedures and an explanation of your rights as a research participant. You should read this information carefully. If you agree to participate, you will sign in the space provided to indicate that you have read and understand the information on this consent form. You are entitled to and will receive a copy of this form.

You have been asked to participate in a research study conducted by Vanessa Sanchez, a graduate student in the Department of International and Multicultural Education at University of San Francisco.

This faculty supervisor for this study is Luz Garcia , a professor in the Department of International and Multicultural Education at University of San Francisco.

**WHAT THE STUDY IS ABOUT:**

The purpose of this research study is to improve parent involvement at San Jose High School. To learn how to support parent involvement and learn new strategies to improve how we communicate with parents.

**WHAT WE WILL ASK YOU TO DO:**

During this study, the following will happen:

1. I will interview you to look at parents' point of view on how to improve parent engagement.
2. None of your identification will be shared everything will be anonymous.
3. After I interview the parents I will collect the data and use the information to see similar themes on how to improve parent involvement.
4. After I have transcribed your recordings I will delete all of the audio recordings.
5. Before, during and after the interviews your identity will not be disclosed.

**DURATION AND LOCATION OF THE STUDY:**

Your participation in this study will involve an interview that will be one session for 30-45 minutes. Depending on your schedule I can meet any day in my classroom or at school.

Each family will be recorded using a recording app that I will provide. Participants will have access to see the entire interview after it is transcribed. Each interview will be with one family or parent at a time. Each parent will be given the following discussion norms: there is no correct or wrong answer; this is a safe zone to express their experiences and views; they can tell me as little or as much as they would feel comfortable expressing. I will be interviewing each parent depending on their schedule.

I will be using pseudonym names for each of the parents being interviewed, unless they want to use a specific name. All the notes will be taken on my notebook while they are being voice recorded. Then I will copy everything on a Google doc, which is secured by a username and password. At the beginning of each interview, family members can ask any questions they might have. They also can choose not to answer any question they feel uncomfortable with. The parents can also withdraw from the interview/consent at any time. Any questions the families have will be answered before signing the consent form. I will also be going over the process of the interviews before families sign the consent form. After the recordings have been transcribed the audio will be destroyed.



**POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS:** We do not anticipate any risks or discomforts to you from participating in this research. If you wish, you may choose to withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation at any time during the study without penalty.

**BENEFITS:**

The possible benefits to you of participating in this study are to improve parent involvement in Title I Schools. So that all students can succeed and have more options to continue their education.

**PRIVACY/CONFIDENTIALITY:** Because you will not be providing any information that can uniquely identify you (such as your name or student ID number), the data you provide will be anonymous.

**COMPENSATION/PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION:**

There is no payment or other form of compensation for your participation in this study.

**VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY:**

Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits. Furthermore, you may skip any questions or tasks that make you uncomfortable and may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. In addition, the researcher has the right to withdraw you from participation in the study at any time.

**OFFER TO ANSWER QUESTIONS:**

Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you should contact the principal investigator: Luz Garcia or Colette Cann who is my advisor [cncann@usfca.edu](mailto:cncann@usfca.edu). If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the University of San Francisco Institutional Review Board at [IRBPHS@usfca.edu](mailto:IRBPHS@usfca.edu).

**I HAVE READ THE ABOVE INFORMATION. ANY QUESTIONS I HAVE ASKED HAVE BEEN ANSWERED. I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT AND I WILL RECEIVE A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM.**

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*PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE*

*DATE*

