

AN APPLIED RESEARCH STUDY ON IMPROVING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT
AT A SCHOOL IN SOUTHEASTERN NORTH CAROLINA

by

Jacqueline Hahn

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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APPROVED BY:

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this applied research study was to solve the problem of low parental involvement for school stakeholders at a school in southeastern North Carolina and to formulate a solution to address the problem. The central research question for this study was “How can the problem of low parental involvement be improved at a school located in southeastern North Carolina?” The theoretical framework for this study was comprised of Piaget’s cognitive development theory and Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory. Accordingly, the philosophical assumption that guided this research study was an ontological assumption through the interpretive framework of social constructivism. This study explored factors that impact school-based parental involvement and the supports that are needed to increase parental engagement in school-based events. Using a multimethods approach, qualitative data were collected from a variety of school stakeholders through semi-structured interviews, as well as a focus group interview with educators of the site school. Qualitative data were analyzed using the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method of analysis. A Likert-scale survey instrument was created to gather further information from school stakeholders on how to address the problem of low parental involvement. The quantitative data were recorded and analyzed using tables and descriptive statistics. Using the qualitative and quantitative data collected, an intervention plan was developed to improve parental involvement for the stakeholders at the site school.

Keywords: parental involvement, rural schools, academic achievement, engagement, socioeconomic status, barriers, supports

Copyright Page

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving family and friends who have provided support to me throughout my doctoral journey. I will forever be grateful.

Mom and Pops – thank you for encouraging my dream to pursue this degree. You have been there every step of the way cheering me on. Thank you for the times you watched the boys so that I could put in countless hours of work. Most importantly, thank you for keeping me uplifted when things were difficult and ensuring me that I had the grit and perseverance to keep going until my goals were met, and my dreams were achieved. You are the best parents I could have ever hoped for, and I thank God for your amazing presence in my life. I love you both.

Joseph and Benjamin – boys, thank you for being such amazing sons. You have been the best blessing in my life, and I appreciate the patience you have had with me while I pursue this dream. My prayer to you both is that you use my journey as a testament for yourselves that you can achieve all things through Christ who gives you strength. Remember to always follow your dreams and put your trust in God. With Him, you can achieve anything you put your mind to, and I will always be cheering you on! I love you both with all my heart and soul.

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List of Abbreviations

Economic Opportunity Act (EOA)

Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHC)

Elementary and Secondary Educational Act (ESEA)

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES)

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)

Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

School Improvement Team (SIT)

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The purpose of this applied research study was to solve the problem of low parental involvement for school stakeholders at a school in southeastern North Carolina and to formulate a solution to address the problem. The problem is that parental involvement is low at a Title I school in southeastern, North Carolina according to school administrators (personal communication, May 22, 2019). The 21st century has brought forth a paradigm shift within educational legislation requiring schools to increase parental involvement efforts (Tekin, 2011). The prevalence of increasing school-based parental involvement has had a profound effect on current educational research trends. Educational researchers have been interested in exploring how parental involvement influences academic achievement (Kaplan Toren & Seginer, 2015), social and emotional development (Roy & Giraldo-Garcia, 2018), student engagement (Kaplan Toren & Seginer, 2015; Kurtulmus, 2016), student behavior (Garbacz, et al., 2016), and motivation (Gorleku & Campbell, 2018). Additionally, educational researchers have placed emphasis on exploring factors that impede parental involvement to include socioeconomic status (Bardhoshi, Duncan & Schweinle, 2016; Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018; Gilbert et al., 2017; Keru Cetin & Taskin, 2016; Roy & Giraldo-Garcia, 2018), communication (Gonzales & Gabel, 2017; Heath, Maghrabi, & Carr, 2015; Meier & Lemmer, 2015; Ross, 2016), and parental perception (Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018; Lang, Schoppe-Sullivan & Jeon, 2017; Mayo & Siraj, 2015). While there has been significant evidence indicating that educational leaders and educators need to address factors that hinder parental involvement (Erdener et al., 2018; Gilbert et al., 2017), there have been no studies to identify the exact interventions that are needed to support families and their school-based involvement at this particular location. Providing a framework for the

research, Chapter One presents the background of the problem to include the historical and social significance, as well as the theoretical context of the study. In addition, the problem statement, purpose statement, and research questions are delineated. This chapter concludes with the definition of key terms, as well as a summary of the chapter.

Background

Parental involvement in schooling has been strongly linked to student outcomes, embedding it as a significant indicator of student success (Park & Holloway, 2018). Striving to stay competitive within the global society, the federal government drove education reform by enacting policies to increase student achievement and parental involvement in school. The significance of improving academic achievement in schools with a high percentage of disadvantaged youth emphasized the need for increased parental involvement (Finkel, 2011; Klein, 2015). Although policies have established proficiency goals and policies to foster parental involvement, high-stakes testing data suggests that schools are still struggling to generate adequate results among all subgroups (Mathematics & Reading Assessments, 2017). The Nation's Report Card (2017) showed no significant changes in national achievement levels for reading and mathematics proficiency compared to the 2015 results (Mathematics & Reading Assessments, 2017). In fact, the 2017 results indicated that only 40% of fourth graders and 34% of eighth graders were considered proficient in mathematics (Mathematics & Reading Assessments, 2017). The reading proficiency rates were also problematic with only 37% of fourth graders and 36% of eighth graders being proficient (Mathematics & Reading Assessments, 2017). Although some narrowing of the achievement gap has been found between demographic and socioeconomic subgroups, the gaps continue to concern educational leaders.

Sacks (2016) pointed out that at the rate of current increase, it would take an estimated 60 years for the achievement gap to completely close.

International reports of student achievement comparison also yielded concerning results. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), a cross-national test that measures various skills such as science and math literacy and reading proficiency, indicated that the United States placed 24th out of 71 countries in science and 38th in mathematics (Desilver, 2017). These statistics indicate that the education system within the United States still has a long way to go to ensure that students are ready to compete with top-performing countries. To combat these statistics, educational leaders are seeking strategies to increase student achievement. Getting parents involved could help support student proficiency and help close the achievement gap for elementary school students. Parental involvement can play a vital role in the academic success of students (Bariroh, 2018; Keru Cetin & Taskin, 2016). According to Keru Cetin and Taskin (2016), “family is the most important informal structure affecting the education of the child” (p. 105). Accordingly, Bariroh (2018) indicated that parental involvement significantly impacted student motivation and advocated “that parents should be more intensive in assisting, accompanying, and guiding their children” (p. 96). For educators and educational leaders, it is important to understand the factors that impact parental involvement in order to improve parental activity and participation and thus possibly improve student achievement.

Historical Context

Over the last 60 years, educational policymakers have been concerned with providing equitable access to quality education for all students. Increasing parental involvement has been a cornerstone in educational policymaker’s efforts to promote positive student outcomes. President Johnson’s Great Society Program enacted clear educational policies in the Elementary

and Secondary Educational Act (ESEA) of 1965 for federal Title I funding for disadvantaged youth, while establishing a distinct role for federal government involvement (Klein, 2015). Under the Title I legislation, federal funds are allocated to schools with high percentages of children from low-income families to ensure that these children meet state academic standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). In addition, Title I legislation mandates that schools implement activities, programs, and procedures to involve parents in their children's education (Finkel, 2011). The ESEA legislation was reauthorized in 2002 by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which required schools to be accountable for student outcomes and emphasized parental involvement (Klein, 2015). In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced NCLB, giving states flexibility to set their own proficiency goals, but required them to continue to foster parental involvement (Klein, 2015). Additionally, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHC) of 1975, which later became the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) in 2004, emphasized parents' rights and involvement in the development and progress monitoring of individualized educational plans (IEPs) (Rodriguez, Blatz & Elbaum, 2014). While the policies have evolved over the years, an emphasis on parental involvement has prevailed, giving parents more rights by law and requiring schools to take extensive efforts to inform and involve parents (Tekin, 2011).

Elementary and Secondary Educational Act. The ESEA of 1965 was derived from President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty" (Paul, 2018). Providing equitable access to quality education for all, the ESEA was a federal statute that allocated funds for instructional materials, professional development, and promoting parental involvement (Paul, 2018). The ESEA appropriations were reenacted every five fiscal years and amended as needed (Paul, 2018). In 1988, Title I was refocused under the Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary

School Improvement Act which shifted the focus from financial regulations to student achievement, requiring an emphasis on raising achievement for students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds (Paul, 2018). Under the revised program, increased parental involvement was required through program improvement and school-wide projects (Paul, 2018).

Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act. The 1960s brought forth a paradigm shift for students with disabilities as advocates pushed for federal funding so that students with disabilities could receive free public education (Bicehouse & Faieta, 2017). Under the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act, congress set up the Bureau for Education of the Handicapped in 1966, which funded some programs for students with disabilities (Bicehouse & Faieta, 2017). In 1970, the Education of Handicapped Act allocated grants for states to enact programs for students with disabilities; it failed to mandate the programs and several students with disabilities received limited services or no services at all (Bicehouse & Faieta, 2017). The Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 was passed after a congressional report was released identifying that more than half of the students identified with disabilities were receiving no formal services from public schools (Bicehouse & Faieta, 2017). The Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1990 was the reauthorization of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 and received several amendments requiring parental involvement in the monitoring and involvement of their child's individualized education program (Bicehouse & Faieta, 2017; Tekin, 2011). This legislation gave parents' rights to be part of the decision-making process of their children's IEP and to hold schools accountable to stay in line with state proficiency standards (Tekin, 2011).

No Child Left Behind. The ESEA legislation was reauthorized in 2002 by the NCLB, which mandated academic proficiency standards on high stakes testing to hold schools

accountable (Klein, 2015). NCLB required reading and academic proficiency by the year 2014 for all students (Husband & Hunt, 2015). NCLB also mandated that schools publish report cards annually detailing their demographics and achievement data (Klein, 2015). Providing corrective actions for schools who failed to meet adequate yearly progress, NCLB emphasized the importance of parental involvement in children's education (Ankeny, Wilkins, & Spain, 2009; Klein, 2015). Under NCLB, parents' rights were increased, giving them more voice and choice in school selections (Tekin, 2011). Additionally, NCLB required schools to develop a partnership with parents in the creation and evaluation of parental involvement policies to offer supports such as flexible meetings, transportation, home visits, childcare, and understandable curriculum guides (Tekin, 2011). Demonstrating increased value in parental involvement, NCLB established parental information and resource centers to offer assistance to parents of children who needed additional supports (Tekin, 2011).

Every Student Succeeds Act. The ESSA of 2015 replaced NCLB and reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Young, Winn, & Reedy, 2017). The ESSA provided federal funding to schools who adopted college and career-ready standards (Young et al., 2017). The ESSA also extended federal focus on providing equitable resources to English language learners, students identified with disabilities, as well as students from minorities and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Young et al., 2017). The ESSA provided mandates for parent and family engagement that required schools to conduct outreach programs and activities to all members of the family (Henderson, 2015). In addition, the ESSA required that the use of funds for parent and family engagement be used to provide professional development on family engagement, home-based programs to reach family members at home, as well as disseminating information on best practices for fostering family engagement with economically disadvantaged

families (Henderson, 2015).

Social Context

The rapid development of globalism within the digital age of the 21st century has shifted the focus of education to preparing students for a changing world. Current empirical research indicated that children need to be prepared to compete in a global society; therefore, it is critical that parents are active participants in the academic development of their children (Roy & Giraldo-Garcia, 2018). Anticipating the changes that lay ahead of today's youth, parents and educators are tasked with preparing children to think critically and respond to challenges that are yet to be foreseen. Fostering parent-school partnerships is an integral component of getting parents engaged in inclusive school practices that can support academic achievement and 21st-century skills development (Park & Holloway, 2018; Rodriguez et al., 2014; Urbani et al., 2017). Schools that communicate effectively with parents and encourage their involvement stimulate parental self-efficacy, which can positively impact their involvement at home and their engagement in school activities (Park & Holloway, 2018; Rodriguez et al., 2014). Moreover, teachers play an important role in the development of parent-school partnerships (Erdener & Knoepfel, 2018; Lang, Schoppe-Sullivan, & Jeon, 2017). Current research findings indicated that educators' attitudes were the most significant factor on positive parent perceptions, which is positively associated with parental involvement in schooling (Erdener & Knoepfel, 2018). Educators that fostered co-caring relationships by validating and encouraging parental involvement, helped increase parents' self-efficacy, which gave them the confidence they needed to get more readily involved (Lang et al., 2017). The implications from these findings indicate the importance of a positive school climate, as well as positive parent-teacher and parent-school relationships. Fostering parental involvement through support and partnership may help children

as they gain 21st-century skills and develop into global citizens.

From a conflict perspective, parental involvement is often impacted by barriers that impede family engagement in academic contexts. Current research indicated that low-socioeconomic status negatively impacted parental involvement (Bardhoshi et al., 2016; Erdener, & Knoepfel, 2018; Gilbert, Spears Brown, & Mistry, 2017). In addition, parental involvement was negated by language barriers (Cobb, 2014; Jung & Zhang, 2016) and level of education (Drajea & O'Sullivan, 2014; Kikas et al., 2014; Wilson, 2015). Comparatively, parents' self-efficacy impacted their involvement and engagement in their children's education (Antolin Dreša & Lipovec, 2017; Okeke, 2014; O'Sullivan, Chen, & Fish, 2014). It is important that educational leaders and teachers take into account these factors when looking to foster parent-school and parent-teacher relationships and engage families in parental involvement programs and activities that support the development of today's youth. Researchers must identify specific supports to address these barriers to parental involvement in order to overcome them.

Theoretical Context

The first theory used in this study was Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory. Advocating for learning through social interaction, Vygotsky stressed that human learning involves building upon prior knowledge; therefore, demonstrating the importance of making meaningful connections when assimilating new ideas (Foote, Battaglia, & Bermette, 2001). Additionally, Vygotsky emphasized community learning to enact guided learning opportunities within students' zone of proximal development to make meaning (McCleod, 2014). Advocating that children can learn at one level by themselves, Vygotsky emphasized that when assisted by an adult or more capable peer, children are able to learn at a higher level (Vygotsky, 1978; Tekin, 2011). Due to children being inquisitive in nature when actively engaged in learning,

Vygotsky believed that children could develop understanding based on the culture of their environment (McCleod, 2014). Based on these assertions from Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, children's engagement and interaction with their family in the community is important as they gain knowledge and make sense of the world (Tekin, 2011). Thus, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is applicable to this study which seeks to improve parental involvement in the education of their children.

The second theory utilized in this study was Piaget's (1981) cognitive development theory. Piaget believed that children were influenced by the constructivist role of experience with their family, matching their external constructions within their surroundings with the internal constructions of their perceptions (Tekin, 2011; Piaget, 1981). Within the stages of intellectual and affective development, children acquire schemes based on habits and perceptions, as well as autonomous moral feelings (Piaget, 1985). Developing during childhood, schemes are cognitive structures and these pervasive thought patterns help children organize knowledge, as well as to adapt and interpret the world around them (Piaget, 1985). Based on his beliefs regarding child development, Piaget emphasized that children learn best when they can interact meaningfully with others in their environments to assimilate new experiences; therefore, showing the importance parental involvement has on children's development and achievement (Piaget, 1985; Tekin, 2011).

Problem Statement

The problem is that parental involvement is low at a Title I school in southeastern, North Carolina according to school administrators (personal communication, May 22, 2019). The focal point of the research was to identify the factors contributing to the lack of parental involvement for the administrators, educators, parents, and other school stakeholders in order to generate

solutions to increase parental involvement at the school. The 2016 Parent and Family Involvement in Education Survey indicated that a total of 79% of families reported attending at least one school event during the course of the school year, and 47% of parents volunteered or served on a school committee (McQuiggan et al., 2017). Demographic analysis of the results indicated that these percentages decreased significantly based on poverty status, language barriers, and education level of parents surveyed. For families living in poverty and families with limited English proficiency, 62% of families reported attending at least one school event. Parents who identified as having less than a high school diploma reported 54% participation in at least one school event and parents who identified as high school graduates or equivalent reported 69% participation. In comparing these statistics to the site school, school administrators stressed that school-based parental involvement has been even more limited, indicating that only 52% of parents attended the most recent school-based curriculum event (personal communication, May 22, 2019). Recent data on parental involvement indicated that rural schools had lower percentages of supports to increase parental involvement as compared to large suburban schools (Quirk & National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). These statistics imply that further research is needed to investigate why these gaps exist between demographic groups and the interventions that are needed for these demographic groups to increase parental involvement.

According to current empirical literature, parental involvement was directly linked to several factors to include socioeconomic status (Bardhoshi et al., 2016; Erdener et al., 2018; Gilbert et al., 2017), level of education (Wilson, 2015), parent attitudes towards their children's education and school environment (Sedlackova, 2017) and language barriers (Jung & Zhang, 2016). Additionally, current literature indicated that increased parental involvement was positively associated with academic achievement (Dove, Neuharth-Pritchett, Wright, &

Wallinga, 2015; Gilbert et al., 2017; Knapp, Landers, Liang, & Jefferson, 2017), student engagement (Niia, Almqvist, Brunnberg, & Granlund, 2015), behavior (Garbacz et al., 2016), and motivation (Gorleku, Brancaccio & Campbell, 2018). Current empirical research findings indicate that over the last few years educational researchers have investigated factors that impede parental involvement linking socioeconomic status as the most significant factor impacting parental involvement (Erdener et al., 2018). Research suggests that schools should provide supports to address socioeconomic barriers to increase parental involvement (Bardhoshi et al., 2016; Erdener & Knoepfel, 2018; Gilbert et al., 2017; Keru Cetin & Taskin, 2016; Roy & Giraldo-Garcia, 2018); however, specific solutions to address the problem are not clear, which shows that this study is relevant to the field and empirically significant. Further research was warranted to address the barriers impeding parental involvement and identify the specific supports needed to improve parental involvement so that a plan could be generated for the administrators, educators, and parents at the school in this study. This is important to the organization because the school is identified as a Title I school and under the Title I program increasing parental involvement is federally mandated (“Parent and Family Involvement,” 2019). While the school in this study has eagerly tried to actively and effectively involve parents, school administrators indicated that they have been unsuccessful in getting parents involved; therefore, justifying the need for this study (personal communication, May 22, 2019). Utilizing a multimethod applied research design, this study should identify the factors contributing to the lack of parental involvement and provide solutions to address these barriers.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this applied research study was to solve the problem of low parental involvement for school stakeholders at a school in southeastern North Carolina and to formulate

a solution to address the problem. A multimethod design was used consisting of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The first approach was semi-structured interviews with school stakeholders to include a school administrator and teachers. The second approach was a focus group interview with teachers. The third approach was survey data using a Likert-scale survey with teachers.

Significance of the Study

This study sought to improve parental involvement at a school in southeastern North Carolina and to formulate a solution to address the problem of low parental involvement. The school received a plan to increase parental involvement based on the findings of this study; therefore, providing a practical contribution to the organization. This is important to the organization because the school is identified as a Title I school and is required by Title I mandates to actively and effectively involve parents (“Parent and Family Involvement,” 2019). Additionally, current research findings indicated that parental involvement can significantly impact student motivation (Bariroh, 2018), engagement (Gilbert et al., 2017; Heddy & Sinatra, 2017), behavior (Garbacz et al., 2016; McNeal, 2014; Wang et al., 2014; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014) and academic achievement (Garcia & Thornton, 2014; Gonzalez-DeHass, 2016). Increasing parental involvement may help increase student’s academic achievement, motivation, engagement, and behavior; therefore, the results from this applied research study would be beneficial to the school administrators, educators, and parents, as well as provide a framework in which parental involvement could be increased at other schools within the United States to positively impact student outcomes.

Empirically, this study seeks to add to the existing body of knowledge to identify supports that may overcome the barriers impeding parental involvement. According to the

statistics from the “Public Elementary and Secondary Education Universe: School Year 2015-2016” report by the National Center for Educational Statistics (2017), 68,614 of 98,456 elementary and secondary schools were identified as Title I schools, which are comprised of large percentages of students from low-income families. Providing solutions to address barriers, such as socioeconomic status, could be beneficial to educators, educational leaders, and state Boards of Education seeking to increase parental involvement among low-poverty schools.

Research Questions

Central Question: How can the problem of low parental involvement be improved at a school located in southeastern North Carolina?

Sub-question 1: How would administrators and teachers in an interview solve the problem of low parental involvement at a school located in southeastern North Carolina?

Sub-question 2: How would teachers in a focus group solve the problem of low parental involvement at a school located in southeastern North Carolina?

Sub-question 3: How would quantitative survey data inform the problem of low parental involvement at a school located in southeastern North Carolina?

Definitions

Terms pertinent to the study are listed and defined below:

1. *Academic achievement* – Academic achievement is the extent to which a student is academically successful (Roy & Giraldo-Garcia, 2018).
2. *Motivation* – Motivation is the extent to which a student models behaviors or attitudes that foster learning (Bicknell, 2014)
3. *Parental involvement* – Parental involvement is defined as parent participation and engagement in school-related contexts both at home and in school to support the academic

development of a child or improvement of school welfare and resources (Sawyer, 2015; Fisher, 2016).

4. *Socioeconomic status* – Socioeconomic status is defined by the monthly income of a student’s family (Sad & Gurbuzturk, 2013).
5. *Title I* – Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is federal legislation that provides funds to schools with high percentages of low-income families (U.S. Department of Education, 2019).

Summary

The purpose of this applied research study was to solve the problem of low parental involvement for school stakeholders at a school in southeastern North Carolina and to formulate a solution to address the problem. Chapter One presented background information to signify the historical, social, and theoretical context of the study. Additionally, the problem statement, purpose statement, and research questions were delineated to provide a framework for the study. This chapter concluded with the definition of key terms, as well as a summary of the chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Chapter Two begins with an introduction of the theoretical frameworks which this study is based upon. The philosophical assumption on which this study is grounded in is an ontological philosophical assumption viewed through the lens of the interpretive framework of social constructivism. The theories used in this study were Piaget's (1981) cognitive development theory and Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory. A description of the theories is provided to include the origination of the theories, as well as an explanation of how these theories have informed current empirical literature on parental involvement. Establishing the significance of this study, a description of how these theories apply to this study and how they may advance future research will be provided. In addition, Chapter Two presents a historical overview and comprehensive review of current empirical literature related to parental involvement and the research questions guiding this study. This literature review synthesizes current research to identify common trends and current implications of parental involvement to include student outcomes and barriers impacting parental involvement.

Theoretical Framework

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), theories are derived from the literature and they "provide a general explanation as to what the researcher hopes to find in a study or a lens through which to view the needs of participants and communities in a study" (p. 17). In this multimethod applied research study, the theoretical framework was comprised of Piaget's (1981) cognitive development theory and Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory. Bickman and Rog (2009) emphasized that applied researchers use theory instrumentally in order to produce practical and important results. Additionally, Bickman and Rog (2009) highlighted that applied

researchers may combine several theories in useful and creative ways. The philosophical assumption that guides this research study is an ontological assumption through the interpretive framework of social constructivism. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), ontological assumptions view reality through multiple interpretations. Creswell and Poth (2018) also accentuated that social constructivism is a paradigm where “meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas” (p. 23). Grounding the research and providing a lens to analyze the data of this study, these constructivist theories provide a dichotomous view of parental involvement.

Philosophical Assumption

The philosophical assumption guiding this multimethod applied research study is an ontological philosophical assumption. An ontological philosophical assumption uses multiple realities as different individuals describe their perceptions and experiences using their own words to develop numerous forms of evidence, which researchers interpret the findings to derive themes from the participants’ accounts (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). The nature of reality is questioned and; therefore, reality is seen through multiple viewpoints or accounts (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Westerhoff, 2005). For this study, the ontological philosophical assumption is grounded in the interpretive framework of social constructivism. As participants describe their experiences, a manifestation of their constructivist worldview emerges, and the researcher develops subjective meanings of things or objects through their experiences as they gain an understanding of the way in which the participants view the world (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Meaning can be multiple and varied; therefore, as participants engage in dialogues, researchers should look for complexity rather than narrow meanings of an individual’s views as alteration of validity occurs generating a reciprocal

correction of reality (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Valid understandings of reality are grounded in social and personal knowledge; therefore, participants interact through the operation of cultural and historical norms in their lives and researchers must be aware that their interpretations are grounded by their own sense of meaning (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Schwandt, 2007). A social constructivist framework augments the philosophical assumption to support this research by constructing multiple viewpoints as participants describe their experiences and interact with the researcher. According to the empirical literature, there are several factors that influence parental involvement (Bardhoshi et al., 2016; Drajea & O'Sullivan 2014; Erdener & Knoepfel, 2018; Gilbert et al., 2017; Keru Cetin & Taskin, 2016; Roy & Giraldo-Garcia, 2018). Viewing the research through the lens of an ontological philosophical assumption and social constructivist interpretive framework, this research study sought to answer the central research question: How can the problem of low parental involvement be improved at a school located in southeastern North Carolina?

Cognitive Development Theory

One theory utilized in this study was Piaget's (1981) cognitive development theory, which emerged through the social and intellectual discourse of the psychology crisis of 1920 (Formosino, Day, Jesus, & Reis, 2014; Tryphon & Voneche, 1996). During this time, Piaget confronted the psychological beliefs of traditional structuralism, pragmatic functionalism, and behaviorism and faulted "empiricism for failure to recognize the active principle in mind, and gestalt psychology for failure to understand the principles of structural transformation inherent in development" (Tryphon & Voneche, 1996, p. 13). Piaget's conceptions were grounded in the human psychological process and structure, which were dichotomies during the psychology crisis (Formosino et al., 2014; Tryphon & Voneche, 1996).

Emerging from the discourse, Piaget's cognitive development theory emphasized assimilation of new learning through active interaction with the environment (Formoshino et al., 2014; Tryphon & Voneche, 1996). As infants grew and developed, Piaget (1981) believed that they advanced through four stages of development determined by biological maturation and interaction with the environment. These stages included the sensorimotor stage, pre-operational stage, concrete operational stage, and the formal operational stage, which individuals progressed at varying rates of development (Piaget, 1981). During the sensorimotor stage (birth to 2 years), Piaget believed that object permanence was attained through the development of schemes (Piaget, 1981; Tryphon & Voneche, 1996). Piaget asserted that children developed symbolical relationships through egocentric viewpoints during the preoperational stage (2-7 years) as they interacted with the environment (Piaget, 1981; Tryphon & Voneche, 1996). Marking a major transitory period of cognitive development, Piaget stressed that during the concrete operational stage (7-11 years), children began thinking operationally and logically (Piaget, 1981; Tryphon & Voneche, 1996). Piaget emphasized that the formal operational stage (11 years to adulthood) was characterized by abstract thinking and cognitive development was enhanced by logically testing hypotheses to gain further understanding of the world (Piaget, 1981; Tryphon & Voneche, 1996). Constituting every symbolic or sensorimotor action, Piaget's (1981) cognition system stressed that affect and cognition were inseparable (Formoshino et al., 2014; Tryphon & Voneche, 1996). Arguing that affect was related to the function of intelligence and cognition provided the structure, Piaget (1981) affirmed that affect influenced an individual's choice to exert effort intellectually (Formoshino et al., 2014; Tryphon & Voneche, 1996). Piaget (1981) stressed that affect also played a role in the development of an individual's values (Formoshino et al., 2014; Tryphon & Voneche, 1996). Most significantly, Piaget (1981) accentuated "by

regulating action and determining values, affect influences our tendency to approach or avoid situations; in turn, this influences the rate at which we develop knowledge, accelerating it in some areas, slowing it down or preventing it in others” (p. xi).

Cognitive development theory and parental involvement. Piaget’s (1981) assertions demonstrated the importance of parental involvement as children construct knowledge internally and externally through experience in their environment. Through each new experience, children will continuously rework, revise, assimilate, and accommodate their constructions internally (Prior & Gerard, 2007; Tekin, 2011). In this regard, parental involvement heavily influences children as they assimilate new ideas, gain new understanding, and develop values (Piaget, 1981; Tekin, 2011). As children interact socially with their parents, they learn to consider multiple perspectives as they decenter their thinking from egocentric viewpoints and assimilate new learning (Tekin, 2011; Tryphon & Voneche, 1996). When a child is faced with an opinion that is conflicting to his or her worldview, disequilibrium emerges from the disagreement and causes a child to fluctuate between two levels of understanding (Piaget, 1981; Tryphon & Voneche, 1996). As the transitional child faces the discernment being presented, they develop cognitively (Piaget, 1981; Tryphon & Voneche, 1996).

Current research affirmed that parental involvement plays a vital role in children’s cognitive development (Creech, 2010; Jung & Zhang, 2016; Hoghugi & Long, 2004; Park, Byun, & Kim, 2011; Pears et al., 2015). Since the introduction of Piaget’s cognitive development theory, parental involvement has been a prominent cornerstone in United States legislation and educational policies (Gestwicki, 2007; Hoghugi & Long, 2004; Klein, 2015; Tekin, 2011). Piaget’s cognitive development theory, being part of the framework for this research, confirms the importance of parental involvement on students’ academic achievement and overall success.

Although this study does not seek to further develop Piaget's cognitive development theory, it does seek to identify factors to enhance parental involvement, which is a vital component to the theory. Identifying solutions to increase parental involvement may lead researchers to explore the effects of increased parental involvement on children's cognitive development and academic achievement in the future.

Sociocultural Theory

The second theory utilized in this study was Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which also confronted the social and intellectual discourse in psychology during the 1920s and stemmed from Piaget's cognitive development theory (Lordelo, 2011; Tryphon & Voneche, 1996). While there were many similarities to Piaget's beliefs, Vygotsky's theory presented many criticisms of Piaget's thoughts (Kozulin, 2003; Tryphon & Voneche, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky emphasized that children assimilate new ideas through active social interaction with the relational environment, while Piaget believed children construct knowledge directly from their environments (Kozulin, 2003; Piaget, 1981, Tryphon & Voneche, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978). Constructing meaning as an act of sense-making through organization and recognition of the environment, Vygotsky viewed structure and function as interdependent and organization as hierarchical with systemic levels of retention (Tryphon & Voneche, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978). Conversely, Piaget believed that children build schemes as they advance through stages of development through equilibrium, assimilation, and accommodation (Piaget, 1981, Tryphon & Voneche, 1996). Through Vygotsky's experiments, he found that children's development began with primitive functioning consisting of primary psychological functions such as perception, memory, and attention – also referred by Vygotsky as the systemic structure of consciousness (Tryphon & Voneche, 1996; Kozulin, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky (1978) also found that

consciousness becomes restructured as children master the use of external objects, acquire semiotic tools and go through reorganization of attention, function, memory, perception, and thought (Tryphon & Voneche, 1996; Kozulin, 2003). These beliefs differed from Piaget (1981), who believed that children's development preceded their learning. Most notably, Piaget (1981) asserted that children's cognitive development stemmed from independent explorations of their environment, which was a major dichotomy in Vygotsky's (1978) beliefs. While Piaget (1981) emphasized that cognitive development was enhanced by peer interaction to promote social perspective taking, Vygotsky (1978) asserted that cognitive development was most enhanced by adult interaction as children internalize cultural and intellectual adaptations (Tryphon & Voneche, 1996). Vygotsky (1978) also accentuated the importance of social interaction with more experienced peers in the acquisition and mastery of semiotic tools of literacy, as they co-constructed knowledge with a partner (Kozulin, 2003; Tryphon & Voneche, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978;).

Sociocultural theory and parental involvement. Vygotsky (1978) proposed the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which addressed the concept of problem-solving ability in children. As defined by Vygotsky (1978), the ZPD is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by the independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). According to Tekin (2011), Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasized that family interaction within the home and community is vital for children's development as children gain knowledge and understanding about the world through these experiences. Current research validated that parental involvement is a critical component of student success; therefore, showing the prominence of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory within

education today (Kaplan Toren & Seginer, 2015; Roy & Giraldo-Garcia, 2018; Sy, Gottfried, & Gottfried, 2013; Waters, 2014). Increasing parental involvement in public education continues to be a prominent feature of United States legislation and educational policies (Klein, 2015). Utilizing Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory provides a lens in which to view this research study to articulate the importance of parental involvement and interaction on student's development and knowledge construction. Although this study does not seek to further develop Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, it does seek to generate solutions to increase parental involvement, which is a prominent component to the theory. Identifying solutions to increase parental involvement may spark future research to examine the effects of increased parental involvement on student achievement and success, which may further validate Vygotsky's assertions.

Related Literature

The purpose of the literature review is to justify the rationale for the problem and position of the study within the existing knowledge base on the topic (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The literature review seeks to identify the extent to which the literature addresses the problem in practice or provide justification for additional research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Bickman and Rog (2009) advocated that before an applied research study can be commenced, researchers need a complete, clear, and comprehensive understanding of the problem being addressed to include the characteristics of the topic, the impetus of the study, and the information being desired. This literature review synthesizes current research and literature to identify common trends and current implications of parental involvement. Additionally, this literature review augments the significance of this study and embeds it within the current empirical knowledge base to address the gaps within the literature.

Defining parental involvement involves several dimensions of conceptualization as it is often broadly and obscurely defined within the literature (McLean, 2014; von Otter, 2014). Most researchers agree that parental involvement is a multidimensional construct that involves several behaviors (Kaplan Toren & Seginer, 2015; Roy & Giraldo-García, 2018). Moreover, some researchers believe that parental involvement encompasses the constructs of parental beliefs in the form of aspirations and curriculum agreement, as well as parental involvement practices and behaviors (McLean, 2014; von Otter, 2014). Parental involvement practices were commonly grouped into the two overarching categories of home-based and school-based efforts and practices (Kaplan Toren & Seginer, 2015; Roy & Giraldo-García, 2018). For this study, parental involvement is defined as parent participation and engagement in school-related contexts both at home and in school to support the academic development of a child or improvement of school welfare and resources (Fisher, 2016; Sawyer, 2015). After critically reviewing the literature, Fisher (2016) provided the most distinct and comprehensive interpretation of parental involvement. According to Fisher (2016), parental involvement

reflects a broad spectrum of 44 activities, characterized by the focus of the parental activity (within school grounds or outside the school grounds), the organizational level (student level or organizational level) and focus of activity (improvement of resources, control, pedagogy and wellbeing and welfare). (p. 462)

Additionally, Fisher (2016) asserted that “involvement can be expressed actively or passively, in the context of school as an organization and in the context of the parent's individual child” (p. 462). Utilizing this interpretation provides a lens in which characterizes parental involvement for the purpose of this study.

A review of empirical literature brought forth numerous studies to provide compelling evidence that parental involvement influences student outcomes. The review of literature also indicated a significant number of studies demonstrating common trends of influential barriers to parental involvement that impact the extent to which parents are involved in their children's education.

Historical Overview of Parental Involvement

Early childhood education and preschool programs became prevalent in America as parents got involved with educational reform (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000). During the 1920s, constructivist theories that challenged previous psychological beliefs regarding child development led way to an emphasis on early childhood education (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000; Tryphon & Voneche, 1996). These new constructivist ideologies led to the belief that children constructed knowledge based on engagement and exploration in rich real-world experiences through hands-on learning, social interaction, and discovery (Chiapetta, 2008; Piaget, 1981; Vygotsky, 1978). During the 1920s discord of psychological thought regarding cognitive development, women were inspired to learn about child development and apply this knowledge to help their children reach their maximum potential (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000; Tekin, 2011).

From the period of 1920 to 1960, middle-class families became involved in parent cooperative nursery schools which emphasized parental involvement in child development (Gestwicki, 2007; Tekin, 2011). Programs to support parental involvement of families that were from culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds, as well as parents from lower socioeconomic statuses, emerged during the 1960s and 1970s (Goldberg, 1997; Tekin, 2011). The Head Start program was specifically designed for "particularly disadvantaged families" in order to empower parents to get actively involved (Tekin, 2011, p. 1). Parental involvement became even more

important as the government pushed for educational reform during the American economic expansion of the post-World War II era. The necessity for scientific and technological advancement grew as the United States entered the Cold War against the Soviet Union (Bybee, 2007; Chiappetta, 2008). Although concerns about the United States' public education system had surfaced, the launching of Sputnik, the first space satellite by the Soviet Union, fueled educational reform (Bybee, 2007; Chiappetta, 2008). The federal government enacted educational policies in order to reform the current educational system and to increase student achievement. The Great Society Program, promoted by President Johnson, designated educational policies and federal Title I funding for disadvantaged youth, as well as established a definitive role for federal government involvement (Gestwicki, 2007; Klein, 2015). Stemming from the government involvement of the 1960s, educational reform continued to be an emphasis in further political agendas (Klein, 2015; Tekin, 2011). Educational reform movements included the enactment of several policies by the government to include the Goals 2000 Project, ESEA, IDEA, NCLB, and ESSA which all promoted parental involvement and academic achievement.

Parent cooperative nursery schools. Limited to middle-class families, parent cooperative nursery schools blossomed during the period of 1920 to 1960 (Tekin, 2011; Gestwicki, 2007). Serving as educational centers in suburban and college towns, these centers encouraged mothers to serve as paraprofessionals in the classrooms with the premise that parents “know what they want for their children and thereby should be involved in school” (Tekin, 2011, p. 1; Gestwicki, 2007). Additionally, mothers were empowered to take on leadership roles at the Cooperative Nursery schools (Sterba, 2015; Gestwicki, 2007). Critics, however, argued that cooperative nursery schools completely lacked public infrastructure and there was no concern for assisting households with children from the federal government (Sterba, 2015). In fact, mothers

were investing a major commitment of time to the organization, as well as paying membership fees (Sterba, 2015). Although these difficulties presented themselves to the mothers, Sterba (2015) emphasized that the “co-op children who came of age in the 1960s were thoughtfully nurtured by their parents and not taught simply to conform and consume” (p.193).

Head Start. The government made several strides to encourage child-rearing at home (Stoltzfus, 2003; Tekin, 2011). The Aid to Dependent Children program gave cash grants to mothers from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds to enable them to stay at home with their children (Stoltzfus, 2003; Tekin, 2011). Although these programs were geared to keep mothers at home, economic challenges still drove the mothers to enter the workforce, therefore creating a need for federally funded childcare (Stoltzfus, 2003). Deriving from the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) in 1965, Project Head Start, an eight-week summer program, was initiated to serve children to address educational attainment and poverty, as well as support low-income citizens (Hines, 2017; Tekin 2011). The initial implementation included the enrollment of 561,000 children, emphasized the equality of parent partnerships, and was held in public schools and churches throughout the United States (Hines, 2017; Tekin, 2011). This eight-week program evolved into the Head Start program to support children from low-socioeconomic backgrounds (Hines, 2017; Tekin, 2011). The Head Start Program provided both half-day and full-day services, as well as many comprehensive services such as hot meals, mental health, physical health, home visits, and dental referrals, as well as parent activities and programs (Hines, 2017; Tekin, 2011). Head Start also stressed equal partnerships with parents and educational professionals in children’s education, as well as required a high level of parental involvement (Hines, 2017; Tekin, 2011). Parents of children in the program were required to

volunteer in the classroom or serve on policy councils (Hines, 2017; Ripple, Walter, Channana, & Zigler, 1999).

Government involvement and regulations. The American economic expansion of the post-World War II era brought forth the need for educational reform to stay competitive with other nations and increase student achievement as many high school graduates were unprepared to enter the urbanized workforce requiring increased literacy skills (Aldridge & Goldman, 2007; Klein, 2015). President Johnson's Great Society Program stressed educational attainment for all, with an emphasis on supporting students living in poverty (Klein, 2015; Tekin, 2011). President Johnson's efforts led to the enactment of ESEA which provided Title I funding to promote quality education for all students, especially those living in poverty (Paul, 2018; Tekin, 2011). The Title I program was centered around family involvement and featured a family-centered literacy program that mandated parental involvement in school orientations, school events, workshops, and home-based reading programs (Gestwicki, 2007; Tekin, 2011).

Parental involvement was also a cornerstone of further federal legislation. Responding to a congressional report indicating that children with disabilities were not being supported or formally serviced in the public school, President Ford signed into law the EAHC in 1975, which was later reauthorized in 1990 as IDEA (Bicehouse & Faieta, 2017; Tekin, 2011). These acts mandated parental involvement in the decision-making process, creation, and monitoring of their children's individualized education plans (Bicehouse & Faieta, 2017; Tekin, 2011). The Clinton administration signed into law the Goals 2000 project, also known as the Educate America Act which placed emphasis on parent-school partnerships and accountability (Aldridge & Goldberg, 2007; Tekin, 2011). Federal funds were allocated to schools to emphasize performance standards and establish parent-school partnerships to support and promote the emotional, social,

and academic growth of children (Aldridge & Goldberg, 2007; Stitt & Brooks, 2014).

Emphasizing home-school partnerships with disadvantaged and bilingual families, as well as parents of children with disabilities, the Goals 2000 bill emphasized shared educational decision-making and to support academic work at home (Epstein et al., 2002; Tekin, 2011).

The educational reform of the 21st century also emphasized parental involvement. The NCLB of 2002 was a reauthorization of ESEA, which placed emphasis on school accountability and academic proficiency as measured by high stakes testing (Aldridge & Goldberg, 2007; Klein, 2015). NCLB emphasized parent-school relationships through empowerment and effective communication, as well as school-based opportunities for active engagement (Aldridge & Goldberg, 2007; Stitt & Brooks, 2014). NCLB also “forced schools to consider how and in what ways parental involvement can be increased within their districts in the service of raising academic achievement” (Stitt & Brooks, 2014, p. 77). President Obama’s ESSA of 2015 replaced NCLB and reauthorized ESEA (Aldridge & Goldberg, 2007; Young, Winn, & Reedy, 2017). Mandating parent and family engagement, the ESSA required schools to foster parental involvement through outreach programs and school-based activities that actively engaged all members of a child’s family by providing federal funds to increase parental involvement efforts (Henderson, 2015).

Today, the ESSA legislation continues to promote parental involvement and awareness (Secretary DeVos Unveils Parent’s Guide, 2018). According to an interview with the U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, the ESSA legislation has acknowledged that the federal government does not know what is best for the education of the nation’s students, therefore the ESSA legislation focuses on returning power to the states, local educators, and parents (Secretary DeVos Unveils Parent’s Guide, 2018). The ESSA allows states and districts significant

flexibility in meeting the requirements of the law, allowing them greater freedom and discretion on selecting assessments, creating school accountability plans, funding, and generating school improvement plans (Secretary DeVos Unveils Parent's Guide, 2018). Most notably, Secretary DeVos indicated that parents play a vital role in the ESSA as parents should be informed of the law and have a clear voice to advocate for the educational decisions for their children (Secretary DeVos Unveils Parent's Guide, 2018). To help foster parental awareness of the ESSA legislation, Secretary DeVos indicated that a parental guide was created to clearly explain the letter of the law to the parents in a way that they can understand how the law affects their children (Secretary DeVos Unveils Parent's Guide, 2018). In addition, parents have been provided with letters explaining the ESSA, as well as being involved in roundtable discussions with Secretary DeVos as part of her "ReThink School" tour in an effort to foster parental involvement and empower parents to understand the components of the ESSA so that they can be a strong advocate for their children ("Secretary DeVos Unveils Parent's Guide", 2018).

Student Outcomes

Federal legislation over the past 60 years in the United States has emphasized parental involvement in an effort to increase student achievement and close the achievement gap for all students. With a heavy emphasis on parental involvement, researchers have begun investigating the effects of parental involvement on student outcomes. After an extensive review of the current empirical literature, themes that emerged included increases in overall academic achievement, as well as across subject domains. Several studies brought forth significant evidence advocating for parental involvement to improve student engagement, motivation, attitude, and behavior. A number of studies indicated evidence that parental involvement influenced post-secondary school attendance and completion. While most literature indicated

parental involvement influenced positive impacts on student learning, numerous studies found conflicting results, therefore augmenting discourse and implicating gaps within the research.

Academic Achievement. Parental involvement was found to be predictive of student's academic success and it was associated with overall increases in academic performance and school engagement in students' early childhood education (Kurtulmus, 2016; Kaplan Toren & Seginer, 2015; Sy et al., 2013), middle school education (Kaplan Toren & Seginer, 2015; Sy et al., 2013), and high school education (Al-Alwan, 2014; Kaplan Toren & Seginer, 2015, Sy et al., 2013). Most notably, parental involvement was directly linked to mathematics achievement (Gilbert et al., 2017; Knapp, et al., 2017; McNeal, 2014; Park & Holloway, 2017), science proficiency (McNeal, 2014), and English language arts achievement (Camacho & Alves, 2017; Crosby, Rasinski, Padak, & Yildirim, 2015; Dove et al., 2015; Gilbert et al., 2017; Hemmerchts, Agirdag, & Kavadias, 2017; Park & Holloway, 2017; Wambri & Ndani, 2015). Longitudinal data provided evidence that parental involvement had positive effects on academic achievement as students progressed from elementary to secondary schools (Kaplan Toren & Seginer, 2015; Sy, Gottfried, & Gottfried, 2013). Longitudinal data also found significant evidence indicating parents' academic socialization and construction increased student academic achievement in reading over time (Kaplan Toren & Seginer, 2015; Sy et al., 2013). Similarly, parent-child academic socialization was found to be a strong predictor of academic success, therefore parental involvement was emphasized in children's social and emotional skills development to prepare children to face academic challenges (Roy & Giraldo-Garcia, 2018; Waters, 2014). Predicting academic success and engagement, Wang and Sheikh-Khalil (2014) also found that parental involvement improved emotional and academic functioning in adolescents. While these studies provided significant evidence that parental involvement

provided stability to students' academic achievement and ability to persevere through academic challenges, it is important to note that parental involvement was limited to home-based involvement and was not a reflection of school-based involvement efforts.

While most empirical findings implied that parental involvement increases student's overall achievement, current empirical research also indicated inconsistent and conflicting results. For example, findings from Water's (2014) investigation indicated that parental involvement increased student's literacy confidence and engagement, however, the analysis of standardized reading scores indicated insignificant improvement. Indicating conflicting findings as well, Gilbert et al. (2017) found that parental involvement practices positively influenced language arts achievement; however, these findings were not significant for math outcomes. Park and Holloway (2017) also indicated differential effects for math and reading achievement, suggesting that parents may need more support in developing their self-efficacy so that they can support their children with the mathematics curriculum,

Some research findings indicated insignificant evidence that parental involvement positively impacted academic achievement. McNeal (2014) and Wang and Sheikh-Khalil (2014) found that parental involvement in school-based practices showed very little to no direct impact on secondary students' academic performance. More significantly, Flores de Apodaca et al. (2015) found that some aspects of parental involvement were negatively associated with academic performance. From their study, parental communication in the form of checking for notes home from the school and discussion of school problems was found ($\beta = -.46$), indicating volatile academic outcomes with higher levels of communication (Flores de Apodaca et al., 2015). In addition, general parental involvement efforts such as parent-teacher communication, seeking further information on helping their children academically, and self-efficacy was found

($\beta = -.36$), designating negative regress with students' academic performance (Flores De Apodaca et al., 2015). While these studies contributed to the current empirical knowledge base, the findings did not elucidate whether or not parental involvement consistently increases academic achievement. Implications from these empirical findings indicate that further research is needed to measure parental involvement on academic achievement among subject domains. The utilization of academic measures beyond the analysis of students' grade point averages is warranted as academic achievement and success can also be measured by attendance rates, graduation rates, and drop-out rates (Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014).

As well as inconsistencies within in the research findings, there were also several limitations noted within the studies to include sample size (Al-Alwan, 2014; Kaplan Toren & Seginer, 2015; Sy et al., 2013; Waters, 2014), limited gender analyses (Kaplan Toren & Seginer, 2015; Waters, 2014), and generalizability (Al-Alwan, 2014; Kaplan Toren & Seginer, 2015; Waters, 2014). Very few studies were conducted within the United States, indicating that the findings may vary stateside as educational systems and governmental policies vary across countries. Longitudinal findings indicated clearly that academic achievement was positively associated with academic socialization, which is a huge component of home-based parental involvement efforts (Kaplan Toren & Seginer, 2015; Roy & Giraldo-Garcia, 2018; Sy et al., 2013; Wang and Sheikh-Khalil, 2014; Waters, 2014). These findings, however, bring forth several questions regarding the distinct involvement efforts of parents, indicating further gaps within the literature. As a researcher, these findings raise the question: Does home-based parental involvement efforts produce the same effects on student achievement as school-based involvement efforts? Further research is needed to distinguish the effects of home-based and school-based parental involvement efforts to comparatively analyze the findings. A longitudinal

study on parental involvement as students' progress from primary to secondary school is also warranted to identify shifts in parental self-efficacy and student autonomy, which impacts their involvement (Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014; Kaplan Toren & Seginer, 2015; Sy et al., 2013; Park & Holloway, 2017).

Academic engagement. Parental involvement was found to positively influence children's academic engagement (Al-Alwan, 2014; Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018; Wang, Hill, & Hofkens, 2014). Quantitative analysis findings revealed that high school students' academic engagement exhibited direct effects on emotional and behavioral engagement, which were predictive of students' academic performance (Al-Alwan, 2014). Based on these findings, Al-Alwan (2014) emphasized that parental involvement increases the likelihood of children to engage and succeed in school, as well as become more responsible for their learning. Al-Alwan (2014) also stressed that increased engagement impacts students' attitudes, feelings, and interests in school, therefore parental involvement increases children's perceptions, satisfaction in school activities, and self-efficacy. Accordingly, "students who have high self-efficacy tend to spend more effort, attention, and participate in school activities" (Al-Alwan, 2014, p. 53). Students who displayed increased cognitive engagement in school were more likely to utilize "deep level learning strategies" and "meaningful processing in learning activities" (Al-Alwan, 2014, p. 53). Emphasizing the importance of increased parental involvement in secondary level students' education, Wang et al. (2014) stressed that increased parental involvement promoted engagement and the health and well-being of adolescents. Wang et al.'s (2014) quantitative investigation found that home-based parental involvement and academic socialization were positively correlated with engagement and school-based involvement. Academic socialization was found to positively correlate with emotional engagement, therefore Wang et al. (2014) stressed the need

for parents to engage in academic socialization as it was the highest indicator for the mental well-being, academic achievement, and engagement of adolescents studied. Based on these implications, researchers suggested that schools invest resources to foster parent-child relationships and home-based parental involvement practices (Al-Alwan, 2014; Kurtumulus, 2016; McNeal, 2014; Kaplan Toren & Seginer, 2015; Roy & Giraldo-García, 2018; Waters, 2014; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). Building students' engagement through support, involvement, goal setting, and decision making may foster educational resilience so that children are prepared to face challenges in academic contexts and diversified interpersonal interactions (Al-Alwan, 2014; Kaplan Toren & Seginer, 2015; Roy & Giraldo-García, 2018; Waters, 2014).

While these studies elucidated the prominence of parental involvement on academic engagement through academic socialization and the development of parent-child relationships, many of these studies were limited in that the parental involvement efforts were home-based and did not reflect school-based involvement efforts (Al-Alwan, 2014; Kurtumulus, 2016; Roy & Giraldo-García, 2018; Waters, 2014; Wang et al., 2014). In fact, researchers shed light on the difficulty of identifying what parental involvement behaviors truly affected academic engagement as the involvement efforts were often obscurely defined within the literature (McNeal, 2014). Some researchers indicated that parental involvement was conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing multiple behaviors (Kaplan Toren & Seginer, 2015; Roy & Giraldo-García, 2018; Wang et al., 2014). On the other hand, McNeal (2014) argued that current research indicated that parental involvement initiatives were broadly defined and parental involvement initiatives whether school-based or home-based should be explicitly addressed to identify the expected outcomes.

Based on the studies that investigated both school-based and home-based involvement,

there were inconsistencies noted among the discourse. For example, McNeal (2014) reported there were very few parental involvement strategies that directly affected high school academic engagement. In fact, McNeal (2014) found that home-based parental involvement practices such as academic socialization, behavior monitoring, and fostering parent-child relationships were positively associated with academic engagement and achievement; however, school-based involvement strategies showed a negligible relationship. These findings could be due to the fact that some forms of school-based parental involvement at the high school level are often reactive versus parents being engaged in parental involvement practices proactively (McNeal, 2014). For instance, parents may become involved reactively when their child exhibits behavior concerns or academic difficulties (McNeal, 2014). Based on these findings, McNeal (2014) argued that the timing of school-based parental involvement efforts should be gauged to understand the positive and negative effects it has on academic engagement and achievement. Most notably, McNeal (2014) also stressed that the research findings indicated that parental involvement in various parent-teacher organizations or school events were much less important than home-based practices and schools should shift their focus and resources on fostering and sustaining home-based parental involvement practices. Wang et al. (2014) also found that both types of parental involvement practices were differentially and significantly associated with academic engagement in middle and high school adolescents; therefore, concluding that parental involvement characterized by parental warmth, academic socialization, scaffolding independence, and the provision of home structure most significantly impacted students' academic engagement and success. Similarly, Kaplan Toren and Seginer (2015) longitudinally investigated both home-based and school-based parental involvement practices on junior high school students' self-evaluation. Kaplan Toren and Seginer (2015) found that home-based involvement was the only

aspect of parental educational involvement to be relevant in their study. Based on these findings, Kaplan Toren and Seginer (2015) advocated home-based practices that fostered adolescent support and warmth, as well as involvement in charting future plans and decision making.

Based on the implications from these studies, schools should focus on fostering home-based practices, such as providing explicit emphasis on academic socialization, goal-setting beyond secondary education, and developing positive parent-child relationships to promote academic engagement (Kaplan Toren & Seginer, 2015; McNeal, 2014; Wang et al., 2014).

Generalizability limitations of these studies warrant future research to investigate school-based and home-based parental involvement efforts on academic engagement of elementary-aged adolescents as this was a significant gap noted within the review of current literature.

Researchers might also want to investigate these findings among various subgroups through qualitative research methods as these studies were quantitative in nature. Most significantly, further research is warranted to investigate specific parental involvement efforts and behaviors as they have been broadly defined and have been conceptualized as multidimensional constructs.

Student motivation. A number of studies indicated positive correlations between parental involvement and student motivation (Camacho & Alves, 2017; Gorleku, Brancaccio, & Campbell, 2018; Heddy & Sinatra, 2017). Consistently found across socioeconomic settings, Gorleku et al. (2016) indicated that parent motivation had a significant impact on middle school adolescents' growth mindset. Gorleku et al. (2016) also reported that parental expectations, motivation, and maternal aspirations were the most prevalent direct predictors associated with the development of children's growth mindset. Based on these implications, Gorleku et al. (2016) stressed the importance of home-based parental involvement efforts such as showing interest in children's school-work, academic socialization and having high post-secondary

aspirations. Heddy and Sinatra (2017) also suggested that increased parental involvement correlated to student's motivation and interest in science among middle and high school girls. The qualitative findings of Heddy and Sinatra's (2017) investigation indicated that the most common and frequent parental involvement behaviors were parental value statements and coactivity engagement, which positively impacted student motivation. Camacho and Alves (2017) found similar findings, thus advocating that parents create a warm environment by providing positive academic socialization, parental praise, and constructive feedback, which improves motivation and performance in writing among second graders. In their study, Camacho and Alves (2017) implemented a school-based parental involvement intervention program consisting of four training sessions where parental involvement in writing was discussed and parents were provided with resources to build their self-efficacy in helping their children with writing tasks. One-way Analyses of Covariance findings indicated significant improvement of the intervention group's children in the areas of spelling and story length, therefore indicating increased motivation to write. This finding is significant to this study in that it indicates the importance of increased parental involvement to promote student motivation. Parental involvement was also found to directly impact students' commitment to learning, academic aspirations, and intrinsic motivation; therefore, Al-Alwan (2014) stressed the direct impact of parents' attitudes and values on children's motivation and perseverance in tackling educational challenges. Increasing parental involvement motivates children to employ self-regulation strategies and establish task-oriented goals (Al-Alwan, 2014). The implications derived from these findings indicate that schools should support the development of academic socialization among parents as it was directly linked to students' emotional and behavioral engagement and motivation (Al-Alwan, 2014; Camacho & Alves, 2017; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014).

The findings of these studies provided significant evidence that parental involvement increases student motivation; however, it is important to note that there were several limitations among the empirical literature findings. Generalizability and sample size limitations were noted among all of the studies as each study focused narrowly at specific populations within specific locations (Al-Alwan, 2014; Camacho & Alves, 2017; Gorleku et al., 2018; Heddy & Sinatra, 2017; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). Further research is warranted to investigate larger samples among various locations. Researchers should also extend the investigations to include students among various academic levels.

Attitude and behavior. The review of empirical literature brought forth evidence that parental involvement improved student attitude and behavior (Al-Alwan, 2014; Garbacz et al., 2016; McNeal, 2014; Wang et al., 2014). Al-Alwan's (2014) study indicated that parental involvement encourages student engagement and when students were highly engaged in school, they listened more carefully, participated in classroom activities, and completed their work autonomously. Al-Alwan (2014) also emphasized that increased parental involvement influenced self-regulation of behavior and increased student responsibility. Asserting that when parents were involved in their children's education, Al-Alwan (2014) found that children had reduced disruptive behaviors, levels of aggression, and increased compliance with school rules. Similarly, Garbacz et al. (2016) found statistically significant evidence that parental involvement positively influenced boy's behavior in school-based involvement. Based on the gender analyses, Garbacz et al. (2016) suggested that differences could have been contributed to a higher prevalence of behavior concerns observed in boys, therefore augmenting increased parental involvement. These studies demonstrate that as parents increase their involvement, the likelihood for problematic behaviors decrease.

While several studies provided compelling evidence linking parental involvement to improved student behavior and attitude, numerous studies indicated conflicting findings, suggesting that parental involvement was negated by student autonomy (Kaplan Toren & Seginer, 2015; Mayo & Siraj, 2015; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). Empirical findings suggested that maturation of adolescents increases their desire for autonomy and affects their attitudes toward parental involvement as they may feel uncomfortable with an increase of parental interaction within the school setting (Kaplan Toren & Seginer, 2015; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). Based on these implications, further research is needed to address the augmentation of these empirical research findings. A longitudinal study is also warranted to investigate the role of parental involvement throughout a child's entire educational career and beyond as it may change character from primary school onwards (von Otter, 2014). These empirical findings reflect the perspectives of parents, thus implicating that further study should address student perceptions and beliefs to extend the scope of the investigation (von Otter, 2014). Further research should also address the limitations noted within the studies to include increasing the sample size, extending the sample population, and including students from various grade levels.

Post-secondary attendance and completion. Parents play an integral role in the decision-making process for students considering post-secondary attendance, as well as attending and completing post-secondary schooling. Empirical research findings indicated that parental involvement had a direct and significant impact on post-secondary attendance and completion (Bui & Rush, 2016; Kutty, 2014; Odom & McNeese, 2014; Ross, 2016). According to quantitative data, parent's educational expectations played a significant role in post-secondary attendance (Bui & Rush, 2016; Ross, 2016). Parental involvement in school functions was also

found to be a positive and significant predictor for post-secondary enrollment (Ross, 2016). According to qualitative findings, parental expectation on educational attainment significantly influenced students' personal motivation to attend post-secondary schooling (Kutty; 2014; Odom & McNeese, 2014). The qualitative case-study analysis reported by Kutty (2014) indicated that occupational expectations of parents drove students to enter post-secondary schooling to mitigate concerns about status, income, and security. Kutty (2014) indicated that students from single-parent families and low socioeconomic statuses felt that they had an obligation to support the family and increase their parents' status in society by completing post-secondary schooling, which stemmed from the academic socialization instilled in them by their parents. Directly supporting students' psychological well-being through the educational process of attending post-secondary schooling, Kutty (2014) emphasized parental support in the form of informal family communication, advice, provisional resources for study, and a positive learning environment at home. Accordingly, Odom and McNeese (2014) conducted a multimethod investigation of African-American male student perceptions of parental involvement on their post-secondary educational attainment and success. Through the qualitative investigation, Odom and McNeese (2014) found that parents were highly involved in their students' educational journey through accountability, academic socialization, instilling academic values, providing opportunities for learning, and requiring academic excellence. Odom and McNeese (2014) emphasized that qualitative findings also indicated that parents shared similar academic expectations for their children, had equal parental power, and created a foundation that fostered academic success during their children's earlier school years through systematically and purposefully creating a rich learning environment. The quantitative findings indicated a substantial difference in the impact of paternal involvement, as fathers were found to be highly authoritative and were a

positive role model and driving force for African American male students to be successful in post-secondary schooling (Odom & McNeese, 2014).

While most of the findings from current empirical research indicated that parental involvement had a profound effect on post-secondary attendance, completion, and success, there was some evidence indicating contradictory findings. For example, Odom and McNeese (2014) presented inconsistent findings between their qualitative and quantitative analysis. While the qualitative evidence indicated positive correlations between parental involvement and post-secondary success, further quantitative analysis indicated that there was no statistically significant relationship between students' grade point average and parental involvement. Longitudinal data from the National Education Longitudinal Study also presented conflicting findings (Bui & Rush, 2016). Multivariate logistic regressions indicated that among the various dimensions of parental involvement, parents' educational expectations were the only predictor for college attendance for first-generation students (Bui & Rush, 2016). Parents' educational expectations for non-first-generation students also predicted college enrollment and attendance less consistently, indicating incongruous findings (Bui & Rush, 2016). Based on these implications, further research is needed to address the augmentation of these empirical research findings. Several studies also presented generalizability limitations as the findings were derived from narrowed populations and did not include both genders and all ethnic groups, therefore warranting the need for additional study to broaden the empirical literature findings (Kutty, 2014; Odom & McNeese, 2014; Ross, 2016).

The major implications derived from this literature indicates that parental involvement, particularly through academic socialization, high expectations, and participation in school-based events most significantly impacted post-secondary enrollment, attendance, and success (Bui &

Rush, 2016; Kutty, 2014; Odom & McNeese, 2014; Ross, 2016). As advocated by Bui and Rush (2016), high parental educational expectations provide enormous academic dividends and require very little in terms of parents' time, finances, and other resources. The results from these studies not only help schools and parents better prepare students for higher education, but it also implicates the need for schools to support school-parent and parent-home relationships that foster academic rigor and high expectations. These findings also convey that educational leaders and educators need to be more intensive in seeking ways to support parent-child academic socialization within the home to increase post-secondary enrollment, attendance, and success.

Barriers

With federal government mandates requiring schools to foster parental involvement, it is important for educational leaders, administrators, and teachers to understand the factors that influence parental involvement. Current empirical literature indicated a significant number of studies to indicate common trends of influential barriers on parental involvement that impact the extent to which parents are involved in their child's education to include socioeconomic status perceptions, and other demographic factors to include age, race and ethnicity, and gender.

Socioeconomic status. Research findings indicated that schools with higher percentages of students receiving free or reduced lunch made greater efforts to increase parental involvement (Rodriguez & Elbaum, 2014). Although schools are striving to get parents involved, socioeconomic status barriers impede the ability for parents to get actively engaged in school-based involvement (Bardhoshi et al., 2016; Drajea & O'Sullivan 2014; Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018; Gilbert et al., 2017; Keru Cetin & Taskin, 2016; Roy & Giraldo-Garcia, 2018). In fact, Erdener and Knoeppel (2018) found that family income was the most significant factor impacting parental involvement. According to their study, Erdener and Knoeppel (2018) found

that family income directly impacted the parental involvement factors of school interactions, learning at home, parenting, and decision-making. Von Otter (2014) also found that parental involvement was greater in families with more resources. Bardhoshi et al. (2016) also emphasized that as income increased, parental involvement in school-based efforts also increased. These findings correlated with the study conducted by Roy and Giraldo-Garcia (2018) that found social class was linked to parental involvement, therefore the higher the social class, the more likely a parent would be involved in their child's education. Notably, Gilbert et al. (2017) found that increased "greater financial stress also reported higher levels of depressive symptoms this, in turn, was related to lower parent reported levels of engagement ... and transmission of implicit and explicit valuing of academics" (p.1202).

In understanding the constraints of lower socioeconomic status on parental involvement, Bardhoshi et al. (2016) emphasized that schools should provide childcare during meetings and hold meetings, conferences, and events at "times that allow for the greatest participation" (p. 17). Utilizing the implications from these findings, further research is needed to support these findings through qualitative and quantitative data collection as no known studies were identified to verify that these supports would increase parental involvement among lower socioeconomic families. Further research is augmented to determine the level of agreement from parents of lower socioeconomic families or educators that these supports would be beneficial to them and in turn would increase their involvement in school-based and home-based practices. The implications from these findings justify the rationale for this study, as well as position it within the existing knowledge base on parental involvement. It is important to note that while the findings from these studies were significant for the purpose of this study, there were several limitations noted to include sample size, generalizability, and data collection methods (Bardhoshi

et al., 2016; Drajea & O'Sullivan 2014; Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018; Gilbert et al., 2017; Keru Cetin & Taskin, 2016; Roy & Giraldo-Garcia, 2018; Sad & Gurbuzturk, 2013; von Otter, 2014). Future research should also include both quantitative and qualitative data collection measures to further investigate why socioeconomic status impacts school-based involvement and distinguish if it impacts home-based involvement efforts. Further exploration could uncover the constraints socioeconomic status plays on parental involvement so that schools can address these barriers.

Perceptions. Several studies indicated that parents' perception of education influenced their involvement (Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018; Jones & Jones, 2016; Kikas et al., 2014; Lang et al., 2017; Mayo & Siraj, 2015; Rodriguez et al., 2014; Rodriguez & Elbaum, 2014; von Otter, 2014). According to Mayo and Siraj (2015) parent perception on the role that they should play in their child's education was greatly influenced by their own personal experiences with learning, school, and parenting, which could either positively or negatively impact parental involvement depending on the positivity or negativity of their experiences. In fact, Mayo and Siraj (2015) discovered that parents who valued education and verbally communicated these values to their children supported their children's emotional support with school and learning. In contrast, Mayo and Siraj (2015) found that some parents viewed education as something that was required rather than wanted, enjoyed, or valued. Children whose parents perceived schooling in this way instilled the same perception about school and their growth mindset was negatively impacted (Mayo & Siraj, 2015).

Prominently within the literature, the perception was often negated by parent-teacher and parent-school relationships (Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018; Jones & Jones, 2016; Lang et al., 2017; Mayo & Siraj, 2015). Mayo and Siraj (2015) stressed the importance of parent-teacher relationships as they found that the perception parents had on the teacher impacted their

involvement efforts. For example, parents who believed their children were doing poorly in school often perceived the issues being related to the teacher in the classroom, thus parents believed that the school should address the issues and parents did not become heavily involved (Mayo & Siraj, 2015). On the contrary, Mayo and Siraj (2015) reported that parents who had positive parent-teacher relationships often requested additional meetings with the teacher to advocate for their children. These findings closely correlated with the study conducted by Erdener and Knoepfel (2018) who found that educator attitudes were the most significant factor on positive parent perceptions identified within their study, which is positively associated with involvement in schooling. Lang et al. (2017) emphasized that parents' perceptions within co-caring relationships between parent and school were associated with their involvement in school. Based on their findings, Lang et al. (2017) suggested that "if parents feel a sense of validation, encouragement, and caregiving help from their child's teacher they feel comfortable and confident in the educational setting and hence are more eager to be involved" (p. 109). Similarly, Jones and Jones (2016) emphasized that when parents had concrete evidence of an educator's concern for their children, their parental involvement at school would increase and parents would be more likely to support the redirection of poor student behavior at home. In addition, these positive experiences provided opportunities to foster parent-teacher and parent-school relationships to address and break down barriers that exist between parents and the school (Jones & Jones, 2016).

While most literature indicated that negative perception inhibited school-based parental involvement efforts, Rodriguez et al. (2014) reported contradictory findings. In fact, Rodriguez et al. (2014) stressed that parents may get involved when they perceive that their children are lacking the support they need in school or may become less involved when they feel their

children are succeeding in school. Kikas et al. (2014) also found conflicting findings, discovering that family socialization values influenced parental involvement negatively; thus, the researchers emphasized the importance of educators to collaborate and communicate effectively with both mothers and fathers as they may have different perspectives and values towards their children's education. The implications from these findings indicate the importance of a positive school climate, clear and effective communication, as well as positive parent-teacher and parent-school relationships with both mothers and fathers. Further research is needed to investigate maternal and paternal involvement as mothers and fathers may have different value systems that impact their involvement (Kikas et al., 2014). Additional research in this area may help identify supports to increase both maternal and paternal involvement in school-based parental involvement efforts.

The implications from these findings justify that parent perception can inhibit their involvement, therefore providing a rationale for this study. This study should identify the supports needed to address perception barriers to ensure that parents feel welcome and encouraged to be part of the school community, thus enhancing the existing knowledge base on parental involvement. These findings bring up a valid point that research is warranted to investigate the supports needed to increase maternal and paternal involvement as these can vary due to differences in their perspectives and values on education. Future research should also investigate parental involvement based on parents' role construction and self-efficacy, as well as the specific practices that schools employ to increase involvement (Rodriguez & Elbaum, 2014; von Otter, 2014). In understanding the prominence of the findings from these studies, schools should foster parent-school and parent-teacher relationships to promote positive experiences to negate any barriers that parents may carry with them from previous negative experiences with

their own learning or school-based involvement. Fostering parent-teacher and parent-school relationships may increase school-based parental involvement efforts.

Demographic Factors. Numerous studies indicated that parental involvement was influenced by various demographic factors such as age (Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018; Horby & Lafaele, 2011; Kalayci & Oz, 2018; Reininger & Lopez, 2017), race and ethnicity (Bardhoshi et al., 2016; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Jung & Zhang, 2016; Polanin et al., 2014; Wilson, 2015), and gender (Gorleku et al., 2016; Hart, 2011; Horby & Lafaele, 2011; Skaliotis, 2010; Odom, & McNeese, 2014). These studies signify varying perspectives and findings augmenting discourse among the literature and implicating the need for additional research.

Age. Attributing to both increased and decreased levels of home-based and school-based parental involvement efforts, several studies indicated that the age of parents and their children often influenced their parental involvement efforts (Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018; Horby & Lafaele, 2011; Reininger & Lopez, 2017). Utilizing Exploratory Factor Analysis and Multivariate Analysis of Variance, Erdener, and Knoeppel (2018) found statistically significant impacts on combined factors of parent involvement when combined with educational level and income. Erdener and Knoeppel (2018) reported that education level and income by age interaction significantly impacted and negated the parental involvement practices of parenting, school interactions, learning at home, and decision making. In a similar study, Horby and Lafaele (2011) found that the age of the children could be a barrier to parental involvement as parental involvement decreases as children enter secondary school. Equating to this issue, Horby and Lafaele (2011) suggest that student autonomy could account for the decrease in school-based parental involvement efforts; however, adolescents still desire and benefit from home-based parental involvement efforts.

Contrary to these findings, Reininger and Lopez (2017) suggested that the age of younger students attribute the level of home-based parental involvement because younger children require additional support and supervision with home-based educational activities; conversely, older students may increase parents at-school involvement as childcare issues may no longer be a barrier to their involvement. Other research findings negated age altogether as a barrier to parental involvement (Kalayci & Oz, 2018; Kaplan Toren & Seginer, 2015). Investigating parent perception of parental involvement efforts among elementary school children, Kalayci and Oz (2018) found that age did not significantly impact parents' perceptions about their involvement. Kaplan Toren and Seginer (2015) also reported low levels of correlation coefficients between parental age and other background variables in their investigation of parental involvement among junior high school students. When all other demographic factors were held constant, Erdener and Knoeppel (2018) found that age did not significantly affect parental involvement practices in elementary school. These mixed findings suggest that these conclusions are inconclusive and further study is needed to clarify age as a demographic factor impacting parental involvement.

Race and ethnicity. Among the literature, several researchers pointed out that race and ethnicity were also commonly found as a barrier to parental involvement (Bardhoshi et al., 2016; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Jung & Zhang, 2016; Trainor, 2010; Wilson, 2015). These factors are often combined with lower socioeconomic status, higher levels of stress, and less time, which increases the difficulty for parents to be involved in their children's education (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Investigating parental involvement among schools implementing a college access program, Bardhoshi et al. (2016) found evidence through multiple regression analysis that race and ethnicity predicted parental involvement in terms of parent engagement with school,

parent support of their children, and parent support of learning. In fact, race and ethnicity were found to have the strongest effect among the demographic factors analyzed (Bardhoshi et al., 2016).

Race and ethnicity were also found as a barrier to parental involvement among parents who had children identified with a need for special education services due to a deficit of cultural and social capital (Trainor, 2010; Wilson, 2015). According to qualitative research findings, Wilson (2015) reported that minority parents involved in the development and progress monitoring of their children's IEP lacked the resources and capital of parents from more affluent school districts. Capital acquisition has been found to play a role in parental advocacy and empowerment, which in turn affects their involvement (Trainor, 2010; Wilson, 2015). For example, minority parents may not have access to resources such as attorney consultation and private psychological child testing commonly used by higher socioeconomic status parents to facilitate accommodation services typically included in the IEP (Harry & Klinger, 2006; Trainor, 2010; Wilson, 2015). Minority parents may also be reluctant to challenge personnel decisions or ask questions during IEP meetings due to their cultural or socioeconomic differences, inexperience, and limited knowledge (Trainor, 2010; Wilson, 2015). Based on these implications, minority parents with fewer cultural and social capital resources should be approached using evidence-based tools to facilitate communication and to promote involvement (Wilson, 2015).

The implications from these research findings indicate that educators and educational leaders should be mindful of the experiences of minority families, as well as their cultural and social capital to provide supports to empower them to be advocates for their children; however, the supports needed are not clear. Further research is needed to identify the exact supports that

will increase parents' capital acquisition, which should positively impact their involvement in their children's education. Additionally, these implications provide significance and rationale for this study.

Gender. Research indicated that parental involvement was also influenced by gender as mothers and fathers are influenced differentially by their own cultural backgrounds, school experiences, values, and parenting styles (Gorleku et al., 2016; Hart, 2011; Horby & Lafaele, 2011; Skaliotis, 2010; Odom, & McNeese, 2014). While these findings indicated gender imbalances, researchers had mixed findings on the factors contributing to the differences in maternal and paternal involvement. Longitudinal data revealed that several characteristics such as student attitude, parent-school relationships, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity often influenced changing levels of maternal and paternal involvement (Skaliotis, 2010). Maternal involvement was found to be influenced mostly by socioeconomic changes, ethnicity, and parent-school relationships (Skaliotis, 2010). In contrast, paternal involvement was most strongly associated with the child's behavior and the father's ethnicity (Skaliotis, 2010). In contrast, Odom and McNeese (2014), found that there were significant differences in paternal involvement and parenting style based on the father's education level, whereas there were no significant differences among maternal involvement. Based on their findings, fathers with college degrees were more authoritative, offered the family more financial stability, and were positive role models for their sons (Odom & McNeese, 2014). While there were no differences in parenting style or the expectations for their children, qualitative data indicated that mothers of African American males placed a stronger emphasis on academics and rewarding academic excellence, thus developing intrinsic motivation in their children (Odom & McNeese, 2014). Hart (2011) also reported evidence of gender imbalances in parental involvement as fathers were

less involved than mothers due to a number of identified factors. These factors included self-efficacy, work commitments, time, emotional distress, and coping skills (Hart, 2011). Fathers reported feeling that mothers could cope better within the female dominated environment (Hart, 2011). To combat these factors and increase paternal involvement, suggestions from fathers surveyed included e-mail communication, holding meetings after work hours, and home visits (Hart, 2011). These findings are significant for this study as they may be solutions to increase paternal involvement; however, these suggestions were limited by sample size and generalizability constraints. Further research is warranted to determine the level of agreement of these suggestions with parents, thus providing a rationale for this study.

Summary

In critically evaluating the empirical literature, several limitations were identified, augmenting the need for additional research. Numerous studies measured the frequency of parental involvement, rather than the quality of their involvement suggesting the need for increased qualitative data collection to fully measure the degree of parental involvement within the home and school as the way parents become involved may be more significant than the extent to which they are involved (Kikas et al., 2014; Rodriguez & Elbaum, 2014; Mayo & Siraj, 2015; Kurtulmus, 2016; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). Limitations in generalizability were also found indicating gender and ethnic heterogeneity among the studies (Kikas et al., 2014; Sy et al., 2013; Kaplan Toren & Seginer, 2015; Gilbert et al., 2017; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014; von Otter, 2014; Bui & Rush, 2016; Kutty, 2014; Odom & McNeese, 2014; Ross, 2016). These implications suggest that further research is needed to address maternal and paternal involvement with separate analyses for gender, as well as parental involvement across diverse populations as parental involvement can differ among ethnic groups based on historical and cultural norms.

Most significantly for the purpose of this study, this literature review implicated the need for schools and teachers to ensure positive relationships with parents, as well as consider financial constraints to develop interventions to assist parents so that they are able to increase their involvement (Erdener et al., 2018; Sad & Gurbuzturk, 2013; Gilbert et al., 2017). While some suggestions were given to support families with low socioeconomic statuses, research is needed to identify the exact supports that are needed so that they can become involved in their children's education. Some suggestions to increase paternal involvement were derived from the literature; however, they were limited by sample size and generalizability (Hart, 2011). Further research is warranted to determine if these supports will, in fact, increase paternal involvement. Research is also needed to determine supports needed to increase maternal involvement as these were not clearly stated within the literature. This applied research study will add to the current empirical literature by identifying supports needed to increase both paternal and maternal involvement among families with low socioeconomic statuses.

Chapter Two included a description of the theoretical frameworks and philosophical assumption that guided this research, followed by a historical overview of parental involvement. Subsequently, a review of related literature was outlined on parental involvement identifying the common trends and current implications of parental involvement on student outcomes, as well as barriers impacting parental involvement. The chapter concluded with a critical analysis of current empirical literature to signify the gaps within the existing knowledge base and provide a rationale for this research study.

CHAPTER THREE: PROPOSED METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this applied research study was to solve the problem of low parental involvement for school stakeholders at a school in southeastern North Carolina and to formulate a solution to address the problem. The problem is that parental involvement is low at a Title I school in southeastern, North Carolina according to school administrators (personal communication, May 22, 2019). Current empirical research indicates that parental involvement is directly related to student motivation, engagement, and academic achievement (Bariroh, 2017; Garcia & Thornton, 2014; Gilbert et al., 2017; Gonzalez-DeHass, 2016; Heddy & Sinatra, 2017; Keru Cetin & Taskin, 2016). Increasing parental involvement could help support academic achievement and close the achievement gap for elementary schools; however, recent data on parental involvement indicated that rural schools had lower percentages of supports to increase parental involvement as compared to large suburban schools (Quirk & National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). The school in this study is located in a rural area and has low parental involvement.

This chapter begins with a description of the research design and rationale that will be employed to identify the factors contributing to the lack of parental involvement at the school. Next, the research questions, setting, and participants are presented. Additionally, the researcher's role is described, and the procedures of the qualitative and quantitative investigations are delineated. This chapter concludes with a description of the proposed data analysis procedures and a summary of the methodology that will be utilized in this applied research study.

Design

For this study, an applied research design was used to solve the problem of low parental involvement at the site school. This applied research study employed multiple methods to describe stakeholder perceptions and experiences of parental involvement at the site school and to determine educator attitudes toward the identified factors contributing to a lack of parental involvement, as well as the supports needed to increase parental involvement derived from the literature review. According to the National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES), 79% of families had an adult attend at least one school event during the course of the school year; however, this percentage decreased to 62% for families living in poverty (“Parent and Family Involvement,” 2017). These statistics indicate that parental involvement is negatively influenced by poverty status; therefore, this research design was selected to understand why parental involvement is low at the site school and identify how school administrators and stakeholders can increase parental involvement. Applied research seeks to enhance researchers’ understanding of a problem in order to contribute solutions to address that problem (Bickman & Rog, 2009). This was an appropriate research design for this study in that it aimed to gain an understanding of the phenomenon being studied through meeting intellectual goals and allow for practical goal setting, as well as address a societal problem (Bickman & Rog, 2009). Bickman and Rog (2009) emphasized that,

practical goals are focused on accomplishing something--meeting some need, changing some situation, or achieving some goal. Intellectual goals, on the other hand, are focused on understanding something, gaining some insight into what is going on and why this is happening. (p. 220)

Accordingly, Bickman and Rog (2009) accentuated that scientific methodology is employed in applied research to solve a persistent and immediate societal problem. The qualitative

investigation sought to gain an understanding of stakeholder experiences with parental involvement and the factors influencing a lack of parental involvement at the site school through semi-structured interviews and a focus group interview. The qualitative investigation allowed the researcher to identify specific interventions needed to increase parental involvement at the site school. According to Bickman and Rog (2009), qualitative study is interpretive, and it involves the behavior and physical events taking place, as well as participants' understanding of events and how their sense-making influences their behavior. Bickman and Rog (2009) also emphasized that qualitative inquiry can lead to a greater influence. Using the findings from the literature review, the researcher developed a Likert-scaled survey instrument to determine the level of agreement of the participants for the quantitative investigation. The quantitative findings were included to determine information concerning the factors influencing parental involvement and the interventions needed so that a plan could be developed to improve parental involvement. As emphasized by Bickman and Rog (2009), an effective study utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods "must provide a more complete understanding of the phenomenon under study than its qualitative and quantitative strands do separately" (p. 286). Conducting both qualitative and quantitative data collection measures provided an understanding of the factors that influenced parental involvement develop a plan to improve parental involvement at the site school.

Research Questions

Central Question: How can the problem of low parental involvement be improved at a school located in southeastern North Carolina?

Sub-question 1: How would administrators and teachers in an interview solve the problem of low parental involvement at a school located in southeastern North Carolina?

Sub-question 2: How would teachers in a focus group solve the problem of low parental involvement at a school located in southeastern North Carolina?

Sub-question 3: How would quantitative survey data inform the problem of low parental involvement at a school located in southeastern North Carolina?

Setting

The setting for this study was a small rural elementary school in southeastern North Carolina. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the participants. The pseudonym for this location is Westside Elementary School. This site was selected for this applied research study because it was a Title I school with over 80% of students identified as low-income and because it was located in a rural area. This site was appropriate for this study because school administrators indicated that parental involvement has been low at school events, especially curriculum-based events (personal communication, May 22, 2019). This correlated with current empirical literature findings and survey data. According to the empirical literature, rural schools have a lower percentage of supports to increase parental involvement and poverty status negatively impacted parental involvement in school events (“Parent and Family Involvement,” 2017; Quirk & National Center for Education Statistics, 2018).

According to the 2018 North Carolina School Report Card, Westside Elementary School was identified as a language-immersion school, offering curriculum in both English and Spanish and it operates on a year-round calendar. The school population is comprised of approximately 577 students and 41 educators, with classroom averages of 14 - 23 students per class. The school demographics based on race/ethnicity composition is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Percentage of Race/Ethnicity Composition

Race/Ethnicity	%
Black, non-Hispanic	49.57
Hispanic	26.52
White, non-Hispanic	14.9
Asian/Pacific Islander*	1.04
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.52
Two or more Races	7.45

*Combined ethnicity (Asian and Native Pacific Islander) categories

According to the North Carolina School Report Card, the school is led by two administrators consisting of a principal and assistant principal. The North Carolina School Report Card indicated that 36.6% of the educators at Westside Elementary School taught zero to three years, 24.4% taught four to 10 years, and 39% taught more than 10 years. All 41 educators are fully licensed teachers, with 24.4% of educators holding advanced degrees, and two educators holding national board certifications. Westside Elementary School received an academic growth award due to an 89.1% proficiency growth, which exceeded their growth goal. The school was also awarded an overall performance grade of B, which is based on proficiency and growth rates based on standardized testing data. The 2017 – 2018 school demographic and performance indicators are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Demographic/Performance Indicators

Indicator	%
Reading EOG Proficiency	61
Math EOG Proficiency	69
Growth	84
School Performance	68
School Attendance	96.1

In addition to the regular school schedule and the language immersion program, school administrators indicated that students are afforded opportunities to participate in before and after school programs such as peer-tutoring, chorus, safety patrol, Battle of the Books club, Science Olympiad club, orchestra, and the Green Team Recycling club. School administrators also indicated that teachers provide leadership within the school by serving on the School Improvement Team, as well as grade level chair positions. Most importantly for the purpose of this study, school administrators emphasized that parents are invited to be active participants in school improvement plan meetings, as well as the Parent-Teacher Association, but many neglect to do so.

Participants

In this applied research study, three pools of sample participants were needed and were gained using nonprobability sampling procedures. According to Gall et al. (2007), nonprobability sampling allows the researcher to select subjects by other means that meet the needs of the study being conducted, rather than selecting subjects by chance. For the qualitative investigation, the researcher was seeking to collect data from multiple viewpoints to create a rich and distinct understanding of the factors contributing to a lack of parental involvement, as well as identify specific supports needed to increase parental involvement at the site school. According to Bickman and Rog (2009), bias can be negated by carefully listening to the accounts of important issues through interviews with members from a variety of locations and backgrounds within a unit. Bickman and Rog (2009) also asserted that when investigators conduct interviews with members from various backgrounds, they become aware of the different and distinct perspectives and viewpoints of the members. To negate bias, the researcher used purposeful sampling with an emphasis on maximum variation to identify five stakeholders

including a school administrator, a parent-teacher association (PTA) representative, a school improvement team (SIT) member, and two additional educators at Westside Elementary School to gain a variety of perspectives and experiences on parental involvement at the school through semi-structured interviews. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), purposeful sampling is used by an inquirer “because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (p. 157). Creswell and Poth (2018) also asserted that using maximum variation during the sampling procedure allows the inquirer to “document diverse variations of individuals or sites based on specific characteristics” (p. 158). For this study, participants selected were required to currently have a stake in the school and should have served the school for at least one school year as an administrator, teacher, PTA member, or SIT member. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identify of the participant. The sample consisted of one male and five females. One participant was 20 – 29 years of age, three participants were 30 – 39 years of age, and two participants were 40 or more years of age. Within the sample, one participant identified themself as Black/non-Hispanic, two participants identified themselves as white/non-Hispanic, and three participants identified as Hispanic.

For the qualitative investigation, a focus group interview was conducted with five additional educators using convenience sampling. According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) researchers often select a sample that “suits the purposes of the study and that is convenient” (p. 175). Due to the narrow focus of this study, convenience sampling was the most appropriate sampling as the population was already defined. Pseudonyms were used to protect the participant identity. The sample consisted of five females. Of the five participants, two participants were in the 30 - 39 age range, two participants were in the 40 - 49 age range, and one participant was in the 50 - 59 age range. Within the sample, two participants identified

themselves as Black/non-Hispanic, and three participants identified themselves as white/non-Hispanic.

For the quantitative investigation, a sample pool of at least 30 participants was desired and gained using convenience sampling as the population was already defined and it suited the purposes of the study (Gall et al., 2007). A Likert-scale survey was sent to 53 educators currently teaching at Westside Elementary School. There were 27 surveys collected. The sample consisted of two males and 25 females. Four participants were in the 20 - 29 age range, 10 participants were in the 30 - 39 age range, and 13 participants were in the 40 or more age range. Within the sample, six participants were identified as Black/non-Hispanic, 11 participants identified as white/non-Hispanic, eight participants identified as Hispanic, and one participant identified as American Indian/Alaska Native.

Participant recruitment flyers and letters were sent out to school stakeholders to generate interest in the participation of the study (See Appendix D and E). All subjects were entered into a drawing with a chance to win a \$100.00 gift card for participation in the study. In addition, all subjects that participated in the interviews received a \$20.00 gift card for participating in the study.

The Researcher's Role

Being born and raised in southeastern North Carolina, as well as being an educator and having my own children attending public schools within the area, I am motivated to improve the public education system through practical application at site schools. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the researchers' role in a study is to set aside any personal biases by bracketing themselves by discussing their personal experiences, so that they may view the experiences of the participants objectively. While I have not had any personal experiences with the site school, I was a previous educator for the district at a different elementary school. Based on my

experiences working in this district, I am aware of my own biases that can influence how I view the research. For example, prior to conducting this research, I believed that while parents wanted to be more involved in their child's education by attending workshops and curriculum-based events, barriers and family constraints kept them from being able to be engaged. Additionally, due to the transitory lifestyle of the large pool of military families in the area, it is my belief that parents may choose to be disconnected from the school community, knowing that it is not a permanent setting for their families. It has been my experience that parental involvement has been enhanced by schools' efforts to provide interventions for family barriers. In understanding my own personal biases and ensuring an ethically sound study, I strived to view the data without bias and did not advocate any particular position concerning my research.

In viewing the world through the lens of a Christian worldview, integrity and honesty is a vital component of my belief system. In 2 Corinthians 8:21 it says, "For we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man" (English Standard Version, ESV). As a Christian, this verse demonstrates what I believe in regards to ethical research that is grounded in honesty and integrity. Humane consideration, integrity, and honesty are highly important attributes that I ensured were held to the highest regard as I conducted my research. As a Christian researcher, I am first and foremost motivated by my beliefs in Christ's teachings and the word of God. In 2 Timothy 2:15 it states, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth" (ESV). In knowing that intellectual work can be God's work as all truth is God's truth, it was my responsibility that I ensured that I carried the highest level of ethical consideration through every step of this journey.

To ensure that my research was grounded in integrity, it was important to note any relationships between the setting and participants with myself. The research was conducted at a different school than the school I was previously employed at; therefore, I have no biases for or against the site school. Although I have worked with one of the school's administrators early on in my career as a fellow teacher, we are no longer colleagues. Due to this connection, this administrator was not selected as a participant in this study to ensure there was no researcher bias. I did not have any other prior relationships with the participants in this study, which reduced researcher bias on the premise of familiarity. As the researcher, I collected qualitative data through semi-structured interviews and a focus group interview in order to analyze the data through horizontalization to develop clusters of meaning and find universal themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Utilizing the themes derived through the literature review, I developed a Likert-scaled quantitative survey instrument to administer with the identified participants to determine the level of agreement and attitude toward the findings. I used descriptive statistics to analyze the data and I presented the data in tables, as well as provided an intervention plan to improve parental involvement for the stakeholders at the site school. As I collected and analyzed the qualitative and quantitative data, I viewed the data in an ethical and unbiased manner to ensure the data revealed and presented was without personal assumption or bias. I utilized pseudonyms to protect the identity of all participants and the site school. Most importantly, I strictly adhered to all procedures of the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Procedures

After successful completion of the research proposal and defense, the researcher obtained written permission to conduct the study from the county superintendent and the principal of the participating school (see Appendix B & C). Next, the researcher obtained

approval through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Liberty University (see Appendix A). Three data collection approaches were required for this applied research study. The first and second approach were qualitative, in the form of semi-structured interviews and a focus group interview. The third approach was quantitative in the form of Likert-scale surveys. Once all permissions were received, the researcher began soliciting participants for the qualitative and quantitative investigation. To gain participants, participant recruitment letters and flyers were sent (See Appendix D & E). Letters of consent were obtained from all participants (See Appendix F, G, & H)

For the qualitative investigation, participants were required to be a current stakeholder in the school and must have served the school for at least one year. The selected participants were first contacted by the school principal to ensure their willingness and availability to participate in the qualitative investigation. Consent letters were given to all participants with adequate time to review the details of their participation (See Appendix F & G). Signed consent forms were filed in a locked cabinet. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of all participants. After all signed consent forms were received, the researcher scheduled the interviews by phone and e-mail. The researcher conducted the semi-structured face-to-face interviews with the five stakeholders at a convenient location for the participants that allowed for privacy and confidentiality. Additionally, the researcher conducted a focus group interview synchronously with the five selected participants at a convenient location for all participants that allowed for privacy and confidentiality.

For the quantitative investigation, participants were required to be educators who have worked at the school for at least one year. The researcher e-mailed the survey link to the

participants. Consent statements were presented to participants at the start of the survey. Participants completed the survey if they consented to participate.

All interviews were audio-recorded using the Microsoft Windows Voice application and a hand-held recording device. This allowed the researcher to ensure accuracy as the interview conversations were transcribed (Gall et al., 2015; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2014). Recordings were stored on a password protected computer and locked in a filing cabinet. Survey data were recorded using a password protected account on SurveyMonkey, an internet-based survey data collection tool. According to Bickman and Rog (2009), Web-based survey instruments are useful and time-saving for researchers and they offer flexibility to customize design protocols and elements that are needed through the research process (Bickman & Rog, 2009).

Data Collection and Analysis

For this applied research study, three data collection approaches were utilized. The first and second approaches were qualitative, in the form of semi-structured interviews and a focus group interview. The third approach was quantitative in the form of a Likert-scale survey. These three approaches provided triangulation, which is a vital process that researchers use to generate findings and validate that they are corroborated using multiple data collection techniques (Creswell, 2013; Gall et al., 2007; Patton 2002; Yin, 2014).

Interviews

The first sub-question for this study explored how administrators and teachers in an interview would solve the problem of low parental involvement at a school located in southeastern North Carolina. To gain a variety of perspectives and experiences on parental involvement at the school, the researcher conducted semi-structured face-to-face interviews synchronously with the five stakeholders including an administrator, a PTA representative, a SIT

member, and two additional educators at Westside Elementary. Semi-structured research questions allowed for open-ended responses and deep probing to obtain additional information to better understand the central phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Gall et al., 2007).

Participants were asked to complete an interview questionnaire prior to the interview that provided demographic information about the participant and was used during the descriptive statistical analysis (See Appendix I). The semi-structured interviews were recorded using Microsoft Office Voice application and transcribed using Trint software assistance. All recordings and transcriptions were securely stored on a password protected computer. The semi-structured interviews took approximately 30 to 60 minutes to complete and were located at a convenient location for the participants that allowed for privacy and confidentiality. The sample interview protocol guide suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018) was used during the interviews to standardize the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix K). Standardizing the open-ended interview allowed the researcher to outline a set of predetermined questions with each respondent to minimize the possibility of bias (Gall et al., 2007; Patton, 2002). Interview questions were derived from current empirical literature as detailed later in this section. The following questions were asked during the semi-structured interviews:

Interview Questions for Stakeholders (see Appendix J)

1. What is your role in the school?
2. How would you describe your overall experience with parental involvement at Westside Elementary school?
3. What role do parents take at school that tell you that they are involved in their child's education?

4. What challenges do parents face as they try to become involved in their child's education?
5. What measures have been taken by the school to involve parents?
6. How does the school ask parents to be involved?
7. What is the school doing that is helpful to increase parental involvement?
8. What is the school doing that is negatively impacting parental involvement?
9. What factors do you think keep parents from being involved in curriculum-based events?
10. What supports, expertise, or resources do you think would make the biggest difference in increasing parental involvement at Westside Elementary School?
11. How would you solve the problem of low parental involvement at Westside Elementary School?
12. What other insights do you have regarding parental involvement at Westside Elementary School?

The interview questions were generated based on current empirical research to gain a deeper understanding of the factors contributing to parental involvement, which impacts student learning. Additionally, all questions were open-ended to allow for open-ended responses that allowed the researcher to better understand the overall experiences and perspectives on the challenges of parental involvement in school, as well as address the research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Question one was intended to be used as an ice breaker and to establish rapport with the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Questions two and three were designed to gain a foundational understanding of parental involvement at the site school and their perspective of the role parents play in their children's education. Current literature indicated that parental involvement can significantly impact student motivation, engagement, and academic achievement (Bariroh, 2017; Garcia & Thornton, 2014; Gilbert et al., 2017; Gonzalez-DeHass,

2016; Heddy & Sinatra, 2017; Keru Cetin, & Taskin, 2016). Barrioh (2017) emphasized that “parents should be more intensive in assisting, accompanying, and guiding their children” (p. 96). Keru Cetin and Taskin (2016) also stressed that “family is the most important informal structure affecting the education of a child” (p. 105).

Questions four, nine, 10, and 11 were designed to specifically identify the challenges that parents face that impacts parental involvement and the supports that would help to increase parental involvement. Empirical literature indicated that family income was the most significant factor impacting parental involvement (Erdener et al., 2018). Families’ monthly income was also found to be negatively associated with volunteering in schools (Sad & Gurbuzturk, 2013). Bardoshi et al. (2016) found that parents’ race/ethnicity and income was predictive of parental involvement in education.

Questions five, six, seven, and eight were designed to identify the specific measures taken by the school to get parents involved, as well as identify if any measures were more successful than others or are negatively impacting parental involvement. Current empirical research indicated that,

schools that were successful in promoting collaboration actively solicited parent input, had teachers who were accessible, and communicated frequently with parents through a variety of means. These actions, taken by schools to foster involvement, seemed to have the desired effect on a number of parents, and parents became more involved. (Rodriguez et al., 2014, p. 90)

In addition, interventions and school efforts positively impact parental involvement (Heddy & Sinatra, 2017; Wright et al., 2018). Question 12 was designed to allow an open floor for

participants to share anything else that relates to parental involvement that may not have been discussed or that needs more clarification.

Data analysis of the interview data utilized the process of pattern, themes, and content analysis strategies such as member checking, memoing, coding, triangulation, and bracketing (Creswell, 2013; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2014). Interview data were transcribed using Trint software assistance and categorized into themes using the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method as adapted by Creswell and Poth (2018). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method of structured qualitative analysis is the “most practical, useful approach” (p. 201). This method of data analysis was appropriate for this study because it bracketed the researcher out of the study by identifying their own personal experiences and biases upfront so that the researcher could focus on the participants’ experiences objectively (Creswell & Poth, 2018). After transcribing the interviews, the researcher reviewed the transcriptions for accuracy and annotated significant statements by memoing (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher had participants review their transcripts for accuracy. Next, the researcher went through each response and used open coding procedures. Open coding requires the researcher to code “the data for its major categories of information” (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Coding is defined as a process that “involves a data aggregating and meaning-making process described as doing analysis and denoting concepts to stand for data” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 216). After the transcriptions were coded, the statements were listed, and the researcher went through the process of horizontalization of the data to create heterogeneous statements of non-overlapping statements (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Next, the researcher created clusters to identify broader units of information by grouping statements of significance (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Utilizing these statements and emerging themes, the researcher generated a textural and

structural description of the findings of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Using the textural and structural descriptions, the researcher wrote a composite description to capture the essence of the findings of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Focus Group

The second sub-question for this study explored how teachers in a focus group would solve the problem of low parental involvement at a school located in southeastern North Carolina. To gain a variety of perspectives and experiences on parental involvement at the school and to identify current measures being taken by the school to involve parents, as well as the supports that are needed to increase parental involvement, the researcher conducted a face-to-face focus group interview synchronously with five current teachers. According to Bickman and Rog (2009), focus group interviews allow for “observations of shifts of opinion among group members” and this is “considered a major part of focus group data collection and analysis” (p. 297). Focus group interviews stimulate respondents to state beliefs, feelings, and perceptions that they would not express if interviewed individually (Gall et al., 2007). This was an appropriate approach for this study as teachers may feel more comfortable to share their perceptions and beliefs in this format, as well as they may elaborate on their viewpoints more readily than they would one-on-one with a researcher (Gall et al., 2007). Additionally, this allowed the participants to have robust conversations regarding the parental involvement efforts at the school and the supports that are needed to improve parental involvement. Participants were asked to complete an interview questionnaire prior to the interview that provided demographic information about the participants and was used during the descriptive statistical analysis (See Appendix I for interview questionnaire). The focus group interview was recorded using Microsoft Office Voice application and a hand-held recording device. It was transcribed

using Trint software assistance. All recordings and transcriptions were securely stored on a password-protected computer and in a locked filing cabinet. The focus group interview took approximately 90 minutes to complete with the researcher at a convenient location for the participants that allowed for privacy and confidentiality. The sample interview protocol guide suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018) was used during the interviews (see Appendix K for sample interview protocol guide). Utilizing an interview guide assured that background information and broader issues are discussed before the researcher probes into very specific issues with the focus group (Bickman & Rog, 2009). The focus group questions were grounded on current empirical research as detailed later in this section and intended to allow for open-ended responses that allowed the researcher to better understand the overall experiences and perspectives on the challenges of parental involvement in the school and identify supports that could increase parental involvement. Bickman and Rog (2009) emphasized that “focus group questions are (typically) open-ended, thereby generating narrative data” (p. 297). The following questions were asked during the focus group interview (see Appendix L):

1. What is your role in the school?
2. How would you describe your overall experience with parental involvement at Westside Elementary School?
3. What strategies have been successful in getting parents involved at Westside Elementary School?
4. What challenges do parents face that impacts parental involvement at Westside Elementary School?
5. How does the school communicate parental involvement activities?
6. Why do you think parental involvement in curriculum-based events is low at the school?

7. What is the school doing that is helpful to increase parental involvement?
8. What is the school doing that is negatively impacting parental involvement?
9. What supports do you think would make the biggest difference in increasing parental involvement at Westside Elementary School?
10. What resources do you think would make the biggest difference in increasing parental involvement at Westside Elementary School?
11. How would you solve the problem of low parental involvement at Westside Elementary School?
12. What other insights do you have regarding parental involvement at Westside Elementary School?

The open-ended focus group questions were generated based on current empirical research to gain a deeper understanding of the overall experiences and perspectives on the challenges of parental involvement of the site school and identify supports that could increase parental involvement. Question one was intended to be used as an ice breaker and to establish rapport with the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Questions two, three, four, six, and seven were designed to gain a foundational understanding of parental involvement at the site school and to identify how the school currently fosters parental involvement. Current research indicated that schools should make efforts to communicate effectively and frequently to parents and invite them to actively participate in their child's education (Heddy & Sinatra, 2017; Rodriguez et al., 2014; Wright et al., 2018). Schools should also foster collaboration and parental input in their children's education to positively impact parents' perception and attitude (Afolabi, 2014; Gilbert et al., 2017). Questions four, eight, nine, and 10 were designed to specifically address the challenges that parents face that impact parental involvement and identify the supports that

would help to increase parental involvement. Schools should consider financial constraints and develop interventions to assist parents so that they are able to increase their involvement (Erdener et al., 2018; Gilbert et al., 2017; Sad & Gurbuzturk, 2013). Question 12 was designed to allow an open floor for participants to discuss anything else that relates to parental involvement that may not have been discussed or that needs more clarification.

Focus group interview data analysis also included transcription using Trint software assistance and categorized into themes using the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method as adapted by Creswell and Poth (2018). This approach was appropriate for this study in that it formally analyzed the content to emphasize reliability and replicability of observations (Bickman & Rog, 2009). The Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method requires transcription of the focus group interview and annotation of significant statements using open coding (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher had participants review their transcripts for accuracy. Next, the statements were listed, and the researcher went through the process of horizontalization of the data to create heterogeneous statements of non-overlapping statements (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Using these statements, the researcher created clusters to identify broader units of information by grouping statements of significance (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Utilizing these statements and emerging themes, the researcher generated a textural and structural description of the findings of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Using the textural and structural descriptions, the researcher wrote a composite description to capture the essence of the findings of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Survey

The third sub-question for this study explored how survey data would inform the problem of low parental involvement at a school located in southeastern North Carolina. Utilizing the

themes derived from the literature review, the researcher developed a six-point Likert-scaled survey instrument to determine the attitudes/levels of agreement of the identified participants to answer the central research question. Gall et al. (2007) defined attitude as “an individual’s viewpoint or disposition toward a particular “object” (a person, a thing, an idea, etc.)” (p. 220). Additionally, Gall et al. (2007) emphasized that Likert-scales “ask individuals to rate their level of agreement (e.g., strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, or strongly disagree) with various statements” (p.220). The Likert-scale survey instrument was administered with participants using SurveyMonkey. The questions were delivered through static delivery, which is “compatible with a wide variety of browsers” and “minimizes download times” (Bickman & Rog, 2009, p. 423). Due to the survey being a Likert-scale instrument, the response style was close-ended, using checkbox style formatting. Bickman and Rog (2009) emphasized that “close-ended questions force subjects to choose from a predetermined set of responses” (p. 424).

Survey questions were derived from current empirical literature as detailed later in this section. Questions were included to gain demographic information for the descriptive statistical analysis. Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with the statements (see Appendix M) as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, and don’t know/not applicable to the following survey questions:

1. Parents are kept well informed of school events through phone calls.
2. Parents are kept well informed of school events through flyers.
3. Parents are kept well informed of school events through e-mails.
4. Parents are well informed of school events through newsletters.
5. Parents are invited to participate in parent-teacher conferences.
6. Parents are invited to participate in parent workshops.

7. Parents are invited to participate in curriculum events.
8. Parents are invited to participate in PTA sponsored events.
9. Parents are invited to participate in field trips.
10. Teachers request face to face parent-teacher conferences at least 1-2 times per year to discuss their child's progress.
11. Parents are invited to volunteer within the classroom.
12. Parents are invited to attend field trips at least 1-2 times this year.
13. The school offers curriculum-based parent workshops to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic needs.
14. Providing supervised child care would allow parents a better opportunity to attend parent workshops to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic needs.
15. Providing a free meal for all members of their family would allow parents a better opportunity to attend parent workshops to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic needs.
16. Offering parent workshops during the school day would allow parents a better opportunity to attend parent workshops to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic needs.
17. Offering parent workshops in the evening would allow parents a better opportunity to attend parent workshops to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic needs.
18. Offering parent workshops on the weekend would allow parents a better opportunity to attend parent workshops to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic needs.
19. Offering transportation would allow parents a better opportunity to attend parent workshops to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic needs.

20. Conducting home visits would allow parents a better opportunity to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic needs.

21. Providing a parent lounge would encourage parents to volunteer more frequently at the school.

22. Providing a free coffee and snack bar would encourage parents to volunteer more frequently at the school.

23. Using social media to inform parents of opportunities of parental involvement in the school would encourage them to get involved more frequently.

24. Which category below includes your age?

- 21-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 or older

25. Which category below describes your race?

- White
- Black or African-American
- Hispanic
- Asian
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- From multiple races
- Other

26. Which category below describes your biological gender?

- Male
- Female

27. Which category below describes the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- Bachelor's degree
- Graduate degree
- Advanced Graduate degree

28. Which category below describes your marital status?

- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Separated
- Never married

The survey questions were generated based on current empirical research to gain deeper understanding of the overall experiences and perspectives of parental involvement of the site school and identify supports that could increase parental involvement. Questions one through 13 were designed to gain foundational understanding of parental involvement at the site school and to identify how the school currently fosters parental involvement. This data was used to determine the level of agreement to the foundational understanding gained through the quantitative data collection. According to current literature, schools should effectively communicate and invite parents to participate in their child's education (Heddy & Sinatra, 2017; Rodriguez et al., 2014; Wright et al., 2018). Fostering parent-teacher partnerships impacts parent perception, which can have a direct impact on their involvement efforts (Mayo & Siraj, 2015).

Recent literature indicated that positive parent perceptions gained through educator attitudes were found to be the most significant factor on parental involvement; therefore, demonstrating the importance of developing co-caring relationships and partnerships between parents (Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018; Lang et al., 2017). Questions 14 through 23 were intended to gain understanding of supports, expertise, and resources that would make the biggest difference in increasing parental involvement at Westside Elementary School. According to empirical literature, schools should also consider financial constraints, develop interventions to assist parents so that they are able to increase their involvement, and foster collaboration and parental input in their children's education to positively impact parents' perception and attitude (Afolabi, 2014; Erdener et al., 2018; Gilbert et al., 2017; Sad & Gurbuzturk, 2013). Question 14 was designed specifically to determine if providing childcare would allow parents a better opportunity to attend school-based events. According to recent literature, schools should identify logistical barriers that prevent parents from being involved and provide childcare during meetings so that it allows for the greatest participation (Bardahoshi et al., 2016). Additionally, current literature indicated that other creative ideas should be utilized to support low socioeconomic parents (Bardhoshi et al., 2016). Based on this assumption, question 15 was designed to measure if providing meals to all members of the participating family would allow parents to attend parent workshops. Questions 16, 17, and 18 were specifically designed to determine if offering flexible meeting times and locations would support parents in becoming more involved at school-based events. According to Bardhoshi et al. (2016), schools should hold meetings, conferences, and events at "times that allow for the greatest participation" (p. 17). These questions will identify the best time for parents to attend school-based events. Question 19 was designed to determine if offering transportation to parents would allow them to get more

involved as current literature indicated that a lack of transportation was a common reason parents were uninvolved in school-based events (Alexander et al., 2017). Empirical literature also indicated that schools should offer informative meetings more functionally to parents to explicate the importance of family in students' academic success (Keru Cetin & Taskin, 2016). Question 20 was designed to determine if conducting home visits would afford parents a more functional approach to be informed of ways to meet their child's academic needs. In addition, developing parent-parent partnerships was another support identified to increase parental involvement; therefore, question 21 will determine if providing a parent lounge will foster parental involvement efforts (Drajea & O'Sullivan, 2014). Accordingly, question 22 will identify if offering refreshments will create an inviting atmosphere to increase parental involvement and support parent-parent partnerships, as well as provide a framework to support parent-child interactions (Roy & Giraldo-Garcia, 2018; Kraft & Rogers, 2015). Question 23 was designed to gain additional information on alternate forms of communication as current literature indicated that maternal and paternal involvement efforts can vary based on the type of communication used (Hart, 2011). Questions 24 to 28 were intended to gain demographic information for the descriptive statistical analysis (Gall et al., 2007).

Participants received an e-mail link to access the survey instrument. Submissions of this static-web instrument were collected when respondents clicked a submission button at the end of the survey instrument, providing a successful submission page for the respondent and thanking them for their participation (Bickman & Rog, 2009). Utilizing the features offered by SurveyMonkey, the researcher received an e-mail notifying of the submission, as well as the data being recorded into a database. Bickman and Rog (2009) stressed that this approach saves researchers "considerable time and effort" (p. 429). The instrument allowed for anonymous

replies to ensure confidentiality of participants. Data was securely stored through a password-protected account with SurveyMonkey, as well as on a password-protected computer. The quantitative data in this study were recorded and calculated using an internet-based survey tool, SurveyMonkey. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to measure frequencies and analyze the survey data collected to summarize the findings. According to Gall et al. (2007), descriptive statistics allow researchers to organize and summarize sets of numerical data using mathematical techniques, which was appropriate for this study. The survey instrument employed a six-point Likert scale that included the following measures, strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, and don't know/not applicable. Using the generated data from the surveys, the researcher displayed the data for each question using tables as shown below in Table 1.

Table 1

Percentage of teachers who reported school-initiated communication practices, by method of phone calls, e-mails, flyers, and newsletters.

Variable	Phone calls	E-mails	Flyers	Newsletters
Gender				
Male	00	00	00	00
Female	00	00	00	00
Highest Education Level				
Bachelor degree	00	00	00	00
Graduate degree	00	00	00	00
Advanced degree	00	00	00	00
Marital Status				
Married	00	00	00	00
Divorced	00	00	00	00
Widowed				
Separated	00	00	00	00
Never Married	00	00	00	00
Age				
21-29	00	00	00	00
30-39	00	00	00	00
40-49	00	00	00	00
50-59	00	00	00	00
60 or older	00	00	00	00

Race				
White	00	00	00	00
Black or African-American	00	00	00	00
Hispanic	00	00	00	00
Asian	00	00	00	00
Am. Indian or Alaskan Native	00	00	00	00
Multi-racial	00	00	00	00
Other	00	00	00	00
Total	00	00	00	00

Bickman and Rog (2009) emphasized that the probability of the findings from an applied research study would be used is dependent on the ability of the researcher to convince and persuade policymakers that the findings are applicable to their problem or setting. The researcher was seeking to better understand and identify the factors impacting parental involvement at Westside Elementary School to convince stakeholders that the results of the quantitative findings may improve parental involvement through a proposed intervention plan.

Ethical Considerations

Conducting ethical research is imperative through the dissertation process so that it is worthy of dissemination. Doctoral students are tasked with being good stewards when researching as they collect, analyze, annotate, curate, preserve, and disseminate their data (Nelson, 2018). Research studies should be “consistent with generally accepted ethical principles” (Glatthorn, Joyner, & Rouse, 2013, p. 8). Additionally, research studies should be grounded in honesty to ensure there is no deception throughout the research process, as well as ensure that they do not result in any physical or emotional pain of participants and that the study reflects equity by not reflecting or supporting any type of discrimination (Glatthorn et al., 2013). Based on these guiding principles, the researcher strictly adhered to all procedures outlined in the Liberty University Dissertation Handbook, as well as the procedures of the IRB. The researcher

also received IRB approval prior to conducting the study. Participants were given adequate time to review and consent to participate in the study, as well as given the opportunity to freely disengage in the study at any time without any bias or repercussions. Participants were given adequate information about the intent of the study before consenting to participate; therefore, building trust. All signed consents and permissions were filed in a locked cabinet. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of all participants and locations. All recordings and transcriptions were securely stored on a password-protected computer and account with SurveyMonkey and Trint.

All participants were treated with a high level of respect, honesty, and integrity. Most significantly, the researcher ensured humane consideration as there were no known risks or discomforts projected within the study. It is important that as researchers spend a considerable amount of time at the research site, that they do not go native by focusing on one perspective, rather than multiple perspectives (Creswell, 2013). To ensure that the researcher composed a complex picture of the findings, multiple perspectives were represented. The researcher validated findings and added credibility through bracketing, member checking, peer debriefing, and by providing detailed descriptions, which is a hallmark of “high-quality applied research” (Bickman & Rog, 2009, p. 12).

Summary

The purpose of this applied research study was to solve the problem of low parental involvement for school stakeholders at a school in southeastern North Carolina and to formulate a solution to address the problem. For this applied research study, a multimethod research design was used to describe stakeholder perceptions and experiences of parental involvement at the site school and to determine teacher attitudes on the identified factors impacting parental

involvement. Utilizing the findings from the qualitative and quantitative data, the researcher gained an understanding of the factors that impacted parental involvement and was able to compose an intervention plan to improve parental involvement at Westside Elementary School.

This chapter began with a description of the research design and rationale that was employed to identify the factors contributing to the lack of parental involvement at the school. Next, the research questions, setting, and participants were presented. Additionally, the researcher's role was distinguished, and the procedures of the qualitative and quantitative investigations were delineated. This chapter concluded with a description of the proposed data analysis procedures, ethical considerations, and a summary of the methodology that was utilized in this applied research study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this applied research study was to solve the problem of low parental involvement for school stakeholders at a school in southeastern North Carolina and to formulate a solution to address the problem. This multimethod study utilized three data collection methods including interviews, a focus group and surveys, as detailed in Chapter Three. Chapter Four delineates the findings of this study and presents the data analysis. This chapter begins with a description of the participants and an elucidation of the results. Next, the study findings in relationship to the empirical and theoretical literature reviewed in Chapter Two are presented. This chapter concludes with a critical analysis of the findings.

The following research questions guided the data collection for this applied research study:

Central Question: How can the problem of low parental involvement be improved at a school located in southeastern North Carolina?

Sub-question 1: How would administrators and teachers in an interview solve the problem of low parental involvement at a school located in southeastern North Carolina?

Sub-question 2: How would teachers in a focus group solve the problem of low parental involvement at a school located in southeastern North Carolina?

Sub-question 3: How would quantitative survey data inform the problem of low parental involvement at a school located in southeastern North Carolina?

Participants

Three pools of participants were included in this study. Interview participants were selected using purposeful sampling and included six stakeholders to gain a variety of perspectives of parental involvement at the school. Focus group participants were selected using

convenience sampling and consisted of five teachers from various grade levels. Survey participants were selected using convenience sampling and included 27 teachers. All participants were required to have served for at least one school year at Westside Elementary School and participants could only participate in one data collection measure.

Interview Participants

Six stakeholders participated in the face-to-face interviews, which consisted of five female participants and one male participant. These stakeholders were purposefully selected because they held various positions at the school which helped to gain a variety of experiences and perspectives of parental involvement at Westside Elementary School. The participants consisted of one administrator, the school media specialist, and four additional teachers from different grade levels. Each teacher also held additional titles as described below. Interview participants were assigned a pseudonym for confidentiality and to protect their identity. Of the six participants, one participant was in the 21-29 age range, three were in the 30-39 age range, and two were in the 40-49 age range. The average tenure of the participants was 12.2 years.

Mrs. Harrington. Mrs. Harrington was the first interview participant. She currently is serving as the school PTA vice president, SIT Chair representative, Box Top coordinator, and is a Pre-K teacher. Notably, she was also honored as the 2018-2019 Teacher of the Year at the school. Serving the school for 17 1/2 years, Mrs. Harrington noted that she has been through several administration changes over the years, which has impacted the parental involvement at the school. Mrs. Harrington expressed overall satisfaction with the current parental involvement and the schools' efforts to increase parental involvement.

Mrs. Rodriguez. Mrs. Rodriguez has been an educator for 16 years. She worked as a fourth grade teacher previously at Westside Elementary school; however, this school year she

has moved into the role of media coordinator. She also serves on the PTA as a parent representative and as the Battle of the Books coordinator. Mrs. Rodriguez highlighted the numerous opportunities for parents to get involved and the efforts that the school currently does to positively impact their participation. Mrs. Rodriguez also shared the struggle for parent buy-in stating “there’s always a discrepancy between those that want to and those that either can’t or just don’t value it” (personal communication, July 20, 2020).

Ms. Alvarez. Ms. Alvarez is a fourth year teacher from Costa Rica, serving as a third-grade Spanish-Immersion educator. Being part of the choice-school program at Westside Elementary, Ms. Alvarez has had very positive experiences with parental involvement, noting that parents must sign-up their students to participate in this program and commit to it for all 5 years of elementary school. This program begins with children in kindergarten and immerses children in the Spanish language during the entire school day. Additionally, students are not introduced to reading in English until the 2nd grade. Ms. Alvarez believes that because of the commitment to this program, parents are naturally more involved. In fact, Ms. Alvarez stated “when parents really see their kids speaking Spanish, they know that they have to be very involved in their growth cause it’s more challenging. For example, when they get to second grade, they will be having two homework assignments; English homework and Spanish homework, so parents tend to be very, very involved” (personal communication, September 11, 2020).

Mrs. Calvin. Mrs. Calvin has been an educator for 16 years and is currently serving the school as a fifth grade teacher, Science Olympiad coach, and a parent. Serving previously as a first grade teacher at the school, Mrs. Calvin voiced various experiences with parental involvement. In fact, Mrs. Calvin stated “if I compare parental involvement with first grade then

fifth grade, there's definitely a big difference between grade level parental involvement. There's more parental involvement in lower graders as opposed to the upper grades. When the kids get older, it just seems like the parental involvement kind of decreases" (personal communication, September 19, 2020). Mrs. Calvin also expressed positive personal experiences with parental involvement in her class, which she attributes to the relationships she builds with her families; however, as a school she noted that parental involvement was limited and needed to be addressed.

Mr. Garcia. Mr. Garcia, the school principal, has 20 years of experience in education. Formerly serving as a kindergarten teacher assistant and an elementary school teacher, he took on the role of the schools' administrator position three years prior. Mr. Garcia noted that parental involvement was not where he would like to see it, stating "we see consistently the same group of parents and students involved when it comes to like curriculum nights and any parental engagement meetings. The purpose of those curriculum nights would be to better support families and sometimes the families that attend don't need the support" (personal communication, September 30, 2020). Mr. Garcia stressed factors that he believed inhibited parents from being involved and discussed efforts he believed were positively impacting the parental involvement.

Focus Group Participants

Five teachers participated in the face-to-face focus group, all of which were female educators. Focus group participants were assigned a pseudonym for confidentiality and to protect their identity. Of the five participants, two participants were in the 30 - 39 age range, two were in the 40 - 49 age range, and one was in the 50 - 59 age range. The average tenure of the participants was 18.6 years.

Mrs. Pelton. Mrs. Pelton, a 22-year educator, is currently serving as a third grade teacher and as the grade level chair. Although Mrs. Pelton has only served Westside Elementary School for two years, she believed she had a good understanding to the lack of parental involvement, attributing it to teachers and schools pushing parents away, parental self-efficacy, and parent buy-in.

Ms. Langthum. Ms. Langthum, a fourth grade teacher at Westside Elementary School, has been an educator for 14 years. She also conducts after-school tutoring for math and is a parent. Ms. Langthum stressed the parent perspective to getting involved in school and the barriers that parents face. For example, Ms. Langthum expressed “I think back to everybody’s really busy. As a single mom, I know how busy I am as a teacher. Then after school I have dinner to make, homework to help with, church on Wednesdays and Sundays, and that doesn’t even include sport practices and games for my son” (personal communication, September 23, 2020). Ms. Langthum expressed belief that more parents want to be involved, but do not have the time necessarily to get more involved.

Ms. Meredith. Ms. Meredith is currently serving as a second grade teacher, SIT representative, grade-level chair, and assists with the Science Olympiad club. She has been an educator for 32 years. During her experience at Westside Elementary School, she expressed several negative impacts to the parental involvement efforts, stressing that the school building has become intimidating due to background checks and a curriculum parents do not resonate with.

Mrs. Stratton. Mrs. Stratton, a special education teacher and caseworker, has been an educator for 15 years. Currently serving students identified with mild to moderate special education needs, Mrs. Stratton adds a unique element to this study. Speaking to the parental

involvement efforts in developing student's individualized education plans, Mrs. Stratton stressed barriers to parent self-efficacy. For example, Mrs. Stratton stated, "we talk about these concepts that parents have no idea. Just cannot understand and we're teaching in a way that they've never seen" (personal communication, September 23, 2020). Mrs. Stratton stressed the need to empower parents and build up their self-efficacy so that they will feel comfortable to become more involved.

Ms. Kimber. Ms. Kimber is a 10-year educator who is currently serving as a fourth grade math teacher. She also helps conduct the after-school tutoring club for students struggling in math. Ms. Kimber shared frustrations with parental involvement efforts in the upper elementary and discussed parental buy-in. Highlighting parent struggles, Ms. Kimber expressed "we have a whole slew of single parent families and military families with soldiers deployed. Families are not as stable as they could be, which limits their availability to be involved and they just aren't interested in spending their free time at the school" (personal communication, September 23, 2020). Ms. Kimber offered many suggestions to increase parent buy-in, such as offering food, increasing the excitement level, and incorporating holiday-based activities.

Survey Participants

Survey participants were anonymous elementary school teachers who had served as an educator for at least one school year at Westside Elementary School. A Likert-scale survey was sent to 53 educators currently teaching at the school. Of the 53 educators, 27 consented and completed the survey. The sample consisted of two males and 25 females. Four participants were 20 - 29 years of age, 10 were 30 - 39 years of age, and 13 were 40 or more years of age. Within the sample, six participants were identified as Black/non-Hispanic, 11 identified as white/non-Hispanic, eight identified as Hispanic, and one identified as American Indian/Alaska

Native. Of the 27 participants, 15 held Bachelor's degrees and 12 held graduate degrees. The marital status of the participants consisted of 19 married, 3 divorced, and 5 never married. See Table 3 below for demographic information of all participants.

Table 3

Demographics of Survey Participants

Variable	Percentage	Number of participants
Gender		
Male	7.41	2
Female	92.59	25
Highest Education Level		
Bachelor degree	55.56	15
Graduate degree	44.44	12
Advanced degree	0	0
Marital Status		
Married	70.37	19
Divorced	11.11	3
Widowed	0	0
Separated	0	0
Never Married	18.52	5
Age		
21-29	14.81	4
30-39	37.04	10
40-49	18.52	11
50-59	14.81	1
60 or older	14.81	1
Race		
White	42.31	6
Black or African-American	23.08	11
Hispanic	30.77	8
Asian	0	0
Am. Indian or Alaskan Native	3.85	1
Multi-racial	0	0
Other	0	0

Results

This study employed three data collection methods. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with stakeholders from Westside Elementary School in order to find themes related to their experiences with parental involvement at this school. Additionally, a focus group was conducted with teachers to gather further details on their experiences with parental involvement at Westside Elementary School and to gain their perspective of the supports that are needed to increase parental involvement. The last data collection method was surveys. A six-point Likert-scale survey was created based on empirical research to quantitatively measure teacher perspectives on parental involvement experiences at this school and to identify supports to increase parental involvement.

Sub-question 1

Sub-question one for this study was, “How would administrators and teachers in an interview solve the problem of low parental involvement at a school located in southeastern North Carolina?” Interviews were conducted with school stakeholders from Westside Elementary School in order to find themes related to parental involvement at their school. Using the Stevick-Colazzi Keen method of qualitative data analysis, significant statements were identified and four themes were uncovered. The themes that emerged were communication, fostering relationships, parental buy-in, and parental self-efficacy. Textural and structural descriptions were generated for each theme and a composite description was generated (see Table 4). Each theme was then itemized using the textural and structural descriptions to identify the frequency of related words (see Table 5).

Table 4

Final Themes with Textural and Structural Elements

Themes	Codes
Communication	Sending communication to parents via flyers Classdojo Newsletter Email Phone calls conferences Student agenda Social media Reaching out Active communication
Fostering Relationships	Connections Community Building relationship Building strong foundations Teamwork Communicating frequently Supporting families Supports
Parental Buy-in	Volunteering Interest in events Involvement Support Valuing information Parental personal experiences with school
Parental Self-Efficacy	Intimidation Understanding the curriculum Empowerment Challenges Barriers Level of education Family stability

Table 5

Frequency of Related Words, Stakeholder Interviews

Themes	Frequency of Related Words
Communication	70
Fostering Relationships	39
Parental Buy-In	42
Parental Self-Efficacy	26

Theme 1: Communication. Communication emerged as the most ubiquitous theme as all participants stressed communication during the interviews. Unanimously, participants shared a consensual belief that the school offered several lines of communication between parents and staff to include communication via flyers, Classdojo messages, newsletters, e-mail communications, phone calls, conferences, and contact through social media platforms.

Mrs. Harrington emphasized positive beliefs about school communication stating, “Communication. That’s our baby! We focus so heavily on communication and that’s how we get parents involved” (personal communication, July 20, 2020). Accordingly, Ms. Alvarez, shared that the various forms of communication have helped stakeholders feel more connected, affirming

the information papers, flyers, Classdojo messages, and Facebook posts helps everybody to understand what’s going on in the school. There is just so many different ways to get that information. Our families are so diverse and some homes have grandparents taking care of the kids. Others have single parents. So, they need all the different ways... the flyers, e-mails, social media posts, those things that help remind them of what is going on. (personal communication, September 11, 2020)

While several participants agreed that the school offered many lines of communication, one concern surfaced regarding school communication among many of the participants. For example, Mrs. Rodriguez stressed,

We have a language barrier. A lot of our parents’ primary language is Spanish. So, I don’t see a ton of communication going home in Spanish. So, eliminate that barrier. I just think that when documents are created to be sent home, we traditionally go with English. And I don’t know as it’s something that could be maybe even done on the reverse side in

Spanish, but parents should have the option of whatever their native language is so that they can be empowered to become more involved (personal communication, July 20, 2020).

Mr. Garcia, also stressed the concern that the school might be missing opportunities to increase communication with the Spanish populating stating, “many of our parents don’t understand the communication that is being sent out because they either don’t know how to read English or don’t understand it well or don’t comprehend it well” (personal communication, September 30, 2020).

Most agreeably, participants noted that offering communication in both English and Spanish would offer parents better opportunities to become involved and due to the Spanish immersion program at the school, the supports are available to address those barriers. Mrs. Calvin stated,

There are people in the school willing to help communicate with our Spanish speaking parents as it is often challenging to communicate with them when they do not speak English. Our secretary and Spanish immersion teachers are very helpful in helping me craft communication. They would also help me to translate back and forth through phone calls or conferences. So, the expertise is there, we just need to use it to reach those families better. (personal communication, September 19, 2020)

Theme 2. Fostering relationships. Another prevalent theme that emerged during the interviews with participants was the importance of fostering relationships between parents and staff. Unarguably, building relationships and strong foundations was an omnipresent belief among participants who undoubtedly believed that fostering relationships began with the connections made between teachers and parents at the start of each school year. Mrs. Rodriguez

emphasized, “building those relationships at the very beginning of the year was crucial for me and letting our parents know that we were on the same team. Because of that, my parents are willing to come in more and be involved” (personal communication, July 20, 2020). Similarly, Mrs. Harrington shared,

I think our parents are doing the best that they can. So, I think if we make the connection with parents and set the foundation, we will set the tone and hopefully get more participation. I strongly believe in building relationships with the parents because that’s really where it starts. You know, it’s the whole child. The whole family. That’s a big dynamic of it. So, building those relationships is key. (personal communication, July 20, 2020)

Participants also expressed that fostering relationships at the school-wide level was very important to getting parents involved. Mr. Garcia, emphasized the importance of fostering relationships as a school community stating,

Overall, we try to pride ourselves in forming the individual relationships with the families because I think that’s another buy in to it. They feel like they are a part of the school. They’re a huge stakeholder in the school, and if they have that relationship with the teacher or the administration or resource teachers, they’ll feel like a part of the family and they’ll want to attend parent teacher conferences. They’ll want to have a stake in curriculum nights and IEP meetings. So, a lot of it is building those relationships with families. (personal communication, September 30, 2020)

Accordingly, Mrs. Calvin expressed “the school environment has just been so positive. Everyone tries really hard to make parents feel welcome and because of the relationships we have built as a

school with them, it really has made a difference in getting them to volunteer and come to events” (personal communication, September 19, 2020).

Theme 3. Parental buy-in. Another overarching theme that emerged during the interviews was parental buy-in. Several participants mentioned parental buy-in as a barrier to increasing parental involvement at the school. Mrs. Harrington attributed it to the fact that parents were young and may not have the resources to invest in their child’s education, stating,

A lot of parents are young and they may just not have the time or resources to become invested because of the demands that are placed with being young parents. So, we got to educate the parents on the value of their child’s education. (personal communication, July 20, 2020)

Accordingly, Mrs. Rodriguez emphasized,

There’s a lot of opportunities for parents that want to be involved, but there’s always a discrepancy between those that want to and those that either can’t or just don’t value it. Sometimes they just don’t want to invest their time and energy into it. (personal communication, July 20, 2020)

A couple of participants expressed a discrepancy between parental buy-in depending on the age of the children. Mrs. Calvin, for example, stated “younger grades have more parents coming in and out of the school participating. As the kids get older, the number of parents coming goes down” (personal communication, September 19, 2020). Mrs. Alvarez, attributed the discrepancy to loss of interest stating,

As the kids start growing up, parents lose interest in going to hear them sing or coming to curriculum events. So maybe if they made it more exciting, like an escape room or something where the parents would have fun for them to come to, it would make a big

difference. Parents would be more curious to come check out the event at the school if it sounded more exciting. (personal communication, September 11, 2020)

Congruently, Mr. Garcia stressed the schools' efforts to combat parental buy-in through creative efforts, emphasizing "by coupling curriculum workshops with student presentations, parents are more invested to come see their student's projects. We try to be creative and spotlight the students to make it fun for the families" (personal communication, September 30, 2020). Mr. Garcia also emphasized,

Money is being spent on food to get families into the building. We also have offered incentives as far as we're allowed to. Our general funds purchase things like food, gift cards, and stuff to be used as door prizes for participating. We also reach out to our community sponsors to get things donated to be used as prizes to excite parent participation. These efforts have helped increase parent engagement. (personal communication, September 30, 2020)

Theme 4. Parental self-efficacy. The final theme to emerge during the stakeholder interviews was parental self-efficacy. Several participants shared concerns of intimidation and barriers to parents becoming involved due to limitations in their self-efficacy. For example, Mrs. Harrington stated, "I think sometimes it just the level of their own education" (personal communication, July 20, 2020). Similarly, Mrs. Rodriguez stressed that parents are challenged to become involved stating,

I think lack of understanding or a lack of education for some parents. They're struggling to just make ends meet and working and balancing work and their kids. And they're already struggling. They just don't know how to give either the time or the monetary commitment that they may need. (personal communication, July 20, 2020)

Mr. Garcia also stressed intimidation factors stating,

Intimidation factor for our specific demographic of families is that they feel intimidated by maybe the school building itself. And that could go back to maybe their own experiences with school, you know, and they don't want to be anywhere near the front office. Maybe they've had incidences when it came to their own experiences with the principal's office, or it's the same thing with stepping through the front doors of the school and stepping into a classroom environment. They won't attend any of the parent teacher conferences or IEP meetings. The intimidation factor may lie in their own levels of education. (personal communication, September 30, 2020)

To combat intimidation factors, Mr. Garcia suggested that "if parents would let us know what they don't know we could understand the challenges that are facing them" (personal communication, September 30, 2020). Accordingly, Mrs. Calvin emphasized supports to increase parents' self-efficacy and empower them by offering workshops suggesting, "parents might need academic classes because they struggle with helping their kids with their homework, especially in math. The new way of math is so different and parents don't understand it" (personal communication, September 19, 2020). Similarly, Mrs. Rodriguez emphasized that "because parents are afraid of the curriculum and parents don't understand Common Core, we need to do more to help them understand it so that they don't just turn away because they think they will never get it" (personal communication, July 20, 2020). The statements by participants demonstrated the need to address concerns over parental self-efficacy.

Sub-question 2

Sub-question two for this study was, "How would teachers in a focus group solve the problem of low parental involvement at a school located in southeastern North Carolina?" A

focus group was conducted with teachers from Westside Elementary School in order to find themes related to their experiences with parental involvement at this school. To analyze the data, the Stevick-Colazzi Keen method was utilized to identify significant statements, generate textural and structural descriptions, and inductively write composite descriptions (See Table 6). Each theme was then itemized using the textural and structural descriptions to identify the frequency of related words (see Table 7). The themes that emerged were parental self-efficacy, supports, and barriers.

Table 6

Final Themes with Textural and Structural Elements

Themes	Textural/Structural Elements
Parental Self-Efficacy	Level of education. Curriculum changes. Challenges to understanding the curriculum. Family stability. Intimidation. Parental personal experiences in education.
Supports	Flexible meeting times. Varying communication methods. Offering child care, transportation, and meals. Increasing interest. Fostering relationships.
Barriers	Military deployment. Single-parent households. Income. Work schedule. Transportation. Value systems.

Table 7

Frequency of Related Words, Stakeholder Interviews

Themes	Frequency of Related Words
Parental Self-Efficacy	15
Supports	19
Barriers	21

Theme 1. Parental self-efficacy. The first theme that emerged from the focus group was parental self-efficacy. Participants shared the belief that parental self-efficacy often hinders parental involvement, especially at their school. One of the most prevalent factors inhibiting parents' self-efficacy shared by participants was parents' level of education and their understanding of the curriculum. Mrs. Pelton shared "we are eliminating the ability to have parents help us because we're teaching it in a way that they've never seen...and now they're not interested" (personal communication, September 23, 2020). Ms. Langthum added, "we teach these concepts that parents have no idea about and just cannot understand. Even I didn't get it the first time and had to teach it to myself a few times before my students, so it pushes parents away" (personal communication, September 23, 2020). Accordingly, Ms. Meredith emphasized

I think parents don't have buy in the way we teach nowadays and so they don't like it. They don't understand it. Look, this is the way math geniuses do it and if we ask them, how do you solve problems in your brain...all they see is that they're having to do all these steps for like, no reason. Meanwhile it does not make sense to them so there is less involvement. We've pushed parents away because of it. (personal communication, September 23, 2020).

Agreeably, Mrs. Stratton stressed, "Parent's do not understand and everyone is not very well educated. Some barely made it out of school themselves" (personal communication, September 23, 2020).

Other contributing factors brought forth regarding parents' self-efficacy was family stability and personal experiences in education that has caused parents to either not value education or be intimidated by it. Mrs. Pelton emphasized, "school is not always a positive for parents. Some parents hated school and didn't do well in school. So, if we can't pull them in a

positive way, they just think of school as negative and they don't want to come in or don't see value in it" (personal communication, September 23, 2020). Similarly, Ms. Kimber added, "It may just be a different mindset. School doesn't look familiar so it is intimidating to them. So even though we offer opportunities for parents to get involved, it looks and feels different so it scares them away" (personal communication, September 23, 2020). Ms. Langthum stressed family stability as a contributing factor, stating,

Parents are already struggling to work and run a household. A lot of these families are young and don't have the resources or the know how to manage it all. When parents are stressed by factors within the home, getting them to the school just adds additional stress that they do not need. So because of these stressors, parents do not think they have the ability to help their child and will not invest the time into doing it because they already cannot keep their heads above water and don't want to feel like a failure. (personal communication, September 23, 2020).

Theme 2. Supports. Another prevalent theme that emerged from the focus group was supports needed to increase parental involvement. Each of the participants shared a common belief that supports are needed to address the barriers to parental involvement. Participants offered several ideas to address the barriers discussed that inhibited parental involvement. Varying communication styles and methods (Pelton, personal communication, September 23, 2020), offering flexible meeting times (Langthum, personal communication, September 23, 2020), offering child care (Kimber, personal communication, September 23, 2020; Stratton, personal communication, September 23, 2020), offering transportation, (Meredith, personal communication, September 23, 2020), and offering meals to the family (Stratton, personal

communication, September 23, 2020) were several of the supports brought forth by participants to address the barriers they believed were keeping parents from being involved.

The two most predominant supports emphasized were increasing interest to encourage parental buy-in and fostering relationships. For example, Ms. Meredith accentuated,

You must build relationships. We have to create an atmosphere where people are comfortable and we can get our parents comfortable through building those relationships. So, we have to communicate frequently and the communication needs to be a mixture of both positive contacts and those where we are expressing concern for their child. If parents are comfortable and they know that we care for their child, they will get more involved naturally. The buy-in will be there.

(personal communication, September 23, 2020).

Accordingly, Ms. Kimber stressed, “We need to increase interest in the activities we are offering. If the kids are excited about what we are offering and it seems fun to them, then parents are more likely to come” (personal communication, September 23, 2020). Similarly, Mrs. Stratton shared the belief, “If you want parents to buy-in what the school is offering, it has to be fun and exciting for them to take their time off to come. If we take the time to build relationships with parents and show them our own excitement in activities the school is offering, we can get more parents engaged” (personal communication, September 23, 2020).

Theme 3. Barriers. The most significant theme to emerge from the focus group was barriers parents are facing that inhibit them from being involved more actively in the school. Participants shared a consensual belief that the large population of military families and the struggles that military families face was a barrier to parental involvement at their school.

Military deployments (Kimber, personal communication, September 23, 2020; Stratton, personal communication, September 23, 2020), duty station changes (Pelton, personal communication, September 23, 2020), and running single-family households (Meredith, personal communication, September 23, 2020; Langthum, personal communication, September 23, 2020) all attributed to these beliefs.

In addition, several participants believed that the fast paced lifestyle of the 21st century also attributed to the barriers keeping parents from being involved (Kimber, personal communication, September 23, 2020; Langthum, personal communication, September 23, 2020; Stratton, personal communication, September 23, 2020). For example, Ms. Langthum stressed,

I think back to everybody's really busy. I think families stay just very busy and technology continues to keep people very busy when they are home because they are so connected to the outside world and people don't disconnect from it. I am a teacher and a single mom and when I come home at the end of the day, I am tired. I am doing the best I can, but there are days when I just can't give any more than what I am doing. Most parents don't get to be stay at home moms and dads anymore. So, it just boils down to that people are busy. They want to be involved but emotionally and physically they just can't give more than what they are giving. (personal communication, September 23, 2020).

Accordingly, Ms. Kimber, added "parents are involved in so many other activities outside of school. Between sports and church activities, I am lucky if my students have time to do homework and parents don't have the time to help them with it" (personal communication, September 23, 2020).

Several participants also believed that family income and resources held parents from getting more involved (Langthum, personal communication, September 23, 2020; Pelton, personal communication, September 23, 2020; Meredith, personal communication, September 23, 2020). Ms. Meredith stressed, “schools tend to offer activities at dinner time. Most times, families have to eat out before coming to events because there isn’t enough time to cook a meal. For some families, they cannot afford to do it, so they just don’t come” (personal communication, September 23, 2020). Mrs. Pelton also added, “and for some families they only have one vehicle and parents are sharing that vehicle. So, it may be that they have no means of transportation to come to extracurricular activities that the school is offering” (personal communication, September 23, 2020). While these barriers exist, several participants shared a united belief that these barriers could be addressed and rendered with adequate supports (Langthum, personal communication, September 23, 2020; Pelton, personal communication, September 23, 2020; Stratton, personal communication, September 23, 2020).

Sub-question 3

Sub-question three for this study was, “How would quantitative survey data inform the problem of low parental involvement at a school located in southeastern North Carolina?” A survey was conducted with teachers from Westside Elementary School in order to collect quantitative data related to educators’ experiences with parental involvement at this school. Table 8 shows the frequency and mean of each survey question. Tables 9 and 10 display disaggregated data collected from the survey questions based on the demographic information collected from the participants.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for Teachers’ Perceptions of Parental Involvement Efforts and Supports

Items and Item Descriptions	1	2	3	4	5	6	Mean	SD
1. Parents are kept well informed of school events through phone calls.	0	0	0	0	9	18	4.5	7.53
2. Parents are kept well informed of school events through flyers.	0	0	0	4	7	16	4.5	6.32
3. Parents are kept well informed of school events through e-mails.	3	0	4	1	9	10	4.5	4.14
4. Parents are well informed of school events through newsletters.	1	0	3	3	12	8	4.5	4.59
5. Parents are invited to participate in parent-teacher conferences.	0	0	0	0	4	23	4.5	9.20
6. Parents are invited to participate in parent workshops.	1	0	3	5	5	13	4.5	4.64
7. Parents are invited to participate in curriculum events.	2	0	0	1	6	18	4.5	6.98
8. Parents are invited to participate in PTA sponsored events.	0	0	0	0	9	17	4.3	7.17
9. Parents are invited to participate in field trips.	2	0	0	5	11	9	4.5	4.68
10. Teachers request face to face parent-teacher conferences at least 1-2 times per year to discuss my child's progress.	1	0	0	0	5	21	4.5	8.31
11. Parents are invited to volunteer within the classroom.	1	0	2	2	12	10	4.5	5.13
12. Parents are invited to attend field trips at least 1-2 times this year.	2	0	1	2	16	6	4.5	5.99
13. The school offers curriculum-based parent workshops to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic needs.	0	1	1	3	12	9	4.3	4.97
14. Providing supervised childcare would allow parents a better opportunity to attend parent workshops to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic needs.	2	0	3	5	12	5	4.5	4.14
15. Providing a free meal for all members of their family would allow parents a better opportunity to attend parent workshops to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic needs.	1	1	1	5	12	7	4.5	4.46
16. Offering parent workshops during the school day would allow parents a better opportunity to attend parent workshops to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic	1	3	5	8	6	4	4.5	2.43

needs.									
17. Offering parent workshops in the evening would allow parents a better opportunity to attend parent workshops to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic needs.	1	0	1	4	11	9	4.3	4.63	
18. Offering parent workshops on the weekends would allow parents a better opportunity to attend parent workshops to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic needs.	1	2	7	6	9	1	4.3	3.44	
19. Offering transportation would allow parents a better opportunity to attend parent workshops to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic needs.	1	0	2	10	12	2	4.5	5.13	
20. Conducting home visits would allow parents a better opportunity to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic needs.	2	0	4	11	9	1	4.5	4.51	
21. Providing a parent lounge would encourage parents to volunteer more frequently at the school.	2	0	3	8	10	4	4.5	3.78	
22. Providing a free coffee and snack bar would encourage parents to volunteer more frequently at the school.	2	0	3	7	14	1	4.5	5.24	
23. Using social media to inform parents of opportunities of parental involvement in the school would encourage them to get involved more frequently.	0	0	0	4	13	10	4.5	5.72	

Table 9

Percentage of teachers who reported school-initiated communication practices, by method of phone calls, e-mails, flyers, and newsletters.

Variable	Phone calls	E-mails	Flyers	Newsletters
Gender				
Male	100	50	50	50
Female	100	68	88	80
Highest Education Level				

Bachelor degree	100	66.67	80	60
Graduate degree	100	75	91.66	91.66
Marital Status				
Married	100	63.16	84.21	68.43
Divorced	100	100	100	100
Never Married	100	80	80	80
Age				
21-29	100	50	75	75
30-39	100	80	100	90
40-49	100	20	60	20
50-59	100	100	75	75
60 or older	100	100	100	100
Race				
White	100	63.63	63.63	63.63
Black or African-American	100	50	100	66.67
Hispanic	100	87.50	100	87.50
Am. Indian or Alaskan Native	100	100	100	100
Total	100	70.37	85.19	74.07

Table 10

Percentage of teachers who reported agreement to parental involvement supports

Variable	Child Care	Free Meals	Transportation	Flexible Schedule
Gender				
Male	0	50	50	50
Female	68	72	52	79.16
Highest Education Level				
Bachelor degree	53.33	66.67	46.67	80
Graduate degree	75	75	58.33	72.72
Marital Status				
Married	57.90	68.42	47.37	83.84
Divorced	33.33	33.33	33.33	66.67
Never Married	100	100	80	60
Age				
21-29	100	75	75	75
30-39	70	70	60	100
40-49	20	60	40	60
50-59	50	75	25	75
60 or older	75	75	50	33.33
Race				
White	54.55	63.64	45.45	72.72

Black or African-American	66.67	83.33	50	66.67
Hispanic	62.50	62.50	50	87.50
Am. Indian or Alaskan Native	100	100	100	100
Total	62.96	70.37	51.85	76.93

The quantitative data collected from the Likert-responses of the teacher survey was used to examine correlations and implications between the focus group and interviews conducted with the school stakeholders. The mean scores and the standard deviation were calculated for each survey question to find the average response of participants, as well as the dispersion of the data set. In addition, data was disaggregated based on demographic responses provided by participants in order to gain insight on the characteristics of the responses based on each variable in the areas of communication and parental involvement supports, as these were the themes identified from the survey responses.

Theme 1: Communication. Survey responses indicated that various forms of communication are used by the school to involve parents, which was congruent with focus group and interview responses. The results indicate that teachers consensually believe that the school communicates with parents through phone calls, flyers, newsletters, and by e-mail. Survey responses also indicated that teachers agree that the school facilitates parental involvement through invitation to conferences, curriculum-based events, and volunteer opportunities. Remarkably, the results indicated that no participants disagreed with the ways in which the school communicates with parents or the school's parental involvement efforts. There were also no discrepancies found during the data analysis of the disaggregated data.

Theme 2: Parental involvement supports. Several questions within the survey were targeted to gauge teacher perceptions of supports that are needed to increase parental

involvement. Responses from participants indicate a mixture of attitudes regarding which supports would be beneficial to parents. There were also discrepancies found based on the disaggregated data analysis. For example, participants had varying beliefs about providing supervised childcare so that parents could attend workshops. Of female participants, only 68 percent reported agreement, while no male participants were in agreement. Discrepancies were also found among responses to offering meals to increase parental involvement. While most participants were neutral or were in agreement, there were significant differences noted based on gender, ethnicity, and marital status. Of these differences, marital status showed the highest discrepancy with 68 percent of married participants in agreement as compared to 33 percent of divorced, and 100 percent of never married participants.

Another support that showed major discrepancies was offering flexible meeting times. Most participants were in agreement that offering parent workshops in the evening would be most beneficial to parents. Offering parent workshops during the school day or weekends demonstrated mixed attitudes based on survey responses. Of the female respondents, 80 percent reported agreement; however, only 50 percent of male respondents reported agreement. Another major disparity noted was based on ethnicity. Participants identified as Hispanic had the highest percentage of agreement with 88 percent being in agreement, as compared with 73 percent of White and 67 percent of Black/African-American participants.

The survey also measured participant perception of offering transportation, a parent lounge, and a snack bar to increase parental involvement. Of these supports, participants were mostly neutral or in agreement that these supports would be beneficial to increase parental involvement with no major discrepancies found among the disaggregated data.

Discussion

The triangulation of data gleaned from this research supports the themes that emerged, as well as corroborates with previous research related to parental involvement. The findings of this study supports the empirical and theoretical literature presented in Chapter Two, as well as extends the knowledge base by shedding light on solutions to improve parental involvement as explained further in the forthcoming sections.

Empirical Literature

Reflecting on previous and current empirical literature on parental involvement in relation to the research questions guiding this study, two major themes correlate with the findings gleaned from this research. The data revealed from this study parallels to previous research confirming barriers found through previous research that impede parental involvement. In addition, the findings of this study extends previous research by providing specific supports to increase school-based parental involvement.

Theme 1: Barriers. Empirical research indicated that several barriers impede parents from becoming involved in their child's education. Among these barriers, family income was considered one of the most significant factors impacting parental involvement (Erdener & Knoepfel, 2018; Gilbert et al., 2017). Financial stress attributed to lower levels of engagement and decreased sense of value in academics (Gilbert et al., 2017). Findings from the data analysis of the focus group from this study validates these conclusions. Teachers consensually believed that financial stressors and the need for both parents to work outside the home attributed to decreased levels of parental involvement. For example, Ms. Meredith stressed,

parents are both working full time jobs...barely making ends meet...and are struggling to juggle just helping with homework. Parents are just overwhelmed with life and financial stress. Coming to the school for extra activities is the last

thing on their minds when they are struggling just to put food on the table.

(personal communication, September 23, 2020)

These findings corroborate with previous research, indicating that schools need to consider these constraints when looking to involve parents and provide supports to overcome this barrier.

In understanding that financial stress also negatively impacts the value of education, educators should also consider parent perception, which was confirmed by the qualitative data points in this study as a major barrier impacting parental involvement. Empirical research indicated that parent perception was greatly influenced by parent self-efficacy, buy-in, and parent-teacher relationships based on their own personal experiences with learning, school, and parenting (Erdener & Knoepfel, 2018; Jones & Jones, 2016; Lang et al., 2017; Mayo & Siraj, 2015; Sad & Gurbuzturk, 2013). Both the focus group and the interview data of this study confirmed this barrier impacting school-based parental involvement. Participants of this study consistently affirmed the belief that parent self-efficacy and perception attributed to whether they would become involved. Participants were in agreement that parents' lack of understanding to the curriculum accredited to the decreased parental involvement. Additionally, participants believed that parental buy-in was also a factor inhibiting parents from becoming involved. Accordingly, participants strongly believed that fostering parent-teacher relationships was key to getting parents involved. Based on these conclusions, it is important that schools ensure that parents are informed of instructional approaches so that parents understand the curriculum and the learning techniques being utilized in the classroom so that parents feel that they can adequately help at home. Moreover, findings from this study validate that schools need to consider interest levels when planning curriculum events as participants believed that if schools made the events more interesting and exciting, parents would be more apt to want to participate

because they would value it more highly. Parents who value education will verbally communicate these values in their children, which in turn will support their children's emotional support with school and learning (Mayo & Siraj, 2015). Additionally, findings of this study corroborate previous empirical research that suggests schools should foster parent-teacher and parent-school relationships. When parents feel encouraged, validated, and comfortable, their self-efficacy will increase and they will be more eager to become involved (Lang et al., 2017). As stated empirically and validated by this study, addressing these barriers will increase the likelihood for parents to become more engaged in school-based parental involvement efforts.

Theme 2: Supports. There are many barriers that parents face that impact their ability to become involved in their child's education. As stated in Chapter Two, current empirical literature indicated a significant number of studies to indicate common trends of influential barriers such as socioeconomic status, perceptions, and other demographic factors to include age, race and ethnicity, and gender. These studies suggested that future research was warranted to find supports to address these barriers and measure their effectiveness in improving parental involvement. Researchers indicated that schools should support parents by finding ways to foster positive relationships with parents, as well as consider financial constraints to develop interventions to assist parents so that they are able to increase their involvement (Erdener et al., 2018; Sad & Gurbuzturk, 2013; Gilbert et al., 2017). Additionally, researchers suggested that schools consider times to hold meetings, conferences, and events that would generate the greatest parent participation (Bardhoshi et al., 2016). The qualitative data of this study corroborates with previous research, and all three data points of this study sheds light on stakeholders' perceptions of supports that will address the barriers impacting parental involvement.

Interview and focus group participants of this study were eager to suggest supports that they believed would increase parental involvement to include increasing interest in events, offering meals to families, providing childcare, offering transportation, and offering flexible meeting times. Accordingly, survey participants believed that offering school events or meetings in the evenings or secondly on weekends would provide parents the greatest ability to participate. In addition, survey participants believed that offering home visits would allow parents better opportunities to be informed of ways to best meet their child's academic needs. Survey data also indicated that offering supports such as a parent lounge and snack bar would encourage parents to volunteer more frequently. Qualitative data from this research validated those supports as participants believed that fostering relationships with parents and encouraging them to feel welcome in the school was vital to their participation. Moreover, qualitative participants believed keeping parents informed through various means of communication was key to their involvement. Validating these findings, survey participants strongly believed that Westside Elementary School uses various forms of communication strategies, and the data suggested that participants believed that using social media to inform parents of opportunities to become involved would encourage them to get involved more frequently. The findings from this study extends the empirical knowledge base on parental involvement by suggesting specific supports to address the barriers indicated through previous research. Schools trying to increase their involvement efforts should consider these supports as possible solutions to address low parental involvement.

Theoretical Literature

The theoretical frameworks which this study is based upon were Piaget's (1981) cognitive development theory and Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory as discussed in

Chapter Two. The findings of this study support the theoretical literature related to parental involvement as it sheds light on the factors influencing parental involvement. In addition, this study contributes to theoretical literature by providing potential solutions to improve school-based parental involvement.

Theoretical literature affirmed that parental involvement heavily influences children's cognitive development (Creech, 2010; Jung & Zhang, 2016; Hoghugi & Long, 2004; Park, Byun, & Kim, 2011; Pears et al., 2015) and therefore parental involvement has been a prominent cornerstone in United States legislation and educational policies (Gestwicki, 2007; Hoghugi & Long, 2004; Klein, 2015; Tekin, 2011). Piaget's (1981) cognitive development theory suggests that children will continuously rework, revise, assimilate, and accommodate their constructions internally and parents play a vital role as they assimilate new ideas and understanding, as well as develop values (Piaget, 1981; Prior & Gerard, 2007; Tekin, 2011). Similarly, Vygotsky (1978) asserted that cognitive development was also influenced by adult interaction as children internalize cultural and intellectual adaptations (Tryphon & Voneche, 1996). Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasized that family interaction within the home and community is vital for children's development as children gain knowledge and understanding about the world through these experiences (Tekin, 2011). These understandings affirm the importance of parental involvement on children's cognitive development. While this research did not seek to validate these findings, it contributes to the literature base by shedding light on the barriers impeding parental involvement, as well as by providing solutions to increase parental involvement.

Data analysis of the findings of this study indicate that parental self-efficacy and buy-in negatively influences parental involvement. According to the teacher interviews, parents' level

of education and their understanding of the curriculum were contributing factors to parental self-efficacy. One teacher emphasized “we are eliminating the ability to have parents help us because we’re teaching it in a way that they’ve never seen...and now they’re not interested” (Pelton, personal communication, September 23, 2020). These findings suggest that educators need to address these barriers by providing supports so that parents are able to understand the curriculum, as well as become invested in it. To combat these barriers, the teachers in this study emphasized the need to increase interest in school-based curriculum events to encourage parental buy-in and foster parent-teacher relationships.

Summary

For this applied research study, data was collected from school stakeholders to include teachers and administrators from Westside Elementary School in order to increase parental involvement at the school. Qualitative data from stakeholder interviews and the focus group conducted with teachers indicated barriers that the school needs to overcome in order to increase parental involvement. In addition, the data collected suggested supports that would help address these barriers. Quantitative data from the Likert-survey provided teacher perceptions on specific supports needed to increase parental involvement. The findings from the quantitative data were congruent with the supports stakeholders believe will address the problem of low parental involvement at Westside Elementary School. Based on the findings of this study, two themes were revealed that situated this study within current empirical and theoretical literature, as well as extends previous research to address the problem of low parental involvement. Using the findings presented in Chapter Four, Chapter Five will present a proposed solution to address the problem of low parental involvement for school stakeholders at Westside Elementary School.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this applied research study was to determine factors that impact parental involvement at a school in southeastern North Carolina and to formulate a solution to address the problem. Chapter five presents the proposed solution to address the problem of low parental involvement. In addition, the resources and funds needed, the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, and the timeline of the proposed implementation are outlined. This chapter concludes with the potential solution implications, an evaluation plan to assess the effectiveness of the proposed solutions, and a summary of the chapter.

Restatement of the Problem

Research indicates that parental involvement is a key indicator on student achievement, especially for elementary school students (Avnet et al., 2019; Jeynes, 2003; Park & Holloway, 2018). Increasing parental involvement could positively impact student success; however, research indicated that rural schools have less supports available to increase parental involvement as compared to larger suburban schools (Quirk & National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). As indicated previously, the school in this study is located in a rural area and has had low parent turnout to curriculum-based events. According to Hornby and Blackwell (2018), the main barriers to parents being involved in their children's education included parent and family factors, parent-teacher factors, societal factors, and practical barriers. Focus group and interview data indicated similar barriers to increased parental involvement efforts.

Quantitative data from the teacher surveys reflected that supports are needed to increase parental involvement within this rural school, therefore to examine this problem, the researcher began with a central question, "How can the problem of low parental involvement be improved at a

school located in southeastern North Carolina?”

Proposed Solution

Triangulation of data from the focus group, interviews, and survey data indicated several supports to address the central research question guiding this study. The most prominent solutions gleaned from the data analysis of the research findings were fostering relationships with parents and providing socioeconomic supports. Implementing these solutions may increase the parental involvement at Westside Elementary School and serve as a model for other Title one schools in the area.

Fostering Relationships

Within scholarly literature, parental involvement was found to be influenced by parents' perception of education (Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018; Jones & Jones, 2016; Kikas et al., 2014; Lang et al., 2017; Mayo & Siraj, 2015; Rodriguez et al., 2014; Rodriguez & Elbaum, 2014; von Otter, 2014). Empirically, researchers found that parent perception was often negated by parent-teacher and parent-school relationships (Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018; Jones & Jones, 2016; Lang et al., 2017; Mayo & Siraj, 2015). Fostering parent-teacher and parent-school relationships through co-caring relationships increases parental involvement (Lang et al., 2017). Moreover, educators' attitudes play a vital role in the way parents perceive education; therefore, showing the importance of positive teacher interactions with parents (Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018).

The findings of this study supported previous empirical research findings, which indicated that fostering relationships was paramount in getting parents involved. Both interview and focus group findings conclusively suggested that relationships must first be cultivated between parents and the teacher. Creating a connection to parents and showing care and concern for their child from the start of the school year and continuing to build on this connection

through open communication throughout the school year were strategies noted by participants as ways to foster these relationships. Teachers reported that communicating frequently through various forms of communication and working together with parents to come up with solutions to support their children helped them to cultivate these relationships. Data analysis of the qualitative findings also suggested that creating a warm and rich school environment where parents feel welcome is necessary when fostering parent-school relationships. Based on the quantitative findings of this study, educators believed that offering parents a place in the school such as a parent lounge with a snack bar, would influence parents to become more involved as this would help them to feel welcome within the building.

Based on the findings of this study, as well as empirical literature the proposed solution consists of the following goals:

1. Foster parent-teacher relationships through a cyclic research-based approach
2. Cultivate relationships through various forms of consistent communication
3. Implement a dedicated space for parents within the building to foster parent-school partnerships.

Goal 1. Foster parent-teacher relationships through a cyclic research-based approach. To foster parent-teacher relationships, McDermott (2008) suggested that parents and teachers work together to generate solutions for students' academic and behavior concerns. McDermott's (2008) systematic approach could be used as a model to foster parent-teacher relationships. McDermott (2008) proposed the following six step cycle:

Step 1: Brainstorm

Step 2: Identify goals

Step 3: Consider needs

Step 4: Think about feelings

Step 5: Recognize individual characteristics and situations

Step 6: Evaluation

According to McDermott (2008), teachers and parents should work together to brainstorm ways to address a specific concern for the student. Next, they should identify short-term and long-term goals to address the identified concern (McDermott, 2008). McDermott (2008) then suggests that they consider the needs and feelings of all stakeholders involved in the situation to ensure all parties' needs are addressed and feelings are taken into account when generating solutions. In the next step, parents and teachers work together to identify developmental differences and individual characteristics of the student and extrapolate these to the area of concern (McDermott, 2008). Lastly, McDermott (2008) encouraged that teachers and parents evaluate which approach would correlate to the ideals and values identified, as well as the best approach to reach the goals set. In implementing a model such as McDermott's (2008) cycle, relationships can be fostered between parents and teachers, which may positively influence parents' self-efficacy and perception of education.

Goal 2: Cultivate relationships through various forms of consistent communication.

Schools that encourage parental involvement and communicate effectively stimulates parental self-efficacy, which was found to have positive impacts to their home and school-based involvement (Park & Holloway, 2018; Rodriguez et al., 2014). Participants of this study noted that communication was key to getting parents involved. Participants consistently indicated that the school uses a variety of communication practices such as newsletters, phone calls, e-mails, conferences, and Classdojo to communicate with parents. The school should continue to ensure that all teachers are using various forms of communication with parents. In addition, an area of

concern that was brought forth by interview participants was a lack of communication in both English and Spanish (Calvin, personal communication, September 19, 2020, Rodriguez, personal communication, July 20, 2020). Empirical research indicated that parental involvement was negated by language barriers (Cobb, 2014; Jung & Zhang, 2016)). The school in this study has a large percentage of Spanish speaking families, therefore to foster relationships with these families, a proposed solution is to provide Spanish speaking families communication in both English and Spanish. By consistently and effectively communicating in both languages, all parents will be afforded the opportunity to become involved and may help to bridge the gap between parents' home and school-based involvement.

Goal 3: Implement a dedicated space for parents within the building to foster parent-school partnerships. Fostering parent-school partnerships is an essential element in engaging parent involvement in inclusive school practices that can support students' academic achievement and 21st-century skills development (Park & Holloway, 2018; Rodriguez et al., 2014; Urbani et al., 2017). Survey data from this study suggested that educators believed that a dedicated space to parents, such as a parent lounge would encourage parents to become more engaged in school-based involvement opportunities. Additionally, survey results suggested that offering a snack bar would also increase parental involvement. A proposed solution is to contrive a dedicated space for parents within the school building that will promote a positive school environment in which they feel welcome. Dedicating a space specifically for parents, may help foster parent-school partnerships and increase their involvement.

Socioeconomic Supports

Empirical research findings indicated that socioeconomic status was the most significant factor impacting parental involvement (Erdener et al., 2018). Current research on socioeconomic barriers suggested that schools should provide supports to address socioeconomic barriers to increase parental involvement (Bardhoshi et al., 2016; Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018; Gilbert et al., 2017; Keru Cetin & Taskin, 2016; Roy & Giraldo-Garcia, 2018). To address the constraints of lower socioeconomic status on parental involvement, Bardhoshi et al. (2016) emphasized that schools should provide childcare during meetings and hold meetings, conferences, and events at times that would afford parents the greatest opportunity to participate. While most research suggested that supports are needed to address socioeconomic barriers to increase parental involvement (Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018; Gilbert et al., 2017; Keru Cetin & Taskin, 2016; Roy & Giraldo-Garcia, 2018), specific solutions to address the problem are not clear. This study is empirically significant in that specific supports were identified to address socioeconomic barriers. Qualitative data analysis of this study was consistent with the supports suggested by Bardhoshi et al. (2016). Stakeholders consistently shared similar opinions that offering meals, childcare, transportation, and flexible meeting times would address parental involvement barriers. Survey data also supported these findings, suggesting that meals, childcare, transportation, home visits, and flexible meeting times were supports that would address socioeconomic barriers. Based on the findings of this study, as well as empirical literature the proposed solution consists of the following goals:

1. Offer refreshments to all members of the family during curriculum-based events
2. Offer childcare during curriculum-based events
3. Offer transportation to parents during curriculum-based events

4. Offer flexible meeting times/locations for curriculum-based events

Providing these supports may afford parents better opportunities to become involved in school-based events, which may help to increase the schools' parental involvement.

Resources Needed

Fostering parent-teacher and parent-school partnerships requires all stakeholders to be involved in the cultivation of these relationships. To ensure consistency among staff members, professional development training at the start of the school year is encouraged where common practices can be established and implemented. Based on empirical research, it is recommended that a cyclic research-based approach be identified and employed to foster parent-teacher and parent-school relationships. Utilizing the academic coaches in the building, an approach that meets the school's mission and goals can be identified and presented to the School Improvement Team to vote upon as a unified approach. Time would need to be invested during the School Improvement Team retreat during the summer months to select an approach. Once an approach is selected, the academic coach would coordinate professional development training to be conducted during the back to school training week. Adequate time would need to be allocated for the professional development training for all stakeholders.

In addition to professional development, the school is encouraged to identify a specific plan to provide various forms of consistent communication with all parents. The school should consistently and effectively communicate with parents through various means. Commonality of communicative approaches should be established and norms should be put into place so that it is consistent among grade level bands. Creating a committee or correlate to address and generate communication for the Spanish speaking population within the school would be beneficial in ensuring all parents are afforded opportunities to become involved.

Findings from this study indicated that a dedicated space for parents within the building would encourage their involvement and may help to foster parent-school partnerships. For successful implementation, a committee or correlate is recommended to manage the space and supplies. Recruitment of the PTA could be a group to assist in the management of this space. This room would require furniture and frequent replenishment of supplies (ie- snacks, drinks, ect.).

The study's findings also indicated providing socioeconomic supports such as refreshments, childcare, transportation, and flexible meeting times would allow parents better opportunities to become involved. The use of a Google form to ask for input from parents would be beneficial to see if these supports are wanted or needed. A committee to gather this data and organize these events with the necessary supports that are warranted by parents would be necessary for successful implementation.

A potential barrier to acquiring these resources is monetary funding. To procure the necessary funds, the school could conduct fundraising efforts or ask the PTA for donations to support this cause. As increasing parental involvement is part of the school improvement plan at Westside Elementary School, the use of Title I funds could also be considered to help fund the purchase of the supplies needed. Another potential barrier to the successful implementation of these supports include recruitment of volunteers. The committees recommended would require for stakeholders to volunteer their time and this may go beyond their scheduled duty day, which could be a potential barrier for successful implementation. Providing rationale and possible incentives for participation may counteract any apprehension in participation in these committees.

Funds Needed

Professional development training is a recommended solution to fostering parent-school and parent-teacher partnerships at Westside Elementary School. The school could utilize the academic coaches already available to them to plan and implement this training at no additional cost to the school. If utilizing the academic coach is not an option, the school could consider hiring a professional development solution company to tailor a professional development workshop to meet the needs of the school. A company such as Catapult Learning would work collaboratively with the school to develop and tailor a program to meet the school's needs. Catapult Learning respectively reports that they work to procure Title I or other government funding resource channels to cover the cost of their services so there is no direct out of pocket cost directly impacting the school (Catapult Learning, 2021).

Training materials for professional development, such as McDermott's (2008) text could be purchased for each teacher. McDermott's (2008) text can be purchased through Amazon.com for a cost of \$19.95 per copy (Amazon, 2021). To purchase each employee a copy, it would cost the school \$ 1,177.05 plus tax and shipping. Another alternative is to purchase one copy per grade level band and department, which would cost the school approximately \$199.50 plus tax and shipping. Title I funds could be utilized to cover these costs. According to the US Department of Education (2019), Section 1118 of Title I funding allows for local education agencies to procure funds to address parental involvement barriers with focus on designing strategies to increase effective parental involvement.

To fund the socioeconomic supports, Title I funds can be utilized to increase parental involvement. The US Department of Education (2019) reported that allowable expenditures under Title I, section 1118 affords local educational agencies the ability to utilize funds to address barriers to allow for greater participation of parents with particular attention to any racial

or ethnic minority groups, parents who are economically disadvantaged, have limited English proficiency, or are disabled. These funds include offering transportation, childcare, food, and refreshments to parents and their children to meet program objectives and encourage attendance and participation by parents (Texas Education Agency, n.d.). The cost of providing refreshments would vary depending on the menu being offered and the number of families participating. Expenditures for refreshments must be considered reasonable in cost in order to meet the program objectives (Texas Education Agency, n.d.). A dedicated space for parents will require furniture such as a table and chairs, which the school may already have on hand, therefore it would not require any additional expense. A monthly budget of at least \$100.00 should be considered if the school plans to offer a snack bar for parents within the dedicated parent space. This budget may need to be adjusted depending on the success of this support. PTA funds or donations could be considered a possible avenue for funding, in addition to the procurement on Title I funds.

Roles and Responsibilities

In order to increase parental involvement at Westside Elementary School, all stakeholders must employ strategies to foster parent-teacher and parent-school relationships. It is recommended that the School Improvement Team meet and select research-based strategies and, or a systemic-based approach to be uniformly implemented to foster these relationships. Additionally, communication norms should be identified by the team to ensure continuity within the building when communicating with parents. It is recommended that the school's academic coach be given responsibility in generating a professional development training based around a systemic-based approach selected by the school improvement team representatives to be administered during the back to school training week at the start of the school year. The

academic coach should present the communication norms with the staff during this professional development training. Providing training to all staff would ensure consistency, and with effective implementation of the strategies it should promote a positive parent-school climate.

In order to effectively implement communicative and socioeconomic supports as proposed in the solution of this study, it is recommended that committees or correlates be established to organize and implement strategies needed. The school administrators could encourage volunteer participation or choose to assign teachers for these roles. It is recommended that a chair be selected for each committee. To encourage volunteer participation, the school's administrator could offer incentives for participation in these groups. Committees needed include a communication committee and a parental involvement committee.

The communication committee's primary function would be to ensure consistent school communication is being sent out to parents through various means such as e-mails, flyers, phone calls, Classdojo, ect. Additionally, in order to effectively communicate with all parents, it is recommended that the committee should have members that can translate parental involvement communication in Spanish to reach the large population of Spanish speaking families. With the high percentage of bilingual teachers employed at the school currently, it is suggested that volunteers willing and able to translate be recruited for this cause.

The parental involvement committee's primary function would be to organize socioeconomic supports needed based on parental input for school-based volunteer and curriculum workshop opportunities. Utilizing Google forms would help the committee inquire which supports are needed by parents through means of survey data. The committee would work with school administrators to procure necessary resources that would promote parental involvement. Moreover, the committee would provide the necessary assistance during

curriculum events to execute plans. Additionally, it is recommended that the committee design and manage a dedicated space for parents to foster parent-school partnerships.

Timeline

In order to resolve the problem of low parental involvement at Westside Elementary School, it is recommended that the following timeline be followed for successful implementation (see Appendix M):

School improvement team members should work to begin planning the execution of the solution prior to the next school year and then followed through with an entire school year of implementation. It is recommended that the school improvement team meets at the end of the current school year or during the summer retreat to select research-based strategies and approaches to foster parent-school and parent-teacher relationships, as well as identify plans to elect committees to support these efforts. Next, the administrators and school academic coach should plan for school-wide professional development training on fostering parent-school and parent-teacher partnerships during the spring of the current school year or the summer before the subsequent school year. Implementation of professional development training on fostering parent-school and parent-teacher partnerships should be conducted during the beginning of the subsequent school year. Formation of committees should also occur at the beginning of the subsequent school year. Implementation of committee groups and parental involvement supports should be on-going for one school year from start of school year. It is recommended that an evaluation of support strategies be implemented quarterly and at the end of the implementation year.

Solution Implications

This study sought to improve parental involvement at Westside Elementary School and it

formulated a solution to address the problem of low parental involvement based on empirical research and conclusive data analysis of the study's findings. The stakeholders of this study may be impacted by the results of this study with successful implementation of the proposed solution. Additionally, the proposed solution has several implications in which stakeholders should consider during implementation.

Stakeholders

The primary stakeholders of this study consist of school level administrators, teachers, parents, and students of Westside Elementary School. Receiving a plan to increase parental involvement based on the findings of this study, provides a practical contribution to the organization. Empirical research indicated that parental involvement can significantly impact student motivation (Bariroh, 2018), engagement (Gilbert et al., 2017; Heddy & Sinatra, 2017), behavior (Garbacz et al., 2016; McNeal, 2014; Wang et al., 2014; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014) and academic achievement (Garcia & Thornton, 2014; Gonzalez-DeHass, 2016). Increased parental involvement can have positive impacts on students' behavior, engagement, motivation, and ultimately their academic achievement, which would help the school meet their school-wide program initiatives and goals. Additionally, this study provides supports that may tackle the barriers parents of this school face that impede their involvement.

Secondary stakeholders include county level administrators, school board members, county educators, community members, and other academic professionals working with Title I schools. Title I schools are mandated to effectively and actively involve parents, therefore the results from this applied research study would be beneficial to the other school districts, school administrators, and educators of title I schools, as this study provides a framework in which parental involvement could be increased at other schools within the United States to positively impact student outcomes. Empirically, this study added to the existing body of knowledge in

that it provided supports that may overcome the barriers impeding parental involvement.

Providing solutions to address barriers, such as socioeconomic status could be beneficial to secondary stakeholders seeking to increase parental involvement among low-poverty schools.

Addressing barriers impeding parental involvement could directly impact the community by providing necessary supports which would help foster co-caring relationships between families and schools.

Implications for Stakeholders

Stakeholders looking to implement the proposed solution of this study should consider both the positive and negative implications of delegating roles and responsibilities of needed stakeholders, facilitating the timeline of the proposed solution, as well as procuring the necessary funds and resources needed for successful facilitation. This study recommended that all stakeholders be involved in the cultivation of fostering parent-teacher and parent-school partnerships. To effectively establish a positive-school climate in which all stakeholders actively pursue these ideals would require buy-in from all staff members. Professional development training to ensure consistent implementation of strategies was encouraged to ensure continuity and common practices. The school may have difficulty acquiring buy-in from all staff, as well as finding the time to conduct the required county-wide trainings in addition to the one proposed in this study during the back to school week at the start of the school year. Reiterating the schools' vision and mission, in addition to the schools' goals may help to increase staff buy-in.

Alternative professional development sessions or mini-sessions should be considered as an alternative to conducting a full-day workshop on fostering parent-teacher and parent-school partnerships, which may also help staff members to chunk information and apply for immediate results. Additionally, school stakeholders should consider the time it will take to collectively decide on which training materials and strategies will be employed. The school may want to

delegate this task to grade-level chairs or another group of educators to find an approach that meets the school's mission and goals. The elected educators could report back to the school improvement team for final selection and determination of materials and strategies to be employed.

Other potential barriers to procuring the necessary funds and resources needed for successful implementation of this study is the procurement of necessary monetary funding and the recruitment of volunteers to serve on the committees recommended. To procure the necessary funds, the school could conduct fundraising efforts, which could be time consuming and may be unsuccessful in acquiring the necessary funds. Other means to procure the needed funds would be to ask for PTA support or the use of Title I funds. Both these avenues for funding would require necessary paperwork. Schools should take into the account the time lapse in completing the required documents to when funds would be available. In addition, this study recommends the formation of committees to ensure fidelity of the implementation of the proposed solution. For successful facilitation, recruitment of volunteers are vital; however, this would require for stakeholders to volunteer their time and this may go beyond their scheduled duty day, which could be a potential barrier for successful implementation. Providing rationale and possible incentives for participation may counteract any apprehension in participation in these committees. Moreover, school administrators may have to require participation in these committees to ensure successful implementation of the proposed solution.

Evaluation Plan

The proposed solution in this study was designed to address the problem of low parental involvement at Westside Elementary School. Utilizing an outcomes-based and impact-based evaluation approach will allow for the school to evaluate both the immediate and long-term

effects of the solution, as well as evaluate which approach obtained the most desired effect. It is recommended that evaluation of the efficacy of each approach be conducted to compare effectiveness of the proposed solution for future implementation.

Westside Elementary School currently utilizes Indistar, an academic development institute service that provides a platform to progress monitor program initiatives and goals as required by their school district (Indistar, 2021). Through this platform, administrators and team leaders evaluate program initiatives and goals by documenting concrete evidence of development or indicating limited or no development (Indistar, 2021). Part of Westside Elementary School's school improvement plan encompasses family and community through community engagement practices. Using this platform to evaluate performance indicators both quarterly and annually will allow for stakeholders to reflect on outcome-based effectiveness of the proposed solution. In addition, stakeholders can use the impact-data gleaned to identify which strategies produced the most desired effect. Quantitatively measuring parent participation will aid in providing artifacts to effectively evaluate these solutions. Evaluation should involve all School Improvement Team members in which evidence of successful or unsuccessful implementation is provided of summative and formative performance and criterion indicators as provided and required by Indistar and school district leaders. School administrators and team leaders are responsible for conducting the necessary evaluations each quarter and annually and presenting this information during school improvement team meetings.

This applied research study is limited to the findings of one school in southeastern North Carolina. The researcher of this study made several purposeful decisions to delimitate the scope and focus of this study due to unavoidable constraints. Currently the school district does not allow for outside parties to collect quantitative or qualitative data from parents or students,

therefore this study was limited to administrator and educator perspectives. Additionally, the sample size of the quantitative data collection was also a limitation of this study as not all eligible school stakeholders participated in the survey data collection. Accordingly, the researcher of this study selected to limit the data collection to one school as not all schools within the district focused on increasing parental involvement as part of their school improvement plan, therefore generalizability constraints should be taken into account. Other limitations within the sample include gender limitations as most participants of this study were female educators. Future research is warranted to investigate parent perspectives on the identified supports suggested within this study. It is recommended that a larger sample be taken from additional schools with attention to gender equivalency as this may impact data gleaned. Additionally, future research should investigate a sample from varying regional locations as the data of this study reflects a school from a rural area and supports may vary depending on the type of community in which the school serves. In consideration of the study's findings, limitations, and delimitations placed on this research, transferability of the findings could still be applicable to other school populations, which could positively impact parental involvement and student outcomes.

Summary

The purpose of this applied research study was to determine factors that impact parental involvement at a school in southeastern North Carolina and to formulate a solution to address the problem of low parental involvement. Triangulation of data from the focus group, interviews, and survey data indicated several supports to address the central research addressing how the problem of low parental involvement be improved at a school located in southeastern North Carolina. The most prominent solutions gleaned from the data analysis of the research findings

were fostering relationships with parents and providing socioeconomic supports, both of which participants indicated could be improved upon at Westside Elementary School. For successful implementation of the proposed solution would require buy-in from all school stakeholders. Creating a positive-school climate in which parents feel welcome requires all stakeholders to be involved in the cultivation of fostering parent-teacher and parent-school partnerships. Additionally, volunteers to serve on the suggested committees are essential for successful facilitation of the proposed solution. Implementing these solutions may increase the parental involvement at Westside Elementary School and serve as a model for other Title one schools in the area. Most importantly, carrying out the proposed solution may increase parental involvement, which could have lasting positive impacts on student outcomes.

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APPENDIX A: Institutional Review Board Approval**LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.**
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

May 1, 2020

Jacqueline Hahn

IRB Exemption 4164.050120: An Applied Research Study on Improving Parental Involvement at a School in Southeastern North Carolina

Dear Jacqueline Hahn,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

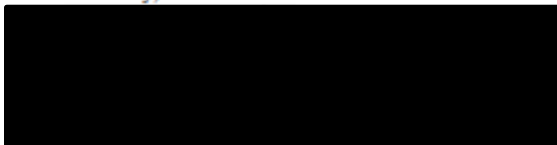
(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

(iii) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,



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UNIVERSITY.
Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971

APPENDIX B: Permissions

Dr. Marvin Connelly, JR.
Superintendent
Cumberland County Schools
2465 Gillespie Street
Fayetteville, NC 28306

Dear Dr. Connelly,

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree in curriculum and instruction. The title of my research project is Improving Parental Involvement at a School in Southeastern North Carolina and the purpose of my research is to determine factors that impact parental involvement at a school in southeastern North Carolina and to formulate a solution to address the problem of low parental involvement.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research at a school within Cumberland County.

Three pools of participants are needed. For the qualitative investigation, participants will be asked to complete a semi-structured interview or participate in a focus group interview. For the quantitative investigation, participants will be asked to go to SurveyMonkey.com and click on the link provided to complete the attached survey. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, [please provide a signed statement on official letterhead indicating your approval]—OR—[respond by email to jhahn7@liberty.edu]. A permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Hahn
Doctoral Student at Liberty University

APPENDIX C: Permissions

Principal
Cumberland County Schools
2465 Gillespie Street
Fayetteville, NC 28306

To whom it may concern,

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree in curriculum and instruction. The title of my research project is Improving Parental Involvement at a School in Southeastern North Carolina and the purpose of my research is to determine factors that impact parental involvement at a school in southeastern North Carolina and to formulate a solution to address the problem of low parental involvement.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research at your school within Cumberland County.

Three pools of participants are needed. For the qualitative investigation, participants will be asked to complete a semi-structured interview or participate in a focus group interview. For the quantitative investigation, participants will be asked to go to SurveyMonkey.com and click on the link provided to complete the attached survey. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, [please provide a signed statement on official letterhead indicating your approval]—OR—[respond by email to jhahn7@liberty.edu. A permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Hahn
Doctoral Student at Liberty University

APPENDIX D: Recruitment Letter

July 12, 2019

Dear Stakeholders:

You are receiving this letter because I would like to make you aware of an opportunity to participate in an applied research study on increasing parental involvement at Westside Elementary School. The researcher of this study is Jacqueline Hahn, a doctoral candidate at Liberty University. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Liberty University. Should you decide to participate, you will be asked to do one the following tasks:

- Participate in one anonymous, online-based survey using SurveyMonkey, which should take no more than 15-20 minutes to complete
- Participate in a one 60 to 90-minute focus group interview conducted confidentially
- Participate in one 30 to 60-minute individual interview conducted confidentially

If you choose to participate, you will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win a \$100.00 gift card for participating in this study. In addition, interview participants will receive a \$20.00 gift card for participating in this study.

If you would like to participate, or are interested in learning more about this study, please contact Jacqueline Hahn via email at jhahn7@liberty.edu or fill out the statement of interest below and return to the school's front office by October 1, 2019.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Hahn
 Doctoral Degree Candidate

Statement of Interest

I am interested in participating, or I am interested in learning more about this study.

- The researcher has my permission to e-mail me more information regarding this study to

the following e-mail address: _____

Signature

Printed Name

Date

APPENDIX E: Recruitment Flyer

Research Participants Needed

An Applied Research Study on Improving Parental Involvement at a School in Southeastern North Carolina

- Are you 18 years of age or older?
- Do you want to improve parental involvement at E.E. Miller Elementary School?
- Are you an administrator, teacher, or parent associated with E.E. Miller Elementary School for at least one year?

If you answered yes to each of these questions, you may be eligible to participate in a research study seeking to improve parental involvement at E.E. Miller Elementary School.

The purpose of this research study is to identify supports needed to improve parental involvement at E.E. Miller Elementary School. Participants will be asked to complete a demographic survey that should take no longer than 5 minutes to complete. Participants will be asked to participate in either a one-on-one interview that should take approximately 30 to 60 minutes to complete, a focus group with other stakeholders that should take approximately 60 minutes to complete or complete an anonymous online survey that should take approximately 10 to 20 minutes to complete. Interview and focus group participants will also be asked to review their transcripts for accuracy which should take 20 minutes to complete. Survey and focus group participants will be voluntarily selected. Interview participants will be selectively chosen based on their position at the school as this study is seeking to gain a variety of perspectives. Information gained from this study may provide beneficial information so that the school can provide supports to increase parental involvement. All participants will be entered into a drawing to win a \$100 Visa gift card. Interview and focus group participants will also receive a \$20.00 Walmart gift card for participation.

The study is being conducted at E.E. Miller Elementary School
1361 Rim Road
Fayetteville, NC 28314

Jacqueline Hahn, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study. Please contact Jacqueline Hahn at (910) 988-8005 or jhahn7@liberty.edu for more information.

Liberty University IRB – 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515

APPENDIX F: Consent Form**CONSENT FORM**

AN APPLIED RESEARCH STUDY ON IMPROVING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

AT A SCHOOL IN SOUTHEASTERN NORTH CAROLINA

Jacqueline Hahn
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study on investigating parental involvement at E.E. Miller Elementary School. You were selected as a possible participant because you are 18 years of age or older and were identified as a current stakeholder at the school serving as an administrator, teacher, School Improvement Team (SIT) member, or other support specialist for at least one school year. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Jacqueline Hahn, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to improve parental involvement at E.E. Miller Elementary School. The central research question guiding this study is “How can the problem of low parental involvement be improved at a school located in southeastern North Carolina?”. Using the information gained from this study, the school will be provided a plan to improve parental involvement.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Participate in a 60-minute interview with the researcher to describe your experiences with parental involvement at E.E. Miller Elementary School. The interview will be recorded using Microsoft Office Voice application and an audio recorder.
2. Complete a demographic questionnaire. This will take 5 minutes to complete.
3. Review your transcript for accuracy. This will take 20 minutes to complete.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study; however, participation in this study may provide beneficial data to improve parental involvement at E.E. Miller Elementary School.

Compensation: Participants will be compensated for participating in this study. If you choose to participate, you will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win a \$100.00 Visa gift card for participating in this study. The drawing will be conducted after all data is collected from participants. The winner will be notified by e-mail. In addition, you will be compensated with a \$20.00 Walmart gift card at the completion of the interview for participating in this study. Email addresses will be requested for compensation purposes.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report, I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. I may share the data I collect from you for use in future research studies or with other researchers; if I share the data that I collect about you, I will remove any information that could identify you, if applicable, before I share the data.

- Participants will be assigned a pseudonym. I will conduct the interviews in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Jacqueline Hahn. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at 910-988-8005 or at jhahn7@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. Russell Claxton at rlclaxton@liberty.edu

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Investigator

APPENDIX G: Consent Form**CONSENT FORM**

AN APPLIED RESEARCH STUDY ON IMPROVING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

AT A SCHOOL IN SOUTHEASTERN NORTH CAROLINA

Jacqueline Hahn
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study on investigating parental involvement at E.E. Miller Elementary School. You were selected as a possible participant because you are 18 years of age or older and were identified as a current stakeholder at the school serving as a teacher or parent for at least one school year. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Jacqueline Hahn, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to improve parental involvement at E.E. Miller Elementary School. The central research question guiding this study is “How can the problem of low parental involvement be improved at a school located in southeastern North Carolina?”. Using the information gained from this study, the school will be provided a plan to improve parental involvement.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

- Participate in a 60-minute focus group with the researcher, other parents, and teachers to describe your experiences with parental involvement at E.E. Miller Elementary School. The focus group will be recorded using Microsoft Office Voice application and an audio recorder.
- Complete a demographic questionnaire. This will take 5 minutes to complete.
- Review your transcript for accuracy. This will take 20 minutes to complete.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study; however, participation in this study may provide beneficial data to improve parental involvement at E.E. Miller Elementary School.

Compensation: Participants will be compensated for participating in this study. If you choose to participate, you will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win a \$100.00 Visa gift card. The drawing will be conducted after all data is collected from participants. The winner will be notified by e-mail. In addition, you will be compensated with a \$20.00 Walmart gift card at the completion of the focus group for participating in this study. Email addresses will be requested for compensation purposes.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report, I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. I may share the data I collect from you for use in future research studies or with other researchers; if I share the data that I collect about you, I will remove any information that could identify you, if applicable, before I share the data.

- Participants will be assigned a pseudonym. I will conduct the focus group in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- The focus group will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- I cannot assure participants that other members of the focus group will not share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Jacqueline Hahn. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at 910-988-8005 or at jhahn7@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. Russell Claxton at rlclaxton@liberty.edu

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Investigator

Date

APPENDIX H: Interview Questionnaire

1. Gender (circle one): M F
2. Age _____
3. Ethnicity (circle one or more): Caucasian Black Hispanic Asian/Pacific Islander
Native American/Alaskan Other (specify) _____
4. Current position at the school: (circle one or more) Administrator Educator
PTA Member SIT Member Parent
5. Education attainment: (Circle all that apply) Did not graduate high school High School
Some college Associate's Degree Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree Doctoral Degree
Other _____
6. Annual family income (circle one): Below \$10,000 \$10,000-\$20,000 \$20,000-\$40,000
\$40,000-\$60,000 \$60,000-& 100,000 Greater than \$100,000 Prefer not to answer

APPENDIX I: Interview Questions

1. What is your role in the school?
2. How would you describe your overall experience with parental involvement at Westside Elementary school?
3. What role do parents take at school that tell you that they are involved in their child's education?
4. What challenges do parents face as they try to become involved in their child's education?
5. What measures have been taken by the school to involve parents?
6. How does the school ask parents to be involved?
7. What is the school doing that is helpful to increase parental involvement?
8. What is the school doing that is negatively impacting parental involvement?
9. What factors do you think keep parents from being involved in curriculum-based events?
10. What supports, expertise, or resources do you think would make the biggest difference in increasing parental involvement at Westside Elementary School?
11. How would you solve the problem of low parental involvement at Westside Elementary School?
12. What other insights do you have regarding parental involvement at Westside Elementary School?

APPENDIX J: Other Data Collection Procedures

The researcher will collect data during the interviews utilizing the interview protocol format seen below (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 166):

Interview Protocol Project: University Reaction to a Terrorist Incident

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of interviewee:

[Briefly describe the project]

Questions:

1. What has been your role in the incident?
2. What has happened since the event that you have been involved in?
3. What has been the impact on the university community of this incident?
4. What larger ramifications, if any, exist from the incident?
5. To whom should we talk to find out more about campus reaction to the incident?

Thank the individual for participating in this interview. Assure him or her of confidentiality of responses and potential future interviews.

APPENDIX K: Focus Group Interview

1. What is your role in the school?
2. How would you describe your overall experience with parental involvement at Westside Elementary School?
3. What strategies have been successful in getting parents involved at Westside Elementary School?
4. What challenges do parents face that impacts parental involvement at Westside Elementary School?
5. How does the school communicate parental-involvement activities?
6. Why do you think parental involvement in curriculum-based events is low at the school?
7. What is the school doing that is helpful to increase parental involvement?
8. What is the school doing that is negatively impacting parental involvement?
9. What supports do you think would make the biggest difference in increasing parental involvement at Westside Elementary School?
10. What resources do you think would make the biggest difference in increasing parental involvement at Westside Elementary School?
11. How would you solve the problem of low parental involvement at Westside Elementary School?
12. What other insights do you have regarding parental involvement at Westside Elementary School?

APPENDIX L: Survey

The purpose of this survey is to help improve parent involvement at Westside Elementary School. This survey asks for your opinions about parental involvement at your school. Participation is anonymous, and data collected will be stored through a password protected computer and through a password protected account on SurveyMonkey. The responses you supply may provide beneficial data to improve parent involvement at Westside Elementary School. Read each statement carefully. For each statement below, please check one answer that most closely matches your opinion. At the end of the survey, submit your responses by clicking the submit button.

1. Parents are kept well informed of school events through phone calls.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know/Not applicable

2. Parents are kept well informed of school events through flyers.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know/Not applicable

3. Parents are kept well informed of school events through e-mails.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know/Not applicable

4. Parents are well informed of school events through newsletters.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know/Not applicable

5. Parents are invited to participate in parent-teacher conferences.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know/Not applicable

6. Parents are invited to participate in parent workshops.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know/Not applicable

7. Parents are invited to participate in curriculum events.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know/Not applicable

8. Parents are invited to participate in PTA sponsored events.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know/Not applicable

9. Parents are invited to participate in field trips.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know/Not applicable

10. Teachers request face to face parent-teacher conferences at least 1-2 times per year to discuss their child's progress.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know/Not applicable

11. Parents are invited to volunteer within the classroom.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know/Not applicable

12. Parents are invited to attend field trips at least 1-2 times this year.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know/Not applicable

13. The school offers curriculum-based parent workshops to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic needs.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know/Not applicable

14. Providing supervised child care would allow parents a better opportunity to attend parent workshops to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic needs.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know/Not applicable

15. Providing a free meal for all members of their family would allow parents a better opportunity to attend parent workshops to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic needs.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know/Not applicable

16. Offering parent workshops during the school day would allow parents a better opportunity to attend parent workshops to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic needs.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know/Not applicable

17. Offering parent workshops in the evening would allow parents a better opportunity to attend parent workshops to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic needs.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

- Don't know/Not applicable

18. Offering parent workshops on the weekend would allow parents a better opportunity to attend parent workshops to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic needs.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know/Not applicable

19. Offering transportation would allow parents a better opportunity to attend parent workshops to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic needs.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know/Not applicable

20. Conducting home visits would allow parents a better opportunity to inform them of ways to best meet their child's academic needs.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral

- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know/Not applicable

21. Providing a parent lounge would encourage parents to volunteer more frequently at the school.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know/Not applicable

22. Providing a free coffee and snack bar would encourage parents to volunteer more frequently at the school.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know/Not applicable

23. Using social media to inform parents of opportunities of parental involvement in the school would encourage them to get involved more frequently.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree

- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know/Not applicable

24. Which category below includes your age?

- 21-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 or older

25. Which category below describes your race?

- White
- Black or African-American
- Hispanic
- Asian
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- From multiple races
- Other

26. Which category below describes your biological gender?

- Male
- Female

27. Which category below describes the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- Bachelor's degree
- Graduate degree
- Advanced Graduate degree

28. Which category below describes your marital status?

- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Separated
- Never married

APPENDIX M: Timeline

- School Improvement Team members meet to identify cyclic research-based approach, communication norms, and plans for formation of committees (Spring of current school year/ Summer before subsequent school year)
- Administrators and school academic coach plans for school-wide professional development training on fostering parent-school and parent-teacher partnerships (Spring of current school year/ Summer before subsequent school year)
- Implementation of professional development training on fostering parent-school and parent-teacher partnerships (Beginning of subsequent school year)
- Formation of committees (Beginning of subsequent school year)
- Implementation of committee groups and parental involvement supports (On-going for one school year from start of school year)
- Evaluation of support strategies (End of the implementation year)