

THE EFFECTS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT ON
STUDENT SUCCESS

by

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ABSTRACT

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The Effects of Parent Involvement on Student Success
(Title)

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The purpose of this study was to find whether a correlation exists between parent involvement and student success at the high school level at Pepin High School, Pepin, Wisconsin.

The review of literature focused on parent involvement in school activities and programs, parent expectations of their children and parenting attitudes. Reasons for lack of parental involvement were identified. Lastly, why it's important for parents to be involved and how to achieve increased parent involvement.

The survey was sent to parents of all students in the 2002 graduating class of Pepin High School. Data was collected through the use of a survey designed specifically for this study. There were three sections to the survey. Section I surveyed parent's attitudes about education and their involvement with their child and their child's school. Section II surveyed parental behaviors as they relate to themselves, their child, and their child's school. Section III dealt with demographic data.

Research Hypothesis I

There will be a positive correlation between Pepin parents' level of involvement and the levels of success of their children.

Research Hypothesis II

There will be a positive correlation between parents' levels of education and expectations for their children.

Results of this study indicate that Pepin parents' are, as a group, involved in the lives of their children who usually average A's and B's. Parents are somewhat more involved at home than at school. This is a result common to other studies of parents of high school students.

Parents' level of education had little or no effect on their desires and expectations for their children. All groups scored high which speaks well of Pepin parents. It is obvious from the survey that parents are concerned about their children's success in and out of school.

This information could assist in identifying behaviors and attitudes of parents that affect children's success in school. Knowledge gained from this study may encourage changes that could improve the level of parent involvement in all aspects of children's lives.

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List of Tables

Table	Page
4.1 Respondent's Ages	23
4.2 Respondent's Gender	24
4.3 Respondent's Marital Status	25
4.4 Respondent's Highest Level of Education	26
4.5 Respondent's Spouse's Highest Level of Education	27
4.6 Respondent's Employment Status	29
4.7 Respondent's Child's Average Grades	30
4.8 Child Receiving Free or Reduced Lunch	31
4.9 Respondent's Attitudes	36
4.10 Respondent's Behaviors	37

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
List of Tables	v
Chapter	
I. Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	4
Research Hypotheses	4
Definition of Terms	4
Assumptions	5
Limitations	5
II. Review of Literature	6
The Effects of Parent Involvement	7
Reasons for Lack of Parent Involvement	11
Getting Parents Involved	13
Standards for Parent Involvement	14
III. Methodology	18
Introduction	18
Description of Subjects	18
Sample Selection	18

	Instrumentation	18
	Data Collection	19
	Data Analysis	19
	Limitations	20
IV.	Results	21
	Introduction	21
	Demographic Information	21
	Age	21
	Gender	22
	Marital Status	22
	Highest Level of Education	22
	Spouse's Highest Level of Education	22
	Employment Status	28
	Child's Average Grades	28
	Free or Reduced Lunch	28
	Summary of Survey Responses	28
	Parent Involvement at Home	32
	Parent Involvement with School	33
	Parent Desires and Expectations	34
	Parent's Own School Experience	35
	Hypotheses I	38
	Hypotheses II	38
V.	Discussions, Conclusions, and Recommendations	40

Introduction	40
Discussion	40
Conclusions	44
Recommendations	45
Appendices	47
A. Cover Letter and Instrument	47
B. Subscale/Created Variables	52
References	55

Chapter One

Introduction

Most of us grew up believing in the American dream. We believed we could do anything or become anything we wanted with dedication and hard work, but for many in this country the American dream is fading as the gap between rich and poor continues to grow. Children were told that if they studied hard they could “make something of themselves.” While this is still true, the rules have changed and the stakes are higher. Federal and state governments have decreased aid for public education and set spending caps. Students today are being faced with “high stakes” testing. We used to worry about scoring high enough on examinations to get into college, but now students take examinations to get out of high school. Policy makers, such as former Governor Thompson, have suggested a school’s funding will be determined by how well their students perform on the tests. In theory it is wonderful, the schools that do well will be rewarded for their excellence. In practice it will most likely become another opportunity for the rich school districts to succeed and the poor school districts to fail. Revenue caps and high stakes testing appear to be an inevitable part of our future so we must find affordable, effective means for inspiring students and their families to improve student outcome. One way may be parental involvement. Another way might be to teach effective parenting skills which could in turn increase parental involvement.

Numerous studies have been done to confirm the assumption that students do better when their parents are involved in their education (Bronfenbrenner, Karnes & Lee, Florin & Doke are cited by the State of Iowa Department of Education, 1998 p. 1). “Henderson and Berla’s study (as cited in Bowen, 1999 p. 1), stated, “According to a review of 66 studies of how students succeed in school when parents become involved in children’s education at school and in the community, the results include one or more of

the following: higher grades and test scores, better attendance and regularly completed assignments, fewer placements in special education and remedial classes, more positive attitudes and behavior in school, higher graduation rates, and greater enrollment in secondary education.”

According to Gould, (1999), “The research all shows, they say, that children do better in school when their parents are involved.” Henderson, (cited in Gould, 1999 p. 2) found that parents are involved in school in four ways. The first two are widely accepted: parents serve as teachers of their children at home and also serve as volunteers and supporters at school. The next two include parents becoming advocates for their children and decision-makers in school in such areas as school policy, hiring, and budget. It is easy to understand that not all administration and faculty would be comfortable with these last two. Hickman (1999) cited research which focused on secondary school level (Dornbusch & Ritter; Henderson et al.; Hickman, Greenwood, & Miller; Thornburg). These research findings provide seven types of parent involvement: (a) parent as communicator, (b) parent as supporter of activities, (c) parent as learner, (d) parent as advocate, (e) parent as decision maker, (f) parent as volunteer/professional, and (g) parent as home activities teacher. One may ask if this is being involved with our children or being involved with our children’s school? A fine point, but perhaps an important one.

Other factors need to be considered in the equation, such as ethnicity, socioeconomic, or marital status of parents. One theory suggests that parent involvement may not be as effective in increasing school achievement for children from families of lower socioeconomic status as for children from middle-class homes. We need to consider a multitude of risk factors that might influence the lives of children in poverty; including health, safety, and housing. (Devaney, Ellwood, & Love; Lewit, Terman, & Behrman, cited in Desimone, 1999). Gest, Hartigan, Lord, Wildavsky, and Marcus, (2000) add domestic strife and drugs to the list. The role of parent-school involvement in explaining academic outcomes for children of lower socioeconomic status may be

significantly less than for their peers who do not have as many negative environmental influences.

Zellman and Waterman (1998) found important contributions of parent enthusiasm and positive parenting style to child outcomes. This suggests that how parents interact with their children is more important in predicting academic outcomes than the extent to which they are involved at school. Parenting style is not enmeshed in a social context defined by poverty, wealth, or ethnicity. Parenting style may be both teachable and changeable, a most encouraging fact for parents who want to help their children and for those who want to help parents help their children.

There are countless obstacles on the road to success and the roads out of the lower and middle class seem to have greater obstacles than the roads for the children of the privileged. If students and their parents understand the advantages offered by something as simple as parent involvement some may choose to become more involved and therefore help their children be more successful. This fact is one of the major reasons for the great emphasis on parent involvement that is flooding our schools. The National Education Goals panel has defined one of the eight goals to be achieved by the year 2000 as: "Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children" (Goals 2000: Educate America Act, 1994). There is a veritable plethora of projects to increase parent involvement in our schools. The question is, are they producing the results that they were intended to produce? Perhaps we need to take a look at the results of some research on the topic before we adopt another new program or implement another plan. One of the considerations might be to offer parenting classes to parents of teenagers to help them learn and develop parenting styles that would encourage success.

Without research to "prove" the effect of parent involvement on student success, many parents may feel it is too late to become involved when their child is already in high school. Hopefully, it is never too late to become involved in our children's lives.

When we consider how complicated our children's lives have become as they travel through their teen years, we owe them, as responsible parents and educators, our involvement in their lives.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to determine whether a correlation exists between parent involvement and student success at the high school level. My subjects were parents of students in the graduating class of 2002 at Pepin High School, Pepin, Wisconsin. The parents of these students were selected because their children had completed much of their schooling. There was a history to reflect upon and yet time to make changes before graduation if necessary. They are a group that will reflect the average, rural, American lower and middle class. The study was done by an anonymous survey of parents. The survey was completed during the spring semester between sport seasons and holidays as this assured a better return rate.

Research Hypothesis

There were two hypotheses this research wished to address. They were:

1. There will be a positive correlation between parents' level of involvement and the levels of success of their children.
2. There will be a positive correlation between parent's levels of education and expectations for their children.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study the following terms need to be defined:

Parent - The definition includes not only biological parents, but step-parents, grandparents, foster parents, guardians, and any other concerned person who may carry the primary responsibility for the child's development, education, and general well-being.

Parent(al) involvement - The definition will include interaction with the child at home, at school, and other activities such as sports, 4-H or scouts and involvement with

the school as learners, advocates for their children, and decision makers in such areas as school policy, hiring, and budget.

Student success - The definition goes beyond “the gaining of wealth, fame, etc.” to “a favorable result” which will include friendship, respect, happiness, and a general feeling of self-satisfaction.

Assumptions

There were several assumptions apparent in this research. They were:

1. Parents who are involved in their children’s lives will have a positive effect on them and therefore, their success rate.
2. There will not be a 100% return rate for my survey.
3. Parent’s education level will be a factor in their amount of involvement in their child’s lives.
4. Income will be a factor in determining the amount of parental involvement.

Limitations

Several limitations have been identified by the researcher. These are:

1. This is a very small group, about 40-45 students from the class of 2002.
2. This is a very homogeneous group, no minorities, no ethnicity to consider into the formula, other than being of Western European descent. Nearly all families will fit into the lower and middle income brackets and few, if any, in the upper income bracket.
3. This is a rural area. Pepin’s population is under 1000.
4. There may be few parent’s with post-secondary degrees as compared to other studies.
5. Reliability of the survey instrument has not been tested. This is the first time this group will have had this survey. There is no previous survey to use as a baseline to see if there are any changes.
6. The survey will not ask specific questions about income, only about levels of education and whether or not the child is eligible for free or reduced lunches.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

This chapter will provide an overview of the effects of parent involvement relating to school activities, parent expectations, and parenting style. Reasons for lack of parent involvement and programs and ideas to get parents involved will be explored. According to Johnston (1998 p.192), “There is one irrefutable truth in education: Parent involvement in the schools promotes student success and achievement.” Most school reform efforts advocate parental involvement. The United States Department of Education has mandated, “By the year 2000 all schools will increase parent involvement and participate in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.” (Goals2000: Educate America Act, 1994 p. 3). There is no longer an option of whether we will include parents in the education of their children, it is required. The goal now is to inform parents and educators of the numerous advantages of parent involvement. Dornbush & Ritter (cited in Hickman, Greenwood, & Miller, 1995) found that parent attendance at high school activities had a positive correlation with school attendance and by printing that fact in the school newsletter increased parent attendance at school events.

Parent involvement can be divided into two general categories: school-site involvement and home involvement (Zellman & Waterman, 1998). They focused on five measures of parent-school involvement: attendance at school events, participation on a school council or advisory committee, regular volunteer activities, employment at school, and PTA meetings. Gestwicki (1996) added parents as learners to this list, and also indicated that home involvement includes helping the child with homework, communicating with the child about school, and spending “quality” time with the child.

The Effects of Parent Involvement

Parental involvement is not a new concept but has evolved, in this country, from parents being concerned about their son's education and their daughter's dowry to a genuine concern for the education of both sons and daughters. It is only in the past few decades that studies, such as the Perry Preschool Project that began in 1960 by Schweinhart and Weikart, (cited in Gestwicki, 1996) have been done to assess the effects of parent involvement on children's educational and personal success. This project followed 123 children who attended high quality early childhood programs for two-and-a-half hours five days a week and whose parents were visited in their homes by teachers for ninety minutes every week. The children were followed from preschool through their twenty-seventh birthday. They did very well both academically and socially. They received less remedial education, graduated from high school and went on to jobs and higher education at twice the rate of children without the preschool experience. Additionally, they had fewer teen pregnancies, fewer arrests, and less welfare dependency. As adults they were more likely to be married, own a home, and hold a stable job.

Velez & Jones (1997) research concluded parent/child interaction lays a firm foundation for academic achievement. The stronger the relationships, especially as they relate to educational issues, the higher the academic achievement. The research is now beyond dispute. When schools and families work together to support learning, children tend to succeed not only in school, but throughout life (Wherry, no date). Johnston (1998) attributes student's achievement, school adjustment, and good behavior to parent/family involvement in the educational process. The Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium [MOEC] (1999) cited the comprehensive survey of research done as a series of publications by Henderson, Henderson, and Berla, (1981, 1987, and 1995). Henderson et al. cited more than 85 studies, which documented the profound and comprehensive benefits for students, families, and schools, when parents and family members became participants in the education and lives of their children. There are hundreds of studies that

conclude with the same basic results, children are more successful when parents take an active role in their lives. Dr. Joyce Epstein, PhD., director of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University, is one of the leading experts in the field of parent involvement. She and Sanders stated, “More will be accomplished if schools, families, and communities work together to promote successful students.” (Epstein & Sanders, 2000, p. 1).

Student success is most commonly associated with grade point average (GPA) and test scores. According to Wherry (no date), research can now document the following benefits for students: higher grades and test scores, better attendance and more homework done, fewer placements in special education, more positive attitudes and behavior, higher graduation rates, and greater enrollment in post-secondary education. Johnston (1998) stated students whose families were involved in school tended to express higher aspirations for their educations and careers. These students were more likely to set career goals in scientific, technical, and professional areas. As high school students they were more likely to enroll in advanced courses. They had a stronger commitment to life-long education than students whose parents were not involved. Crime, alcohol use, drug use, and other anti-social behaviors decreased among adolescents as the amount of parent involvement in schooling increased. There was a general avoidance of high-risk behaviors. Students with involved parents were nearly three times more likely than students whose parents were uninvolved to be engaged in school-sponsored activities such as the arts, academics, service clubs, and athletics. Students who felt connected to the school, typically, exhibited higher achievement, better social skills, and higher levels of self-esteem. Johnston (1998) continued his discussion of the outcomes of parent involvement with the following information: Students whose parents were uninvolved were twice as likely as those with involved parents to be in the bottom half of their class or repeat a grade. Johnston states, “There is some indication that the degree of parent

involvement is more significant in the school success of students than virtually any other variable, including race, social class, or native language.”(p. 193).

Wherry (no date) listed benefits for parents which include: more confidence in the school, teachers have higher opinions of parents and higher expectations of their children, greater confidence in themselves as parents and in their ability to help their children learn at home, and greater likelihood that the parents will enroll in continuing education to advance their own schooling.

He also listed benefits for the school and community. These were: improved teacher morale, higher ratings of teachers by parents, more support from families, higher student achievement, and better reputations in the community. It is important to realize the benefits involving parenting are not confined to early childhood; there are significant gains at all ages and grade levels. Junior and senior high school students whose parents remained involved made better transitions, maintained the quality of their work, and developed realistic plans for their future. The most accurate predictor of a student’s achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which that student’s family is able to: create a home environment that encourages learning; communicate high, yet reasonable, expectations for the child’s achievement and future careers; and become involved in the community (MOEC, 1999, Wherry, no date).

Deslandes, Royer, Turcotte, and Bertrand (1997), concluded three factors that contributed to school achievement were parental acceptance, supervision, and psychological autonomy granting. Dauber & Epstein’s study and Junosz’s study, cited in Deslandes, Royer, Turcotte, and Bertrand (1997), found home environment influences academic achievement and thus prevented high school drop out.

It is important to realize not every style of parenting will bring about the same results of student achievement. Gestwicki (1996) emphasized the fact that research shows the early years are of utmost importance in setting learning patterns for children and families. The importance of parenting cannot be overemphasized.

Attachment, the strong, mutual bond between parent and child that forms during the first two years of life, is correlated with virtually every aspect of development: physical thriving; the exploration, curiosity, and problem solving that are foundations for cognitive skills; the appearance of language and communication skills; emotional security and social comfort.... Studies confirm the assumption that specific factors in the parent's style (particularly mothers) have important and lasting impact on children's learning style, cognitive growth, and educational achievements. (Gestwicki, 1996, p. 90)

Parental expectations are related to school performance. Educational expectations are positively and significantly related to grades in English, math, and science. There is also a strong correlation between parents who enforce rules at home and their children's grades at school.(Velez & Jones, 1997). In their study, Velez and Jones (1997) interviewed Latino parents and found they have a high level of interaction and engagement with their children. Every family reported activities they did together, such as, going to church, playing soccer, and going out for dinner. Parents talked with their children about events and issues in their lives, discussed education, and expectations. All reported some type of supervision and monitoring of homework. Many described rules and consequences for getting homework done, including where the students worked, the time allotted, and rewards for completion. All parents in the sample expressed high aspirations related to their children's education.

Parents in this study who reported having academically successful students showed an intrusive style of parenting. They closely monitored, not only homework, but also other aspects of their children's lives. This monitoring behavior included knowing what children did during their leisure time and who their friends were, as well as enforcing strict curfews. Communication between parent and child was frequent, with parents reporting a high degree of trust and camaraderie between themselves and their children. Though this study is heavily flavored with ethnicity, the findings are likely to

ring true for all parents who show the same parenting style. As Zellman and Waterman (1998) stated in their study of white, African American, and Latino parents, “ethnic and family structure effects on the individual measures were generally nonsignificant.”

Zellman and Waterman (1998) found parent enthusiasm contributed significantly to the home-site and school-site involvement of parents. Even more effective than enthusiasm was positive parenting style as a predictor of child outcome. They went on to say that parenting style had a greater effect on student achievement than parent school involvement. This is an important point to remember as we develop parent involvement programs and projects. Teaching parenting skills will have a greater and longer lasting effect on our children’s lives.

Reasons for a Lack of Parent Involvement

Research has shown repeatedly that parent involvement is a key factor in students’ success. Hickman (1995) even goes so far as to say it is the most important factor in determining a student’s success in school and in their future. With so much evidence at hand one must question why parents, especially at the high school level, are not more involved.

In the past every elementary school had a PTA full of enthusiastic parents and field trips were eagerly chaperoned by moms and dads. Teachers were generally satisfied with that amount of parent involvement. With the exception of booster clubs, PTOs, and open houses, high schools across the country have kept parents at a distance (Fisher 1995). The following questions are offered by Fisher (1995) as a basis for teacher apprehension. “They are:

- Does the “opening of our doors” compromise a safe and orderly environment ?
- Who will manage this sizable labor relations endeavor ?
- How much training will be needed for volunteers?
- How will concerns about confidentiality be addressed?

- How will “undesirable” volunteers be screened from working with our children?
 - How will labor unions react to an increased volunteer work force?
 - Will teachers’ fear of losing their autonomy undermine this effort?
 - Will parents be considered equal partners in the educational process?”
- (p. 70)

Teachers’ fears and concerns are not the only obstacles to parent involvement. Many parents are encouraged to stay home by their children. Having ones’ parents at school is potentially embarrassing, after all, how much independence does one feel with mom or dad at school ? How many parents have the time to be at school ? Some may not care and the majority trust the schools to meet the needs of their sons and daughters (Fisher 1995). Wherry (no date) offers the following as barriers to parent involvement: time, uncertainty about what to do and their own importance, cultural barriers, and lack of a supportive environment. Epstein states that schools and families are more likely to get in touch when the student is having problems at school (as cited in Deslandes, Royer, Turcotte, & Bertrand, 1997).

Gender does play a role with parents of females evidencing greater involvement. The socialization of males and females is different in American society with regard to such issues as independence and feelings of protectiveness on the part of parents. High school parents are evidently more likely to communicate with the school regarding their daughter’s problems, getting involved in advocate (perhaps political) types of activities, and work with their daughters at home than they are of their sons. (Hickman et al., 1995, p.130).

Another societal factor to consider is the divorce rate, at roughly fifty percent of all marriages predicted to end in divorce there are more homes with single parents trying to do the job of two, leaving little or no time to do volunteering at the schools. Lastly,

parents may not be involved simply because they haven't been asked, by the school or by their child.

With the volumes of research demonstrating the importance of parent involvement at all levels of education it is imperative that we find ways to increase the amount of parent involvement in our schools and in their children's lives in general. Numerous programs have been implemented around the country with varying degrees of success. Just reminding parents of the effects of their involvement may be a simple step in increasing involvement. This could be done through the school newsletter, notes home, parenting classes or parent appreciation night.

Getting Parents Involved

No one doubts that parent involvement with schools is important. It is especially important now, as states and school systems begin to develop learning standards and implement practices based on current research—practices that look different from those that parents remember from their own school days. We cannot expect parents to accept and support these changes if they don't understand them and are left out of the planning process. (Dodd, 1996).

“If test scores have dropped in the last 20 years, it is not because schools are not performing as effectively, but because our curriculum has broadened and social responsibilities have increased.” (NASSP, 1994, p. 71). Schools have been forced to assume greater responsibility for raising and nurturing students, from personal hygiene to sex education. Teachers find themselves with more duties and curriculum to cover and shrinking resources with which to get the job done. Therefore, the concept of parent involvement is essential.

Increasing parent involvement in the education of their children is no longer a lofty hope for parents and schools, it is a federal mandate. One of the national education goals states explicitly that, “ By the year 2000, all schools will promote partnerships that will increase parent involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional and

academic growth of children” (Goals 2000: Educate America Act, 1994, p. 3). The question is, how do we achieve this ?

We must not lose sight of the many and varied ways that parents can be involved or that there is not a magical age when their involvement is no longer of importance and value. “Parents are the first and most important teachers of their children “(Ehlers & Ruffin, 1990, cited by MOEC, 1999, p. 5). “The home is our most important social institution. The home is the most important academy of learning “(Hughs, 1988, cited by MOEC, 1999, p. 5).

Standards for Parent Involvement

In an effort to make the development of parent and family involvement programs more successful a number of guidelines have been offered. The National PTA (1997) has adopted Epstein’s (1995) six standards for parent and family involvement programs.

- Standard I: Communicating - Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.
- Standard II: Parenting - Parenting skills are promoted and supported.
- Standard III: Student Learning - Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.
- Standard IV: Volunteering - Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.
- Standard V: School Decision Making and Advocacy - Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.
- Standard VI: Collaborating with Community - Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning. (MOEC, 1999, p. 6).

These standards are each developed into a list of suggestions and examples to offer clear and concise guidelines for parent and family involvement programs. Wherry (no date) lists seven essential elements of strong parent involvement programs, similar to Epstein’s, developed from a study of promising programs in the southwestern United

States. Programs are being implemented at the local, state, and national levels to involve and empower parents. Even the PTA is shaking off its old image and becoming more assertive in response to mounting problems facing our public schools (Gould, 1999). Mehran and White's study and Tizard, Scofield, and Hewson's study indicate that teaching effective parenting skills, training parents to provide academic help at home, for example, can lead to substantial achievement gains. (as cited by Bowen, 1999). Teaching parents the importance of encouraging success in school was a primary component of another successful intervention (Rodick & Henggeler, cited by Bowen, 1999). Examples of activities that schools could use to promote positive parenting styles include workshops, parent education, and parent support groups (Deslandes et al, 1997). "A good role model for all children at any age is a parent who listens to the ideas , concerns, joys, experiences of his/her children " (Epstein, 2000, p.4).

" Unless educators involve parents and community members - in developing the standards and implementing the new teaching strategies, what may begin as a journey toward promising change will probably end in frustration, failure, and community conflict" (Dodd, 1995, p. 44). School-Linked Services (no date), offers the following strategies to increase parent/family involvement. These strategies include:

- developing before and after school programs
- offering workshops on parenting issues or home learning activities
- organizing ESL, GED. adult literacy or computer classes for family members
- providing parent leadership training
- designing school-based Parent Centers
- hosting fun social events to break down communication barriers between parents and school staff. (p. 2)

School districts across the nation have adopted or created programs to involve parents. They all share the common goals of making children and thus school districts more

successful. These organizations have acronyms such as PIE, which stands for Partners in Education, created by Bonnie Mc Reynolds in Arizona (Alpert, 2000). TIPS is an interactive homework that requires students to talk to someone at home about something interesting they are learning in class (Aiex, 1996). Others have names that project the hopes of the creators. The Best Practice Project out of National-Louis University, is working in a dozen schools to involve parents in supporting student-centered, constructivist classrooms (Daniels, 1996). Bel Air High School in El Paso , Texas has a program called “All Kids Can Learn” (Gest et al. 2000).

Zellman & Waterman, (1998) , in an attempt to better understand what accounts for the impact of parent school involvement on child outcomes, asked the following questions.

“Does the involvement increase child self-esteem, inform parents of school curricula and expectations, or increase parents’ sense of their importance in their children’s school careers? Or, does parent involvement simply proxy good parenting or strong motivation for their children’s success?” (p. 2)

Though these are valid questions they are unimportant to this study. The effects of parent involvement is the concern. Zellman and Waterman, (1998) state that:

...parent style is not enmeshed in a social context defined by poverty, wealth, or ethnic background. This is most encouraging to those who want to help parents help their children, because it suggests that parenting style may be both teachable and changeable. We encourage those concerned with the development and well-being of children--parents, teachers, and child development professionals--to rethink their notions about parent involvement programs. Focusing them more clearly on improving parenting may produce more significant and long-lasting effects on children. (p. 12)

Change is frightening, time-consuming, and labor intensive, but what it stands to offer may have a profound effect on the culture of the school, community, and ultimately,

student learning (Fisher,1994). More will be accomplished if schools, families, and communities work together.

Each of the studies reviewed for this paper has shown the profound and unquestionable positive results of parent involvement. The success, both academically and socially is not related to ethnicity or income, but to positive parenting style, a skill which can be learned. The American dream has not died, it lives on for those who choose to become involved in the lives of their children.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will describe the subjects under study and how they were selected for inclusion in this study. In addition, the instrument being used to collect information will be discussed as to its content. Data collection and analysis procedures will then be presented. This chapter will conclude with some of the methodological limitations.

Description of subjects

The subjects for this study were parents of students in the junior class at Pepin High School, Pepin, Wisconsin during Spring semester 2001. A statistical description of subjects is included in chapter four.

Sample selection

A cluster sample was used. The parents of every junior at Pepin High School were asked to participate in the study. They were given an overview of the study and told what their involvement would entail. This group was selected because their children have completed much of their schooling. There was a history to reflect upon and yet time to make changes before graduation, if necessary. They were also selected because of class size, 43 students, this is a large class for Pepin High School and afforded a better number of returned surveys.

Instrumentation

This parent survey was designed specifically for this study. The instrument was developed specifically for this study, so validity and reliability could not be established prior to data collection. There were three sections in the instrument:

Section I of the instrument surveyed parents' attitudes about their education, their child's education, and their involvement with their child and their child's school.

Section II of the instrument surveyed parental behaviors as they relate to themselves, their child, and their child's education.

Section III dealt with demographic data: gender, marital status, highest levels of education for responding parent and spouse, whether they were employed, their high school student's average grades, and whether or not their child qualified for free or reduced lunches. (see Appendix A for complete instrument and cover letter)

No measure of validity or reliability were conducted because this instrument was developed especially for this study. Ideas for questions in the survey came from the review of literature, a review of other surveys, and discussions with colleagues.

Data collection

The survey was sent out to each parent of a student in the junior class at Pepin High School in January 2001. The survey consisted of three pages and a cover letter, all printed on a single sheet of paper folded into booklet form. The survey was folded in thirds and prepared with a return address label and stamp. An introduction of the project, its purpose and hopeful results was presented to the students of the junior class prior to the mailing of the surveys. It was hoped that this might facilitated a swifter and higher rate of return. The researcher collected the surveys in the high school office.

Data Analysis

The survey questions were written to represent four specific areas of parent involvement. The questions for the various sub-scales were randomized through out the survey and some were written in reverse form. It was hoped that in doing so respondents would not mark all one response, but rather have to read each question and provide a more accurate response.

The analysis of the data was divided into eight sub-scales:

1. Parent's attitudes about involvement at home.

2. Parent's behaviors relating to involvement at home.
3. Parent's attitudes about involvement at school.
4. Parent's behaviors relating to involvement at school.
5. Parent's attitudes about their desires and expectations for their children.
6. Parent's behaviors relating to their desires and expectations for their children.
7. Parent's attitudes about their own school experience.
8. Parent's behaviors relating to their own school experiences.

All appropriate descriptive statistics were utilized and correlations were made.

Data was analyzed utilizing mean, standard deviation, Pearson Correlation, range tests, and frequencies.

Limitations

This one-time study collected data from only a small, homogeneous group. There was no measure of validity or reliability because the survey was created specifically for this study. It would be better to repeat the study with students and their parents a number of times as the students progress through school, or better yet, through life.

Chapter Four

Results

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce and examine the outcome of the parent involvement survey as it related to the research questions presented in chapter one. Demographic information will be given, followed by a summary of the parent responses to the survey questions. Numbers and percentages from the returned surveys will be presented for each created variable/subscale. Descriptions of survey information will be presented in a format consistent with the questions asked by the researcher.

Demographic Information

The total number of students in the junior class of Pepin High School, Spring semester 2001, is 43 students, 22 males and 21 females. Parents of these 43 students were asked to complete the survey. Surveys were mailed to 16 single parent families and 64 surveys were mailed to 32 two-parent families. The total number of surveys mailed was 80; of which 62 (77.5%) were partially or completely filled out and returned to the high school office. All surveys were used for this study. The researcher provided a return envelope with each survey, addressed to the high school office. These were placed in a box provided by the researcher and were collected at the end of the allotted time; one week.

Age: One hundred percent of the respondents answered the question regarding age. Twenty-three respondents (37.1%) indicated they were between the ages of 41 and 45 years of age, comprising the largest group of respondents. Eighteen respondents (29%) reported being between the ages of 36 and 40; eleven respondents (17.7%) reported their age as being 46-50; and six (9.7%) indicated their age to be 51 or older. Three

respondents (4.8%) reported being between the ages of 31 and 35, while one respondent (1.6%) indicated their age to be 26-30 years of age. (See Table 4.1)

Gender: All respondents answered the question regarding age. Thirty-eight (61.3%) of the group were female while twenty-four (38.7%) were male. (See Table 4.2)

Marital Status: One respondent chose not to answer this question, (98.4%) did respond to the question. Forty-six (74.2%) indicated they were married with both parents in the home. Eight (12.9%) reported being in a single parent home and seven (11.3%) were living in “remarried” families. No one (0.0%) reported being a guardian. (See Table 4.3)

Highest Level of Education : Twenty-seven (43.5%) respondents indicated having an associate degree from a vocational/technical school. Twenty-one (33.9%) had a high school diploma, while ten (16.1%) had degrees from four-year colleges. Four (6.5%) respondents had a master’s degree or higher. No respondents indicated having less than a high school education. All sixty-two (100%) parents responded to this question. (See Table 4.4)

Spouse’s Highest Level of Education: Only fifty-five (88.7%) answered this question. Two (3.2%) respondents indicated their spouse has some high school education, while twenty (32.3%) reported spouses with a high school diploma. The highest frequency was twenty-four (38.7%) for an associate degree from a vocational/technical institution. Five (8.1%) reported having spouse’s with for-year degrees and four (6.5%) had spouses with a master’s degree or higher. (See Table 4.5)

Table 4.1

Respondent's Ages

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumm. Percent
26-30	1	1.6	1.6	1.6
31-25	3	4.8	4.8	6.5
36-40	18	29	29	35.5
41-45	23	37.1	37.1	72.6
46-50	11	17.7	17.7	90.3
51-above	6	9.7	9.7	100
Total	62	100	100	

Table 4.2

Respondent's Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Male	24	38.7	38.7
Female	38	61.3	61.3
Total	62	100	100

Table 4.3

Respondent's Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumm. Percent
Married/Biol. parents	46	74.2	75.4	75.4
Remarried family	7	11.3	11.5	86.9
Single	8	12.9	13.1	100
Total	61	98.4	100	
Missing Data	1	1.6		
Total	62	100		

Table 4.4

Respondent's Highest Level of Education

Level of Education	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumm. Percent
Some High School	0	0	0	0
High School Grad	21	33.9	33.9	33.9
Voc. Tech/Assoc Deg.	27	43.5	43.5	77.4
4 Year Degree	10	16.1	16.1	93.5
Masters or higher	4	6.5	6.5	100

Table 4.5

Respondent's Spouses Highest Level of Education

Level of Education	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumm. Percent
Some High School	2	3.2	3.6	3.6
High School Grad	20	32.3	36.4	40
Voc Tech/Assoc Grad	24	38.7	43.6	83.6
4 Year Degree	5	8.1	9.1	92.7
Masters or higher	4	6.5	7.3	100
Total	55	88.7	100	
Missing Data	7	11.3		
Total	62	100		

Employment Status: Fifty-one (82.3%) of the respondents work full-time, ten (16.1%) work part-time and one (1.6) respondent is retired. No respondents are not-employed. Sixty-two (100%) responded to this question. (See Table 4.6)

Child's Average Grades: One (1.6%) respondent failed to answer this question. Sixty-one (98.6%) responded with one giving multiple responses. Most respondents, twenty-seven (43.5%) indicated their children's average grades were A's and B's. Twenty-three (37.1%) reported their children averaged mostly A's, while ten (16.1%) reported their children averaged B's and C's. No one (0.0%) indicated their children averaged grades below a C. (See Table 4.7)

Free or Reduced Lunch: Sixty (96.7%) responded to this question: eleven (17.7%) indicated their children did receive free or reduced lunches, while 49 (79.0%) reported their children did not receive free or reduced lunches. (See Table 4.8)

Summary of Survey Responses: Questions in the parent survey were divided into two categories; attitudes and behaviors. These statements were further broken down for analysis into created variables (subscales) . Respondents used a scale of 1 to 9 with 1- indicating disagree strongly, 3-slightly agree, 5-undecided, 7-slightly agree, and 9-strongly agree. Some questions were stated in a negative form and thus the scaling ranged from 1 to 9 from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Refer to Appendix B for a full listing.

Table 4.6

Respondent's Employment Status

Employment	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumm Percent
Full-Time	51	82.3	82.3	82.3
Part-Time	10	16.1	16.1	98.4
Retired	1	1.6	1.6	100
Total	62	100	100	

Table 4.7

Respondent's Child's Average Grades

Child's Average Grades	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumm. Percent
Mostly A's	23	37.1	37.7	37.4
A's & B's	27	43.5	44.3	82
B's & C's	10	16.1	16.4	98.4
Multiple Response	1	1.6	1.6	100
Total	61	98.4	100	
Missing Data	1	1.6		
Total	62	100		

Table 4.8

Child Receiving Free or Reduced Lunch

Free or Reduced Lunch	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumm. Percent
Yes	11	17.7	18.3	18.3
No	49	79	81.7	100
Total	60	96.8	100	
Missing Data	2	3.2		
Total	62	100		

Parental involvement at home:

The first created variable (subscale) dealt with attitudes about parent involvement at home. It was created by combining nine statements dealing with parents' attitudes toward parenting within the home. The Lickert Scale (N-never, S-sometimes, F-frequently, and AA-almost always) was used. (See Appendix B)

Examples of statements from this created variable (subscale). Number 11. It's important to encourage my child so he/she feels successful for simply working hard on his/her homework. The mean for this statement was 8.2 which indicates parents generally agree with the statement.

Example two is statement number 20. There should be time set aside each evening for homework. The mean for this statement was 8.02 which indicates parents generally agreed with this statement. The mean for all items in this new variable was 7.48 and the range of score was 5.33 to 9.0 which indicated that parents are generally positive about their attitudes regarding involvement at home.

The second created variable (subscale) included six statements about parental behaviors relating to involvement at home. (see Appendix B). A Lickert scale used for behavior statements had a range of 1 to 5 as its rating. Responses were: N-never, R-rarely, S-sometimes, F-frequently, and AA- Almost Always. An examples of statements in this section is Number 10. My child sees me reading. The mean for this statement was 4.31. A second example which was phrased in a negative way was Number 12. I allow him/her to skip homework to participate in extra-curricula activities.. The mean for this statement was 4.32 indicating that parents rarely allowed their child to skip homework to participate in an extracurricular activity.

The mean for all items in this new variable was 3.77. The range of scores was 2.83 to 4.83 on a Lickert scale which indicates parents have generally positive behavior when it comes to their involvement at home.

Parental Involvement with School

The third variable/subscale was created by combining five statements dealing with parent's attitudes about parental involvement with school. Respondents used a nine point scale in their responses with 1-disagree strongly, 5-undecided, and 9-strongly disagree. (Refer to Appendix B for a complete list of statements and mean of each statement).

Examples of statements from this created variable include Number 6. Parent/teacher conferences are a waste of time. The mean for this statement was 7.39 indicating that the parents are generally positive about parent/teacher conferences. Another example is: Number 25. It's important for my child to see I am involved in school activities. The mean for this statement was 7.26 which indicates the respondent were generally above the slightly agree category. The mean for all items in this new variable was 7.21 and ranged from 3.80 to 9.0, indicating that respondents are generally positive about their attitudes regarding parent involvement in our schools.

The fourth created variable consists of seven statements dealing with parent's behaviors, relating to involvement with the school. A Lickert scale was used for behavior statements with a 1 to 5 rating ranging from N-Never to AA-Almost Always.

An example of statements from this section is Number 1. I attend the school activities that my child is involved in. The mean for this statement is 4.63, which indicates respondents were generally between the frequently and almost always response categories. The other example of this category is: Number 7. I contact the teacher if my child seems to be having a problem. One response for this category was missing. The mean for this statement was 4.15 which indicates respondents were generally slightly above the frequently response. The mean for all items in this new variable was 3.82 and ranged from 2.43 to 5 on the Lickert scale of 1 to 5. This indicates respondents are generally positive in regard to their involvement with school.

Parents Desires and Expectations

The fifth created variable consists of 8 statements dealing with parent attitudes about their desires and expectations for their children. The respondents used a scale of 1 to 9 with 1-strongly disagree, 5-undecided, and 9-strongly agree. (Refer to Appendix B for a complete list of statements and mean of the responses for this created variable.)

An example of questions from this section is Number 13. I expect my child to finish vocational school or college. The mean for this statement is 8.11 which indicates parents have a generally positive attitude about their children finishing vocational school or college.

The other example is statement Number 17. My child knows that I feel grades are important. The mean for this statement was 8.45 which indicates parents are generally positive about their child's understanding that their parent(s) feel grades are important. The mean for this created variable was 7.39 and the range was 6 to 9 indicating respondents are generally positive in their attitudes regarding their desires and expectations for their children.

The sixth variable was created by combining 3 statements dealing with parents behaviors relating to their desires and expectations for their children. A Lickert scale with rating from 1 to 5 ranging from N-never to AA-almost always. Refer to Appendix B for a complete list of the statements.

An example of statements from this section is Number 11. I talk to my child about graduating from vocational/technical school or college. The mean for this statement was 4.19 which indicates parents are generally positive about the fact they do talk to their child about graduating from vocational/technical school or college. The second example is number 14. I talk with him/her about the jobs/professions that interest him/her. The mean for this statement was 4.13 which indicates parents are generally positive and talk frequently with their child about jobs/professions that interest him/her. The mean for all items in this new variable was 3.84 and the range was 2.0 to 5.0 which

indicates parents are generally positive about their behavior as it relates to expressing their hopes and expectations for their child.

Parents' own school experience

The seventh created variable consisted of 7 statements dealing with parent's own school experience. The respondents used a scale of 1 to 9 with 1-strongly disagree, 5-undecided, and 9-strongly agree. (Refer to Appendix B for a complete list of the statements and mean response.)

An example from this created variables is Number 16. I am content with my level of education. The mean for this statement is 5.73 which indicates a lower level of satisfaction. The second example was Number 23. Overall, my memories of school are good ones. The mean for this statement was 7.37 which indicates parents have a generally positive attitude about their own school experiences. The third example was Number 28. My child's experience has been similar to my own. The mean for this statement was 4.06 which indicates parents generally see their child's school experience as different from their own. The fourth example was Number 30. My view of school affects my child's view of school. The mean for this statement was 7.52 which indicates parents are generally positive about how their attitude affects their child's attitudes.

The mean for all items in this new variable was 6.54 and the range was 2.71 to 8.86, indicating parents are generally positive about their attitudes regarding their own school experience.

The behavior section of this variable was created by a single statement, number 16 which reads: I share "old stories" about my high school days. A Lickert scale with a 1 to 5 rating ranging from N-never to AA-almost always. The mean of this statement is 3.23 which indicates that generally parents will sometimes share "old stories" about high school. (See results in Table 4.9 and Table 4.10)

Table 4.9

Respondent's Attitudes

Statistics	Parent Involve. at home	Parent Involve. at school	Parent Desires & Expectations	Parent's Own School Exper.
Number Valid	61	61	61	62
Missing Data	1	1	1	0
Mean	7.4845	7.2074	7.3873	6.5415
Median	7.4444	7.4	7.5	6.5714
Standard Deviation	0.8963	1.165	0.7313	1.3424

Table 4.10

Respondent's Behaviors

Statistics	Parent Involve. at home	Parent Involve. at school	Parent Desires & Expectations	Parent's Own School Experience
Number Valid	62	62	62	62
Missing Data	0	0	0	0
Mean	3.7677	3.8226	3.8387	3.2258
Median	3.6667	3.8571	4	3
Standard Deviation	0.5451	0.6674	0.6822	0.8763

Hypothesis I

The first hypothesis for this study is: There will be a positive correlation between parent's level of involvement and the levels of success of their children. Pearson's correlation coefficient matrix was run on the data pertaining to this hypothesis. When correlating the behavior score for parent involvement at home with the statement - In high school my child usually averages.... The Pearson correlation of .61 was a positive correlation, greater than .05 confidence level, but quite close to the .05 level. It is, therefore, a nearly significant correlation.

When correlating the behavior score for parents involvement at school with the same statements, the Pearson correlation is .221, again a positive correlation. The significance level is .09, thus it is nearly significant. Because the significance level is close, the hypothesis is partially accepted.

Hypothesis II

The second hypothesis for this study is: There will be a positive correlation between parent's level of education and expectations for their children.

Pearson's correlation coefficient matrix was run on the data pertaining to this hypothesis. When correlating the highest level of education for the respondent with the attitude score of Parent's Desires and Expectations, the Pearson's correlation was .226, significant at the .079 level. This is a positive correlation at the nearly significant level.

The second correlation is between parent's level of education and the behaviors related to parents desire and expectations. Pearson's correlation was .16 significant at the .190 level. This is not a significant correlation and also was in the opposite direction from the hypothesized relationship.

Results indicate there is a positive correlation between parent's level of education and desires and expectations for their children., but neither correlation is statistically significant, and therefore, the hypothesis is partially accepted.

Education level and income had little to do with the results of this survey, contrary to the assumptions before the survey was given. A 77.5% return rate of the survey was better than expected and gave a truer result. This research has indicated that the parents of Pepin High School's graduating class of 2002 are actively involved in the lives of their children.

Chapter Five

Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction:

This chapter will include a discussion of the results of the study and conclusions drawn. The chapter will conclude with some recommendations for further research.

Discussions:

The purpose of this study was to discover if there is a correlation between parental involvement and student's success for parents of the graduating class of 2002, at Pepin High School. The study was done during spring semester of the 2000-2001 school year.

The four page survey was divided into three subheadings with an accompanying cover letter. Section I dealt with parent attitudes, Section II dealt with specific parent behaviors, and Section III collected the demographic information about the parents and their families.

The responses to the surveys were regrouped to create new variables or subscales. These created variables fell into 8 categories.

Subscale 1 was parent attitudes about parent involvement at home.

Subscale 2 was behaviors about parent involvement at home.

Subscale 3 dealt with parent attitudes about parent involvement with school.

Subscale 4 dealt with parent behaviors relating to parent involvement at school.

Subscale 5 dealt with parent attitudes about desires and expectations as they relate to their child.

Subscale 6 considered parent behaviors relating to their desires and expectations as they relate to their child.

Subscale 7 looked at the parent's attitudes based upon their own school experiences.

Subscale 8 considered the parent's behaviors related to their own school experiences.

According to Johnson (1998 p. 192) "There is one irrefutable truth in education: Parent involvement in the schools promotes student success and achievement." Though I and the vast majority of other authors/researchers believe this, this particular study did not find the glaring contrasts that I had expected to find. This may be because the respondents to this survey were the parents who are involved and uninvolved parents failed to return their surveys. Sixty-two of the 80 surveys mailed out were returned.

Another possibility is that this was a homogenous group made up of people who have a common view of their responsibilities as parents.

Most studies about parent involvement have been done on younger children and their families. Gestwicki (1996) emphasized the fact that research shows the early years are of utmost importance in setting learning patterns for children and families. The importance of parenting cannot be over emphasized, whether we are discussing nurturing for the sake of bonding, brain development, language skills, or establishing learning patterns. Henderson, Henderson, and Berla, (1981, 1987, 1995) cited more than 85 studies which document similar findings.

Parenting style, according to Gestwicki (1996), has a major impact on children's learning style, cognitive growth, and educational achievements. Though this study did not look at parenting styles it would be an interesting direction for future studies of high school students. Interestingly, Velez and Jones (1997) found that parents of academically successful students showed an intrusive style of parenting. This information maybe useful when developing material for parenting classes and parent involvement programs.

Fisher (1995), Wherry (no date), and Epstein cited by Deslandes, Rager, Turcotte, & Bertrand (1997) offer a plethora of reasons for parents of high school students to be less involved. These reasons ranged from high school students simply being embarrassed

to have their parents in the building, to parents not having the time to be as involved as they may like.

In this study 71.0% indicated they frequently or almost always contacted the teacher if their child had a problem. This concurs with Fisher's (1995) findings that the majority of parents trust the school to meet the needs of their children, but will contact the school if a problem arises.

In future studies it would be interesting to research Zellman & Waterman's (1998, p.2), question:

"Does the involvement increase child self-esteem, inform parents of school curricula and expectations or increase parents' sense of their importance in their children's success?" Regardless of why, it is obvious that parent involvement is an essential factor in what makes students successful.

This study concurs with the findings of their research. When the respondents were divided into 3 groups; some high school and high school diploma, vocational training to 4 year degree, and Master's degree or above, the mean of the subscales were very close, indicating that parents' level of education is not a significant factor in whether or not parents are involved.

Hypothesis I: There will be a positive correlation between parents' level of involvement and the levels of success of their children. The greatest difference between the groups after totaling their responses and subtracting the lowest value from the highest yielded a difference of .40. Pearson's correlation coefficient matrix was run on the data pertaining to this hypothesis. When correlating the behavior score for parent involvement at home with the statement - In high school my child usually averages.... The Pearson correlation of .61 was a positive correlation, greater than .05 confidence level, but quite close to the .05 level. It is, therefore, a nearly significant correlation.

When correlating the behavior score for parents involvement at school with the same statements, the Pearson correlation is .221, again a positive correlation. The significance level is .09, thus it is nearly significant. Because the significance level is close, the hypothesis is partially accepted.

Hypothesis II: There will be a positive correlation between parents' level of education and expectations for their children. Again, after totaling the responses and subtracting the lowest value from the highest, the difference of the values was .18. Pearson's correlation coefficient matrix was run on the data pertaining to this hypothesis. When correlating the highest level of education for the respondent with the attitude score of Parent's Desires and Expectations, the Pearson's correlation was .226, significant at the .079 level. This is a positive correlation at the nearly significant level.

The second correlation is between parent's level of education and the behaviors related to parents desire and expectations. Pearson's correlation was .16 significant at the .190 level. This is not a significant correlation and also was in the opposite direction from the hypothesized relationship.

Results indicate there is a positive correlation between parent's level of education and desires and expectations for their children., but neither correlation is statistically significant, and therefore, the hypothesis is partially accepted.

This would seem to indicate that Pepin parents, regardless of educational background, have very similar levels of involvement and similar desires and expectations for their children.

One interesting note is that of the three groups the parents with master's degrees or above were the most strict about their children needing to maintain a B average or above in order to drive the car. Parents with some high school or have a high school diploma as their own highest education, were the most lenient. Whether this relates to the desire to save money for the "good student discount", having a littler leverage about

grades, or the possible difference in the value of cars the students might be driving is unknown. Also perhaps the parents who had less education were more able to accept the possible difficulty their children might experience in trying to meet this standard. This survey question had the greatest diversity of answers.

Though it was not a research question the statistics showed a slightly reduced level of involvement for parents of students who receive free or reduced lunches. The mean of the differences indicate that parent attitudes and behaviors are less positive when income is factored in, based on eligibility for free or reduced lunch. There is a difference in nearly all the means, not a significant difference, but a difference none the less.

A simple answer maybe that the majority of these students come from single parent homes. Not only might this person be trying to fill the shoes of two parents financially, but also physically and emotionally, and that can be an exhausting feat.

This concurs with some studies and is contrary to others such as Zellman & Waterman (1998) who found parent enthusiasm and a positive parenting style contributed significantly to a child's success regardless of economics.

Conclusions:

It is evident from the results of the parent survey that Pepin parents are involved in their children's lives. They are somewhat more involved at home than at school which concurs with other studies.

Pepin Elementary School has created an organization dedicated to improving parent involvement and parent-school relationships. A family resource room has been set up with a library of pertinent books, videos, and other valuable resources to help the families of Pepin Elementary students understand and develop important relationships which may aid their children's development.

As a family and consumer education teacher, I offer adult parenting classes at two levels, one for parents of children ages two to twelve and one for parents of children ages twelve to eighteen. I also teach child development/parenting class to high school

students and when necessary teen parenting to pregnant students. Fortunately the latter has only been necessary four times in my nineteen years of teaching.

Contrary to my hypothesis, parent's level of education, at least in the group of parents surveyed, has little to do with parent's desires and expectations for their children. The fact that the parents who responded to the survey indicated a high level of involvement made it difficult to find a correlation between the level of parent involvement and student's success. This is reassuring and speaks well of Pepin parents. It is evident that in rural America, at least in Pepin, Wisconsin, the American dream is still alive. Parents do come to their children's activities, parents do make sure students do their homework, and they do want their children to be educated and successful. (The term educated is far easier to define than successful).

Recommendations:

This was a very small study, in a very small Wisconsin school, with a very homogenous population. To truly research this topic, the survey should be perhaps shortened and questions revised to make the created variables more even in number of questions. I don't think this had any bearing on the study, but might be helpful in future research. It would be important to survey a larger, less homogeneous group to make any broad statements about American parents.

However, if no other study was ever done about parental involvement the hundreds that have been done are basically unanimous and their findings show overwhelming, irrefutable evidence that parent involvement does have a significant and lasting effect on children. Gestwicki (1996) emphasized the fact that research shows the importance of parent involvement especially during the early years.

Knowing what we do, it would be prudent to increase the number and scope of parenting classes and to remember as we implement parent involvement groups that the positive parenting style can be learned, the tremendous importance of nurturing our children, and that there is not an expiration date on love.

My recommendation has been and continues to be that parenting classes should be required before a parent can take their baby home from the hospital. And that this education should continue, helping parents learn how to cope with life issues which change uniquely as a person becomes a parent and as children mature. We need a license to teach, a license to drive, a license to hunt or fish, so why is it that our greatest of all natural resources is left to chance?

Appendix A

The Effects of Parent Involvement on Student Success

Jane L.Rahman

Dear Parents,

The attached survey is part of a study designed to explore the effects of parent involvement on student success of the junior class at Pepin High School. I am asking you to help with this study by completing this attached survey. You are not required to complete this questionnaire; your participation is voluntary. I do not anticipate that this survey will present any medical, mental, or social risks.

The benefit of participating in this study is that the information collected could help improve school as it relates to involving parents in their child's education.

All information will be completely anonymous, no one will know who has completed a survey. Results of the survey will be used in a report, a copy of which will be available through Mr. Michael Funk, Principal of Pepin High School.

Should you have any concerns or questions, please call me at Pepin High School at 712-442-2391, my research advisor, Dr. J. Rommel, at 715-232-2394, or Ted Knous, chair, UW-Stout Instructional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, 11 HH, UW-Stout, Menomonie, Wi. 54751, phone 715-232-1126.

By returning this survey, you are giving informed consent as a participating volunteer in this study. Thank you in advance for you help with this survey!

Sincerely,

Jane L.Rahman

Parent Survey

This questionnaire is part of a study designed to explore the effect of parental involvement on student success. **DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THE SURVEY.** The survey is completely **anonymous**. Please answer all of the questions to the best of your ability. Do not leave any blank. **Thank you for your help with this survey.**

Section I: Attitudes

Indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the attitude statements below by selecting a number from 1 to 9.

If you agree strongly with the statement, enter a **9**. If you disagree strongly, enter a **1**.

If your feelings are not as strong, select a number **between 1 and 9**.

Consider each question carefully, but evaluate it as rapidly as you can. There are no right or wrong answers. The best responses are **your personal opinion**. Remember to answer **all** the questions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Disagree strongly		Slightly disagree		Undecided		Slightly agree		Agree strongly

- _____ 1. Communicating with my child's teacher is a pleasant experience.
- _____ 2. I expect my child to finish high school.
- _____ 3. It upsets me when my child doesn't get As or Bs.
- _____ 4. I learned nothing useful in school.
- _____ 5. Eating meals together is important.
- _____ 6. Parent/teacher conferences are a waste of time.
- _____ 7. Helping my child with homework is important.
- _____ 8. Monitoring my child's homework is an important part of his/her education.
- _____ 9. Parents should not be asked to volunteer at school.
- _____ 10. Extra-curricular activities are more important than getting homework done.
- _____ 11. It's important to encourage my child so he/she feels successful for simply working hard on his/her homework.

- _____ 12. It's important to be active in school organizations, i.e.. PTA, booster club, etc.
- _____ 13. I expect my child to graduate from vocational school or college.
- _____ 14. Too much emphasis is put on school work and grades.
- _____ 15. My child will know how much he/she can handle when it comes to deciding how many activities to belong to.
- _____ 16. I am content with my level of education.
- _____ 17. My child knows that I feel grades are important.
- _____ 18. I have difficulty helping my child with homework.
- _____ 19. It is the school's responsibility to see that children get their work done, not the parent's.
- _____ 20. There should be time set aside each evening for homework.
- _____ 21. Parents have a responsibility to see that their children have their homework done
- _____ 22. My child's education is very important.
- _____ 23 Overall, my memories of school are good ones.
- _____ 24. Many of my best memories are school related (classes, dances, games, trips,etc)
- _____ 25. It's important for my child to see that I am involved in school functions.
- _____ 26. High school was difficult for me.
- _____ 27. My child must maintain a B average, or better, to be able to drive the car.
- _____ 28. My child's school experience has been similar to my own.
- _____ 29. The amount of time I spend with my child has little bearing on his/her success in school.
- _____ 30. My view of school affects my child's view of school.

Section II: Behaviors Please read each statement and circle the response that best applies.

N = never R = rarely S = sometimes F = frequently AA = almost always

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1. I attend the school activities my child is involved in. | N | R | S | F | AA |
| 2. I see that my child does his/her homework. | N | R | S | F | AA |
| 3. I communicate with my child's teachers. | N | R | S | F | AA |
| 4. I volunteer at school. | N | R | S | F | AA |
| 5. We discuss things we're reading. | N | R | S | F | AA |
| 6. We go to plays, museums, historical sites, etc. | N | R | S | F | AA |
| 7. I would contact the teacher if my child seems to be having a problem. | N | R | S | F | AA |
| 8. I attend parent/teacher conferences. | N | R | S | F | AA |
| 9. I read the school newsletter . | N | R | S | F | AA |
| 10. My child sees me reading | N | R | S | F | AA |
| 11. I talk to my child about graduating from voc. Sch. Or college. | N | R | S | F | AA |
| 12. I allow him/her to skip homework to participate in extra-curriculars | N | R | S | F | AA |
| 13. Homework is completed before participating in other activities. | N | R | S | F | AA |
| 14. I talk with my child about the jobs/ professions that interest him/her. | N | R | S | F | AA |
| 15. I reward my child for good grades. | N | R | S | F | AA |
| 16. I share "old stories" about my high school days. | N | R | S | F | AA |
| 17. I talk negatively about school in front of my child. | N | R | S | F | AA |

Section I: Demographic Data

1. Your age: 26-30 yrs 41-45 yrs
 31-35 yrs 46-50 yrs
 36-40 yrs over 51 yrs
2. Gender: Male Female
3. Marital status: single
 a "remarried" family
 married/includes both natural parents
 guardian
8. The highest level of education you have completed:
- 8th grade graduate 4 yr. Degree graduate
 high school graduate master's degree or higher
 voc./associate graduate
8. Your spouse's highest level of education completed:
- 8th grade graduate 4 yr. Degree graduate
 high school graduate master's degree or higher
 voc./associate graduate
6. Are you employed: full-time
 part-time
 not employed
 retired
7. In high school, my child usually averages:
- mostly A's C's & D's
 A's & B's D's & below
 B's & C's
8. My child qualifies for free or reduced lunch: yes no

Appendix B

Sub-Scales/Created Variables

(Number in parenthesis following each statement indicates the mean response)

I. Parent Involvement at Home:**Attitudes:**

5. Eating meals together is important. (8.16)
7. Helping my child with homework is important. (7.56)
8. Monitoring my child's homework is an important part of his/her education. (7.58)
11. It's important to encourage my child so he/she feels successful for simply working hard on his/her homework. (8.2)
18. I have difficulty helping my child with homework. (4.79)
19. It is the school's responsibility to see that children get their work done, not the parent's. (7.16)
20. There should be time set aside each evening for homework. (8.02)
21. Parents have a responsibility to see that their children have their homework done. (7.73)
29. The amount of time I spend with my child has little bearing on his/her success in school. (7.87)

Behaviors: (scored N=1, R=2, etc.)

- | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| 2. I see that my child does his homework. (3.69) | N | R | S | F | AA |
| 5. We discuss things we're reading (3.19) | N | R | S | F | AA |
| 6. We go to plays, museums, historical sites, etc. (3.39) | N | R | S | F | AA |
| 10. My child sees me reading (4.13) | N | R | S | F | AA |
| 12. I allow him/her to participate in extra curriculars (4.32). | N | R | S | F | AA |
| 17. Homework is completed before participating in other activities. (3.70) | N | R | S | F | AA |

II. Parent Involvement with School:

Attitudes:

1. Communicating with my child's teachers is a pleasant experience. (7.43)
6. Parent/teacher conferences are a waste of time. (7.39)
9. Parents should not be asked to volunteer at school. (7.33)
12. It's important to be active in school organizations, i.e.. PTA, booster club, etc. (6.62)
25. It's important for my child to see that I am involved in school functions. (7.26)

Behavior:

1. I attend the school activities my child is involved in. (4.63) N R S F AA
3. I communicate with my child's teachers. (3.29) N R S F AA
4. I volunteer at school. (2.52) N R S F AA
7. I contact the teacher if my child seems to be having a problem. (4.15) N R S F AA
8. I attend parent/teacher conferences. (3.79) N R S F AA
9. I read the school newsletter. (4.21) N R S F AA
13. I talk negatively about school in front of my child (4.19) N R S F AA

III. Parent Desires and Expectations:

Attitudes:

2. I expect my child to finish high school. (8.95)
3. It upsets me when my child doesn't get A's or B's. (5.75)
10. Extra-curricular activities are more important than getting homework done. (8.21)
13. I expect my child to finish vocational school or college. (8.11)
14. Too much emphasis is put on school work and grades. (6.37)

17. My child knows that I feel grades are important. (8.45)
22. My child's education is very important. (8.94)
27. My child must maintain a B average, or better, to be able to drive the car. (4.29)

Behaviors:

11. I talk to my child about graduating from voc. sch. or college. (4.19) N R S F AA
14. I talk with him/her about the jobs / professions that interest him. (4.13)N R S F AA
15. I reward my child for good grades (3.19) N R S F AA

IV. Parent's Own School Experience:

Attitudes:

4. I feel I learned nothing useful in school. (8.15)
16. I am content with my level of education. (5.73)
23. Overall, my memories of school are good ones. (7.37)
24. Many of my best memories are school related; classes, dances, games, trips, etc. (6.29)
26. High school was difficult for me. (6.68)
28. My child's school experience has been similar to my own. (4.06)
30. My view of school affects my child's view of school. (7.52)

Behavior:

16. I share "old stories" about my high school days. (3.23) N R S F AA

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