

MAKING A DIFFERENCE THROUGH PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT:  
TECHNIQUES TEACHERS CAN UTILIZE IN KINDERGARTEN  
BILINGUAL CLASSROOMS

A Thesis

by

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## ABSTRACT

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The importance of parental involvement in the education of all children is essential in schools. The schools that promote parental involvement prepare students for excellence in their education. Parental involvement, gives students opportunities and advantages by reinforcing and fortifying their learning. Different perspectives and viewpoints were examined, focusing on bilingual students and some Spanish speaking parents in a school in south Texas.

By finding what is causing low parental involvement and by listening to strategies used by educators that help increase parental involvement, this research provides answers on how to help parents get involved in their children's education. Empowering parents and supporting them as initial teachers to their children benefits students. Finally, the purpose of this qualitative study is to identify possible causes of low Hispanic parental involvement in kindergarten bilingual classrooms. This study looked for information about the challenges that prevent parents from getting involved in their children's education.





## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents Juan Manuel and Dora Rita Lopez. There are no words to describe how appreciative and grateful I am to God for giving me such loving and caring parents. Their guidance and teachings allowed me to become the person I am today. Thanks to the values they instilled in me and the faith they had in me to become anything I wanted to be, I have had the opportunity to experience life to the fullest. I am forever grateful to them for bringing me in to this world and giving me the gift of knowledge and infinite possibilities.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

A part of parental involvement includes: time parents spend with students on homework; parents getting involved in school related activities, activities parents do with their children at home that help student learning at school. Also, activities such as monitoring how much television students see, what time they go to bed, getting them clean and making sure they attend school every day, talking to their children about their day at school and encouraging students to behave and pay attention at school so that they can learn (Hidalgo, Kallemeyn, & Phillips, 2013). Parental involvement occurs at all times whether parents are aware of it or not.

By obtaining the support from parents, teachers can take advantage of the benefits in their classroom where students follow rules, are engaged, and attend school every day. It is a big challenge for educators to make a difference because it takes a lot of work and time to motivate parents to participate and be involved in their children's school-work.

Ideally, every student would receive support at home and school, yet the reality is that very few students are fortunate enough to receive both. Students who receive support at home only, still benefit more than students who receive help at school only, and the students who don't receive parental support at all are at a disadvantage.

Support at home consists of not only the environment but the structure, rules, procedures, and examples the students receive from their parents. It involves the values instilled in them and

the enthusiasm and love for learning. Parents explain to their children the responsibility of completing homework and provide resources that help students achieve their best.

Support at school includes parents attending meetings, assemblies, and all sorts of events in the school. It has to do with parents who drop off and pick up their children at school, encourage students to attend school and do their best. This type of support allows students to see the value and the importance of education. Parents teach students that school is good for them and that they should strive for good grades and success. Parents are concerned about their children's progress and aid them in all the ways they can whether it be helping with homework or reviewing and reinforcing what was taught in school.

Unfortunately, there are many students who have a home environment that does not support their learning and at times is very dysfunctional and affects students in a negative way. Some of these students are only receiving support from the teacher and staff at school that interact with them. They do not have as many opportunities of receiving assistance and without someone to guide them and show them what they need to succeed they will more than likely stay behind or struggle more to learn. Some parents believe that it is the job of the school, the principal, and the teacher to teach their children and that their responsibility is only to send them to school.

### **Background of the Problem**

Parental involvement has been made a national priority according to Goals 2000: Educate America Act, signed by President Clinton in March 1994, "to improve learning and teaching by providing a national framework for education reform and to ensure equitable educational opportunities and high levels of educational achievement for all American students" (Goals 2000: Educate America Act, 1994).

The reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was passed as a part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty" and has been the most far-reaching federal legislation affecting education ever passed by Congress" (Elementary and Secondary Education Act). Federal education money is also at stake. Eligibility for Title I funding which, "provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards," (Title I, Part A Program) is available to school districts in high poverty areas, but schools need to show they involve and aim to increase parent participation.

There are many factors affecting the lack of parental involvement, such as, parents' work schedule, lack of time, or no transportation. Overcoming these will require dedication and determination from teachers (Kauffman, Perry, Prentiss, 2001). Responsibility between families and schools for student's learning and communication is required between parents and educators. Although professionals and researchers support the strategies to increased parent involvement, not many have the same opinion about the definition of effective involvement (Hidalgo, A.V., Kallemeyn, L., &Phillips, L. 2013).

### **Statement of the Problem**

There are low numbers of Hispanic parental involvement in kindergarten bilingual classrooms. This problem is so significant to the educational field because parents are essential in our student's academic success. Without parents' support, it becomes very difficult to give the best that can be given to a student in school. If a student does not come to school ready to learn and/or with a negative attitude towards school, that child may be distracted from his/her learning.

When everything that is taught in school does not get reinforced at home, chances are the student will not retain most of it (Reali & Tancredi, 2003). It is easier for the student to learn, when what is taught at school is reviewed at home. When parents talk to their children about their day and ask questions to show their children that they are interested in what they do at school, students feel motivated and perform better in school. There are factors such as parents' work and circumstances that make it difficult for parents to be as involved as they would like.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to identify causes of low parental involvement and suggestions on how to increase the amount of Hispanic parents involved in school. Although parental involvement in school could be considered dropping off and picking up a student in school or attending parental meetings and getting involved in the school, the intention of this study is focused on support and extended formal education (parents reviewing schoolwork at home) and making sure students do their homework as well as what parents do with their children at home that reinforces their education.

By knowing what Hispanic parents do with their children at home, we can create a plan to see what works and helps students at school. Understanding Hispanic parents' needs and reasons for not participating in schools is important to make an impact in parental involvement. Empowering the parents and making them aware of the effects they have on their children by what happens at home can help increase the participation of parents at home.

Identifying the circumstances that Hispanic parents are struggling with and are keeping them from getting involved, and providing strategies or solutions may reduce the lack of parental involvement. It was important to find out if it has to do with either different Hispanic parent's

attitudes toward their children's learning or the different cultures, Hispanic and Caucasian, which are conflicting with participation.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions in my study were:

1. What is the parents' perception of their involvement in their child's academic success?
2. What is causing such low numbers of parental involvement?
3. What are the teachers' perception of the effect of parental involvement and what do they recommend can be done to increase it?

### **Importance of the Study**

This study is important because research may help find ways to increase Hispanic parental involvement. Although there is research about parental involvement, there is limited procedure or system to follow that guarantees parental involvement. Finding out what works and gets Hispanic parents involved is necessary to try to motivate all parents to know the importance they make in their children's education (Baker, Soden, 1998). The more Hispanic parents and teachers can communicate and work with, the more success the students will have. The schools need to make parental involvement a priority in order to accomplish the goal of creating a better future for our students (Ascher, 1988).

### **Definition of Terms**

Important terms for this study include:

Hispanic: Of or relating to Spain or Spanish-Speaking Latin America. Of or relating to a Spanish-speaking people or culture. A Spanish-speaking person. US citizen or resident of Latin-American or Spanish ancestry.

Bilingual students: Spanish speaking students learning English as a second language.

Parental involvement: Time parents spend working with students with homework, parents getting involved in school related activities, activities parents do with their children at home that helps student learning at school, activities such as monitoring how much television students see, what time they go to bed, getting them clean and making sure they attend school every day, talking to their children about their day at school and encouraging students to behave and pay attention at school so that they can learn.

Student success: Students passing or exceeding and being ready to continue learning.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The number of participants and their language and cultural background may limit the findings collected. I was not able to compare the findings to other Non-Hispanic parents. The length of the study was limited. With extended time I would have been able to participate in multiple conversations that might have led to deeper insights.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Parental Involvement and Student Achievement**

Parental involvement in the primary grades is fundamental and can help create the foundation students need for a successful education (Hilado, Kallemeyn, & Phillips, 2013). In my experience, teachers play the most important role in creating the relationships needed for an open and welcoming environment where Hispanic parents can feel support and guidance. Creating this environment might not be enough to increase parental involvement. Even though some ways to communicate with Hispanic parents could be through newsletters or phone calls, there are times when a teacher still does not know how to communicate with the parents. Parents are the child's first and most important role models.

Parental involvement is crucial in students' learning (Tinkler, 2002). It has been shown that students learn more when parents are involved. Parental involvement has been defined by Kay Ireland (2014), as the support parents give their children either in school or at home. Different ways teachers can help Hispanic parents become involved is by giving Hispanic parents engaging activities they can do at home such as playing letter bingo and counting games (Reali & Tancredi, 2003). There are many Hispanic parents that would love to be involved, but certain circumstances such as being single parents, having no transportation, feeling unwelcome, no child care, and illiteracy don't allow them to (Durand & Perez, 2013).

## **Ways to Increase Parental Involvement**

Leadership from teachers in creating good communication with Hispanic parents is the first step to get Hispanic parents involved. Overcoming all the obstacles in getting Hispanic parents involved takes planning and teamwork, not only from teachers, but school staff as well. Tinkler found that, “many school personnel do not speak Spanish, and Hispanic parents that haven't mastered English have difficulty communicating with schools and helping with homework. Schools could use bilingual materials, hire bilingual staff, provide interpreters, and offer Spanish classes to teachers and English classes to parents” (2002, p. 9).

Spanish speaking parents’ culture and attitude could be misinterpreted by teachers and school staff as parents being indifferent or unwilling to be involved in their students’ education. There are many factors to overcome to increase parental involvement such as, “the involvement of parents who experience social and economic limitations to full participation in American society: racial and ethnic minority-group members, low-income families, poorly educated parents, and parents who do not speak English” (Ritter, Mont-Reynaud, & Dornbusch, 1993). It is important that educators understand Hispanic parents and facilitate the participation by taking an initiative and inviting Hispanic parents to take the opportunity to be part of their students’ academic success.

Collaborating with parents to be an important part of their children’s education and creating an inviting environment where they can feel comfortable. Overcoming cultural barriers is not easy. According to the U.S. Department of Education (1994), “language barriers of immigrant families and communication barriers of English speaking families who have had little education or bad school experiences limit family-school contact” (p. 7). It is important for teachers to take all these obstacles into consideration when trying to increase parental



involvement. Figuring out ways to change Hispanic families' views and providing an opportunity for them to become involved is necessary to change the present situation with our students.

There are several ways to motivate parents to become involved in their children's education. A good way to motivate Hispanic parents to get involved would be to make home visits and invite them to their children's school. During the visit, the goal is to make Hispanic parents see the value they have in their children's education (Tinkler, 2002). Teachers can write letters to Hispanic parents not only when the students are struggling, but most importantly, when the students are being successful because of their parents' guidance from home. Focusing on the students' successes at school and complementing Hispanic parents for being part of their success is a way of encouraging them to get involved (Trumbull & Rothstein-Fisch, 2011). Letting Hispanic parents know that the positive results are possible because of them inspires them to continue being part of their children's success.

Including Hispanic parents in school activities and giving them opportunities to invite other parents to participate makes them feel valuable and appreciated. The better the relationship the more the student can benefit academically. According to the Michigan State Government, "parental involvement is one of the most important deciding factors in a child's education and suggests that the earlier a parent can intercede with his child's education, the more successful his child will ultimately be" (Ireland, 2014). Hispanic parents can also raise a constructive social experience for their children by being involved in their children's interests in school by getting involved in school related activities that the students enjoy and talking to their children about their day at school (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992).

There are Hispanic parents who are very concerned about their children's schoolwork because they want for their children to have the opportunities they did not have. Parents that realize the value of a good education and the benefits of academic success tend to be more involved in their children's school (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992). There are Hispanic parents whose culture and respect towards educators keeps them from questioning what is being taught in school or leave it all to the teacher believing the teacher's got it and that they do not need to be involved (Durand & Perez, 2013). It is important to look for these parents and invite them and empower them to be involved in their children's education.

Research supports the benefit of parental involvement in students' emotional well-being. Parents give children the emotional care that motivates them to appreciate education. Most parents are interested in their children's' education (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992). Educators should take advantage of the benefits of parental involvement by creating ways to make parental involvement increase and have more students benefit from the extra support they need from home to succeed in school.

### **Importance of Parental Involvement**

In the state of Illinois, the importance of parent involvement in children's development and learning is increasingly recognized in the research literature and in federal and state policies (Hilado, Kallemeyn, & Phillips, 2013). Teachers creating good relationships with Hispanic parents help in so many ways. Some of the most important ways parents can support teachers are discipline and attendance. When Hispanic parents cooperate with teachers, there are always positive results (Dor, 2012).

When it is time for the child to start school, Hispanic parents can make the transition easier if they are involved. Research shows that the home literacy environment is essential and

that parental stimulation of the children's language development is very important. "The security of the parent-child attachment relationship and parental involvement play a key role in the children's academic success especially in the early years" (Baker & Soden, 1998, p. 2).

### **Views of Parental Involvement**

There are different views of parental involvement. There are Hispanic parents who believe it is the school and the teacher's responsibility to teach their students. While there are other Hispanic parents that know that their support to their children's teachers is necessary for their children's academic success (Durand & Perez, 2013). Some teachers and counselors might feel that it is the schools' responsibility to promote Hispanic parental involvement while others might feel it is the responsibility of the Hispanic parents to be involved (Dor, 2012). Depending on the view, there will be different results. Administrators' whose definition of parent involvement is positive and flexible reflect higher parental involvement than administrators who hold a negative view of parental involvement.

### **Culture and Parental Involvement**

It is important to understand that culture (beliefs, values, and customs) can be an issue of misinterpretation. For example, some Hispanic parents might find it disrespectful to make suggestions to teachers; in turn, teachers might interpret this as Hispanic parents not being interested in getting involved. Different cultures hold different values and expectations that make their perceptions of parental involvement unique and diverse. Knowing Hispanic parents and understanding their culture can help teachers understand and be able to communicate with Hispanic parents to help students (Durand & Perez, 2013). The priority is improving student success. There are different views of what achievement means. When Hispanic parents have a

better understanding of the new culture, it is easier for them to understand and participate in the school involvement of their children.

Not all parents view education the same way, they hold different views. Some parents believe that the priority in their child's education is to help them with homework. Other parents feel that it is more important to encourage and motivate their children to do good in school, while others think that the best form to help educate their children is through communication with the teacher and attending school events.

### **Conclusion**

There are many benefits from parental involvement. It is the responsibility of the teacher to explain to Hispanic parents the importance of getting involved with their student's school achievement. Teachers and Hispanic parents may have different points of view of what parental involvement means. Having good communication can clarify many misunderstandings and teachers and Hispanic parents can work as a team with the ultimate goal being the students' success. To not discourage Hispanic parents that do want to be involved, good communication needs to be open between the teacher and the Hispanic parent. A relationship needs to be built to be able to work with Hispanic parents and try to make the student the priority and have teachers working with Hispanic parents to help student succeed (Reali & Tancredi, 2003).

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### **The Research Method**

I conducted a qualitative study, because qualitative research is mainly exploratory research. It is utilized to obtain comprehension of basic explanations, views, and opinions. It provides perceptions into the problem or services to improve concepts or theories for possible quantitative research (Qualitative vs Quantitative Research, 2016). Qualitative Research is also utilized to discover tendencies in ways of thinking and views, and get to the root of the problem. There are different methods that can be used to collect data, “some common methods include focus groups (group discussions), individual interviews, and participation/observations. The sample size is typically small, and respondents are selected to fulfill a given quota. Qualitative research involves the collection, analysis, and interpretation of narrative and visual (non-numerical) data through methods such as ethnography, case study research, in-depth interviews, or focus groups” (Airasian, Gay, & Mills, 2011). Ethnography was used to define and examine part of the beliefs of a community by finding a recounting participant’s practices and views.

It required researcher-participant interaction. Also, it included descriptions of participant’s perspectives, which involved data collection and analysis. Multiple data sources such as interviews and conversations were utilized. Data in qualitative research are often detailed descriptions and direct quotes from participants. Often data that support the author’s conclusions are provided from a variety of sources. The technique of using a variety of sources

to confirm each other is called “triangulation” (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2010). I used the interviews, conversations and observations to compare the data and find similarities and differences in the view of parental involvement that can help find ways to increase parental involvement.

The sources of data were real world situations and interviews face-to-face from the participants after they agreed to participate through informed consent that was gathered. The data was collected in person by recording the interviews and transcribing them. The data was triangulated by comparing and contrasting the different interviews as well as including my observations and different conversations I had the opportunity to have.

### **The Researcher’s Role**

My role as a researcher was to gain as much insight as to what is preventing Hispanic parents from being involved with their children’s education at home. Hispanic English and Spanish speaking parents were interviewed face to face to collect what their perceptions were on the role they play in their children’s education. Time was made to speak to the Hispanic parents of students who came to school and their children’s success and parents were interviewed to see why they were involved in their children’s education. This information was utilized to examine what different circumstances are allowing them to be able to be involved and perhaps get some ideas to share with Hispanic parents who are not involved in their children’s education.

I kept my bias from the perspective of a teacher and was open to different points of view and perceptions of parental involvement. Another aspect of the role I had as a researcher was to organize and conduct the interviews. Once the participant accepted to participate and they had signed the consent forms, they were guided to a private room in the school where the interview took place. This room had a table with chairs, air conditioning and a welcoming environment. I

emphasized that participation was voluntary and that subjects could skip any question they were uncomfortable answering and that they could withdraw participation at any time without question or penalty. They were required to sign a separate consent form for audio recording prior to recording. After the interview, I thanked them and commended them for making a difference in their children's education. As an insider, the following questions were asked to parents:

- How do you define parental involvement?
- How are you involved in your child's academic success?
- What is your perception of the effect of parental involvement?

Teachers were asked the following questions:

- How do you define parental involvement?
- What benefits do you notice in a child's academic success when there is parental involvement?
- What are some techniques you have utilized to increase parental involvement that have worked for you in the past?
- Why do you think there is such low numbers of parental involvement?

Parent specialist was asked the following questions:

- How do you define parental involvement?
- What are some techniques you have utilized to increase parental involvement that have worked for you in the past?
- What are the most common reasons that parents do not get involved in schools?
- How could parental involvement be promoted?

The goal was to try to find the root of the problem. If we do not know why they do not participate, we cannot help them. If we help our Hispanic parents, they will help us and the students will benefit.

### **Data Sources**

I collected recorded interviews, observations, and conversations that guided me to possible solutions and explanations that can help increase parental involvement. The setting was an elementary school in the lower Rio Grande Valley and the participants were kindergarten students' Hispanic English and Spanish speaking parents. 712 students, or 97.3% of the student population at this school was identified as Hispanic, making up the majority of the student body. The demographic breakdown of the school was drastically different from that of a typical school in the state of Texas, which is made up of 50.8% Hispanic students on average. Thirty-two full time teachers and a 23:1 student ratio in the school. For the period July 1, 2013, through June 30, 2014, 130 percent of the poverty level was \$30,615 annual income for a family of four; 185 percent was \$43,568. The median household income in this city was \$25,490 per year. This median income was below the eligibility threshold for reduced price lunch, so this may explain if a larger than average proportion of students was eligible for reduced price lunch. Males outnumber females at this school, where the student body was 54% male and 45% female. The percent of teachers with Bachelor degree was 93.9%. The mean number of years of teaching experience was 14. The years percent of teachers with 1 - 5 years of teaching experience was 36.4% . The percent of teachers with more than 5 years of teaching was 63.6%. This school was considered a very large public school district in the state of Texas with 5,734 students (top 20% in the state). There was a total city population of 16, 271 of which 18.3% were unemployed and 12.7% had Bachelor's degrees.



The school supported Hispanic parental involvement and provided events where teachers had opportunities to share with Hispanic parents. Some events included meet the teacher night, an open house day, six week assemblies, literacy festival, Fall festival, meet the author, book fair, Veterans' day program, Christmas program, Mother's day program, donuts with dad, and grandparents day. The district also had an elementary parent specialist, who conducted parent meetings and created monthly newsletters with activities and information for parents.

Twenty-two teachers, twenty-two Hispanic parents and one parent specialist participated in this study. Seven of the Hispanic parents interviewed had children that were born and raised in the lower Rio Grande Valley and were new to the school setting. Others had children who did not attend daycare and was their first year in a public school. The language spoken at home for some of the participating parents was English, some parents only spoke Spanish. For some the first language was Spanish and they do not speak or understand English. All parents were Hispanic living in the lower Rio Grande Valley.

### **Data Collection**

To collect data, the first step was to audio record all individual interviews. Second, a log to enter all conversations with students' Hispanic parents during drop off, pick up, or all other times there were opportunities to speak to Hispanic parents was kept. The first week parents were asked if they agreed to participate in this study. A selected classroom right next to their child's classroom was available for those parents who agreed to participate. Parents were informed through a newsletter of the opportunity to participate in an interview in the beginning of the week.

Parents, as they dropped off their child, were asked if they would like to participate. In the following week, teachers were asked if they would like to participate and once they signed

the consent form, they were asked to go to the designated classroom where the interview took place. In the same final week of interviewing, a parent specialist was asked if she would like to participate and once she signed the consent form, she was asked to go to the designated room where the interview took place. The same recruitment script was used for parents, teachers and specialist.

The oral interviews conducted with parents, teachers, and parent specialist were recorded. The interviewing was done during the school year for six weeks. A qualitative study was conducted. Within a week of interviews being completed, they were transcribed. Once interviews were transcribed, they were analyzed looking for themes and patterns. The data was then triangulated using observational notes and the different groups. Comparing what the parents were saying the teachers were saying and the parent specialist was saying. To compare Hispanic parents who speak Spanish from Hispanic parent who speak English and their differences and similarities in their perceptions on students' academic success due to their involvement. Two separate journals, one for Hispanic Spanish speaking parents and the other for Hispanic English speaking parents, were kept and the differences in how they perceived their responsibility towards the help or lack of help they gave their children at home was evaluated.

Hispanic parents were interviewed to try to understand what was keeping them from assisting students with schoolwork. The information that was obtained was collected to record all the different reasons Hispanic parents gave for not being able to help their children by being involved and all the suggestions they could give to make it easier for them to be able to assist. All this data was used to examine what is preventing Hispanic parental involvement and makes a difference in parent participation, which increases students' academic achievement. This data

was utilized to construct possible solutions to lack of Hispanic parental involvement and perhaps help us understand why some Hispanic parents do not get involved.

### **Data Analysis**

To analyze the data, a particular numeric coding system, which allowed me to compare how Hispanic English speaking parents' perceptions of parental involvement compared to Hispanic Spanish speaking parents' perception of the role they play in their children's education was used. The recorded interview conversations were transcribed using coding systems to maintain privacy and anonymity. The data was analyzed by focusing on the answers that helped answer the research questions. The data was examined and categorized by themes and ideas that helped understand the answers to the investigation.

Used transcribing computer software called Evernote to analyze the data. I took the time to read through the data and write notes to collect similarities found in the data. Index cards were used to organize the information and to have it in a manageable form. A concept map was used to identify the factors that affect parental involvement. The major influences that affect parental involvement were listed. A visual representation that helped layout and expose the overall problems affecting parental involvement was created. The concept map was reviewed to find out the consistencies and inconsistencies found in the data.

### **Verification**

For verification, the recorded interviews were used to get parental feedback on what they perceived as a major impediment that might be keeping them from being involved in their children's school work. The parents' responses as to their work schedules, transportation issues, childcare availability, and willingness to become involved in their child's school were differentiated. The recorded interviews were used with teachers and parent specialist to gather

suggestions and possible solutions to increase parental involvement. Records of interviews and minutes to verify the data were kept. Audio recordings were kept safe and protected. Parent names and information gathered during conversations were kept confidential.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Administrators were asked for permission to complete the study on their campus. A principals' permission letter was signed prior to beginning my investigation. A parent permission form for the proposed research study was created. Parents signed a consent form concerning my proposed research study. Participants were assured of confidentiality.

The ethical issues in the study were to obtain informed consent by making sure research participants participated by their free will and understood what the study was about. Before any recordings, the participants were asked for permission to be recorded. The information gathered from the participants was extremely protected.

In all the conversations spoken with Hispanic students' parents, they were reassured that the information they provided is very confidential and they were assured that the sole purpose of this process is for the benefit of each student. They were reminded that this study was mainly to find ways to better serve the students and their families for a better community. Hispanic parents were guaranteed that professional ethic is our priority and that anything they share will be kept private.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS AND FINDINGS

#### **Question 1**

The participants responded to the following question. How do you define parental involvement? One parent defined it as being with them and accompanying them and another parent as making students feel supported. Six out of twenty-two said it was important. Three others said it was good and one said it was essential and another excellent. To four it meant helping with homework. Another parent defined it as doing the best you can for your child. Five defined it as being involved in school functions. Two defined it as collaboration between school and parents. One said communicating with the teacher. The parent specialist defined it as being there for their children.

Teachers defined parental involvement as: parents being involved in their children's education by attending school events, parents helping students in their learning, parents coming to school and talking to teachers, being part of their children's education, parents and teachers working together, parents providing food, clothing, shelter, and love at home and helping with homework and getting involved in PTO meetings and keeping close contact with the teacher, parents volunteering their time and helping in the classroom, informing parents of activities that will be held in the school and how parents can help, and parents and teachers working together towards one goal.

The principal defined parental involvement as a partnership between the school and the parents in educating children. She said that in order for all students to succeed in school parents need to be there to guide, influence, make an impact and provide support to their children in school. The counselor said it was getting the parents involved in their child's education and making parents aware of the importance of their participation. The academic coach defined parental involvement as the participation of parents in every facet/area of children's education. She recommends encouraging parents to participate in volunteer work because she believes that as the child sees the parent at their school he/she will feel that school is important and that it will help keep the door of communication open between school and home.

### **Question 2**

Parents were asked: How are you involved in your child's academic success? Twenty-one out of twenty-two answered they were involved by helping their child with homework. Seven out of twenty-two were involved by attending school events and four out of twenty-two said they kept an open communication with the teacher to help their children and ensure that they are making acceptable progress. One parent said that they encouraged their child to do good in school and another felt that being present in their child's education was beneficial to the child's academic success. Two parents said they were involved by dropping up and picking up their children from school because they made sure students attended school every day.

### **Question 3**

Parents were asked: What is your perception of the effect of parental involvement? The following were their answers. It gives students encouragement. Without parental involvement the student would stay behind in on all subjects. With parental involvement the student does well. The students feel supported by the parents. The students show progress. More union and

more help. Good communication with child. It helps the child socialize. It complements, what is taught at school gets reinforced at home. When parents are involved, they do not get left out. It makes the student want to do better, it makes the student happy, and it makes the student want to go to school. It is very important. It plays a major part in their future. Parental involvement is key. It has a great impact on the child.

#### **Question 4**

Teachers were asked: What benefits do you notice in a child's academic success when there is parental involvement? The following were their responses.

- Better grades
- Higher attendance
- Growth in learning
- Students succeed
- They do better academically
- Students achieve more
- Students show big strides

They are more focused on trying to do good, their behavior is good, they are top students, they try harder, it makes it important for the student, they make more gains, the caring and support gives them self-esteem. Students excel, they go farther than students who do not have parents that are involved. Students show more exposure and background knowledge and are more advanced. Teachers notice a domino effect, teachers work with parents, parents work with students and students do better. Students know parents are in school and they see that school is important, so they try harder. They feel they have the support from their parents and that they are not alone. If a student is struggling and the teacher makes contact with the parent and they

work together the student progresses academically. Students that get more help and reinforcement at home and complete homework, the teacher notices the improvement. Students are aware that how they behave will be noticed by their parents or guardians. Students are on level and feel comfortable answering questions; it gives them more confidence and helps them succeed. Students feel secure and safe. Parents support students to get good grades and help students choose to try harder to earn good grades.

### **Question 5**

The participants were asked: What are some techniques you have utilized to increase parental involvement that have worked for you in the past? They responded the following. Sending classroom notes welcoming the child at the beginning of the school year, talking to parents at all opportunities (during drop off or pick up time), keeping them informed on how their child is doing at school, and having parents attend open house, giving phone numbers only if requested by parent, including positive comments on phone calls, asking parents for help through phone calls, as well as sending out flyers, sending text messages, making calls, giving incentives, and giving parents conference hours, letting them know how important it is for them to come to the meetings and be there for their children, sending reminders of special events on a weekly basis, being available at school at any time parents can come to talk or be part of the class, being flexible on the times that parents can speak to the teacher, keeping parents updated, utilizing a behavior calendar and being in contact with the parent every day, sending a behavior folder home every day, using texts message systems, providing phone numbers, weekly newsletter that include what is going to be covered that week and includes birthdays, given ahead of time to allow parents time to make arrangements to attend, sending monthly calendars with lists of activities for that month, and a list of the rules on the monthly calendar are very



beneficial, sending letters, making phone calls to keep parents aware of what is happening at school and offering assistance and showing that the teacher cares, providing interesting and beneficial topics for parents, sending personalized invitations, giving them worksheets or things that will help the parent to help the child at home, telling the parents these are some games that you can play at home or here are some other activities you can do at home that you can help your child, giving them little packages with different things that they can use with the students to help them improve, especially the students that are really low, making booklets with pictures for the parents, taking students to perform for the grandparents and participate in community events like parades and having the students participate and parents come and see them perform, preparing special programs for parents and have the children go home and tell that to the parents so they see it's important to the child and that kind of drives them to come in, sending notes for everything, having the parent sign everything, if it's any reading parent has to sign, parents have to be held accountable for everything that happens in school, like that they're involved, they feel some kind of pressure to be involved, but if there is a parent that wants to help it is important to make sure that they ask the right people so they can come and help because it makes a difference.

### **Question 6**

The participants were also asked: Why do you think there is such low numbers of parental involvement? The following were their answers. Work, children, busy lifestyles, no phone, language barrier, don't see the benefits and importance of parental involvement, lack of time, both parents work, young parents, don't understand the role of a parent, feel inadequate, shame, they don't want to be embarrassed or embarrass their kids, feel unworthy to come to the events, feel they are not educated enough to come and help at school or their child, only one

parent works and he/she cannot miss work, the times that teachers are available might not be the best times for working parents, parents need parenting skills, parents have too many kids, trying to just get by, don't focus on any one of the children, technology and other priorities, lack of a set foundation, or a routine, or no structure at home, they may feel that early childhood is not as important as elementary or secondary school, parents need to be informed of the importance of their involvement, not feel welcomed, comfortable, may not feel appreciated, busy society with many responsibilities, busy with work and no time to communicate with the teacher, feel inferior to teacher and administrators, cannot express themselves the way they would like to due to limited vocabulary, they don't have the flexible hours to come in, lack of education, some parents do not work and don't have the desire to work, don't understand the importance of education, the level of expectations compared to when they were going to school is different, little time (very busy), not available during school meeting hours (working), no means of transportation to get to the school, parents trust in schools for educating and teaching social skills to their children, parents think they have nothing to offer the program, parents worried about making a living to provide for their children, parents not living with their children, very young parents, who do not value the importance of parental involvement.

### **Question 7**

The principal, counselor, academic coach, and parent specialist answered the following question. How could parental involvement be promoted? Teachers having more communication with parents. Teaching them the importance of them getting involved in school, and how they can help their children at home. Collaboration between schools and parents to be ongoing and schools should be a place where parents feel welcome. Considering parent's interests and inviting them to school to listen to speakers cover those topics. Inviting parents to attend literacy

nights, make and take for literacy meetings, cooking classes, jewelry making classes, Fall or Spring festivals. Involving everyone in the district to promote parental involvement and building relationships.

### **Question 8**

The principal, counselor, and academic coach answered the following question. What do you recommend can be done to increase parental involvement? Making parents feel welcome at all times, sharing information about the schools successes and needs for improvement, using social media to get parents involved in their children's school, sending flyers, notes, letters to invite parents to participate in the activities, providing monthly calendars/newsletter, providing second language classes for parents who wish to learn English, opening the library so students can complete school projects, bringing in community agencies, businesses to give the parents information that will help them raise their children, making the school a neighborhood center that is there to meet the needs of its parents and students, parenting meetings need to be held at different times and in different locations throughout the community, visiting the neighborhoods where the students live so parents can see the school staff wants the best for all students, parents should be the number one promoters for all schools. As from the traditional African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child," the partnership and teamwork of all is equally important and necessary. Parents entrust schools with educating their children and getting them ready to live, work in this world as productive citizens. Parenting sessions need to be held to help parents deal with all the issues students face at school and in the community. Having more parents visit the school and their children's classrooms.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Parental involvement is fundamental to a child's education. It is important to consider the different perspectives all adults have regarding parental involvement. Administrators, teachers, parents, and anyone involved in the students' learning can help find solutions on how to better educate the students through collaboration and teamwork, which can make a positive difference in schools. By understanding the different points of view, educators can help find ways to promote parental involvement. Helping parents in their role at home can provide a quality education for their children and empower them by providing them more information on how to help their children at home. In doing this, it will maximize the potential of a great education for that student. Schools can make parental involvement a priority and focus on different techniques that other schools have used that have shown to be productive. Offering various opportunities for parents to be involved in schools can create the perfect learning environment students need to thrive.

This study identified and stated the factors by finding the different reasons, according to teachers, parent specialist, counselor, academic coach, and principal, for low parental involvement and solutions that can be done in the school to increase parental involvement. Parental involvement plays a key role in students' educational success. Therefore, it is important to understand what prevents some Hispanic parents from getting involved as well as what more can be done in schools to welcome and promote parental involvement. After finding

the root of the problem, steps were taken to solve and minimize anything that is preventing Hispanic parents from getting involved in their children's education. Educators realize the value of parental involvement and know that anything they do to get more Hispanic parents involved is well worth the time and effort. The benefits of parental involvement, as I read, are so great that the results are a sure win for the student, the teacher, the parent, and the school (Reali & Tancredi, 2003).

### **Reaching Parents**

There are other causes such as parents going through separation, divorce, remarriage, or other custodial factors that prevents parents from getting involved in scheduled school events. To create good relationships between schools with single or working parents, there are many things the school can do to facilitate Hispanic parental involvement. When planning activities it is important to consider parents' schedules and planning important school events that parents can attend. By keeping parents' schedules in mind, it can open up more opportunities to attend these important school events. By increasing availability of the teachers to meet with parents, more parents can attend.

Schools can plan on how to help these parents be reached and benefit from attending meetings that will explain and facilitate ideas and teachings that can be implemented at home. The environment needed in school to support parental involvement has to be accommodating and inviting (Dor, 2012). To increase parental involvement, Hispanic parents and teachers need to be resourceful and work as a team.

Educators can share with parents that there are many teachable moments in any activity their children do at home and in the community. For example, parents can make home as educational as school for their children, for example, by having high communication and

introducing and explaining new vocabulary. When going to the grocery store, students can help parents make a list of things that need to be purchased at the store. Parents can have their children measure ingredients when preparing something in the kitchen. (Durand & Perez, 2013). Through the collaboration of both parents and educators, the students can gain more support and are more engaged in school activities.

### **Perceptions of Parental Involvement**

After having had the opportunity to interview and get to know how the participants of this study perceived parental involvement, it broadened my understandings about various perceptions of parental involvement. It is a very important aspect of a successful school and being able to comprehend why there are such low numbers of parental involvement was one of the priorities in this research. I would place parental involvement into four levels. Level one, the highest, would be parental support at both home and school, level two would be parental support at home, level three parental support at school, and level four the lowest, no parental support at all. From the observations made, I created this level system as a perfect goal to aim at reaching level one.

All forty-eight participants defined parental involvement in their own words. One word that coincided was “important.” Even though we agree that parental involvement is important, there is yet a way to make sure it is prioritized and implemented by everyone. It is a great responsibility, as educators, to ensure that this matter is discussed and figure out a way to change the current response by targeting solutions to be implemented in order to see more parental involvement in the schools. It is time to listen to the reasons parents are not getting involved and make a plan that can resolve this issue.

## **Solutions That Can Help Increase Parental Involvement**

There are many reasons for low parental involvement. The main challenges preventing parental involvement are: parents work, no transportation, and language barrier. To be able to accommodate for parents who work would be to extend the hours teachers are available to meet with the parents and build a close communication through phone calls and letters to maintain the parents informed of how the student is doing in school and how they can help at home. If parents do not have transportation to come to the school, my recommendation would be for the teacher to make home visits and keep in contact with the parents through phone calls and letters as well. Now if parents are not involved because of a language barrier, teachers can provide resources to the parents in Spanish and make them feel welcomed and invite them to participate in the school. To solve this, schools can offer English classes to parents who are interested in learning the language and teachers can communicate with the parents in Spanish to help them feel comfortable and appreciated.

Without a doubt, Hispanic Spanish speaking parents define parental involvement as important. They understand the necessity of collaboration from home and school for the success of the children. Parents see that team work is required to achieve one goal which is student's achieving their highest potential. Overall, Hispanic English speaking parents defined parental involvement as communication and collaboration between parents and teachers, as well as, attending school events and helping at home. Parents understand that children need guidance and support and by keeping an open communication with teachers they can collaborate with the teacher to help the student succeed. They know that by attending school events, students can feel school is important and parents are interested in how they are doing. The parent specialist believes that the active participation of parents is very important. Although every teacher had

her own definition, many definitions were similar, like: parents being involved with their children; parents helping by participating in school related activities; keeping an open communication with the teacher and collaborating to help students succeed. The principal stated that parental involvement requires teamwork. The counselor believes in the value of showing parents the importance of parental involvement and making them aware of the impact they have on their children. As for the academic coach, she says that it begins at childbirth and is ongoing and requires parents volunteering and keeping an open communication.

### **Parental Involvement Through the Eyes of the Parents**

Every Hispanic Spanish speaking parent that was interviewed spoke to me about the way they were involved in their child's academic success. Their answers varied from very little to a lot, and some interviewees said it was either a wife or bilingual brother who was involved. Some parents help with homework, attendance; attend school events, vocabulary, academics, reading, attending the school, and communicating with the teacher.

Hispanic English speaking parents were involved by: encouraging students to succeed, helping with homework, checking student progress, reading books, knowing that the child is participating in class, making sure they don't stay behind, focusing on areas where they need more help or weaknesses as per teacher, reading, modeling and correcting grammar when speaking, attendance by dropping them off daily, asking questions, helping them develop, keeping a line of communication, attending school events, communicating through e-mails or phone calls, taking students to the library, helping them at home, showing them awareness of authority figures and respect, collaborating with the teacher, and ensuring that students perform to their highest potential.



## **Parents' Perception of Their Involvement in Their Child's Academic Success**

All Hispanic Spanish speaking parents noticed positive effects. They saw that it encourages students and motivates them to want to come to school. Without parental involvement, students feel bad, or they don't try at school. Students wouldn't come to school, they would stay behind on school subjects. It's working, teamwork. Teacher and parent helping child succeed. The benefits of feeling supported by the parents show progress as a result and there is more union and more help and good communication with the students. Students are making progress and learning a lot.

Hispanic English speaking parents see that it's very important because it has great impact on the child. By parents helping students, students succeed. It helps them by socializing with other people, learn a lot, helps them understand in a different way (reviewing, re-teaching). It makes students want to do better, it helps them do better, and want to progress and not stay behind. Parental involvement makes students happy and want to come to school. The children learn from their parents and observe everything they see. It is very important to take time and be patient with them to give them time to grow. Without parental involvement, students will not make an effort or strive to do their best. Parental involvement is crucial; it plays a major part in their future. Teachers only have a certain amount of time with the students and many times it is not on a one on one basis, so it is up to the parents to be reinforcing, repeating, and helping students understand clearly at home. Since the teacher can only teach so much, parents can help their children become stronger in their weaknesses. It is important to make sure that parents feel they are a part of their child's education because it attributes to the child's overall success. Effective parental involvement requires an open line of communication to be able to affect the child and help him/her do better.

The perception of parental involvement by the parents interviewed showed no difference between English speaking parents and Spanish speaking parents. All parents demonstrated that they wanted the best for their children. Parents want their children to be good members of society and have a great future with a desirable profession and to be able to prosper. It is evident that parents make many sacrifices to offer their children opportunities they might not have had.

Parental involvement should be recognized and awarded. Parents that go above and beyond to help their child succeed at home should not go unnoticed. Every parent who is trying and needs guidance should be assisted and empowered to do his/her part in helping the student succeed. There are many parents who want to help but do not know how. It is important to look out for every parent in a class and ensure that some form of communication is available and that they are guided and directed on ways they can help.

### **The Different Lenses of Parental Involvement**

To be able to create a plan on how to increase parental involvement, it is necessary to consider everyone's point of view. Being open to different views is important in order to come to a resolution. To increase parental involvement all perspectives must be examined. Starting with the parents and taking their reasons of why they are not involved and showing this to teachers can broaden their understanding of why parents are not getting involved. Teachers in turn can examine what they are doing to help parents become involved. The parent specialist and the academic coach can work with teachers and parents to overcome the challenges keeping parents from getting involved in the context of the school. Principals and counselors can better help promote parental involvement if they see the parents' perspective as well as the teacher's actions to help increase parental involvement.

Parents' perspectives of parental involvement varied from helping with homework, attending school events, and communicating and collaborating with teachers. The teachers' perspectives were different. Some believed that parental involvement consisted of parents coming to the school events, others with parents helping at home with homework, and others with parents visiting the classrooms. Some teachers believed that parents did not participate only because they did not attend the school meetings others felt parents were not doing enough to help students because they did not help students with homework. The counselor felt it was necessary to invite parents to the school and inform them of the importance they have in their children's education. The academic coach believed that parents could help by becoming involved in the school. The parent specialist perceived parental involvement as creating relationships with parents in order to increase participation. The principal's perspective was that it required everyone participating in the child's learning.

Being able to contribute to this noticeable need is very satisfying and in the long run rewarding. It may take many research studies and many years before a practical educational application can be reached, yet the time and effort will be worth it because of all the benefits that parental involvement brings to bilingual students.

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## APPENDIX

## APPENDIX

### RESPONSES

**Note: All interviewees are presented with their corresponding number throughout this paper.**

**Eleven Hispanic Spanish speaking parents, eleven Hispanic English speaking parents, twenty-two teachers, and one parent specialist were interviewed. Also, one principal, one counselor, and one reading academic coach responded to a questionnaire. The first question was: How do you define parental involvement? The following were their responses.**

**Parent 1:** One has to come to be with them and you know try to be with them continue for them to see that one is accompanying them and for them to see that they have to continue on, that is what one should do.

**Parent 2:** Well important because they have to be involved in the child's progress and how it will be going at the school and how teachers are with them and all that kind.

**Parent 3:** I believe that parental involvement is very important in the with the children because in order for the child to move forward not only the homework of teachers parents also have to be involved in the house to help them to help them in a little by little so that children go forward.

**Parent 4:** It has is essential for children to continue their learning.

**Parent 5:** Like getting involved to help him? Well is good that because we learn together with them.

**Parent 6:** Well concerning school helping with homework as I for example I helped her with homework and when you have an event here I try to always be here with her so that she feels supported.

**Parent 7:** Good because they let us know of everything that they will do they always bring notes and all good.

**Parent 8:** In schools you say, it is very important because we want the best for our children. To get to be good people in society and something that they can do as a doctor an attorney a specialist.

**Parent 9:** How do I define it? Well it's good because in conjunction with the teacher we are a good team.

**Parent 10:** It is something very important for the children.

**Parent 11:** Excellent!

**Parent 12:** Doing the best you can for your child in their classroom that's basically it doing the best to give them the best advantage in life.

**Parent 13:** For my child I'm involved with everything they have like whatever they have in the school I try my best to come for I have two other boys that's why so I try to I try to even it out.

**Parent 14:** Doing homework with her coming to her school functions. Knowing how she's doing.

**Parent 15:** It's very important to be involved because then you don't know about your kids so I'm really involved.

**Parent 16:** Being active in every day like when they go to school you want to be active you want to make sure you know you attend everything that you know when they send you a letter home and for example like when they have a what's it called like just this past weekend I mean



week they had a father daughter thing and of course me and my husband came and whenever she has her little ceremonies for perfect attendance or you know teacher conference and you know also with like after school when they have the to see how your child has been progressing you know and if there's anything like when her report card comes in and you see that there's like satisfactory or you know not excellent you want to go and discuss your teacher what else you could do better for her and also you know making sure you help her with her homework and you know every day and just that's what I think is parental involvement.

**Parent 17:** Important,very important.

**Parent 18:** Helping them with their homework. Participating in activities with them in the school answering questions even as difficult as they may be.

**Parent 19:** Parental involvement I mean its self it sounds just like it means I guess parents being involved in the children's activities parents understanding what's going on and helping out of course.

**Parent 20:** Parental involvement is when you have a collaboration of a school inviting parents to take part in their child's education making them feel welcomed educating them empowering them and making them feel part of their child's education.

**Parent 21:** Parental involvement is a collaboration between parents and the community and in the schools with the school system.

**Parent 22:** Parental involvement to me is making the time to attend your child's events at school being a part of their their reading their learning their per-literacy skills like taking them to the library communicating with the teacher and making sure that that communication is there because as a parent we can do so much at home and the teacher can only do so much so when we communicate it's it's better for the child.

**Parent Specialist:** Parental involvement I guess would be parents actively participating in any functions that the school has or activities that they have sponsoring events and overall just being there for their children. That's a great participation just being there for our children.

**Teacher 1:** Parents being involved in the students' education school meetings projects after school programs.

**Teacher 2:** Parental involvement is where the parents are involved and help their kids basically what I think that's is helping them in their learning that's how I think parental involvement is really.

**Teacher 3:** See I really think that the parents need to be informed of what's going on in the school setting and then actually you know being in the classroom once in a while so that they can actually can see what's going on sometimes they come to meetings and we give them information but they don't get to see their true picture of what goes on in the classroom.

**Teacher 4:** Here at this campus parental involvement it's there could be more I would say it's just trying to figure out a way to get them to be a little bit more involved in you know coming in and speaking to us so I say it's kind of low.

**Teacher 5:** Parent involvement I guess just getting the parents involved having the parents be part of the child's education.

**Teacher 6:** Parental involvement is when parents and teachers and the community work together to help their kids.

**Teacher 7:** Parental involvement is when a parent is involved in their child's education not only in their education but in the wellbeing of the child as well they are focused on first of all meeting their basic needs and by that I mean food and clothing shelter love at home secondly they are focused on their education such as they are you know they help their child with the homework

they're involved in the PTO meetings they keep close contact with the teacher etcetera that's parental involvement.

**Teacher 8:** Parental involvement is when parents are involved in education say for example coming to meet with the teacher maybe calling if they have any concerns or coming by checking up to make sure that their kids are progressing or if I have any concerns me being able to call them and feel comfortable calling them and talking to them about academics and nonacademic subjects that's what I feel that it is also that they come and they participate in any activities that that might be going on in the school and maybe volunteering their time and and trying to help out in the classroom as well.

**Teacher 9:** Okay I think that parental involvement involves the teacher the parent and the student working together to meet at one goal.

**Teacher 10:** Parental involvement is the involvement of teachers with parents grandparents uncles and aunts anyone that's in the household.

**Teacher 11:** Parental involvement would be parents coming and like asking what their students are doing and trying to help the students how can I help you to help my child improve and being yeah knowing what is going on in the classroom.

**Teacher 12:** Parental involvement would be parents that are involved in homework in activities school activities the overall education of the of the students.

**Teacher 13:** Parental involvement for me involves the parent actually playing an active role in the students' education that would be the parent coming in phone calls to the parents and now with technology text messaging with the parents that has changed even using other apps to keep in contact with the parents and having conferences one on one with the parents sometimes yes

coming to an assembly or coming to an award an awards assembly or a school function is parental involvement as well but sometimes for me I prefer the one to one with the parent.

**Teacher 14:** Parental involvement pus that the parental liaisons has meetings with the with the parents and inform them of activities that we have here at school and how to help your students or their children how to help them with the homework or get involved.

**Teacher 15:** Parental involvement is someone that comes to to our campus and is interested in their children's learning and and is willing to to volunteer to help out anything having to do with their child's education with their with their school.

**Teacher 16:** Parental involvement I define it as being in communication with the teacher two way teacher communicates with the parent parent communicates with the teacher as well we need to have that open communication so that we can get their child to succeed in what we are in for and hopefully pass STAAR test and all the academics.

**Teacher 17:** As far as what I see here in school with our children very important parents need to be involved in their child's education unfortunately not everybody is you know we don't have the participation like we would like to but we try to help out those children that you know lack the participation from home but you can see the difference.

**Teacher 18:** To me parental involvement has different I guess different there's different ways that parents can be involved is not just necessarily coming to the school and volunteering time I think parental involvement also is being involved at home as parents reading to their children and asking their children how their day went asking them at least for one good thing that happened maybe one bad thing that happened at school today and conferencing with the teacher keeping in touch with the teacher as far as the student progress and and observations that the

teacher has made just being involved in with their homework and a lot of communication with the child and the teacher.

**Teacher 19:** When the parents come in to check the kids' academics or any kind of activities that we have whether it's literacy night or math night or just come in and volunteer or basically just get involved with any kind of activities that we have in the school.

**Teacher 20:** Parental involvement is when parents help out in school environment is helpful to the teachers because they get to know get to interact with the teachers on a one to one basis and they get to see what's going on around the school environment.

**Teacher 21:** I define it as being involved in what the school needs and but also being involved with your child at home for example making sure that your an active participant when it comes to homework making sure they're on top of that they're always sending notes home from school and sometimes the kids are just so used to taking notes home that they forget so keeping make sure you keep on top of it you know did you get any notes today is there anything going on in school this week that I should know about because my son in particular he'll get notes and they're just in his backpack and it's not until the day before or mom I need this or mom I need that so maybe if schools would kind of send home like a monthly calendar that would be good but parent involvement I think is necessary at any grade from Pre-K to high school cuz then it gets lot more a lot more demanding when it comes to academics and making sure that their GPA is on track and things like that.

**Teacher 22:** Parental involvement should be where the parent is involved in the children's academic academic and that is also agreeing with what the teacher is is trying to do to help their child succeed we need to have make sure that the parent and the teacher are in the same you know in the same idea so we can have these students succeed and learn.

**Principal:** Parental involvement is the partnership between a school and the parents in educating children. Parents need to understand that it is not only the responsibility of a school to accomplish this big task. In order for all students to succeed in school parents need to be there to guide, influence, make an impact, and provide support to their children in school. When parents and schools work together this is a big plus for children, schools and the community. Students feel happy and are motivated to do their best in school when they know their parents are involved in making the school a better place for everyone. The school needs to be transformed to a center that is there for parents as well as in educating all students.

**Counselor:** When we get the parents involved in the education of their children by making them aware that by getting involved in school, they will know their child is learning.

**Reading academic coach:** For an Early Childhood Center, I define “parent involvement” as the participation of parents in every facet/area of children’s education. I feel it starts from the development at childbirth to adulthood. I feel that the parents are the primary influence in the life of their children. There are many ways that parents can get involved in their child’s education, here are a few.

- Encourage parents to participate in volunteer work. As the child sees the parent at their school he/she will feel that school is important.
- This will help keep the doors of communication open between school and home.

**All twenty-two parents were asked: How are you involved in your child’s academic success? The following were their answers.**

**Parent 1:** Well in reality right I involve myself very little because you see my wife is the one that almost always comes, but when given the occasion that I have the opportunity to is when I

present myself I and that way right to follow that well to ask questions to the teacher how he's doing and that that is what.

**Parent 2:** Well this to try to send her to school every day. I struggle very much with her because she doesn't want to come. I start to do homework with her and if she has any questions I am there. I come to the to what they have here you know. I do not know how it is called. Things that they have here Mother's day and all that when she gets awards and all that so here I am.

**Parent 3:** Much much much because when he has homework I put myself with him in the house and we get to do the homework Well I don't do it I tell him how and if it is wrong or something I try to do good things when it is in the form of reading I get him to read books he reads books he reads books at night before we go to sleep and we make it as a game so he don't get bored.

**Parent 4:** I try to always be very attached with her and tell me what in what little I can help. I help her and my son helps her a lot more because he is bilingual.

**Parent 5:** I try to get involved as much. We the two of us because we are the ones who help with homework and all.

**Parent 6:** Well I explain things as I know them and as it comes in what the teacher tells us and that.

**Parent 7:** 50 and 50 here.

**Parent 8:** Well a lot I almost never leave the room. I think that teachers already are getting tired of seeing me here always because I am always here looking after her. Very good teachers Mrs. Vergara and Mrs. Cabrera are good teachers and assistants all have also been very good with the children and MECC has been a good school for my daughter.

**Parent 9:** 100%.

**Parent 10:** Well yes I am involved very much with him in his academics.

**Parent 11:** In everything helping her with the homework reviewing her homework her vocabulary all that.

**Parent 12:** Trying to encourage them always to do better and to succeed and they can do anything they try to do or want to do.

**Parent 13:** At home we have mostly those sprout cubbies so we interact with them and we my wife teaches them more stuff than I know so she helps them out with the school so they're real good right now my boys.

**Parent 14:** We do homework together. I used to do other things with her like for her to learn her words and put them together.

**Parent 15:** Very I when she gets homework and stuff I help her I try to help her as much as I can and if the teacher tells me that she needs more help in something well I try to focus on that.

**Parent 16:** I try to make sure she does all her homework everything she is doing in class you know trying to be involved in that make sure she's progressing the way she should be and making sure she reads her books you know she is answering questions when the teachers ask her and making sure that you know she's not staying behind.

**Parent 17:** I try to make sure that he learns every day with his numbers his abc's. His teacher does send me a note saying he needs more help on certain areas so that's what I try to help him out as most.

**Parent 18:** We do homework as soon as we get home I check their homework we read correct their grammar when they talk.

**Parent 19:** Well I mean I'm here daily I drop her off I ask questions review her homework daily I help her develop that's about it.



**Parent 20:** Making sure to have communication with my child's teacher making sure that I support my child when they're doing homework to look at any papers any materials that are sent back from the school so that I can see how my child is performing keeping up with their grades report cards interim reports and keeping that line of communication with the teacher to know how my child is progressing.

**Parent 21:** I ensure to be a parent to my child I ensure that he understands that I am the authority figure at home and I teach him respect and I live by the golden rule and teach him the same thing as well and I also follow up on his academics I make sure I have collaboration with the teachers that I have communication with teachers and with principles and whoever the authority figures in his life so that I ensure that he's performing to his highest potential.

**Parent 22:** I try to make the effort to attend any events that he has after school and I'll try my best to communicate with the teacher whether it be email because I don't really get the chance to go during her conference but if I have any questions I I feel comfortable giving her the call she has made it easy for me to communicate with her or send her an email and also just I communicate with her by asking her like Ethan's weaknesses and from there I'm able to take him to the library or work with him at home so that he can be successful in school.

**The same twenty-two parents were asked: What is your perception of the effect of parental involvement? The following were their replies.**

**Parent 1:** Not well very well if you have a as I tell him right as if not if one not does not arise or something they feel bad or they don't try at school and when they see us coming and looking forward to school and one they look that one and well comes as I think that it gives them a little more than encouragement to be with them.

**Parent 2:** In much in much because if it weren't for this they would not come to school. She has a lot to learn so there I am in the house so if not if I was not there she would stay behind on her subjects and that.

**Parent 3:** Oh very well I think that we are doing it well both the teacher and I because he is doing well right now. He is already in the twelfth I think the teacher said and he is 2.3 which means the child is doing well but because, one, is thanks to the teacher and the parents have to do with it both.

**Parent 4:** Well until now, well all three I have three and all three have been super and honor roll since little.

**Parent 5:** Well good.

**Parent 6:** Well she likes to feel supported by me.

**Parent 7:** Well all his progress is a lot. Everything they learn is very well.

**Parent 8:** More union more help and I am a LPAC parent also. I got involved in that and it is something that I liked very much being involved in helping at school and the teachers in what they allowing me.

**Parent 9:** A good communication with my son.

**Parent 10:** Oh yes, he is well making progress.

**Parent 11:** As a result very well she is learning a lot and well.

**Parent 12:** I see as a teacher's aide I see a lot of parents don't care and their kids don't succeed but the ones that are in there pushing the kids they succeed and I believe that's the way it is that if the parents try to get them to do stuff they succeed better than the ones that don't have any help.

**Parent 13:** I think it's great I like it how it's come out is pretty nice. How do you think it helps your child? How it helps it helps them by socializing with other people since my son doesn't we

don't really get out of the house so it helps out it helps out cuz my son is real nice real respectful now and he greets himself to other people more better than I ever seen any kid.

**Parent 14:** Oh, a lot she learns a lot here but then we help her understand it in a different way.

**Parent 15:** Well it's very good because sometimes parents don't get involved and they're like uh you know they're left out kind of so.

**Parent 16:** I think it makes her want to you know do better, I think it helps her you know whenever cuz when she's how do you say it? She is like she's shy so me help I guess me being there for her helps her you know do better and helps her how do you say it? Want to progress you know not stay behind I guess you can say it and I'm a little nervous here. It's okay, and I think it makes her happy it makes her want to come to school and that's what I think.

**Parent 17:** I also think it's very important I mean the children learn from mommy and daddy they learn from everything that you see they basically absorb everything so if you teach them wrong they do show that in class you yell at them they'll yell at the other kids so yeah I think it's very important that we try to take our time and be patient with them because they do need time to grow.

**Parent 18:** I think it's major if you if you as a parent don't care don't involve yourself they're not going to make an effort they're not going to strive to do their best. We're all them about you know say the happy smiley faces you know everything that they bring home and we we bring it to their attention you know it's very critical I think it plays a major part in their future.

**Parent 19:** I think that parental involvement is key I mean the teachers do their job but it it's they're only here for a certain amount my kids are here for four hours so it really goes to what we do at home reinforce what they're learning repeat what they're learning help them understand clearly.

**Parent 20:** My perception is making sure that parents feel that they are an integral part of their child's education when that parent feels that they are part of the school system that they are part of their child's success then I think that that attributes to overall success of the child.

**Parent 21:** An effective parental involvement is something difficult to to maintain because there has to be an open line of communication between the parent and the schools and sometimes involve the community as well to help you support students' success but something that's effective has to be ongoing it has to be surveyed monitored and ensure that you're getting your I guess your ideas across to the parents so that children are affected and hopefully perform better.

**Parent 22:** I think it's it's has a great impact on the child because like I said yes they come to school every day but the teacher can only do so much she has to work with or he has to work with so many other students and sometimes it's hard to work one on one with a child that might be struggling and as a parent you can come home and you can that extra time instead of you know watching tv or playing on the iPad you can use that time to help them become stronger in their weak area.

**The same twenty-two teachers responded to: What benefits do you notice in a child's academic success when there is parental involvement? The following were their responses.**

**Teacher 1:** Better grades students do better academically and attendance their attendance is a lot better.

**Teacher 2:** Well I see their growth in their learning and it really helps and I really see it so when I see that a child is failing or that needs extra help I talk with their parents.

**Teacher 3:** I think that when the parents get involved the kid the students do achieve much better cuz the parents are aware of what's going on in the school and that's how they are able to

help the children at home when the parents don't know what's going on at school then they don't help them as much at home.

**Teacher 4:** Oh there's a huge huge cuz when I know when I speak to some parents about the grades and when they do work with them you see the big like strides they make you know when they are working with the students.

**Teacher 5:** If they if they see their parents involved they realize it's something important to the parents something important to the family and I notice the children being more focused on trying to do good because the family makes them understand that it's important.

**Teacher 6:** Oh that's the key to academic success if parents are present not just physically here but if they help at home there is a big difference we see it with all our kids I can tell you from day one who's going to succeed and who's not.

**Teacher 7:** You can tell right away when a child has a parent that is involved not only you know do they do well as far as behavior wise but you know of course academically they're the ones that are normally the top students normally those who are most likely to succeed.

**Teacher 8:** When parents are involved and they come and they they want to know what's going on in school kids are more successful and kids try harder because they know that their parents come and they ask the teacher and they they want to know what they're learning and and when parents are involved the kids actually grow because they feel like well they think it's important so it is important so it makes it important for the child.

**Teacher 9:** I have seen many benefits I've seen children come in with little knowledge of letters and sounds and reading all together and when the parent and the teacher and the student work together at the end of the year they've made more gains than children that have been in school

before and just kind of are complaisant because they they don't get that extra push that help that that guide guidance.

**Teacher 10:** Oh a lot if the child knows that someone is caring for him and and everyone needs support it gives you self-esteem.

**Teacher 11:** The students where that have parents that are interested in what is going on are always excel they go further than the kids that don't have parents that are involved.

**Teacher 12:** The child would be on level in math science reading the child will show more exposure to especially science reading just their background knowledge would be just way more advanced than a child that has no parental involvement.

**Teacher 13:** It keeps the parents on their toes and if you keep the parents on their toes then they as well keep their child on their toes when there's parental involvement so it's like the domino effect if you're on top of things and you're speaking to your parents constantly then they will stay on top of things as well.

**Teacher 14:** You see a lot of success because the the students know that their parents are here and that they care and and in the past that I've had parents working there they are the kids that do the best yes yes for sure.

**Teacher 15:** They feel that okay mom or dad are are there maybe for support or they're on top of what I'm going to do or what I'm not going to do or if they feel that there's somebody there you know that they're not on their own and they I guess they feel they have to perform to you know there's somebody there watching or you know their parents.

**Teacher 16:** Two of the things that I've noticed when there is parental involvement are first of all is their academics if a child is struggling and teacher makes contact with the parent the parent is informed right away what the child is in need of and together they can help the child so his

academics progresses a lot the second one is the child's behavior when the parents are aware that there is a concern with their behavior you know that open communication with the parent helps a lot.

**Teacher 17:** Oh they get far more help reinforcement at home the reading you know the homework gets done it helps them here at school and their grades I mean you can see the improvement.

**Teacher 18:** When there is parental involvement the child on average I've noticed that the child is more successful basically because I think the child is aware that mom or dad or grandma or grandpa are going to call or are going to come by and are going to do little quick check-ins on how the child is doing both academically and also with behavior so I think it helps.

**Teacher 19:** They're usually on level specially when they help them at home with homework they tend to be more comfortable when we ask them questions here in class you know depending on the academics that we're working on it helps them have more confidence and do better overall.

**Teacher 20:** The child knows that the parent is around the school so they get to look around and see their parents around the school area and they feel more secure and more safe.

**Teacher 21:** Well first the child knows that you're on top of things and that you're you know when to expect for example me that I have access to when he tests on line and when he does his AR so whenever he tests I logged in because I wanted to know what kind of grades he gets and when he tests so if there's a period of time where I don't receive emails I'll you know of course follow up with that you know son why haven't you been testing and you need to be reading because you know your grade on the last quiz was an 80 and you know you need to pick up your average or as an educator we are very familiar with progress reports and report cards and so

when progress report comes out son you have three weeks three more weeks to work on that on that average in order you know make sure you pick up that average cuz I don't want you coming home with a B things like that.

**Teacher 22:** When there's parental involvement with the child's academic when the parents are involved with the children the teacher and the parent are you know together and they help the children succeed because we get them here and then at home they also reinforce what we're working on so it it helps in their academic success.

**The same twenty-two teachers and parent specialist were asked: What are some techniques you have utilized to increase parental involvement that have worked for you in the past? They responded as follows.**

**Teacher 1:** Send reminders of upcoming events phone calls.

**Teacher 2:** Well I usually give them extra things for them to work with them at home like extra worksheets or things that will help the parent to help the child at home.

**Teacher 3:** I try to get those parents that come even when they just come to come pick up their children let them know how important it is for them to do come to the meetings when we send notices that we have meetings to discuss the academic or behavior of the child how important it is for them to come through and be here for their son or daughter.

**Teacher 4:** Usually I just do like newsletters do calendars so that they'll know ahead of time like what's coming up so they'll know that they can make arrangements at you know where they work I usually try to give them as much notice as possible be available whenever they need me to be available so they can come in and talk to me or be a part of the class for whatever reason.

**Teacher 5:** I know that as a campus mostly we try to have a dances were the children participate it's always exciting at this age group to see the children you know do a song and dance for the



parents we try to also tell the parent tell the children we are preparing something special for parent and the children go home and tell that to the parents so they see it's important to the child and that kind of drives them to come in.

**Teacher 6:** Keeping in touch with the parents sending them notes and not just bad notes but also good notes.

**Teacher 7:** Okay well one of the things is that I I have a behavior calendar so you know every day I'm I'm in in contact with the parent by that and notifying them how their child has been you know behaving on a daily basis even though it does take you know a lot of time but I think it's really you know important also you know whenever there's special events in the school I remind them I also use the texts message system I have an open communication with them I este give them my my phone number and and send out you know reminders on a weekly basis of the upcoming events of our school.

**Teacher 8:** I try to send notes behavior calendars I implement behavior calendars and parents will sometimes call me why did my child get a sad face today? Or why you know why did this happen or you know and parents tend to call because they they're informed also I try to invite them when there's a mothers' day program I usually send my own invitation aside from the school invitation I try to personalize it so that they feel like you know that they're more welcomed and cuz who doesn't like a pretty invitation right so it it's just a a different way of inviting them not just a plain Jane invitation that the school might send just just to make them feel comfortable and sometimes I'll even get them you know get my phone and call them if I don't see response from a parent I'll say you know we had this and you know it would have been nice or you know I I saw that your child felt a little sad and you know what's going on is there

something I can do for you you know just just to make them feel like I notice and I care you know.

**Teacher 9:** Some of the techniques are that I like to send a lot of notes and I make phone calls I keep them updated I try to find any way that I can communicate with them I work with them I'm flexible if I need to call when it's my time at home with my kids I take a little bit of time and I call them and and I make that that contact with them.

**Teacher 10:** Let's see well I call them and I'll send them letters and I've even made booklets with pictures and we've we've got I well I don't know if it's parental but you know the students would go to the high rise and sing to the parents to the not to the parents to the grandparents or going to the parade they'd be in the parade and the parents would come and bring them and so that helps a lot.

**Teacher 11:** Give me time to think well I've I'll try to call the parents and there are parents that will come in and like there are parents that no matter how many times you call them they're just like kinda like yeah yeah okay and then they don't help other parents do come in and I'll give them like little packages with different things that they can use with the students to help them improve like especially the ones that are really low so like these are some games that you can play at home or here are some other activities you can do at home that you can help your child some parents do use what I give them and others parents the kids are like I got lost and they don't try.

**Teacher 12:** I like to send notes for everything have the parent sign everything if it's any reading parent has to sign parents have to be held accountable for everything that happens in school like that they're involved they feel some kind of pressure to be involved.

**Teacher 13:** Some of the things that I've done in the past and sometimes they work and they'll work with one group of students that you have and sometimes it doesn't work the following year so you have to change it but sending notes home consistently I would do the newsletter and that was very good response because my parents were always aware of what was happening in the classroom with the students were learning it did work that one year other years you could find that the note is still in the binder in the same place hasn't been touched hasn't been used and constant contact phone calls that's that's the main one.

**Teacher 14:** What I've done is like in the past I think not this year because I didn't have any parents involved but if I know that there is some parents that want to help I make sure that they ask the right people so they can come and help because it makes a difference.

**Teacher 15:** For parental involvement I guess maybe incentives or I think just incentives for the parents as well as for for the children the students.

**Teacher 16:** One of the techniques that I've used is the monthly calendar I'll list their activities that are going on throughout the school for that month I also make a list of the rules on the monthly calendar and for example if a child gets a sad face the child the parent would read there you know he was misbehaving rule number one or excessive talking for example rule number two so the parents are aware and usually the following day you see a difference in in the child's behavior so those are some of the techniques that I've used besides keeping in you know making phone calls.

**Teacher 17:** Try to get the parents involved when we have programs let them know ahead of time if I see them in the morning is like a quick you know let me tell you how your child is doing and you know if we don't see the parent that often then we make the phone calls but I do send a

behavior folder home every day so there is that communication I do let them know little notes there and you know sometimes we don't hear back but you know we're communicating.

**Teacher 18:** First of all at the beginning of the school year I like to give everybody a phone call and give them my conference hours some of them don't have access all though we have it online they don't have access or they just simply don't log on but I like to call them at the beginning of the school year and I also make a little note a little classroom note welcoming their child a little letter to the classroom and it has my conference information and a school phone number I used to give my cell number but then I would get texts like at 10:30 at night so I don't give my cell phone number out unless the the parent asks for it or I use my phone and they record it.

**Teacher 19:** Usually when I send do telephone calls I try to let them know that their child is I try to give them positive all the time and then at the end I'll if there is any negative comments I'll let them know but I usually try to do positive that way they feel welcomed and not be like oh they just want me to hear bad stuff.

**Teacher 20:** I call parents in to see if they can help and a lot of parents do help I send out work home and they'll do it at home and they'll just send it back if they're not able to come to the school.

**Teacher 21:** As a teacher as a teacher I think the newsletter I used to do a weekly newsletter and that helped a lot it would consist of things that were going to be studied that week it was a lot of time it was very time consuming we would also include birthdays for the week math language social studies objectives important activities that were happening in the school and that I kind of felt short with that I've stopped doing it because it was just so darn time consuming and every year since our scope and sequence changes and all that it was having to be redone every year every week so it was like like another lesson plan to do and it was useful but then again we don't

all we don't have a 100% parent involvement it's only it's only a maybe 50% of our kids that have parents' support at home.

**Teacher 22:** We do have open house where the parents can come in and and speak to us and we also let the parents know that we have a conference period that they can come in or they can come in at any time and they can see their child you know in their class setting and you know we invite them to come in.

**Parent specialist:** We've send out flyers we've send text messages calls a variety of things to entice we also have we get items we give books and things like that to kind of entice the parents to attend we try to make topics that they would be interested in or things that they would benefit the family and so we focus on that.

**Lastly, the same twenty-two teachers, parent specialist, principal, counselor, and reading academic coach were asked: Why do you think there is such low numbers of parental involvement? Following are their responses.**

**Teacher 1:** Because most of the parents work or have more children.

**Teacher 2:** Why because maybe the parents work or they don't they're not they're too busy with other things that they forgot you know to help their child but maybe just reminding them.

**Teacher 3:** I understand that there are a lot of parents that do work but to tell you the truth I don't know why they would not be able to make a that little bit of time you know to come to discuss the their the progress of their children.

**Teacher 4:** It might be their work they might not have transportation but honestly is it could be a multitude of things someone might not have a phone to be able to get contacted in might be a language barrier I'm not sure but usually it's with mine the once I have noticed it's it's the work

they're like I can't get the time off to come especially when we let them know to to soon for them to make the arrangements.

**Teacher 5:** I think for one families are busy families are busy and sometimes the jobs that they have don't allow them the time to come during the during the day or even in the evenings that's one but another one is parents sometimes just don't see the importance they don't see the benefit for the children in being in being involved.

**Teacher 6:** I think a lot has to do with our busy lifestyles moms are have joined the workforce a lot of moms work now and and dads work too so a lot of these kids end up staying with grandma or grandpa and there's lack of time I think.

**Teacher 7:** You know to me the parents seem to be getting younger and younger as you know the time goes by and I don't think they fully understand what the role of a parent you know should be those parents that are really really you know young you know might see their child as a friend as a buddy but not really like a child you know you know that they need to be raising and and and you know having that good example for them so I think that that has a lot you know to do with it. Also there are language barriers as well that you know some parents you know might feel inadequate to come you know to the classroom because because you know their language difference you know perhaps you know they might not speak English and they you know they may feel you know shame or or or you know not worthy to come you know to the events as well.

**Teacher 8:** In the in where we work we have a lot of parents who are not able especially our LEP population they're not able to come because they work and maybe they're the only parent that works so it's very hard for them to miss their work you know because I mean that's what they they live on and sometimes they don't have transportation or sometimes they feel and I've

had parents tell me this they feel that they're not educated enough they feel like they're inadequate to their child so they they don't want to be embarrassed or embarrass they're kids so sometimes that's why they don't want to come because they feel pos what can I do? How can I help? They feel that they they're not knowledgeable enough to come and help us or to help their child.

**Teacher 9:** I think that sometimes it has to do with the times that we're available again because a lot of parents do work during the day and they can't always make it to school events I mean or meetings because they have to prioritize when they're able to come in and that's probably the one of the barriers in in having enough parental involvement.

**Teacher 10:** I think it's the kind of parents now a days that is different some of these parents need parenting skills they don't have it and you can tell on the children they'll have the kids playing baseball and yet the kids don't bring any homework you know some of these kids they they don't do any homework whatsoever.

**Teacher 11:** Some of the parents that I have seen like this year that aren't really involved is because they have to many kids and they're like well I have all these kids I can't be just working with this one when I have to take care of so many of them and they don't really focus on any one of them they just I guess trying to just get by.

**Teacher 12:** What I notice a lot there's a lot of young parents and now with this technology it's just I feel that they're focus is more on other things and the kids as sad as that sound they're just you know they're just it seems like their priority is something else.

**Teacher 13:** Wow the trend in parenting I believe if anything sometimes it's difficult to get ahold of a parent there isn't a routine with the parent and the child there's you know if there isn't a set foundation a set routine if there isn't a set structure at home that makes it difficult to have

good parental involvement or just to have that communication with that one parent to help the child we've seen a decline this year actually this year there was a major decline when we had that TLI was the reading one of our literacy nights I believe I had zero parents come in what could it have been attributed to? I don't think it was attributed to the weather I know we were expecting severe weather that time I just think it was a lack of maybe communication with in ourselves and to our parents or I just don't know if parents maybe work later now to try and support their family and so they push their child's education aside maybe they feel that early childhood is not as important as elementary or secondary school.

**Teacher 14:** I think they need to be informed that it is important for them to be involved in their children's education they they need to be informed we need to have more meetings to let them know how how to get involved and why they should get involved.

**Teacher 15:** I don't know sometimes maybe they go into the school setting and and I don't know maybe at times they might not feel welcomed or to comfortable you know that they feel like maybe appreciated you know like why go you know they don't even take into account what I do maybe that's what I would say.

**Teacher 16:** I think that one of the main reasons that there is very low turnout for parental involvement is that a lot of now a days I feel that we live in a society that is run run run run it's a very busy we have a lot of responsibilities and a lot of the parents have to work some parents work in the afternoon so it's very hard for them to be make contact with the teacher or to be more involved with their child because a lot of it has to do with I think with work that that we just live very busy lives and sometimes that's why I think that we have a very low turnout in parental involvement.



**Teacher 17:** That I do not know it is their children and I don't know why they're not involved I don't understand how that happens.

**Teacher 18:** I've heard various reasons being a bilingual teacher the most often that I've heard from parents is that they sometimes feel inferior to the teachers and to the administrators a lot of times it's a language barrier they feel embarrassed that we predominantly speak English when you have conferences and stuff like that and I guess they feel like they cannot express themselves the way they would like to with their vocabulary limited vocabulary a lot of them and others simply is because they work and they don't have the hours the flexible hours to come in but mostly I think that there's a lot of feelings of embarrassment.

**Teacher 19:** Probably cuz they work that's the only thing I feel that keeps parents from coming in and if there's any parental involvement it should be like in the evenings when there's time for them to attend.

**Teacher 20:** Now a days a lot of parents work to support their family so there's a lot of parents that both work and they're not able to come into the schools so it's a little bit harder now a days.

**Teacher 21:** I think a lot of it is maybe like the lack of education maybe it's the population here at the school that I work at because a lot of these parents they don't work there's no desire to work so it's kinda like well the kids are going to school but that's just what the kids do from 7:45 to 3 o'clock they really don't comprehend how important the school day is how rigorous it is they don't understand the level of expectations that have changed from when they were going to school so to them it's it doesn't really play a very big part it's just oh my kids at school and I think they if they were a little bit better educated then they would be more involved because they would understand the importance of the education.

**Teacher 22:** I really don't know why there's a low count I but I know that if more parents would get reached by a school officials I believe more parents would be more involved.

**Parent specialist:** I think that one of it is that parents are just very busy I mean I have an 8 to 5 job so I also if I ever need to go to my child's meetings at school I would have to take time off my job so I'm assuming that most of the parents cannot come during the day or you don't see them painting much it would be the same reason it's either you work for a leaving or you're there for your children and it's hard to balance both of them for some parents some of them it could be that they don't have a vehicle so they can't attend the meetings or attend the functions that the school has so it's hard on them on the parents they might want to come they might have that desire but unfortunately they don't have the means or the ways to get here.

**Principal:** There are many reasons why parents do not get involved because 1.) They are too busy. 2.) Parents trust in schools for educating & teaching social skills to their children. 3.) Parents think they have nothing to offer the program. 4.) Parents are not educated. 5.) Language barriers. 6.) Parents worried about making a living to provide for their children. 7.) Parents not living with their children. 8.) No means of transportation to get to the meetings or activities.

**Counselor:** We need to have more communication with parents to make them see that by them getting involved in school they will know what their child is learning & how they can help at home. Invite them to visit the school (campus).

**Academic reading coach:** I have been in education for 25 years and the only thing I can think that there is such a low number of parental involvement is that now we have "Children raising Children." The parents of today don't seem to value the importance of parental involvement.

**The principal, counselor, and academic reading coach answered through a questionnaire and the parent specialist answered during the interview the following question. How could parental involvement be promoted? Their responses follow.**

**Principal:** Parental involvement programs need to be promoted by both the parents and the district staff. Parents should not be worried they cannot bring anything to the table to help a school. Just like parents, a school or district does not have all the answers on how to get parents involved in their children's education. Parents and teachers should realize educating children is a big job and it will not get done by having several meetings. This collaboration between schools and parents is ongoing and never comes to an end. All meetings for parents need to be productive. Parents can tell a lot about a school's culture in one visit to a school. If parents are not helped or treated with respect they will never want to help in their children's school be a great place.

**Counselor:** Send a survey home to ask parents what topic they would like to learn about. Bring speakers to educate parents and invite the parents to come and listen to the speaker.

**Academic reading coach:** I would have to reiterate what we are doing in our schools.

- Literacy nights
- Make and take for literacy
- Cooking classes
- Jewelry making classes
- Fall or Spring festivals
- Etc.

I feel that this is a big problem in most of the school districts and everyone has yet to find a way to fix it, but that is just my opinion.

**Parent specialist:** I think that if you have all your all the parentals all the school everybody in this district everybody in the school involved in promoting it everybody would be more willing and in a perfect world if we had all the time in the world and didn't have to worry about doing things parents probably would be more willing to attend but unfortunately sometimes just reality takes a toll and I think we just have to promote get it maybe promote more activities that parents would be interested in participating things that they need to learn about whether it be economics or would be home or anything like that things that benefit the home and the overall wellbeing of the child and the family I think that would help those if we had topics like that and just kind of motivate and maybe building relationship with the parents I've noticed that with my parents when I've build a relationship with them they're more willing to come to meetings and things like that because they feel that connection to the person and that's there or someone that's there so we need to build those relationships.

**Finally, the same principal, counselor, and academic reading coach answered through a questionnaire the following question. What do you recommend can be done to increase parental involvement? Their responses follow.**

**Principal:** In order to increase parental involvement a district and campus should do the following things. 1.) Make parents feel welcome at all times. 2.) Share information about the schools successes and needs for improvement. 3.) Use social media to get parents involved in their children's school. 4.) Send flyers, notes, letters to invite parents to participate in the activities. 5.) Provide monthly calendars/newsletters. 6.) Provide second language classes for parents who wish to learn English. 7.) Open the library so students can complete school projects. 8.) Bring in community agencies, businesses to give the parents information that will help them raise their children. 9.) Make the school a neighborhood center that is there to meet the needs of

its parents and students. 10.) Parenting meetings need to be held at different times and in different locations throughout the community. 11.) Visit the neighborhoods where the students live so parents can see the school staff wants the best for all students. 12.) Parents should be the number one promoters for all schools. Parents entrust us with educating their children and getting them ready to live, work in this world as productive citizens. 13.) Parenting sessions need to be held to help parents deal with all the issues students face at school and in the community.

**Counselor:** Invite parents to come and see what their children are learning and how they can help the teacher.

**Academic reading coach:** In our school we have:

- Literacy nights
- Make and take for literacy
- Cooking classes
- Jewelry making classes
- Fall or Spring festivals

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Monica Isabel Lopez was born on a Monday in November 1979 to a loving family expecting her arrival at a wonderful home. Her father and mother showed her respect, honesty and faith. Her older brother gave her guidance, support and always cared for her. She had two younger brothers who she had the privilege to motivate and always tried to set a good example for them to follow. Monica attended high school and graduated top 25% of her class in 1998. Monica graduated from UTPA with a bachelor's in Interdisciplinary Studies and a minor in Bilingual Bicultural education. She is currently a Texas Certified Bilingual Teacher working for Mercedes ISD and residing in 91 Carlos Avenue, Mercedes, Texas, 78570.

Monica Isabel Lopez earned her master's degree in Bilingual Education with a minor in leadership from The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, on August 2016. Her future plans are to continue furthering her education. She is interested in pursuing her Doctoral degree and wants to make a difference in bilingual education and the school system. Her goal is to be able to be in a position where she can influence and have the responsibility to make education better for all.