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Principal Perspectives toward Parental Involvement in Pennsylvania Public High Schools

Hollis Batista

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PRINCIPAL PERSPECTIVES TOWARD PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Education

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Education

By

Hollis R. Batista

May 2009

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Hollis R. Batista

2009

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
INTERDISCIPLINARY DOCTORAL PROGRAM FOR
EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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ABSTRACT

PRINCIPAL PERSPECTIVES TOWARD PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS

By

Hollis R. Batista

May 2009

Dissertation Supervised by Dr. Gibbs Kanyongo

Historically, school systems have used their personnel, curricular, and fiscal resources to improve student performance. Faculty members in nearly every school have participated on committees focused on preparing school improvement plans to address the needs of their specific student populations. Nearly all have included a parent involvement component. The quality of design and implementation of annual school improvement plans has varied both across and within schools. The component that is more often “hoped for” than actualized has been parent involvement (Blank & Kershaw, 2001; Epstein, 2004). Rarely has the involvement of the community extended beyond fiscal support or the involvement of community role models for special events. As noted in the introduction, the need for real partnerships has become apparent as schools are now focusing on systemic reform. Based on the literature throughout, the voices of parents

and community, leaders can no longer be marginalized if schools are to address the national call for increasing student engagement and achievement in rigorous coursework, the challenge of an increasingly competitive workforce, the diverse needs of children and families, the requirements of the No Child Left Behind (Executive Summary, 2006) reform movement, and the need to assure that communities remain strong and viable places to live and work.

The intent of this study was to examine the perspectives of high school principals and assistant principals in the state of Pennsylvania toward parental involvement, and identify potential barriers to parental involvement from the perspective of the school administrator. This study will also seek to determine if perspectives are different based on principals' gender, race, professional title, years of experience, size of school, school setting. A survey was sent to all principals of public high schools in the state of Pennsylvania, which resulted in an overall response rate of 103 respondents, representing 26.8% of the sample.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my wonderful husband; Josué, you are amazing. I feel as if your name should be on the front of this paper as well as mine because this was definitely a joint effort. Those nights that I got frustrated and wanted to quit, you always said the right things to motivate me to continue. You were so patient throughout this process and went above and beyond the call of duty to make sure I had the time needed to study. You showed me how proud you were of me every step of the way. I love you.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I wish to express my deepest appreciation to those who contributed to the completion of this study. A special thank you goes to my Chair Dr. Gibbs Kanyongo for giving excellent suggestions and commentary on this study as well as valuable advice and guidance. To my committee members, Dr. Connie Moss and Dr. Robert Furman, thank you for providing a positive and encouraging attitude throughout this process and for being my compass in helping me to complete this journey.

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Chapter One : Introduction to the Study

Parents' involvement in schools has been a topic of research for many years and has continued to be a focus for improvement in schools across the country. Researchers have shown that parents' involvement in schools plays an important role in students' success (Barbour & Barbour, 2001; Gestwicki, 2000; Sergiovanni, 2001). As researchers, educators, and practitioners continue to identify ways to improve the education of students, not only do parents need to be involved in the schools, but partnerships with the community also need to be extremely effective (Barbour & Barbour; Berns, 2001; Blank & Kershaw, 2001). Furthermore, studies have shown that partnering with families and communities has contributed to an increase in students' test scores, grades, attendance, attitudes, and graduation rates (Hiatt-Michael, 2003; Lundblad & Stewart, 2005).

According to Barbour and Barbour (2001), educators, administrators, parents, community members, community leaders, and social service providers are responsible for ensuring the best possible education for students who will be the foundation of society in the future. Furthermore, school systems must establish procedures for mutually beneficial school partnerships (Blank & Kershaw, 2001). "School Partnerships" is a relatively new term used to describe the interactions of parents, community members, local businesses, community leaders, government officials, and civic organizations regarding involvement with schools and education of students (Hiatt-Michael, 2003). According to the Center for Mental Health in Schools (2003), the partnership trend that is spreading across our country has been described as "groups of people who often haven't worked together previously that are combining their talents and resources to improve outcomes for children and youth" (p. 1). While parents continue to play a critical role in school

improvement initiatives across the country, they are able to take part increasingly in collaborative change efforts within their communities (Blank & Kershaw; Ellis & Hughes, 2002). According to Bagin and Gallagher (2001) and Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach (1999), parents, educators, and community members can create workable partnerships by supporting each other in their respective roles, maintaining open communication, participating in shared decision-making processes, and implementing collaborative and authentic activities for the students.

The globalization of education, or the “flattening” of our world as Friedman (2005) described the 21st century's international economy and escalating social, political, and economic challenges, has been redefining educational partnerships in our country. The importance of partnering to assure that all children are succeeding in school has never been more important to local communities and the nation. Not only are definitions of educational partnerships expanding, but also are the parameters, the players, and the structures. Moreover, some reference to parental involvement is addressed in most legislation concerning K-12 education; for example, Goals 2000: *Educate America Act*, the Federal Title I program, and the former *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, now titled the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB). As a result of such legislation, Igo (2002) contended that parents and principals alike have a tremendous opportunity to build partnerships and work together. Indeed, Nichols-Solomon (2001) asserted that “parent involvement is one of the few things in education about which there seems to be universal agreement” (p. 34).

Although varied in name and definition, numerous researchers, practitioners, and policymakers have documented the importance of parent involvement beyond elementary

grades. Wheeler (1992) stated that “parent involvement at the middle and secondary school levels is vital if teenagers are to become stable and productive adults” (p. 28). Research indicates that when parents participate in their children’s education, an increase in student achievement and an improvement of students’ attitudes are typical outcomes. Increased attendance, fewer discipline problems, and higher aspirations have been correlated with an increase in parent involvement (Henderson & Berla, 1994). Moreover, a positive association between parental support and school grades has been established (Deslandes, Royer, Turcotte, & Bertrand, 1997). This study also found “empirical evidence that parents retain substantial influence over their adolescents’ school performance” (p. 202). Furthermore, Engle’s (1989) study of 11,200 students concluded that students whose parents remained involved in high school were much more likely to complete college. These same students were three times more likely to complete a college degree than those students whose parents had no ties to the secondary school experience. Unfortunately, parental involvement has become a phrase often mentioned but subsequently ignored, especially at the high school level. Leon (2003) believed that like a buzzword or idiom, we trust that just repeating the term will affect some benefit. Unfortunately, contemporary research has shown that parental involvement actually declines, as students grow older, so that by the time a child reaches secondary school, few parents remain active in the educational process (Stouffer, as cited in Lebahn, 1995). This decline in involvement may occur for a variety of reasons; however, research has demonstrated that continued participation by parents throughout high school remains in the best interest of the child (Connors & Epstein, as cited in Phelps, 1999; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Simon, 2001).

Flaxman and Inger (1991) pointed out that the “benefits of parent involvement are not confined to early childhood or the elementary grades. There are strong positive effects for involving parents continuously through high school” (p. 5). These efforts work to not only increase chances for academic success but also to calm the natural turbulence caused by adolescence. McGrew-Zoubi (1998) agreed, suggesting parental involvement at the middle and secondary level is a difficult balance between adolescents’ developing independence and their parents’ quest to nurture.

Parental involvement definitions and strategies for application are compounded when one considers the differences between elementary, middle, and secondary schools. The mental picture of what defines successful levels of parental involvement at the elementary level is not necessarily appropriate for secondary schools and merely implementing the same parental involvement strategies at the high school level will most likely be met with failure. If school administrators desire parents to actively help in the education of their child, principals must first outline or make apparent what parental involvement at the secondary level should look like and assemble a model of parental involvement that best meets the needs of the teenage student (Leon, 2003).

Secondary school principals must not only recognize the inherent barriers associated with parental involvement at the high school level, but also take steps to create meaningful opportunities for parental involvement. Since the responsibility for implementation of parental involvement strategies typically falls to the building-level administrator, it is imperative the secondary-level principal be cognizant of his or her personal attitudes as they relate to the issue. Lebahn (1995) suggested that while there exist a number of solutions that can be used to improve parental involvement at the high

school level, the most important is for the principal of the school to be totally committed to the concept. Peiffer (2003) concurred, by suggesting that the principal's attitude toward parental involvement may be the key determinant of the extent of parents' involvement in school programs.

Purpose of the Study

Historically, school systems have used their personnel, curricular, and fiscal resources to improve student performance. Faculty members in nearly every school have participated on committees focused on preparing school improvement plans to address the needs of their specific student populations. Nearly all have included a parent involvement component. The quality of design and implementation of annual school improvement plans has varied both across and within schools. The component that is more often "hoped for" than actualized has been parent involvement (Blank & Kershaw, 2001; Epstein, 2004). Rarely has the involvement of the community extended beyond fiscal support or the involvement of community role models for special events. As noted in the introduction, the need for real partnerships has become apparent as schools are now focusing on systemic reform. Based on the literature throughout, the voices of parents and community, leaders can no longer be marginalized if schools are to address the national call for increasing student engagement and achievement in rigorous coursework, the challenge of an increasingly competitive workforce, the diverse needs of children and families, the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind (Executive Summary, 2006)* reform movement, and the need to assure that communities remain strong and viable places to live and work.

The intent of this study will be to examine the perspectives of high school principals toward parental involvement in the state of Pennsylvania, and identify potential barriers to parental involvement from the perspective of the school administrator. This study will also seek to determine if perspectives are different based on principals' gender, race, years of experience, size of school, school setting and the socioeconomic status the school community.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this study regarding the perspectives of secondary school administrators toward parental involvement:

Research Question One

How strongly do Pennsylvania secondary school principals believe in parental involvement?

Research Question Two

What is the relationship between secondary principal perspectives and each of the following six identified parental categories:

Communication.

Communication is the foundation of a solid partnership. When parents and educators communicate effectively, positive relationships develop, problems are more easily solved, and students make greater progress.

Too often school or program communication is one-way without the chance to exchange ideas and share perceptions. Effective home-school communication is the two-way sharing of information vital to student success. Even parent-teacher conferences can

be one-way if the goal is merely reporting student progress. Partnering requires give-and-take conversation, goal setting for the future, and regular follow-up interactions.

School Decision- Making and Advocacy.

Studies have shown that schools where parents are involved in decision making and advocacy have higher levels of student achievement and greater public support.

Effective partnerships develop when each partner is respected and empowered to fully participate in the decision-making process. Schools and programs that actively enlist parent participation and input communicate that parents are valued as full partners in the educating of their children.

Parents and educators depend on shared authority in decision-making systems to foster parental trust, public confidence, and mutual support of each other's efforts in helping students succeed. The involvement of parents, as individuals or as representative of others, is crucial in collaborative decision-making processes on issues from curriculum and course selection, to discipline policies and over-all school reform measures.

Collaborating with Community.

As part of the larger community, schools and other programs fulfill important community goals.

In like fashion, communities offer a wide array of resources valuable to schools and the families they serve. When schools and communities work together, both are strengthened in synergistic ways and make gains that outpace what either entity could accomplish on its own:

- Families access community resources more easily;

- Businesses connect education programs with the realities of the workplace;
- Seniors contribute wisdom and gain a greater sense of purpose; and ultimately,
- Students serve and learn beyond their school involvement.

The best partnerships are mutually beneficial and structured to connect individuals, not just institutions or groups. This connection enables the power of community partnerships to be unleashed.

Volunteering.

When parents volunteer, both families and schools reap benefits that come in few other ways. Literally millions of dollars of volunteer services are performed by parents and family members each year in the public schools. Studies have concluded that volunteers express greater confidence in the schools where they have opportunities to participate regularly. In addition, assisting in school or program events/activities communicates to a child, "I care about what you do here." In order for parents to feel appreciated and welcome, volunteer work must be meaningful and valuable to them. Capitalizing on the expertise and skills of parents and family members provides much needed support to educators and administrators already taxed in their attempts to meet academic goals and student needs.

Although there are many parents for whom volunteering during school hours is not possible, creative solutions like before- or after-school "drop-in" programs or "at home" support activities provide opportunities for parents to offer their assistance as well.

Student learning.

Student learning increases when parents are invited into the process by helping at home. Enlisting parents' involvement provides educators and administrators with a valuable support system-creating a team that is working for each child's success.

The vast majorities of parents are willing to assist their students in learning, but many times are not sure what assistance is most helpful and appropriate. Helping parents connect to their children's learning enables parents to communicate in powerful ways that they value what their children achieve. Whether it's working together on a computer, displaying student work at home, or responding to a particular class assignment, parents' actions communicate to their children that education is important.

Parenting.

Parents are a child's life support system. Consequently, the most important support a child can receive comes from the home. School personnel and program staff support positive parenting by respecting and affirming the strengths and skills needed by parents to fulfill their role. From making sure that students arrive at school rested, fed, and ready to learn, to setting high learning expectations and nurturing self-esteem, parents sustain their children's learning. When staff members recognize parent roles and responsibilities, ask parents what supports they need, and work to find ways to meet those needs, they communicate a clear message to parents: "We value you and need your input" in order to maintain a high-quality program.

Research Question Three

What differences are there in principal perspectives based on the following demographic characteristics: a. principal gender, b. race, c. Socioeconomic Status of school community, d. years of experience, e. school setting, and f. size of school?

Significance of the Study

A number of previous studies have indicated that parental involvement remains critical for optimal student success at the high school level (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Fan, 2001; Simon, 2001). The *No Child Left Behind Act* makes additional provisions for parental involvement specifically requiring schools to expand current parental involvement activities in an effort to improve both student achievement and school performance (*No Child Left Behind*, Parental Involvement: Title I, Part A, 2004). Furthermore, Pennsylvania is a member of the Southern Regional Network Board as a “High Schools That Work” (HSTW) state.

HSTW is the nation’s first large-scale effort to engage state, district, and school leaders and teachers in partnerships with students, parents and the community to improve the way all high school students are prepared for work and post-secondary education. (Pennsylvania Department of Education, Office of Career and Technical Education, n.d.)

HSTW suggests schools follow 10 key practices. In particular, HSTW key practice number 8 states as follows:

Guidance -Involve students and their parents in a guidance and advisement system that develops positive relationships and ensures completion of an accelerated program of study with an academic or career/technical concentration.

Provide each student with the same mentor throughout high school to assist with setting goals, selecting courses, reviewing the student's progress and suggesting appropriate interventions as necessary.

School leaders need to:

Involve parents in annual meetings with students and their mentors to review progress and develop plans for the next year.

Develop efforts to educate middle grades parents, school and teacher leaders, and students about the achievement level needed for challenging high school studies and to educate high school parents, students and teachers about the achievement level needed for postsecondary study and high-demand, high-income jobs. (Southern Regional Education Board, n.d.). The Pennsylvania Office of Career and Technical Education states that the mission, goals, framework and key practices of the HSTW program is closely aligned with NCLB components, suggesting that the program can help the state meet accountability requirements for NCLB.

Even though implementation of parental involvement strategies is usually left to the building principal, few administrators have received formal training in building home-school partnerships as part of their graduate coursework. Additionally, high school teachers may be reluctant to embrace parental involvement in their classrooms, making the implementation of even excellent strategies to be especially challenging (Ramirez, 2000). As a result, the building principal who is aware of their personal and professional beliefs regarding parental involvement as well as the potential barriers inherent when working with secondary parents may be able to create increased opportunities for parental involvement in their individual school and thereby optimize the potential for each high

school student. This study may also provide useful information for administrator preparation programs. Lastly, an examination of the perspectives of Pennsylvania secondary-level administrators may serve as a catalyst toward change of current practices or provide information for modification of existing parental involvement practices.

Limitations of the Study

The number of responses received as well as the lack of authority of the researcher to obtain responses from the principals surveyed may limit this study. The statistical analyses to be performed in this study may provide significant evidence of some particular trend or direction; however, it should be noted that generalizing such findings may not be appropriate given the sample size of the population. The researcher will ensure that conservative statistical fundamentals are followed to ensure the significance and relevance of the findings.

The researcher's own beliefs and perspectives can in itself be a limitation with regard to the potential for bias and analyzing emerging data. Thus, every attempt to remain personally detached and objective about the survey and the participants will be made to create the best possible scenario for useful data and information. In addition, a significant amount of planning before and during the study will help limit the degree to which bias will play a role in this study.

Another limitation of this study will be the concerns of the issue of social desirability of responses. Participants will probably answer the survey from a perspective of what they think they should have answered. Therefore, the responses may not be honest reflections of the opinions held by the participants. In order to discourage this, participants will not be required to state their names on the survey.

Finally, it is quite possible that some principals will be relatively new to the school or in their first year as a principal and as such, have not had an opportunity to assess the school culture in regards to parental involvement.

Delimitations

This study will be delimited to Pennsylvania high school principals. In addition, the study will be delimited to six respondent personal characteristics: number of years of experience as a high school principal (0-5, 6-11, 12-19, 20+), the gender of the principal (male, female), principals' race (African-American, Hispanic White or other), the size of the school (student enrollment), (socioeconomic status of the community) and school setting (rural, urban or suburban). This demographic information was selected in an effort to determine possible differences in principal perspectives based on personal and professional factors.

Overview of the Study

This study will be divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 has presented the introduction, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations and delimitations, overview of the study and theoretical framework. Chapter 2 contains a review of selected literature for research design, review of literature, significance of parental involvement in secondary education, barriers to parental involvement in high schools, successful home-school partnerships, results of family and community involvement and implications for public school administrators.

Chapter 3 contains the, methodology, research questions, variables, and participants' selection, validity of survey instrument, data collection and data analysis. An analysis of reported data and findings will be presented in Chapter 4. Finally, a

summary of the findings, conclusions, discussion and recommendations for practice will be presented in Chapter 5.

Theoretical Framework

Despite the significant amount of research that investigates parental involvement and its effects on student achievement, the field has not produced clear and consistent results for secondary education. A difference in how researchers conceptualize parental involvement is one of the major reasons for inconsistent results. Some researchers conceive of parental involvement as participation in school activities; others, as parental aspirations for their children; and others, as involvement in children's learning activities at home. Only recently have researchers recognized the multi-dimensional character of parental involvement and have tried to capture the multitude of parental activities regarding children's education. This study conceptualizes parental involvement from a perspective that considers family, school, and community as overlapping spheres of influence (Epstein 1987, 1990, 1992). These spheres enter into complex interrelationships which define six different types of parental involvement: (1) parents' basic obligations for establishing a positive learning environment at home, (2) parent-school communications about school programs and student progress, (3) parent participation and volunteering at school, (4) parent and school communications regarding learning activities at home, (5) parent involvement in school decision making and governance, and (6) parent collaboration with community organizations that increase students' learning opportunities (Epstein, 1992).

The significance of the theoretical perspective of overlapping spheres of influence lies not only in the identification of different types of parental involvement, but also in

the recognition that parents' involvement in children's education and family-school connections are not static. Rather, differences in any of the three overlapping spheres of influence can affect which types of involvement parents are engaged in. Parental involvement may, therefore, vary by factors such as students' grade level, socioeconomic and race/ethnic background, family relationships and experiences, and school policies (Epstein, 1992). This theoretical perspective framework is a key pointer to the importance of expanding existing knowledge of how family involvement can affect student progress at different levels of education and of how educational institutions can promote family practices that increase students' further educational opportunities.

Chapter Two: Review of Selected Literature for Research Design

Prior to research design, an extensive literature review on the topic of parental involvement was undertaken. Specific attention was given to research that addressed parental involvement efforts and studies that focused on the secondary grade levels. Information was retrieved from references cited in the literature search, which included Resources in Education, Education Abstracts and Dissertation Abstracts International obtained from ProQuest, at Duquesne University's Gumberg Library, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Review of Literature

Principals play a vital role in setting the direction for successful schools, but existing knowledge on the best ways to prepare and develop highly qualified principals is sparse. Public demands for more effective schools have placed growing attention on the crucial role of school leaders, a professional group largely overlooked by various educational reform movements of the past two decades. A series of studies and schools and school districts identified the importance of eight "essential elements" for effective leadership and programs of school, family and community partnerships. These include: leadership, teamwork, action plans, implementation of plans, funding, collegial support, evaluation and networking (Epstein, 2001; Epstein et al., 2002). District and schools that organized programs with these components had higher-quality programs, greater outreach to parents and more parents involved overall (Epstein, 2005b). This study will focus on the effects of principal's perspectives about parental involvement in secondary children's education.

Significance of Parental Involvement in Secondary Education

Research findings show that parental involvement in children's learning activities positively influences their levels of achievement and motivation to learn (Epstein, 1992). Many studies indicate that the influences of parental involvement upon students' primary education make a difference. Similarly, parental influence on a student's academic success in high school may be a factor that cannot be ignored. The present study builds upon existing research that has identified different types of parental involvement in the middle grades and high schools. Data from the public use files of the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) are enhancing the study of parental involvement in secondary education. Research efforts using these data reveal that in the high school grades, parents are mostly involved in the daily supervision of children's lives and educational activities.

These activities include establishing family rules for the supervision of students' homework, TV viewing, and curfews, and discussing career aspirations and plans about high school programs. Most parents are trying to supervise and guide their children during high school but with limited assistance from school officials. They are more likely to supervise and set rules about activities that families traditionally control (such as doing family chores), than about activities for which they lack information (such as improving report card grades). Parents report a serious lack of communication from schools, and the families themselves contact the schools infrequently. It seems that few high schools have comprehensive programs for parental involvement and few parents volunteer at school (Epstein & Lee, 1995). Some schools, though, foster higher levels of communications with parents than other schools (Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996; Epstein, 1990). In high school,

parental involvement of Epstein's Type 1 (parenting) drops as parents loosen their daily supervision of their teenagers, but parents become more concerned about the learning opportunities that high schools provide. Parental involvement during high school increases for Types 2 (communication) and 3 (volunteering) parent-school communications about school programs and student progress and parent participation as volunteers at school (Catsambis & Garland, 1997). As children move from the middle grades to the last years of high school, parents also crystallize their educational expectations for their children. As students near high school graduation, parents become increasingly concerned about their teen's further education and about the effects of high school programs on postsecondary opportunities (Catsambis & Garland, 1997).

Investigations show that the effects of family practices on students' academic success tend to vary by age and are strongest for elementary school children (Singh et al., 1995). Some researchers report no effects of parental involvement on student standardized test scores in high school (Lee, 1994; Keith, 1991, cited in Singh et al., 1995). However, other researchers conclude that parental involvement remains important for children's success throughout secondary education (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Fehrman et al., 1987; Keith et al., 1993; Lee, 1994; Muller, 1993; Singh, Bickley, et al., 1995; Stevenson & Baker, 1987; Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996). By far the most important effect that is consistent across studies is that of parents' educational aspirations for their children. High parental aspirations tend to positively influence students' levels of achievement in primary and secondary education (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Keith et al., 1993; Singh, Bickley, et al., 1995; Milne et al., 1986). A number of studies reported that other indicators of parental involvement also positively affect the academic

achievement of secondary school students, including parent/student discussions regarding school experiences and academic matters (Keith et al., 1993; Lee, 1994; Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996; Muller, 1993), general parental supervision and monitoring of student progress (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Fehrmann et al., 1987; Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996), and to a lesser extent, parent participation in school-related activities (volunteering and parent-teacher organizations) (Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996; Stevenson & Baker, 1987) and participation in parent-teacher conferences (Stevenson & Baker, 1987). Most of the above studies examined the effects of parental involvement in middle school rather than in high school. Moreover, different studies produce inconsistent results regarding the effects of specific family practices. For example, Singh et al., (1995) analyze the same NELS:88 data as Keith et al., (1993), Ho and Wilms (1996), and Muller (1993); but, unlike them, find that eighth grade achievement is not affected by parent-student communication and parental participation in school-related activities.

Administrators Beliefs as Palimpsests

The complexity and diversity of influences that have shaped school administrators' views on parental involvement can be understood as a "palimpsest". A palimpsest is a term that describes the way in which the ancient parchments used for writing were written over, but new messages only partially obliterated the original message beneath. Both the new and the original messages still stand, albeit partially erased and interrupted (Davies, 1993; Moss et.al., 2006). The concept of palimpsest – within the context of beliefs, emotions, biases, and perspectives – is an interesting referential framework for the interpretation and understanding of the administrators' responses to this study's survey. The key reason for that assertion is that beliefs and

perspectives are not monolithic, static, unmovable structures; instead, they are fluid, dynamic, multi-faced paradigms that morph, change, and evolve as experiences accumulate and time passes by. Thus, there is a high level of complexity involved in the process of understanding and interpreting administrators' responses. The researcher is taking special care in considering the unpredictable nature of beliefs and perspectives, tempering superficial trends with due diligence and rigorous statistical analysis.

As Dr. Moss said, "(...) our beliefs – both tacit and explicit – are the best predictors of our actions in any situation." (Moss et.al., 2006, p. 5) In other words, there is a direct implicit connection between what we internally believe and the way we respond and act to explicit, external stimuli. As Dr. Covey (2006, p. 13) said, "(...) we judge ourselves by our intentions and others by their behavior." That very sentence illustrates how our own set of beliefs can change the way we perceive and interpret the world around us. Basically, our perceptions, biases, beliefs, and perspectives are constantly shaping and forming how we interact with others around us and how we interpret other people's behaviors and actions.

As we advance throughout this study, the multi-faced paradigm imposed by our human nature will be quite evident. In fact, this very study serves as a testimony to the fluid, evolving nature of perceptions and perspectives that along with biases and opinions make everyone of us a unique individual, independently of what we stand for at the explicit, superficial level. It is our inner self, our heart of hearts that encapsulates the mere nature of our own self. Like palimpsests, one's beliefs cannot be described or defined in simple terms. Instead, for good or for bad, what drives most of our actions is not the external world, but the way we interpret it using our own "lens" or paradigm.

Like a palimpsest, our own reality is not constructed with predefined patterns or designs, but with the outmost complex expressions of our own nature as human beings.

Why Attitudes and Beliefs are Important

The effect of school culture on school improvement efforts is significant. The attitudes and beliefs of persons in the school shape that culture. Many times innovations are not put into practice because they conflict with deeply held internal images of how the world works, images that limit persons to familiar ways of thinking and acting (Senge, 1990; Senge & Lannon-Kim, 1991). This failure is played out in schools on a regular basis. The attitudes and beliefs of those in the school administration create mental models of what schooling is and how others in the school should and will respond to events and actions. It is from these attitudes and beliefs that the culture of the school is created.

Because principals are seen as the primary leaders in the individual school, this section of this paper examines how the principal is both a part of the context while feeling the impact of the context. Because specific strategies used by principals or others leading school improvement efforts are addressed elsewhere (Hord, 1992), issues are raised in this section, as in preceding sections, that are intended to heighten awareness regarding the existence of factors that appear to facilitate or impede change. Without awareness of their existence, administrators cannot possibly address the problems they present to change, or the help they may provide for change might be overlooked.

The next paragraphs will be a brief review of key leadership concepts that appear to facilitate or impede the perspectives of principals and parental involvement. The

review of literature has led to an initial identification of six crucial areas that impact the principal's values or beliefs that are unique to a particular school, community or district.

Ecology

A study by Hallinger, Bickman and Davis (1990) of school administrators found that the impact of the context of the school on administrators is as profound as it is for students and teachers. "Factors such as school district size and complexity, the number and types of special programs, faculty experience and stability, school level, district support and expectations and other factors shape the principal's approach to instructional leadership" (p. 8). In addition, features of the community such as homogeneity, socioeconomic status of families, parental expectations and involvement, and geographic location simultaneously constrain the principal and provide different opportunities for leadership (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1990). Principals who are aware of the inorganic factors of the school context and their influence on school improvement efforts may take steps to reduce or enhance the impact of those factors depending on the needs of their school.

Culture

Leaders seeking to improve schools for at-risk students will nurture the norms of school culture that support lasting school improvement. Fullan (1992) notes that developing collaborative work cultures to help staff deal with school improvement efforts is a major responsibility of the principal. He asserts that "the message for both the school and district levels is captured in Schein's (1985) observation: 'The only thing of real importance that leaders do is to create and manage culture'" (p. 20). An additional

challenge for principals is that they are also part of the culture of the school through their attitudes and relationships with others.

Principal Attitudes Toward Change

Sarason (1982) describes how past experiences can influence a principal's beliefs. Experiences as a teacher can cause principals to view going into the classroom for purposes of evaluation and change as a hostile intrusion. A belief that the power to legislate change is no guarantee that the change will occur also may be based in part on the principal's experience as a teacher. These experiences create "the tendency to deny that problems exist in the school" (Sarason, 1982, p. 147).

According to Berman and McLaughlin's 1975 study, the active support of principals powerfully affects a project's implementation and continuation. The principal's contribution to implementation lies in giving moral support to the staff and in creating a culture that gives the project "legitimacy" rather than in "how to do it" advice (Sarason, 1982, p. 77). Teachers need the sanction of their principal to the extent that the principal is the "gatekeeper of change" (Berman & McLaughlin, 1975, p. 20).

Principals' actions serve to legitimate whether a change is to be taken seriously and to support teachers both psychologically and with resources. The principal is the person most likely to be in a position to shape the organizational conditions necessary for success, such as the development of shared goals, collaborative work structures and climates, and procedures for monitoring results (Fullan, 1991). "Change efforts fail if principals do not understand and support them, if faculties do not view them as relevant to their own goals and needs and if the community and central office do not provide ongoing encouragement, support, and resources" (Gauthier, 1983, p. 9).

Most people believe a school principal has a good deal of power and freedom to act in the school. They rarely realize that there are numerous restrictions, formal and informal, that limit the principal's freedom of action (Sarason, 1982). One principal faced with impending restructuring described the conflicting feelings the prospect evoked: "I feel like a bird that has been caged for a long time. The door is now open. Will I dare to fly out? I am beginning to realize that the bars of the cage that have imprisoned me have also protected me from the hawks and falcons out there." (Barth, 1990, p. 128)

Principals have little formal preparation for managing change at the school level. The principal must face problems of change that are as great as those that confront teachers. Many principals feel that "other people simply do not seem to understand the problems they face" (Fullan, 1991, p. 76). Simpson (1990) asserts that leaders, just like teachers, need partners, someone to nurture them, and persons with whom to collaborate.

Many principals do not question the attitude that "the system" will not allow certain practices. This attitude presents a significant barrier to improvement efforts. Evidence that some principals within the same system change their practices and that these practices are tolerated by "the system," is an indication that as important as the system itself is, the way the principal perceives the system is even more significant (Sarason, 1982).

Principal Relationships with Teachers

As it goes between teacher and principal so will it go in other relationships in the school. If the teacher-principal relationship can be characterized as helpful, supportive, and trusting, so too will relationships between teachers, students, and parents. Unfortunately, according to Barth (1990), the relationships between teachers and

principals have become increasingly strained with growing emphasis on teacher empowerment, pupil minimum competency, collective bargaining, reduction in teacher force, increased litigation, and above all "accountability." The administrative subculture must deal with issues of accountability, control, and change. Deal (1985) asserts that these values "frequently place principals in direct conflict with teachers" (p. 611). According to Goodlad (1984), however, "a bond of trust and mutual support between principal and teachers...appears to be basic to school improvement" (p. 9).

Change will be undermined if misconceptions held by teachers regarding administrators and by administrators regarding teachers are not dealt with. Liptig (1990) asserts that administrators' perceptions of teachers as "the Loafer, the Artful Dodger, and Them" and teachers' perceptions of administrators as the "Snoopervisor, the Terminator, and the Successful Incompetent" cloud this essential relationship for school improvement.

Louis and Miles (1990) note that broad participation in developing the change program is essential to implementation. Sarason (1990) argues that schools, like other social systems, can be described in terms of power relationships and that recognition of these relationships and the distribution of power is a significant issue in change. The basis for power rests with the acquisition of three commodities: information (technical knowledge, expertise), resources (money, human services, material goods, space, time), and support (endorsement, backing, legitimacy). Access to these commodities by those ultimately responsible for using a specific innovation is critical to successful implementation (Patterson, Purkey, & Parker, 1986). Personnel who will encourage the flow of information between the formal and informal systems and, where needed, make

sure that the flow occurs are needed. Teachers who are influential leaders are especially useful in assisting with implementation through informal networks within the school (Krueger & Parish, 1982).

In a study of five schools in Missouri that had adopted national improvement programs and then discontinued them within a short time, Krueger and Parish (1982) identified an "informal covenant" that exists between teachers and principals. This covenant defines the roles of each group and relationship between them where implementation of new programs is concerned. "Principals control access, resources, and decision making. Teachers control what is going to actually be implemented, if anything" (p. 138). This covenant was responsible for the demise of the new programs at these schools according to the study.

Relationships with the District

The degree to which the superintendent supports school improvement affects the ability of individual schools to increase student achievement (Wimpelberg, Teddlie, & Stringfield, 1989). The superintendent and central office supervisors are key figures in stimulating and facilitating efforts to maintain and improve the quality of instruction (Everson, Scollay, Fabert, & Garcia, 1986; Firestone & Wilson, 1991; Patterson, Purkey & Parker, 1986; Pajak & Glickman, 1989; Pink, 1990). "Teachers and others know enough now, if they didn't 20 years ago, not to take change seriously unless central administrators demonstrate through actions that they should" (Fullan, 1991, p. 74). Levine (1991) notes that the success of an effective schools program depends on a "directed autonomy" defined as a mixture of autonomy for participating faculties and control from the central office (p. 392).

Relationships with the External Environment

Principals are accountable to parents, the central office, school boards, and the state department of education. The school principal is the agent through which others seek to prevail on teachers to do their bidding. "Principals are judged on the basis of how effectively they can muster teachers to the drumbeats of these others, by how well they monitor minimum competency measures, enforce compliance with district wide curricula, account for the expenditure of funds, and implement the various policies of the school board." (Barth, 1990, p. 27) With these many forces exerting pressure on the principal, focus on the change effort may be difficult. Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis (1990) found, however, that parental involvement has a positive impact on principal leadership.

The community support for the school and efforts to improve the school have been shown to be vital for lasting implementation. Because the external environment impacts the school's culture heavily, the introspection and critical examination of the school by those who are implementing school improvement efforts cannot occur without a supportive community. If schools are to be successful in providing success for all students, especially those at risk, parents and other members of the community must be actively involved in the school and school improvement effort.

Community involvement often entails the allocation of resources to eliminate disadvantages in students' access to resources (Nettles, 1991). One significant contribution of business is support of adequate and equitable financing of the public schools and an insistence that the schools produce students who are properly prepared for the workforce and who are good citizens (Carnegie Foundation, 1989). It is essential that

the community, including parents, social agencies, businesses, and civic and volunteer organizations, be involved particularly in rural areas where resources are simply too scarce to attempt to deal with problems in isolation (Helge, 1989).

Support groups are the key ingredients in reducing opposition to change. It is important, first, to identify target groups that are essential for effecting change. Some of the critical groups include "teachers, and teachers' organizations; school administrators and the groups that represent them; school boards; parents; civic, business, and political leaders, including governors and legislators; and taxpayers generally" (Cole, 1991, p. 79). There is little chance to survive the competition for limited resources without the appropriate constituency (Sarason, 1982).

Barriers to Parental Involvement in High Schools

Barriers to involvement exist for both schools and families. Limited resources create some barriers, while others originate from the beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of families and school staff (Liontos, 1992). The most common barriers to family involvement include:

Lack of teacher time. Teachers often see working on family involvement as a task added to an already long list of responsibilities (Caplan, 2000).

Teachers' misperceptions of parents' abilities. Some teachers believe parents can't help their children because they have limited educational backgrounds themselves; however, many poorly educated families support learning by talking with their children about school, monitoring homework, and making it clear that education is important and that they expect their children to do well in school (Caplan, 2000).

Lack of understanding of parents' communication styles. Some efforts at increasing involvement fail because there is a mismatch in the communication styles of families and teachers, often due to cultural and language differences (Caplan, 2000; Lontos, 1992).

Limited family resources. Lack of time is the major reason given by family members for why they don't get more involved. Lack of transportation has also kept families from participating (Caplan, 2000).

Parents' lack of comfort. Some parents feel intimidated and unwelcome at school. Many parents had negative school experiences themselves or are so unfamiliar with the American culture that they do not want to get involved or feel unsure about the value of their contributions. Barriers are also created by parents who have feelings of inadequacy or are suspicious of or angry at the school (Jones, 2001; Caplan, 2000; Lontos, 1992).

Tension in relationships between parents and teachers. Parent and teacher focus groups, conducted around the country as part of the Parents As School Partners research project, identified common areas of conflict between parents and teachers (Baker, 2000).

Parents felt that teachers waited too long before telling them about a problem and that they only heard from teachers when there was bad news. Most parents felt they didn't have easy or ongoing access to their children's teachers and that teachers blamed parents when children had problems in school. Some parents felt unwelcome at the school, believed schools didn't really want their input, and thought communication was a one-way system, with schools sending out information and parents having few, if any, opportunities to share ideas with the school.

Teachers believed parents didn't respect them, challenged their authority, and questioned their decisions. They believed parents encouraged students to disrespect them. Teachers resented that not all parents sent their children to school ready to learn and wanted parents to follow through more with the academic and disciplinary suggestions they made.

Mobility. Some urban areas have low rates of home ownership. Families that rent tend to move around a lot more, which makes it harder to build relationships between families and school staff (Metropolitan St. Louis, 2004).

Lack of vested interest. Many families don't see the value in participating and don't believe their involvement will result in any meaningful change (American Association of School Administrators, 1998).

Difficulties of involvement in the upper grades. There is typically less parent involvement at the middle and senior high school levels, as adolescents strive for greater autonomy and separation from their parents. Families often live further from the school their child attends and are less able to spend time there (Caplan, 2000).

Although the benefits of family involvement are numerous and have been well documented, a review of the literature found that family involvement programs were often not fully implemented for the following reasons (Drake, 2000):

1. School staff had not been trained to work with families.
2. Administrators and teachers worried that increased family involvement would add to their already busy schedules.
3. Educators were concerned that closer relationships with families would mean giving up power and decision-making.

4. Families were not sure how far they could go making suggestions or asking questions; they worried that a teacher or principal who was annoyed or threatened by the parent would punish children for their parents' actions.

Successful Home-School Partnerships

Family involvement refers to activities families engage in to support their children's education (Drake, 2000). When families become involved in their children's education, students, schools, and communities all benefit because strong home-school partnerships help all stakeholders focus on the real issue of high student achievement (Caplan, 2000). This report examines the benefits of family involvement, the different ways families can become involved, the barriers to involvement, and strategies that schools can implement to involve all families and increase student achievement. Meaningful family involvement is a powerful predictor of high student achievement. Students attain more educational success when schools and families work together to motivate, socialize, and educate students (Caplan, 2000). Students whose families are involved in their education typically receive higher grades and test scores, complete more homework, have better attendance, and exhibit more positive attitudes and behaviors. Children of involved families also graduate at higher rates and are more likely to enroll in postsecondary education programs (Riggins-Newby, 2004; Norton, 2003; Caplan, 2000; Binkley et al., 1998; Funkhouse and Gonzalez, 1997). Henderson (1987) found that the academic benefits gained from family involvement with elementary school students continued through the middle and senior high school levels. Furthermore, studies have observed these positive outcomes regardless of students' ethnic or racial background or

socioeconomic status, noting that students at risk of failure have the most to gain when schools involve families (Caplan, 2000; Funkhouse and Gonzalez, 1997; Henderson, 1987). When families become involved in their children's education, they have a better understanding of what is being taught in school and of teaching and learning in general. They gain more information about children's knowledge and abilities, as well as the programs and services offered by the school (Moorman, 2002; Caplan, 2000; Drake, 2000). Research has found that when parents are involved, their confidence in their ability to help their children with classroom assignments increases (Nistler and Maiers, 2000) and they rate teachers higher in overall teaching ability (Caplan, 2000). Educators benefit when family involvement is strong, as school staff gain an awareness of the ways they can build on family strengths to support students' success (Caplan, 2000). As teachers understand more about students' lives, they are able to connect learning outside of the school to classroom learning in real and meaningful ways (Ferguson, 2004).

Almost all studies on parental involvement in middle school and high school are concerned with effects on achievement test scores, but Lee (1994) utilizes NELS:88 data to examine the effects of family involvement on a variety of educational outcomes in addition to achievement test scores. NELS study revealed that the effects of parental involvement in high school may be stronger on students' behavior, attitudes toward school, and report card grades than on achievement test scores. The study reports a number of noteworthy effects of different types of family involvement on tenth graders' attitudes and behaviors, after controlling for students' socioeconomic background, family structure, and previous educational characteristics. The types of involvement that have consistent and sizable effects on a number of outcomes for tenth graders are frequent

family discussions about educational matters, family involvement with homework, and to a somewhat lesser extent, parental participation in school activities (such as parent audiences, attending school meetings, and volunteering). These types of involvement positively affect a variety of educational outcomes, such as students' reading habits and homework, attitudes towards school and teachers, and commitment to school work. They also tend to reduce the frequency of behavioral problems and absenteeism (Lee, 1994). However, the study by Lee relies on students' reports of their parents' behaviors and practices. Analysis of data from parents is needed to validate the above findings and increase our knowledge of the effects of parental involvement through the twelfth grade.

As the above discussion suggests, existing knowledge of parental involvement in secondary education is limited in scope. Considerable gaps in the literature exist about the effects of parental involvement on educational outcomes other than test scores, and on long- term effects of different family practices. Moreover, the research findings on the effects of parental involvement on achievement test scores tend to be inconsistent. This may be due to age differences of the children under investigation, differences in analytical research strategies, and differences in the sources of information and variables used as indicators of parental involvement. It is possible that certain types of parental involvement are more important in middle grades than in high school, and vice versa.

Data from schools in the *National Network of Partnership Schools* (NNPS) indicated that on-going technical assistance on partnerships helped schools improve the number and quality of actions taken to organize their programs of family and community involvement from one year to the next, regardless of the quality of their programs in the prior school year. When schools established *Action Teams for Partnerships* and used

helpful tools and materials, the teams were more likely to form committees, write plans, adjust for changes in principals, reach out to more families, evaluate their efforts, and sustain their programs over time (Sheldon, 2005). By taking these actions, schools addressed more challenges to reach “hard-to-reach” families (Sheldon, 2003) and improved the scope and quality of their programs of family and community involvement from year to year on several types of involvement and at all school levels, elementary, middle, and high (Epstein, 2001, 2005a; Sanders, 1999, 2001, in press; Sanders & Harvey, 2002; Sanders & Lewis, 2005; Sanders & Simon, 2002; Sheldon, in press; Sheldon & Van Voorhis, 2004; Van Voorhis & Sheldon, in press).

Results of Family and Community Involvement

Several studies were conducted on the impact of family involvement on student outcomes. These studies showed that, through high school, family involvement contributed to positive results for students, including higher achievement, better attendance, more credits earned, more responsibility preparation for class, and other indicators of success in school (Catsambis, 2001; Simon, 2004). Using hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) analyses, Catsambis and Beveridge (2001) explored whether school, family, and community factors independently and significantly affected students’ math achievement. The analyses indicated that students in neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty had lower math achievement test scores, but this effect was ameliorated by on-going parental involvement in high school.

According to the NNSP studies at the high school level, it is never too late to initiate programs of family and community involvement, as the benefits accrue through grade twelve. Other studies showed that when educators communicated clearly with

families on targeted content about attendance schools' rates of average daily attendance increased and chronic absence decreased from one year to the next (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Sheldon & Epstein, 2004). Furthermore, when educators communicated effectively and involved family and community members in activities focused on student behavior, schools reported fewer disciplinary actions with students (Sheldon & Epstein, 2002). Similarly, the percentage of students attaining math proficiency increased where educators implemented math homework that required parent-child interactions and offered math materials for families to take home (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005a). Also, a review of literature on family involvement with students on reading, indicated that across the grades, subject specific intervention to involve families in reading and related language arts, positively affected students reading skills and scores (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005b). Still other studies explored the effects of family involvement in homework, building on earlier work, the studies found significant results of subject-specific family involvement for students' science report card grades and homework completion (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001; Van Voorhis, 2003,2004). The studies of homework and targeted outcomes reinforce the importance of well-designed, subject-specific or goal-linked activities for family and community involvement for strongest impact on student achievement and success in school.

Implications for High School Administrators

Empirical research leaves no doubt: that the more involved the parents, the better the children will achieve in school. Principals are charged with the responsibility of providing effective schools. School leaders have tried to implement effective parental involvement programs. Successful parental involvement programs are a part of effective schools. "In any school, leadership is essential if a school staff is to choose the partnership approach to school reform and to develop an understanding of the basic concepts of providing success for an children serving the whole child and sharing responsibility" (Davies, 1991, p. 382). "The principal's leadership sets the tone and shapes the culture for the entire school" (National PTA, 2000, p. 160). Principals are charged with the responsibility of providing the best learning environment for their students. This environment must include parental involvement.

Traditionally, elementary schools have been more active with parental involvement. "Secondary students need parental involvement just as much as elementary students" (Phelps, 1999, p. 32). The benefits of parental involvement for students do not stop in high school. High school students need support. Given the impact of learning in high school on later life, indications of U.S. high school underachievement call for diligent efforts from those who are concerned with developing approaches for improving the academic achievement of our high school students (Fehrmann, Keith & Reimers, 1987, p.330). Dodd and Konzal (1999) explained it in a different way:

Why high schools? ... Some people take the position that once children reach high school age, they object to having their parents involved. Others accept a *fait accompli* the commonly held belief that parents are less likely to become involved in high

schools and so it is not worth the effort to try to get them involved. While both points may be partly true, it is also true that parents are particularly concerned about what goes on in high schools, for, as their children get closer to graduations, parents focus more and more on how well the school is preparing their children for life after high school (p.12).

Coleman and Hoffer (1987) identified differences in student achievement for students in private or Catholic high schools and public schools where the backgrounds were comparable. The authors speculated that the reason for the difference lies in the relationship between families and schools. "One of the indicators of this difference is in the level of parent involvement" (Henderson& Berla, 1994, p. 7).

Nettles (1991) detailed a framework for establishing relationships between community and at-risk high school students. "The benefits of community involvement for those students removes impediments to their progress and creates environments that nurture their success" (Henderson& Berta 1994, p. 6).

It may be more difficult for principals of high school to initiate parental involvement. "Administrators often are not trained in dealing with parents and seeking meaningful parent involvement" (American Teacher, 1999, p. 4). It is just as important for high school students that their parents are involved in their education.

Most studies have focused on parents as teachers and supporters, roles that are customary to the early childhood and elementary school settings the programs address and that have been more fully developed. In full partnerships, parents must be able to act as advocates and decision-makers as well (Henderson & Berla, 1994, p. 15).

The importance of parental involvement cannot be ignored. Henderson and Berla (1994), Keith et al. (1993), and Stevenson and Baker (1987) compiled a multitude of

studies that support the notion that parental involvement is important to a student's achievement and success in school, at all levels. "The authors found that the degree of parental and community interest in quality education is the critical factor in explaining the impact of the high school environment on the achievement and educational aspirations of students" (Henderson and Berla, 1994, p. 86).

In order to create the most effective school climate, the principal needs to be informed of the importance this involvement means to his/her students. "We understand that an exploration of the relationship between parents and schools is, by definition, dually formed that is to say, how parents perceive their role in their children's school may be a function of how the school organization treats them" (Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001, p.2).

The examination of principals' attitudes toward the differently defined parent roles/characteristics and examination of demographic data, may lead to a better understanding of how those attitudes affect parent involvement in schools. An examination of the attitudes of high school principals is as important as the examination of middle level or elementary principals.

Epstein (2001), Christenson and Sheridan (2001) and the National PTA (2000) identified different parent roles or characteristics. The current study delineated parent roles as decision maker, policy-maker, home tutor/co-learner, and advocate. One parent characteristic was labeled the socio-economic status. The attitude of principals toward those roles was an important focus for this research.

Demographic data regarding the respondent may also help identify differences in principals' attitudes toward parent involvement. The researcher requested that the

respondents indicate their experience in administration as the number of years as a principal. Previous research (Lacey, 1999) indicated that the more experience the middle level principal has the more likely he or she is to reject parents as home-tutors.

The respondent was also asked to indicate their race or gender. Previous research (Brittle, 1994) did not indicate that gender of the elementary principal plays a role in the principals' attitude toward parent involvement. A search of the literature does not indicate that the race of the principal reflects beliefs about parent involvement. The researcher included the demographic data of the respondents' race, gender and experience for high school principals in Pennsylvania.

Demographic data regarding the student body may be associated with principals' attitudes toward parent involvement. de Carvalho (2001) listed many cultural and socio-economic factors that separate the school age population. Of those factors, the size of the school or the setting of the school (rural, urban, suburban) may be related to the principals' attitude toward parent involvement. "The percentage of parents participating in school activities rises with household income and educational level" (Snyder, 2000, p.2). The researcher examined the relationship between the principals' attitude and the student body demographic data.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The intent of this study will be to examine the perspectives of high school principals in the state of Pennsylvania toward parental involvement, and identify potential barriers to parental involvement from the perspective of the school administrator. This study also will seek to determine if the differences of perspectives exist for High school principals' based on gender, race, professional title, years of experience, size of school, school setting. This section covers the research design and sampling procedures, participants, instrumentation and data collection procedures that will be used in this study.

Research Questions

The three research questions that this study intends to answer are:

1. How strongly do Pennsylvania secondary school principals believe in parental involvement?
2. What is the relationship between secondary principal perspectives and each of the following six identified survey: Communication, School Decision-Making and Advocacy, Collaborating with Community, Volunteering, Student Learning and Parenting.
3. What differences are there in principal perspectives based on the following demographic characteristics: (a) principal gender, (b) race, (c) socioeconomic status of school community, (d) years of experience, (e) school setting, and (f) size of the school.

Participants Selection

The participants for this study will be secondary principals in the state of Pennsylvania, found on the Pennsylvania Department of Education database. The target population will be the 501 schools in Pennsylvania, but sampling will possibly be conducted on a smaller accessible population, due to the fact that it might not be possible to have contacts in certain schools. Stratificated sampling will be employed in this study, with school setting (rural, urban, suburban), and school size (small, medium or large), as the stratifying variables. The objective of employing this procedure of sampling is to obtain proportional representation within each stratum. Simple random sampling within each stratum will ensure representativeness of the sample.

Validity of Survey Instrument

Validity is defined as founded on facts or truth. “Content validity is the degree to which an instrument measures that which it is intended to measure” (Brittle, 1994, p. 53). The intent of this study is to measure the perspectives of high school principals toward parent involvement in high schools. Brittle addressed the issue of content validity. Brittle sent a pilot survey to 50 principals in the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee. “Principals were asked to complete the questionnaire and then evaluate the survey instrument by answering a predetermined set of questions” (Brittle, 1994, p.55). Their responses were then analyzed to determine the usefulness of the instrument. The overall format, clarity and readability of statements were all checked. “Data from the pilot instruments were analyzed using SPSS/PC+” (Brittle, 1994, p.56). Descriptive statistics were applied to the pilot responses to determine content validity.

The survey instrument used in this study was based on the one used by Dr. Peiffer (2003). A letter was sent to Dr. Peiffer requesting permission to use her survey instrument and instrument validity information. The request was granted (See Appendix E). Peiffer (2003) conducted a split-half reliability procedure on Brittle's instrument to obtain alpha value for part 1 of .6652 and an alpha of .7287 for part 2 of the survey. In addition, an Equal Length Spearman-Brown analysis indicated a reliability coefficient of .6998, Guttman Split-Half indicated .6954 and the Unequal Length Spearman-Brown revealed a coefficient of .6998. These findings designated that Brittle's survey instrument has content validity, as well as instrument reliability.

Another approach pertaining to the validity of the instrument was obtained by contacting doctoral students who had previously used the instrument. Six professionals critically reviewed the instrument in May 2007. The panel included two college faculty members, two superintendents and two individuals retired from the education field. All members of the critique panel were formerly employed as secondary school principals, but were not currently part of the population surveyed. The individuals all had direct experience as secondary school administrators and were asked to review the survey instrument and provide written comments and suggestions. Based on the responses from the critique panel, adjustments were made to the survey and incorporated into the final format of the survey instrument. All respondents indicated that the survey took less than ten minutes to complete and the directions were easy to understand and follow. Two respondents indicated that the words "complementary" and "onus" may be unfamiliar to some principals. As a result, one statement was reworded to avoid the term "onus". Additionally, two statements were excluded to eliminate possible redundancy. No

respondents offered additional suggestions and/or statements to include as part of the survey instrument.

Research Variables

This section will describe the variables for each research questions guiding this study.

Research Question One

The variable is *principal beliefs* in parental involvement. This variable will be measured on a 4 point Likert scale (1 to 4), with 1 representing strongly disagrees and 4 representing strongly agrees. The items on the inventory measuring *principal beliefs* are 32-38.

Research Question Two

The dependent variable is *principal perspectives* and the six independent variables are: *communication* measured by items (3, 9, 23 and 24), *school decision making and advocacy* measured by items (1, 2, 7, and 8), *volunteering* measured by items (18, 22, 28, 29, 31 and 32), *student learning* measured by items (4, 5, 6, 14, 16, and 26), *collaboration* measured by items (10, 17, 19, 20, 21, and 27), and *parenting* measured by items (11, 12, 13, 15, and 25). All of these variables are measured on 1 to 4 Likert scale.

Research Question Three

Principal perspectives is the (dependent variable) and the seven (independent variables) are: *gender* (coded: male =1, female = 2), *race* (coded: African-American =1, White =2, Hispanic=3, Other =4), *years of experience* (coded: 0-5=1, 6-11=2, 12-19=3, 20+ =4), *school size* (coded: small 0-500 =1, medium 501-1000=2, large 1001+ =3), *school setting* (coded: rural =1, urban =2, suburban = 3) and *Socioeconomic status of*

the community (low income- 15,000-25,000, middle income- 26,000-40,000 ,upper income 41,000-50,000+) . (See Appendix A for items measured on the Likert Scale).

Data Collection

The researcher will be using *The Parental Involvement Inventory* originally designed by Brittle (1994) for elementary principals and subsequently by Peiffer (2003) for secondary principals (See Appendix A). After obtaining the Internal Review Board (IRB) approval (See Appendix F), the participants will be asked to complete a *Zoomerang* online survey (See Appendix G). The researcher will inform principals the purpose of the research along with directions and express appreciation for their time (See Appendix E). The survey is comprised of two parts. Part I presents 37 statements designed to quantitatively assess the attitudes of principals toward parent involvement. The 37 questions within Part I will collect information related to six identified categories: communication concerns, school decision-making and advocacy, volunteering, student learning, collaboration, and parenting issues.

For the purposes of this study:

Communication concerns are defined as issues related to both the formal and informal methods of communication concerns between home and school (regular, two-way and meaningful) between the school and the parent(s).

School Decision Making and Advocacy refers to those attributes related to school decision-making activities, such as school climate and culture, curriculum, behavioral management, parent involvement and parent teacher organizations. In terms of advocacy, it relates to actions families, teachers, principals, and other stakeholders could take to improve involvement.

Collaboration issues involve how principals view the role of the parents in a secondary school, especially with respect to decision-making and policymaking. Also, how principals utilize resources within the community to strengthen schools, families and student learning.

Volunteering issues are related to how principals provide a welcoming environment for parents and support their assistance with respect to decision-making and policymaking.

Student Learning issues are defined as, how principals encourage parents' integral role in assisting student learning.

Parenting issues deals with schools promoting and supporting parents with resources and guidance on how to successfully raise, praise, discipline, teach and love their children.

In Part I, respondents will be asked to indicate the degree to which they believe a statement to be true using a four point semantic differential scale with 1 indicating strong disagreement, 2, disagreement, 3, agreement and 4, strong agreement. The researcher intentionally chose a four point scale given that the survey is relatively innocuous and is not likely to stimulate complex, emotional responses. Mangione (1995) stated that if given a choice, many respondents would choose the middle. By eliminating the natural middle point, respondents will be forced to make a definitive, reflective choice.

Finally, Part II consists of six demographic and professional questions that define the proposed independent variables of the study (See Appendix A).

Statistical Analysis Strategy

The data will be analyzed in several ways. Each research question will be addressed using defined statistical measures (See Appendix B). The three research questions guiding the study include the following:

How strongly do Pennsylvania secondary school principals believe in parental involvement? Descriptive statistics and frequency distribution tables will be created for each individual question based on the four-point Likert scale. Those survey items identified as the highest agreement and disagreement will be highlighted.

What is the relative concern between secondary principal attitudes as they relate to the six identified survey areas? In an effort to better understand the relationship between principal perspectives as they relate to the six categories, descriptive statistics will be used to rank the principal perspectives. Composite means and standard deviation will be computed for each of the six categories and the means will be ranked to determine relative concern within each category. Correlation analysis between principal perspectives and each of the IV's will be calculated.

What differences, if any, are there in principal perspectives based on the following demographic characteristics: *race, gender, years of experience, school size* (student enrollment), *school setting* (rural, urban and suburban), and socioeconomic status of the community)? ANOVA statistical analysis will be performed to determine if the principal perspectives toward parental involvement differ as they relate to the principals' *gender, race, years of experience, socioeconomic status of the community, size of the school* (student enrollment), and *school setting* (rural, urban, suburban).

Demographic data will be reported as means and medians, frequencies, and percentages to responses providing a general representation of the data. Demographic data will be grouped for statistical purposes. *Gender* will be classified as male or female. *Race* will be classified as African-American, Hispanic, White and Other. *Number of years of experience* will be grouped 0-5, 6-11, 12-19 and 20+yrs. The *size of school* will be categorized by number of students in the school. Socioeconomic status of the community will be grouped into three categories: (low income- 15,000-25,000, middle income- 26,000-40,000, and upper income 41,000-50,000+). The *school setting* will be grouped as: rural, urban, suburban.

The *principal perspectives* toward each category (communication concerns, school decisions and advocacy, volunteering, collaboration issues, student learning, and parenting issues) will then be compared based on the demographic categories (years of experience, school setting, socioeconomic status of the community, and size of school) using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Comparisons in the areas of gender and race will be made using t-tests for independent means. In each ANOVA and t-test, the principals' demographic grouping will serve as the independent variable and the composite mean for each response category will serve as the dependent variable. All significant ANOVAs will be followed by Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) test to identify which groups differ significantly from the others. The .05 level of significance will be used for all inferential statistics. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 14.0) will be used for all data analyses and presented in graph format.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were examined in this study.

- H₁ : There is a difference in the attitude of the principals toward parent involvement in schools and the administrative years of experience of the principals when controlling for the principal's gender, race, size of or location of the school, and the economic status of the school community.
- H₂: There is a difference in the attitudes of the principals toward parental involvement in schools and the geographical location of the school when controlling for the principal's gender, race, administrative experience, size of the school and the economic status of the school community.
- H₃: There is a difference in the attitudes of the principals toward parental involvement in schools and the location of the school when controlling for the principal's gender, race, administrative experience, size of the school and the economic status of the school community.
- H₄: There is a difference in the attitude of the principals toward parental involvement in schools and the economic status of the school community when controlling for the principal's gender, race, administrative experience or size of or location of school.
- H₅: There is a difference in the attitudes of principals toward parent involvement in schools and the gender of the principal when controlling for principal's race, administrative experience, size or location of the school and the economic status of the community.

- H₆: There is a difference in the attitudes of the principals toward parent involvement in schools and the race of the principal when controlling for the principal's gender, administrative experience, size, or location of school, and the economic status of the school community.

Three research questions guided the study and six hypotheses were tested.

Research Question 1 acted as an umbrella seeking an overall measure of the attitudes of principals toward parent involvement. Research Question 2 sought to measure the attitude of the principal for each of the six specific parent involvement categories. Hypothesis 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 were tested to answer research question three.

Chapter Four : Statistical Analyses

Even though implementation of parental involvement strategies is usually left to the building principal, few administrators have received formal training in building home-school partnerships as part of their graduate coursework. Additionally, high school teachers may be reluctant to embrace parental involvement in their classrooms, making the implementation of even excellent strategies to be especially challenging (Ramirez, 2000). This study and survey attempt to measure and quantify personal and professional beliefs regarding parental involvement from high school principals in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as well as the potential barriers inherent when working with secondary parents. High school principals may be able to create increased opportunities for parental involvement in their individual school and thereby optimize the potential for each high school student. Not least important, an examination of the attitudes of Pennsylvania secondary-level administrators may serve as a catalyst toward change of current practices or provide information for modification of existing parental involvement practices.

Presentation of Data

The amount of any kind of parental involvement varies from school to school. The reason for these differences may be as a result of the attitudes of building principals toward parent involvement. The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze the attitudes of high school principals toward parent involvement. This chapter contains the data analysis for the study.

Preliminary Data Analysis

Response Rates. The participants for this study were secondary principals in the state of Pennsylvania, found on the Pennsylvania Department of Education database. The

target population was the 501 schools in Pennsylvania, but sampling was conducted on a smaller, accessible population of 360 schools, due to the fact that it was not possible to have contacts in certain schools. Stratificated sampling was employed in this study, with *school setting* (rural, urban, suburban), and *school size* (small, medium or large), as the stratifying variables. The objective of employing this procedure of sampling was to obtain proportional representation within each stratum. Simple random sampling within each stratum ensured representativeness of the sample. The rate of return totaled 103 surveys, which resulted in an overall return rate of 28.6% (Table 1).

Table 1

Survey Participation Requests and Rate of Responses

Number of surveys sent	Number of respondents	Percent of response
360	103	28.6

Duplicate Survey Item. Question 30 was removed from the analysis because it is a duplicate of question 31: “Parents of teenagers are not as interested in their child’s education as they were during the elementary years.”

Reversing Negatively Worded Items. Agreeing to a negative statement is not the same as agreeing to a positive statement. For example, Item 1 is worded in a positive direction (high scores indicate a positive attitude for the statement): “Educators and parents have complementary expertise about the education of children.” Item 4, however, is negatively worded (high scores indicate a negative attitude for the statement): “Minority parents and those of low socio-economic background *are less likely to be involved* in their child’s education.” Negatively worded items need to be reversed before a sub-total or total score can be calculated.

Careful review of the survey items revealed negative worded items, which then were reversed (Appendix C). For a list of all questions see Appendix A. For a list of all responses with percentages, see Appendix D.

Analysis of Research Question One

How strongly do Pennsylvania secondary school principals believe in parental involvement? There is research that supports the notion that school culture has a significant effect on school improvement efforts. Helping to shape that culture, one cannot minimize the importance of the attitudes and beliefs of persons in the school. In plenty of scenarios, innovative initiatives are not implemented because they disagree with deeply engrained internal images of how the world is to suppose to work, images that limit persons to familiar ways of thinking and acting (Senge, 1990; Senge & Lannon-Kim, 1991). This failure is played out in schools on a regular basis. The attitudes and beliefs of those in the school create mental models of what schooling is and how others in the school should and will respond to events and actions. It is from these attitudes and beliefs that the culture of the school is created.

Because principals are seen as the primary leaders in the individual school, they play a pivotal role shaping and forming the culture and mental model of the school. The building principal who is aware of their personal and professional beliefs regarding parental involvement as well as the potential barriers inherent when working with secondary parents may be able to create increased opportunities for parental involvement in their individual school and thereby optimize the potential for each high school student. In order to measure that level of potential, survey items 32-38 are focused on exploring principals' beliefs toward parental involvement (See Table 2).

Table 2

Survey Items Related to Principals' Beliefs Toward Parental Involvement

Survey Items on <i>Principals' Beliefs toward Parental Involvement</i>	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
Question 33: Parental involvement is important for a good school climate.	0.0	4.9	60.2	35.0
Question 34: Every family has some strength that could be tapped to increase student success in school.	0.0	6.8	68.9	24.3
Question 35: Parent involvement can help teachers be more effective with more students.	0.0	0.0	68.0	32.0
Question 36: Some parents already know how to help their children on school work at home.	0.0	4.9	82.5	12.6
Question 37: Parent involvement is important for student success in learning and staying in school.	0.0	0.0	59.2	40.8
Question 38: Schools should have workshops for parents to build skills in parenting and understanding their children at each grade level.	1.0	10.7	58.3	30.1

A variable called “*ADMIN BELIEFS*” was created to appropriately answer this research question. This variable is being measured on a 4 point Likert scale (1 to 4), with 1 representing strongly disagrees and 4 representing strongly agrees. To create this variable, SPSS was used to calculate the mean value of adding the scores of items 33 thru 38. The descriptive statistics for this newly created variable can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

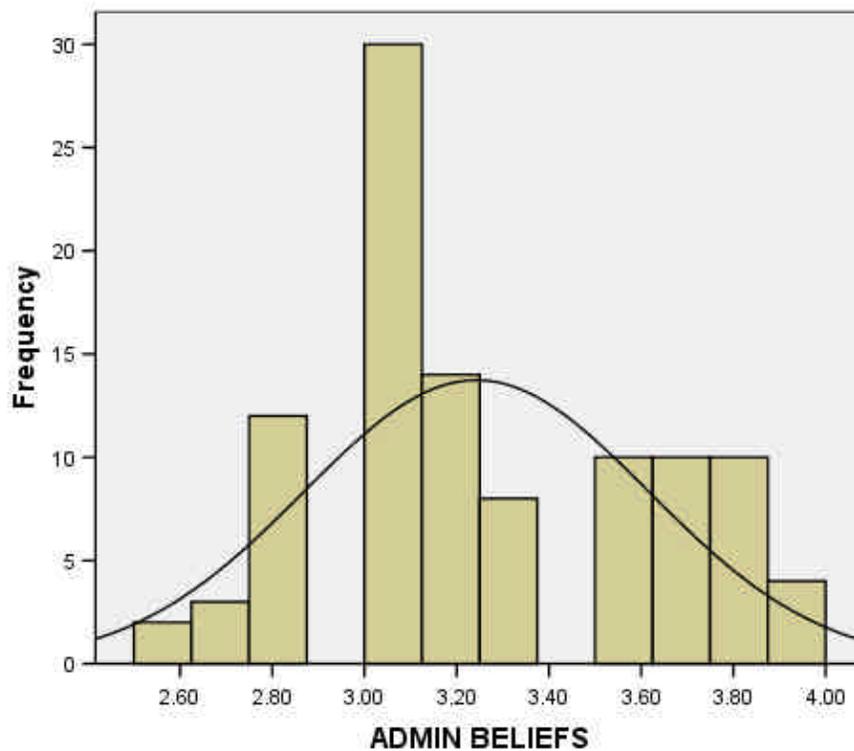
Descriptive Statistics for Calculated Variable ADMIN BELIEFS

Statistics			
Mean	3.24	Minimum	2.50
Median	3.17	Maximum	4.00
Mode	3.00		

In terms of the measures of central tendency ($n = 103$), the scores for the variable *ADMIN BELIEFS* range from 2.50 to 4.00. With a mode value of 3, one can conclude that the most frequently occurring score was “Agree.” The midpoint of the distribution, or median, was 3.17. With a mean value of 3.24, there is evidence that principals’ beliefs toward parental involvement are positive (See Figure 1).

Figure 1

Histogram for Calculated Variable ADMIN BELIEFS



Analysis of Research Question Two

What is the relationship between secondary principal perspectives and each of the following six identified parental involvement categories: Communication, School Decision Making and Advocacy, Collaborating with Community, Volunteering, Student Learning and Parenting?

Collaboration

The area of *collaboration*, items 10, 17, 19, 20, 21, and 27, offer an indication of principals' attitude toward the value of collaboration between parents, the school, and the community. To facilitate comparative analysis, the four-point scale was collapsed to a two-point scale on item 20 to indicate areas of agreement or disagreement (Table 4). The responses offer some possible contradictory attitude indicators. For example, 100% of the principals agree on Item 27: "Creating a partnership between the school and parent has a positive impact on student behavior." However, almost 60% of the principals disagree on Item 20: "Most teachers desire large parent involvement in their classrooms."

Table 4

Survey Items Related to Collaboration

Survey Items on <i>Collaboration</i>	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
Question 10: Parental input is helpful in curriculum issues such as textbook selection.	12.6	51.5	35.0	1.0
Question 17: Parents should participate in staff hiring decisions.	42.7	42.7	11.7	2.9
Question 19: Parents should be encouraged to participate in the school budget planning process.	26.2	31.1	39.8	2.9
Question 20: Most teachers desire large parent involvement in their classrooms.	0.0	59.2	40.8	0.0
Question 21: Parents should assist in the establishment of the educational goals for the school.	1.0	6.8	78.6	13.6
Question 27: Creating a partnership between the school and parent has a positive impact on student behavior.	0.0	0.0	50.5	49.5

A variable called “*COLLABORATION*” was created to appropriately answer this research question. This variable is being measured on a 4 point Likert scale (1 to 4), with 1 representing strongly disagrees and 4 representing strongly agrees. To create this variable, SPSS was used to calculate the mean value of adding the scores of items 10, 17, 19, 20, 21, and 27. The descriptive statistics for this newly created variable can be found in Table 5.

Table 5

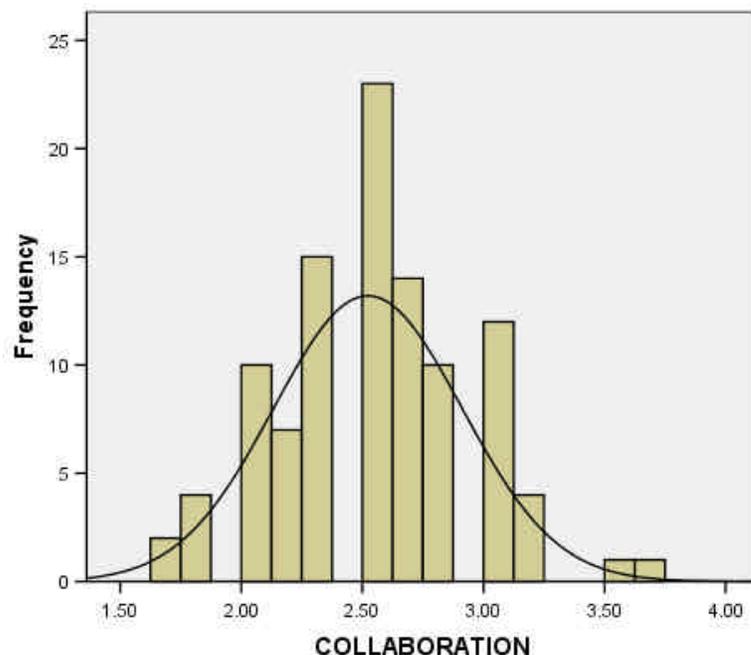
Descriptive Statistics for Calculated Variable COLLABORATION

Statistics			
Mean	2.52	Minimum	1.67
Median	2.50	Maximum	3.67
Mode	2.50		

In terms of the measures of central tendency, the scores for the variable *COLLABORATION* range from 2.00 to 3.67. With a mode value of 2.50, one can conclude that the most frequently occurring calculated score was between “Disagree” and “Agree.” The midpoint of the distribution, or median, was 2.50. With a mean value of 2.52, there is evidence that principals’ attitudes toward *collaboration* are between disagreeing and agreeing (See Figure 2).

Figure 2

Histogram for Calculated Variable COLLABORATION



Communication

The area of *communication* is represented by items 3, 9, 23, and 24. With the exception of item 24, most principals expressed a positive attitude toward communication initiatives from the school to the parents as a way to encourage parental involvement.

However, according to Item 24, 77.7% of the principals disagree that teachers have a primary responsibility to increase parental involvement (Table 6).

Table 6

Survey Items Related to Communication

Survey Items on <i>Communication</i>	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
Question 3: Most parents feel welcome when they come to the high school.	0.0	20.4	71.8	7.8
Question 9: Most parents are familiar with the school building and can successfully find their way around.	1.9	44.7	45.6	7.8
Question 23: Our school does a sufficient job of encouraging parental involvement.	1.9	40.8	52.4	4.9
Question 24: The primary responsibility to increase parental involvement within a high school lies with classroom teachers.	4.9	72.8	22.3	0.0

A variable called “*COMMUNICATION*” was created to appropriately answer this research question. This variable is being measured on a 4 point Likert scale (1 to 4), with 1 representing strongly disagrees and 4 representing strongly agrees. To create this variable, SPSS was used to calculate the mean value of adding the scores of items 3, 9, 23, and 24. The descriptive statistics for this newly created variable can be found in Table 7.

Table 7

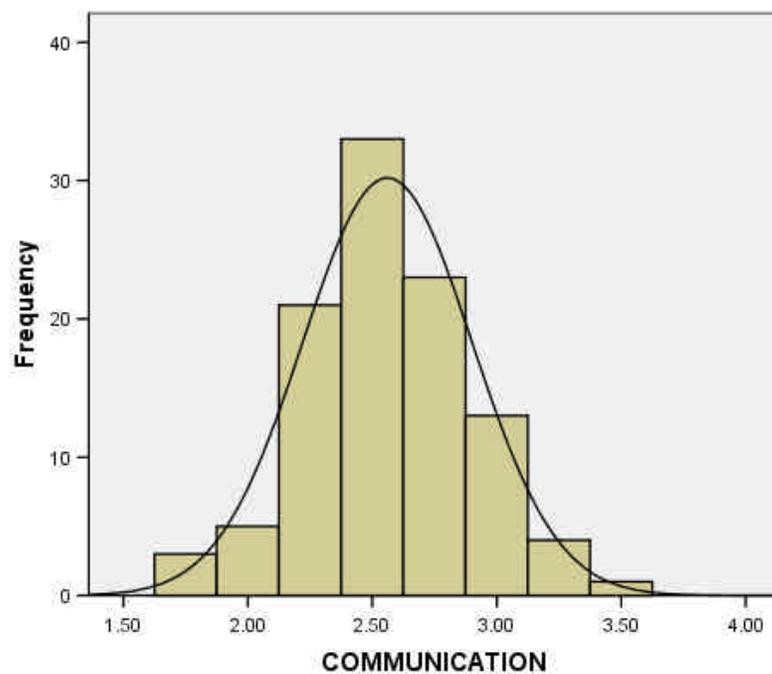
Descriptive Statistics for Calculated Variable COMMUNICATION

Statistics			
Mean	2.56	Minimum	1.75
Median	2.50	Maximum	3.50
Mode	2.50		

In terms of the measures of central tendency ($n = 103$), the scores for the variable *COMMUNICATION* range from 1.75 to 3.50. With a mode value of 2.50, one can conclude that the most frequently occurring calculated score was between “Disagree” and “Agree.” The midpoint of the distribution, or median, was 2.50. With a mean value of 2.56, there is evidence that principals’ attitudes toward *communication* are between disagreeing and agreeing (See Figure 3).

Figure 3

Histogram for Calculated Variable COMMUNICATION



Parenting

Items 11, 12, 13, 15, and 25 are related to principals’ attitudes toward *parenting* (Table 8). To facilitate comparative analyses, the four-point scale was collapsed to a two-point scale on item 12 to indicate areas of agreement or disagreement. It is interesting that over 90% of the principals agree with item 1, portraying a positive

attitude in terms of parents acting as home tutors. However, the same principals express disagreement and negative attitudes to the idea of parents providing input in the evaluation of teachers and parents having the knowledge and/or ability to help their child with academic work (Items 15 and 25).

Table 8
Survey Items related to Parenting

Survey Items on <i>Parenting</i>	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
Question 11: Parents should act as home tutors assisting their children with school assignments as needed.	0.0	8.7	65.0	26.2
Question 12: Most parents desire large interaction with the high school.	0.0	40.8	59.2	0.0
Question 13: Parents should hold fundraisers to support school needs.	10.7	42.7	42.7	3.9
Question 15: Parent input in the evaluation of teachers is useful.	27.2	40.8	30.1	1.9
Question 25: Most parents have the knowledge and/or ability to help their child with academic work.	4.9	42.7	51.5	1.0

A variable called “*PARENTING*” was created to appropriately answer this research question. This variable is being measured on a 4 point Likert scale (1 to 4), with 1 representing strongly disagrees and 4 representing strongly agrees. To create this variable, SPSS was used to calculate the mean value of adding the scores of items 11, 12, 13, 15, and 25. Table 9 shows descriptive statistics for this newly created variable.

Table 9

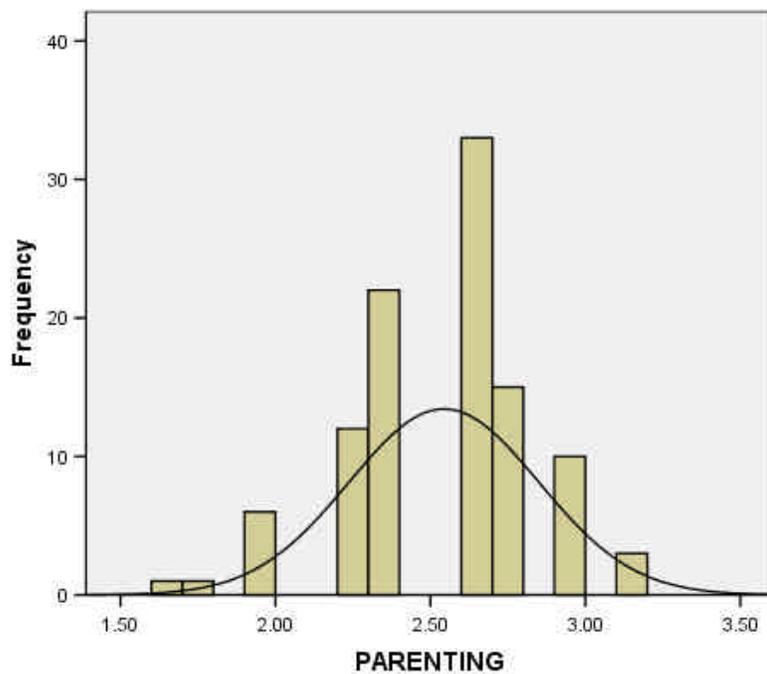
Descriptive Statistics for Calculated Variable PARENTING

Statistics			
Mean	2.54	Minimum	1.60
Median	2.60	Maximum	3.20
Mode	2.60		

In terms of the measures of central tendency (n = 103), the scores for the variable *PARENTING* range from 1.60 to 3.20. With a mode value of 2.60, one can conclude that the most frequently occurring calculated score was slightly closer to “Agree.” The midpoint of the distribution, or median, was 2.60. With a mean value of 2.54, there is evidence that principals’ attitudes toward *parenting* are between disagree and agree (See Figure 4).

Figure 4

Histogram for Calculated Variable PARENTING



School Decision Making and Advocacy

In the area of *school decision making and advocacy*, items 1, 2, 7, and 8 were collapsed from a four-point scale to a two-point scale to indicate areas of agreement or disagreement (Table 10). The scores provide evidence that principals have positive attitudes about advocating parental involvement in the school’s decision-making process. When it comes to practical implementation, principals agree with significant levels of parental involvement. For example, three out of five principals agree that educators and parents have complementary expertise about education of children (Item 1) and that most parents do have the training or background necessary to take part in making school policies (Item 7). About 75% of the principals agree that parents have a positive attitude to getting themselves involved in school activities (Item 8).

Table 10

Survey Items for Calculated Variable School Decision Making and Advocacy

Survey Items on <i>School Decision Making and Advocacy</i>	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
Question 1: Educators and parents have complementary expertise about the education of children.	0.0	41.7	58.3	0.0
Question 2: Most parents, regardless of background, desire to be involved in their children's education.	0.0	30.1	69.9	0.0
Question 7: Most parents do have the training or background necessary to take part in making school policies.	0.0	38.8	61.2	0.0
Question 8: Most parents, whether have had a positive school experiences themselves or not, choose to be involved in their children's education.	0.0	25.2	74.8	0.0

A variable called “*SCHOOL*” was created to appropriately answer this research question. This variable is being measured on a 4 point Likert scale (1 to 4), with 1 representing strongly disagrees and 4 representing strongly agrees. To create this variable, SPSS was used to calculate the mean value of adding the scores of items 1, 2, 7, and 8. The descriptive statistics for this newly created variable can be found in Table 11.

Table 11

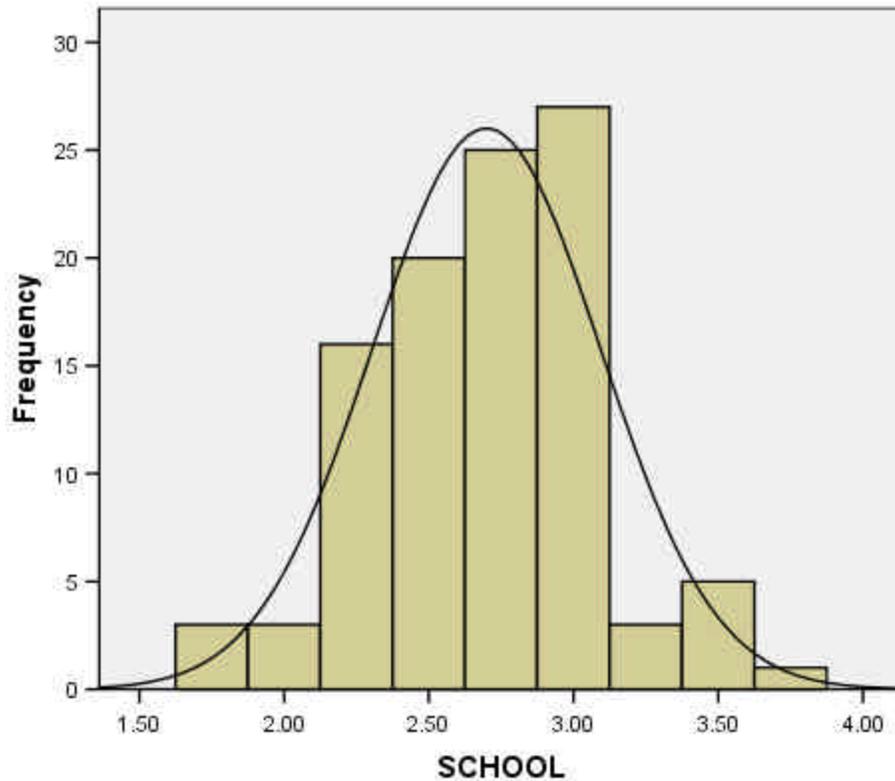
Descriptive Statistics for Calculated Variable SCHOOL

Statistics			
Mean	2.70	Minimum	1.75
Median	2.75	Maximum	3.75
Mode	3.00		

In terms of the measures of central tendency (n = 103), the scores for the variable *SCHOOL* range from 2.0 to 3.75. With a mode value of 3.00, one can conclude that the most frequently occurring calculated score was “Agree.” The midpoint of the distribution, or median, was 2.75. With a mean value of 2.70, there is evidence that principals’ attitudes toward *school decision making and advocacy* was closer to agree (See Figure 5).

Figure 5

Histogram for Calculated Variable SCHOOL



Student Learning

The area of *student learning* (Table 12) contains items 4, 5, 6, 14, 16, and 26. It appears that 100% of the principals agree that creating partnerships between school and parents has a positive impact on student grades (Item 5); also, all principals agree that schools should develop creative ways to overcome barriers when parents do not participate in school events, such as parent teacher conferences (Item 6). However, principals appear to believe that ethnicity and socio-economical backgrounds are factors that somewhat impact parental involvement (Item 4). Additionally, over 80% of the

principals agree that it is “natural” for parent involvement to decline as students go through school (Item 14).

Table 12

Survey Items Related to Student Learning

Survey Items on <i>Student Learning</i>	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
Question 4: Minority parents and those of low socio-economic background are more likely to be involved in their children's education.	13.6	47.6	36.9	1.9
Question 5: Creating a partnership between the school and parent(s) has a positive impact on student grades.	0.0	0.0	42.7	57.3
Question 6: The school should develop creative ways to overcome barriers when parents do not participate in school events, such as parent teacher conferences.	0.0	4.9	63.1	32.0
Question 14: It is a natural occurrence that parental involvement declines as the student progresses through school.	1.0	14.6	64.1	20.4
Question 16: Middle and upper income parents desire more parent involvement than do lower socio-economic parents.	2.9	32.0	51.5	13.6
Question 26: It is embarrassing for most teens to have their parents involved in school activities.	4.9	56.3	36.9	1.9

A variable called “*STUDENT*” was created to appropriately answer this research question. This variable is being measured on a 4 point Likert scale (1 to 4), with 1 representing strongly disagrees and 4 representing strongly agrees. To create this variable, SPSS was used to calculate the mean value of adding the scores of items 4, 5, 6, 14, 16, and 26. The descriptive statistics for this newly created variable can be found in Table 13.

Table 13

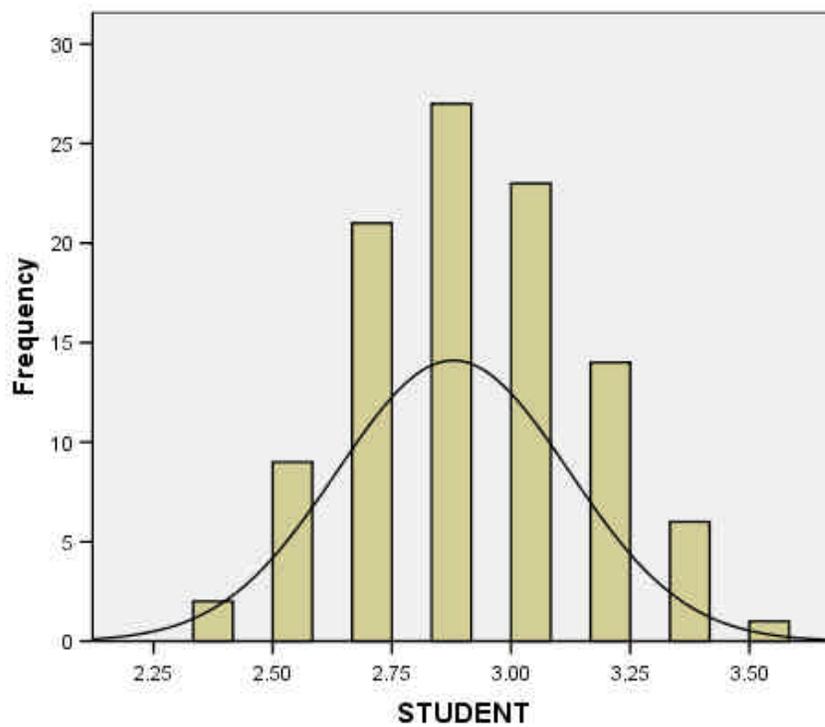
Descriptive Statistics for Calculated Variable STUDENT

Statistics			
Mean	2.89	Minimum	2.33
Median	2.83	Maximum	3.50
Mode	2.83		

In terms of the measures of central tendency (n = 103), the scores for the variable *STUDENT* range from 1.17 to 3.50. With a mode value of 2.83, one can conclude that the most frequently occurring calculated score was below “Agree.” The midpoint of the distribution, or median, was 2.83. With a mean value of 2.89, there is evidence that principals’ attitudes toward *student learning* was quite closer to agree (See Figure 6).

Figure 6

Histogram for Calculated Variable STUDENT



Volunteering

The final area of inquiry was *volunteering*, as shown in items 18, 22, 28, 29, 31, and 32 (Table 14). In terms of holding fundraisers, principals' attitudes are almost evenly divided between agreement and disagreement (Item 13). Over 50% of the principals believe that parents of high school students are as interested in their children's education as they were during elementary or middle school (Items 18 and 31). When it comes to principals' attitude about parents being available or willing to participate in volunteering activities, it seems that two thirds of the principals disagree with the statement that parents do have adequate time to volunteer (Item 22). Also, over 60% of the principals agree that it is difficult to get parents involved (Item 29).

Table 14

Survey Items Related to Volunteering

Survey Items on <i>Volunteering</i>	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
Question 18: Parents of high school students are as interested in their children's education as they were during middle school.	5.8	33.0	53.4	7.8
Question 22: Most parents do have adequate time to volunteer at the school.	5.8	62.1	30.1	1.9
Question 28: The primary responsibility for school success at the secondary level lies with the students' parents.	0.0	64.1	35.9	0.0
Question 29: It is difficult to get working parents involved in their children's education.	1.9	36.9	59.2	1.9
Question 31: Parents of teenagers are as interested in their children's education as they were during the elementary years.	11.7	35.9	47.6	4.9
Question 32: I believe parental involvement is critical at the secondary level.	0.0	3.9	66.0	30.1

A variable called “*VOLUNTEERING*” was created to appropriately answer this research question. This variable is being measured on a 4 point Likert scale (1 to 4), with 1 representing strongly disagrees and 4 representing strongly agrees. To create this variable, the mean value of adding the scores of items 18, 22, 28, 29, 31, and 32 (Table 15).

Table 15

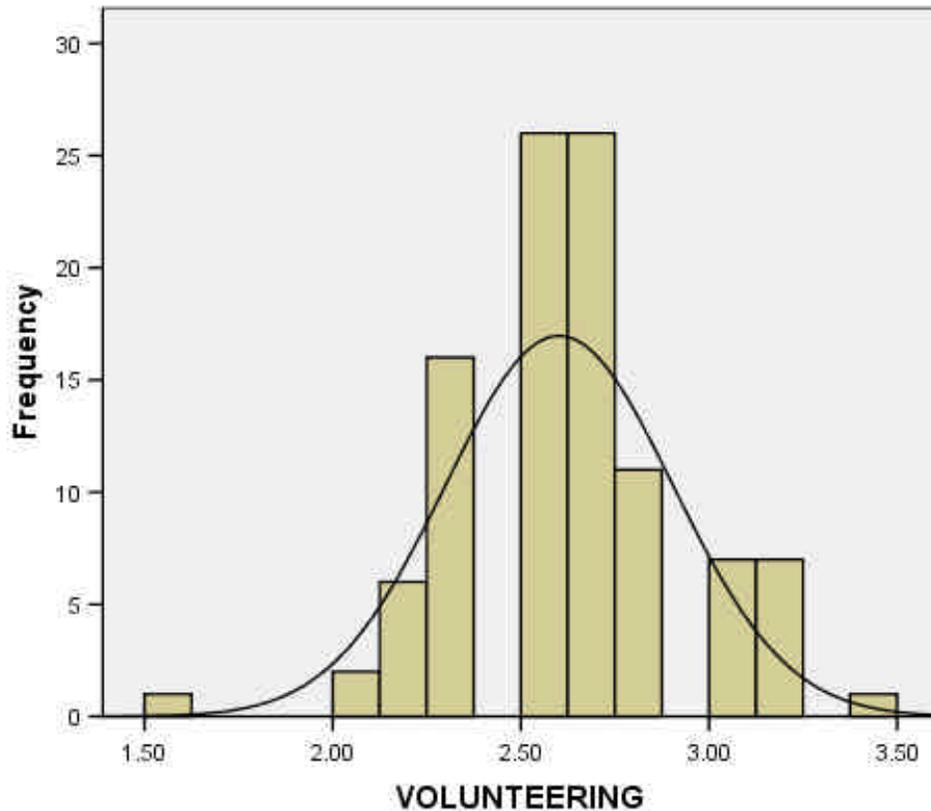
Descriptive Statistics for Calculated Variable VOLUNTEERING

Statistics			
Mean	2.60	Minimum	1.50
Median	2.67	Maximum	3.50
Mode	2.50		

In terms of the measures of central tendency (n = 103), the scores for the variable *VOLUNTEERING* range from 2.00 to 3.50. With a mode value of 2.50, one can conclude that the most frequently occurring calculated score was between “Disagree” and “Agree.” The midpoint of the distribution, or median, was 2.67. With a mean value of 2.60, there is evidence that principals’ attitudes toward *volunteering* was quite between disagreeing and agree (See Figure 7).

Figure 7

Histogram for Calculated Variable VOLUNTEERING



Comparison of Parental Involvement Variables

A closer comparative examination of the calculated variables reveals some interesting information (Table 16). The calculated variable with the lowest mean is *COLLABORATION* (2.523), indicating that principals' attitudes toward school-community collaboration were the lowest among all other traits. The variable *COLLABORATION* has the second highest standard deviation of 0.389, indicating that scores in this category have a larger dispersion from the mean. The variable with the highest mean is *STUDENT* (2.879), corresponding to the category of *Student Learning*. That indicates that principals' attitude toward parent involvement and its relation to

student learning is more positive than any other category. The variable *STUDENT* has the lowest standard deviation (0.243), which indicates that scores are closely dispersed around the mean.

Table 16

Descriptive Statistics for Parental Involvement Categorical Variables

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
COLLABORATION	1.667	3.667	2.523	0.389
COMMUNICATION	1.750	3.500	2.561	0.340
PARENTING	1.600	3.200	2.544	0.306
SCHOOL	1.750	3.750	2.699	0.395
STUDENT	2.333	3.500	2.879	0.243
VOLUNTEERING	1.500	3.500	2.602	0.303

The final analysis on this section involves correlation between principal perspectives and each of the independent variables. The relationship between principals' beliefs toward parental involvement (as measured by the ADMIN BELIEFS) and each one of the independent variables was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Cohen (1988) suggests that correlation values $r = .10$ to $.29$ or $r = -.10$ to $-.29$ are **small**, $r = .30$ to $.49$ or $r = -.30$ to $-.49$ are **medium**, and $r = .50$ to 1.0 or $r = -.50$ to -1.0 are **large**.

As shown on Table 18, small and medium correlation coefficients were found among the calculated variables. Most notably, four medium positive coefficient values were found (bolded print on Table 17).

Table 17

*Pearson Product-moment Correlation Coefficient for Parental Involvement
Categorical Variables*

	ADMIN BELIEFS	COLLAB.	COMM.	PARENT.	SCHOOL	STUDENT	VOLUNT.
ADMIN BELIEFS	1.000						
COLLABORATION	0.426*	1.000					
COMMUNICATION	0.076	0.005	1.000				
PARENTING	0.386*	0.403*	0.160	1.000			
SCHOOL	0.187	0.265	0.069	0.264	1.000		
STUDENT	0.286	-0.017	0.021	-0.014	-0.014	1.000	
VOLUNTEERING	0.313*	0.237	0.023	0.140	0.239	-0.145	1.000

N = 103

* $p < 0.001$

The largest correspond to the correlation between collaboration and administrators' beliefs ($r = 0.426$). The next medium size correlation coefficient is $r = 0.403$, between collaboration and parenting. Finally, there are medium correlations between administrators' beliefs and parenting ($r = 0.386$); and, between administrators' beliefs and volunteering ($r = 0.313$).

Analysis of Research Question Three

What differences, if any, are there in principal perspectives based on the following demographic characteristics: *race, gender, years of experience, school size* (student enrollment), *school setting* (rural, urban and suburban), and socioeconomic status of the community?

Data were obtained from six demographic items on Part II of the Parent Involvement Inventory. Part II focused on student body statistics and professional information. Data on six different demographics were obtained regarding the *race, gender, years of experience of the principal, socio-economic status, student enrollment, and geographic location* of the school.

To further explore attitudinal differences between the two variables being compared, a hypothesis test of the difference between two group means was performed for each of the six demographical categories. The null hypothesis for each variable was that the mean score answers for the two groups were identical: $H_0: \mu_a = \mu_b$.

A statistical hypothesis usually postulates the opposite of what the researcher predicts or expects. In this form it is known as a null hypothesis and is usually represented by the symbol H_0 . The alternative hypothesis is represented by the symbol H_a . If the researcher thus expects that there will be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of female and male administrators with respect to parent involvement (research hypothesis) then the hypothesis will be stated in the form of a null hypothesis. It is the null hypothesis that is tested using the statistical techniques.

Prior to conducting the one-way ANOVA tests, a Levene test for equality of variances was performed for each one of the pair of groups. The objective was to test

whether the variance in scores is the same for each of the six categorical group comparisons. Since all the significance values found were greater than 0.05, no group has violated the assumption of homogeneity of variance, $p > 0.05$.

Since the researcher is evaluating a number of separate analyses, it is suggested to set a higher alpha level to reduce the chance of a Type 1 error (ie. finding a significant result when there is not really one). The most common way of doing this is to apply what is known as a Bonferroni adjustment (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). In its simplest form this involves dividing the original alpha level of 0.05 by the number of analysis performed (six categorical variables). Thus, these ANOVA tests will be evaluated at alpha of 0.008 (0.05/6).

Administrative Experience

The first item on the demographic data sheet asked the respondents to indicate their number of years as a principal (Table 18 and Figure 8). 47.6% of the principals have five or less years in their positions. About 15.5% of the high school principals have 12 years or more in their positions. That indicates that about one out of every six principals have less than 10 years of experience as administrators.

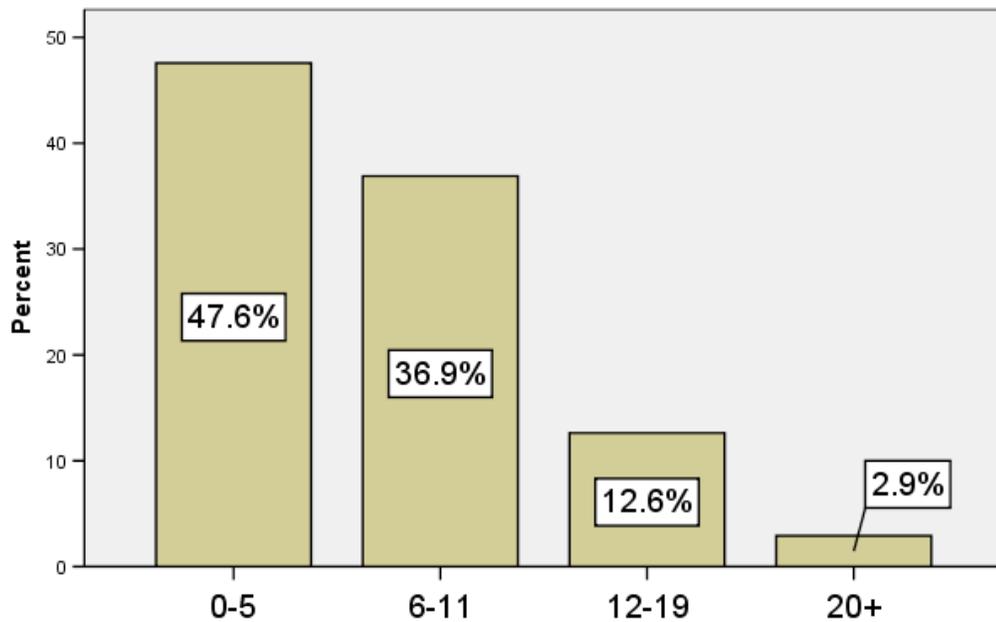
Table 18

Frequency Distribution for Survey Item: Total Number of Years as a High School Principal

Years	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0-5	49	47.6	47.6
6-11	38	36.9	84.5
12-19	13	12.6	97.1
20+	3	2.9	100.0
Total	103	100.0	

Figure 8

Histogram for Survey Item: Total Number of Years as a High School Principal



In an effort to better understand the relationship between principal attitudes as they relate to the six parental involvement categories, the following section test whether the total number of years as a high school principal influenced, both singularly and interactively, principals' attitude toward parental involvement. The researcher's null hypothesis is defined as:

$$H_0: \mu_{\text{principal_beliefs}} = \mu_{\text{years_of_experience}}$$

Since the administrative experience is measured by years using four range levels (0-5, 6-11, 12-19, 20+) it is appropriate to use one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to investigate if differences exist between the categorical groups.

Table 19 shows the analyses of variance (ANOVA) results with the parental involvement categories as dependent variables and with the four ranges of administrative experience as levels of the independent variable.

Table 19

One-way ANOVA Analyses for Total Number of Years as a High School Principal as the Independent Variable and Parental Involvement Categories as Dependent Variables

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
COLLABORATION	Between Groups	1.609	3	0.536	3.837	0.012
	Within Groups	13.838	99	0.140		
	Total	15.447	102			
COMMUNICATION	Between Groups	0.089	3	0.030	0.251	0.860
	Within Groups	11.719	99	0.118		
	Total	11.808	102			
PARENTING	Between Groups	0.028	3	0.009	0.096	0.962
	Within Groups	9.526	99	0.096		
	Total	9.553	102			
SCHOOL	Between Groups	0.437	3	0.146	0.931	0.429
	Within Groups	15.483	99	0.156		
	Total	15.920	102			
STUDENT	Between Groups	0.446	3	0.149	2.645	0.053
	Within Groups	5.565	99	0.056		
	Total	6.011	102			
VOLUNTEERING	Between Groups	0.122	3	0.041	0.437	0.727
	Within Groups	9.224	99	0.093		
	Total	9.346	102			

With a Bonferroni-corrected alpha level of $p < 0.008$, these analyses revealed no statistical significant effect of administrative years of experience on principals' parental involvement attitude categories, $p > 0.008$. As such, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. There is no statistical evidence to support that a difference exists in the attitude of the principals toward parent involvement in schools and the administrative experience of the principals when controlling for the principal's gender, race, size of or location of the school, and the economic status of the school community.

Geographical Setting

The next item in the demographics section of the survey collected information about the geographical setting of the high school: rural, urban, or suburban (Table 20 and

Figure 9). Only 17.5% of the principals qualified their high school as an urban school. For the most part, 82.5% of the schools were located in either rural or suburban areas. It should be highlighted that rural settings were the largest survey respondents (46.6%).

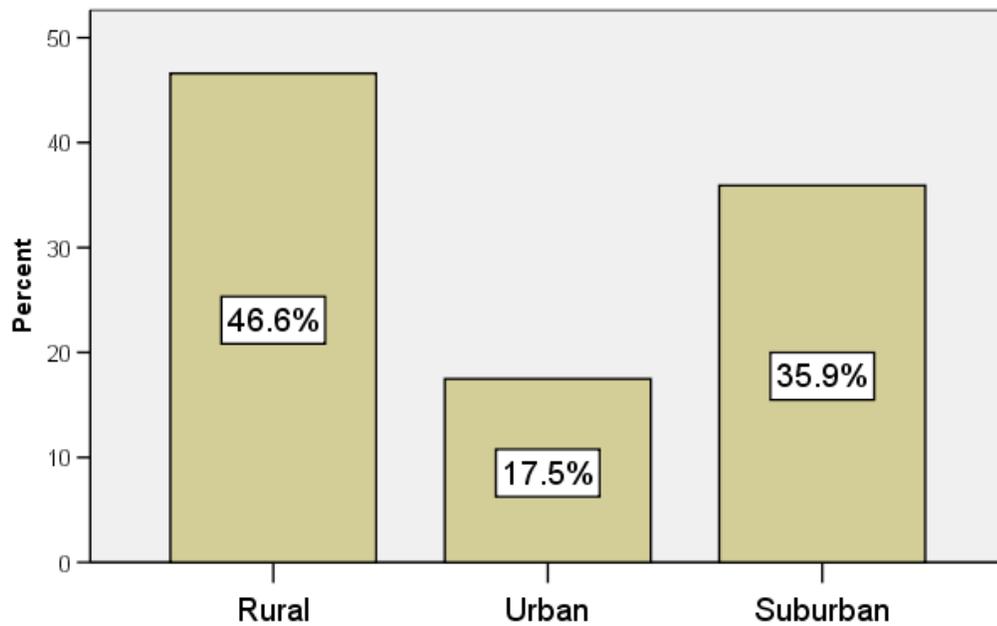
Table 20

Frequency Distribution for Survey Item: School Geographical Designation

Years	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Rural	48	46.6	46.6
Urban	18	17.5	64.1
Suburban	37	35.9	100.0
Total	103	100.0	

Figure 9

Histogram for Survey Item: School Geographical Designation



In an effort to better understand the relationship between principal attitudes as they relate to the six parental involvement categories, the following section test whether

the school geographical setting influenced, both singularly and interactively, principals' attitude toward parental involvement. The null hypothesis is defined as:

$$H_0: \mu_{\text{principal_beliefs}} = \mu_{\text{school_geographical_location}}$$

The geographical location is measured by three categorical groups (rural, urban, and suburban). Therefore, ANOVA analyses will be conducted to investigate if differences exist between the categorical groups. Table 21 shows the analyses of variance (ANOVA) results with the parental involvement categories as dependent variables and with the three groups of geographical location as levels of the independent variable.

Table 21

One-way ANOVA Analyses for School Geographical Location as the Independent Variable and Parental Involvement Categories as Dependent Variables

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
COLLABORATION	Between Groups	0.155	2	0.077	0.507	0.604
	Within Groups	15.292	100	0.153		
	Total	15.447	102			
COMMUNICATION	Between Groups	0.081	2	0.041	0.345	0.709
	Within Groups	11.727	100	0.117		
	Total	11.808	102			
PARENTING	Between Groups	0.616	2	0.308	3.449	0.036
	Within Groups	8.937	100	0.089		
	Total	9.553	102			
SCHOOL	Between Groups	1.213	2	0.607	4.125	0.019
	Within Groups	14.707	100	0.147		
	Total	15.920	102			
STUDENT	Between Groups	0.028	2	0.014	0.232	0.793
	Within Groups	5.983	100	0.060		
	Total	6.011	102			
VOLUNTEERING	Between Groups	0.034	2	0.017	0.184	0.832
	Within Groups	9.312	100	0.093		
	Total	9.346	102			

With a Bonferroni-corrected alpha level of $p < 0.008$, these analyses revealed no statistical significant effect of school geographical location on principals' parental

involvement attitude categories, $p > 0.008$. As such, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. There is no statistical evidence to support that a difference exists in the attitudes of the principals toward parental involvement in schools and the geographical location of the school when controlling for the principal's gender, race, administrative experience, size of the school and the economic status of the school community.

School Enrollment

In terms of enrollment, the survey prompted principals to quantify this item using ranges less than 500, 500 to 1000, and more than 1000 (Table 22 and Figure 10). The majority of the principals reported enrollment in the range of 500 to 1000 (46.6%), followed by more than 1000 (35%), for a cumulative percentage of 81.6 for enrollment 500 students or more.

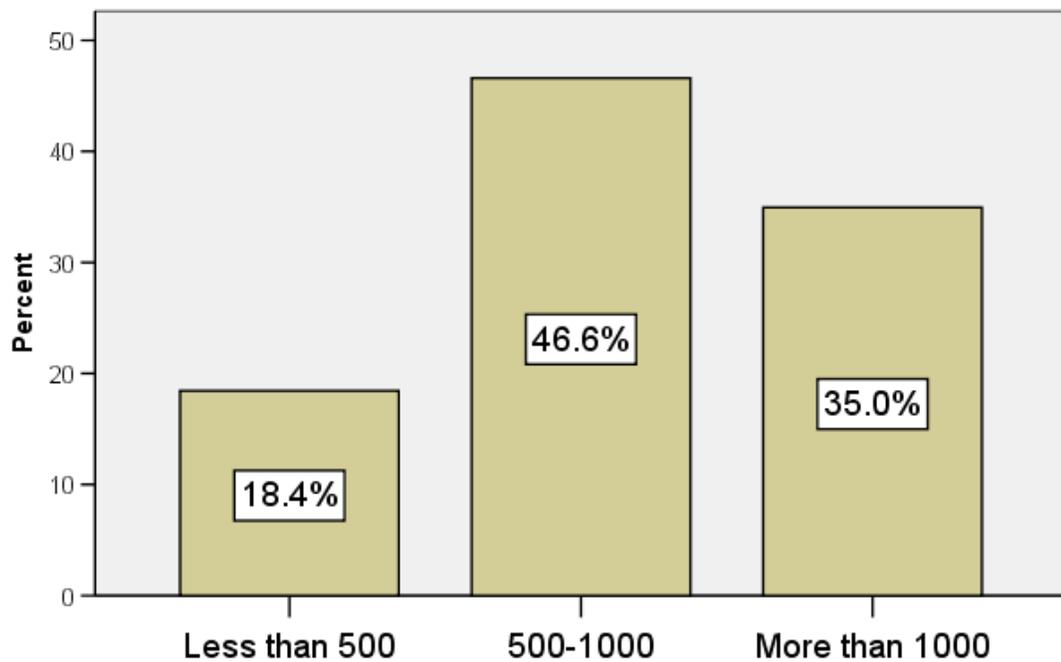
Table 22

Frequency Distribution for Survey Item: Student Enrollment

Years	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 500	19	18.4	18.4
500 - 1000	48	46.6	65.0
More than 1000	36	35.0	100.0
Total	103	100.0	

Figure 10

Histogram for Survey Item: Student Enrollment



To better understand the relationship between principal attitudes as they relate to the six parental involvement categories, the following section test whether the school enrollment influenced, both singularly and interactively, principals' attitude toward parental involvement. The null hypothesis is defined as:

$$H_0: \mu_{\text{principal_beliefs}} = \mu_{\text{years_of_experience}}$$

The school enrollment size is measured by three categorical groups (less than 500, 500-1000, and more than 1000). Thus, it is appropriate to use ANOVA analyses to investigate if differences exist between the categorical groups. Table 23 shows the (ANOVA) results with the parental involvement categories as dependent variables and with the four groups of school enrollment as levels of the independent variable.

Table 23

One-way ANOVA Analyses for School Enrollment as the Independent Variable and Parental Involvement Categories as Dependent Variables

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
COLLABORATION	Between Groups	0.695	2	0.347	2.354	0.100
	Within Groups	14.753	100	0.148		
	Total	15.447	102			
COMMUNICATION	Between Groups	0.022	2	0.011	0.092	0.912
	Within Groups	11.787	100	0.118		
	Total	11.808	102			
PARENTING	Between Groups	0.252	2	0.126	1.353	0.263
	Within Groups	9.302	100	0.093		
	Total	9.553	102			
SCHOOL	Between Groups	0.426	2	0.213	1.375	0.257
	Within Groups	15.494	100	0.155		
	Total	15.920	102			
STUDENT	Between Groups	0.040	2	0.020	0.333	0.717
	Within Groups	5.971	100	0.060		
	Total	6.011	102			
VOLUNTEERING	Between Groups	0.588	2	0.294	3.356	0.039
	Within Groups	8.758	100	0.088		
	Total	9.346	102			

With a Bonferroni-corrected alpha level of $p < 0.008$, these analyses revealed no statistical significant effect of school's student enrollment on principals' parental involvement attitude categories, $p > 0.008$. As such, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. There is no statistical evidence to support that a difference exists in the attitude of the principals toward parent involvement in schools and the size of the school when controlling for the principal's gender, race, administrative experience, and the economic status or the location of the school.

Socio-economical Status

To measure the socio-economical properties of the sampled data, one of the demographics items requested an indication of the average annual income per household

using a three level scale: Less than \$25,000 per year, between \$25,000 and \$40,000 per year, and above \$40,000 per year. As shown on Table 24 and Figure 11, only 17.5% of the high school principals reported less than \$25,000 as the average annual income per household in their community. According to the poverty guidelines published each year in the *Federal Register* by the *Department of Health and Human Services* (HHS), the 2008 HHS poverty guidelines for a household of five is \$24,800 per year (HHS, 2008). Thus, about one out of five high school principals work in a community with household very close or below the HHS poverty guidelines.

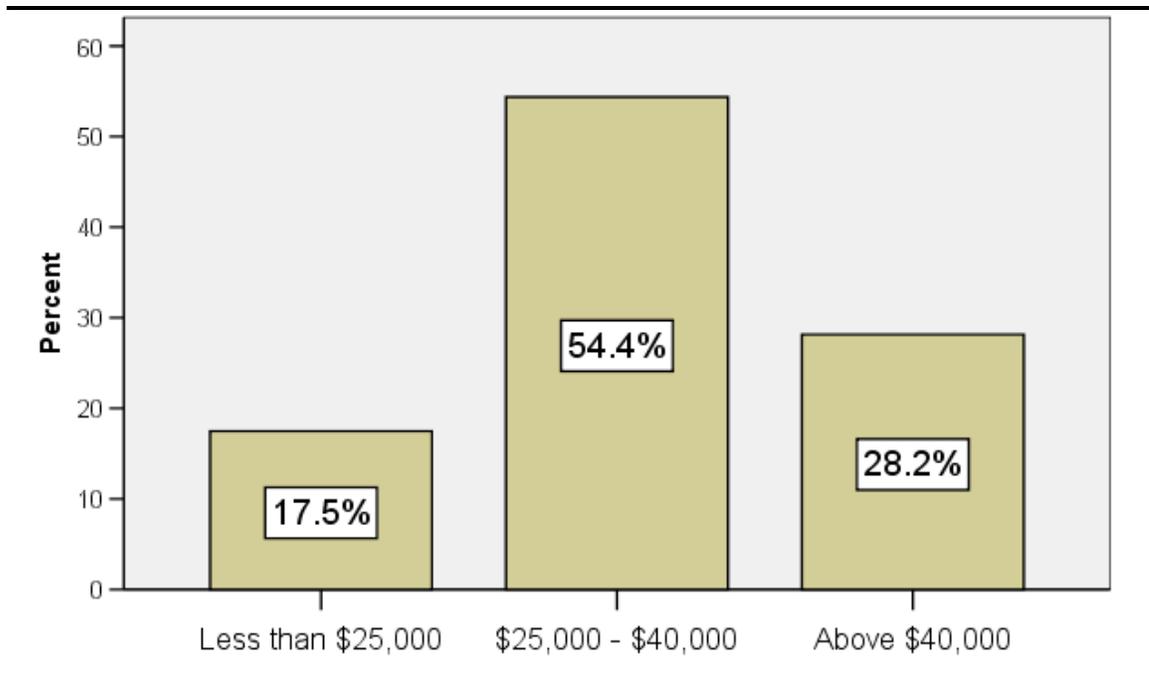
Table 24

Frequency Distribution for Survey Item: Socioeconomic Status of the Community

Average annual income per household	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than \$25,000	18	17.5	17.5
\$25,000 - \$40,000	56	54.4	71.8
Above \$40,000	29	28.2	100.0
Total	103	100.0	

Figure 11

Histogram for Survey Item: Socioeconomically Status of the Community (Average Annual Income Per Household)



To better understand the relationship between principal attitudes as they relate to the six parental involvement categories, the following section test whether the socio-economical status of the school community influenced, both singularly and interactively, principals' attitude toward parental involvement. The null hypothesis is defined as:

$$H_0: \mu_{\text{principal_beliefs}} = \mu_{\text{socioeconomical_status}}$$

The school community's socio-economical status is measured by the average annual income per household under three categorical groups (less than \$25,000, between \$25,000 and \$40,000, and over \$40,000). One-way ANOVA analyses will be used to determine whether differences exist between categorical groups.

Table 25 shows the analysis of variance (ANOVA) results with the parental involvement categories as dependent variables and with the three groups of socio-economical status as levels of the independent variable.

Table 25

One-way ANOVA Analyses for School Socio-economical Status as the Independent Variable and Parental Involvement Categories as Dependent Variables

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
COLLABORATION	Between Groups	0.486	2	0.243	1.623	0.202
	Within Groups	14.962	100	0.150		
	Total	15.447	102			
COMMUNICATION	Between Groups	0.294	2	0.147	1.277	0.283
	Within Groups	11.514	100	0.115		
	Total	11.808	102			
PARENTING	Between Groups	0.205	2	0.103	1.098	0.337
	Within Groups	9.348	100	0.093		
	Total	9.553	102			
SCHOOL	Between Groups	0.894	2	0.447	2.975	0.056
	Within Groups	15.026	100	0.150		
	Total	15.920	102			
STUDENT	Between Groups	0.489	2	0.244	4.427	0.014
	Within Groups	5.522	100	0.055		
	Total	6.011	102			
VOLUNTEERING	Between Groups	0.083	2	0.041	0.445	0.642
	Within Groups	9.264	100	0.093		
	Total	9.346	102			

With a Bonferroni-corrected alpha level of $p < 0.008$, these analyses revealed no statistical significant effect of school socio-economical status on principals' parental involvement attitude categories, $p > 0.008$. As such, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. There is no statistical evidence to support that a difference exists in the attitude of the principals toward parental involvement in schools and the economic status of the school community when controlling for the principal's gender, race, administrative experience or size of or location of school.

Gender of the High School Principal

Another relevant demographics item was gender (Table 26 and Figure 12). It is noticeable that about four out five principals is male (79.6%).

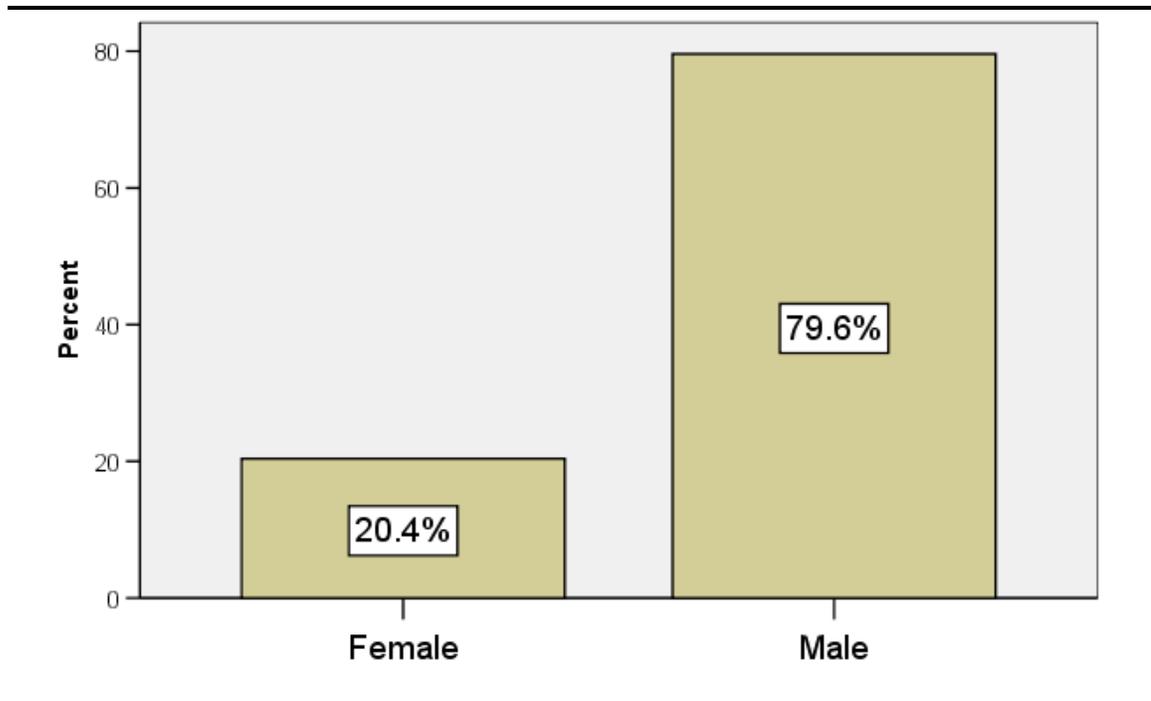
Table 26

Frequency Distribution for Survey Item High School Principals' Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	21	20.4	20.4
Male	82	79.6	100.0
Total	103	100.0	

Figure 12

Histogram for Survey Item: Gender of the High School Principal



To better understand the relationship between principal attitudes as they relate to the six parental involvement categories, the following section test whether the gender of

the high school principal influenced, both singularly and interactively, principals' attitude toward parental involvement. The null hypothesis is defined as:

$$H_0: \mu_{\text{principal_beliefs}} = \mu_{\text{gender}}$$

Since gender was measured using two categories (male or female) a *t*-test is more appropriate to determine whether differences exist between categorical groups. Like with prior analysis, a Levene test for equality of variances was performed to test whether the variance in scores is the same for each of the six categorical groups (Table 27).

Table 27

Independent Samples t-test for Gender of the High School Principal as the Independent Variable and Parental Categories as Dependent Variables

	t-test for Equality of Means		
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
COLLABORATION	0.537	101.000	0.592
	0.431	25.016	0.670
COMMUNICATION	-1.279	101.000	0.204
	-1.219	29.324	0.233
PARENTING	-0.014	101.000	0.989
	-0.012	26.946	0.990
SCHOOL	1.926	101.000	0.057
	1.921	30.964	0.064
STUDENT	-1.128	101.000	0.262
	-1.261	36.466	0.215
VOLUNTEERING	0.692	101.000	0.490
	0.669	29.803	0.508

* $p < 0.05$

After evaluating the corresponding *t*-test significance results, no group has a statistically significance difference in the mean values for males and females, $p > 0.05$.

As such, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. There is no statistical evidence to

support that a difference exists in the attitudes of principals toward parent involvement in schools and the gender of the principal when controlling for principal’s race, administrative experience, size or location of the school and the economic status of the community.

Race of the High School Principal

The last demographics item captures how survey respondents qualify themselves in terms of race. There were four categories to choose from: White, Hispanic, African-American, and Other. The category “Other” was removed because it had just one case, reducing the number of cases to 102 for this evaluation. Table 28 and Figure 13 show the distribution of the responses. It is evident that white principals have an overwhelming majority of the high school principal seats, with a nine to one advantage (92.2%).

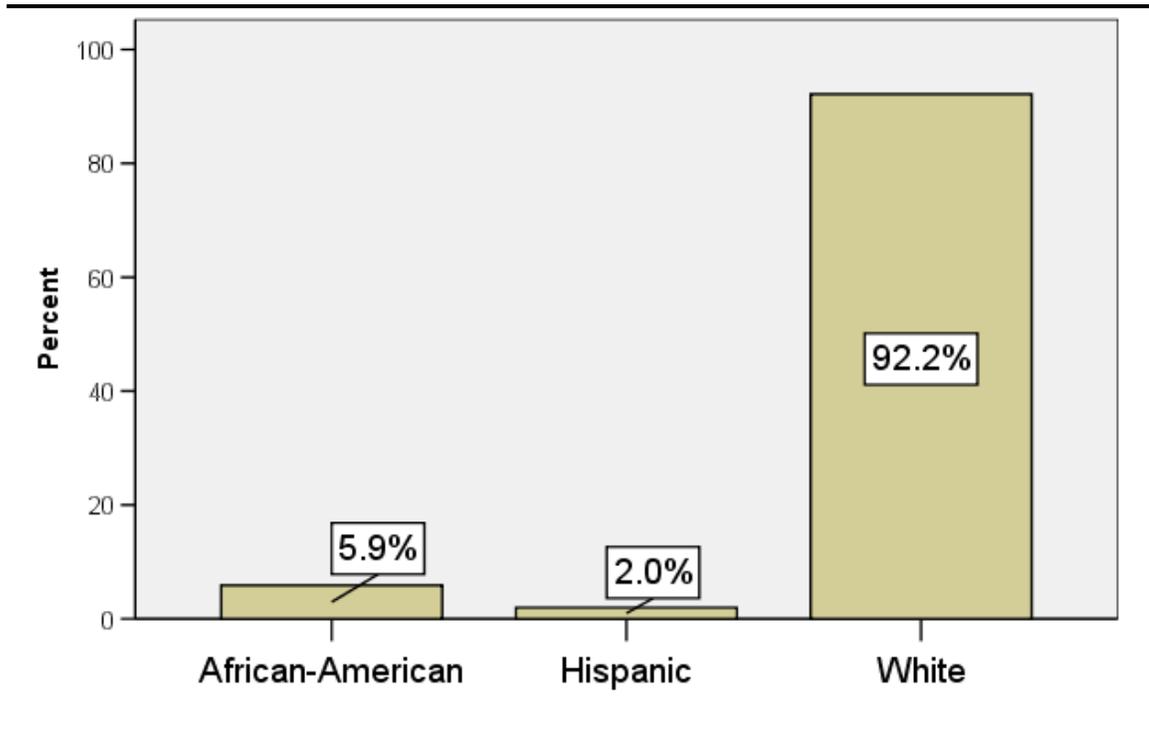
Table 28

Frequency Distribution for Survey Item: Race of the High School Principal

Race	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
African-American	6	5.9	5.9
Hispanic	2	2.0	7.9
White	94	92.2	100.0
Total	102	100.0	

Figure 13

Histogram for Survey Item: Race of the High School Principal



To better understand the relationship between principal attitudes as they relate to the six categories, the following section test whether the high school principal race setting influenced, both singularly and interactively, principals' attitude toward parental involvement. The null hypothesis is defined as:

$$H_0: \mu_{\text{principal_beliefs}} = \mu_{\text{race}}$$

The principals' race was collected using a categorical variable (African-American, Hispanic, White, and Other). Table 29 provides a breakdown of each one of the levels within the variable RACE, by parental involvement category.

Table 29

Descriptive Statistics for Race of the High School Principal by Parental Involvement Category

Category	Race	Cases	Mean	Std. Dev.
COLLABORATION	African-American	6	2.92	0.40
	Hispanic	2	3.00	0.24
	White	94	2.49	0.37
COMMUNICATION	African-American	6	2.54	0.29
	Hispanic	2	2.63	0.18
	White	94	2.56	0.35
PARENTING	African-American	6	2.77	0.20
	Hispanic	2	2.80	0.28
	White	94	2.52	0.30
SCHOOL	African-American	6	3.08	0.30
	Hispanic	2	2.25	0.35
	White	94	2.68	0.39
STUDENT	African-American	6	2.92	0.27
	Hispanic	2	2.92	0.59
	White	94	2.87	0.24
VOLUNTEERING	African-American	6	2.81	0.29
	Hispanic	2	2.50	0.00
	White	94	2.59	0.30

Table 30 shows the ANOVA results with the parental involvement categories as dependent variables and with the three groups of race as levels of the independent variable.

Table 30

One-way ANOVA Analyses for Race of the High School Principal as the Independent Variable and Parental Involvement Categories as Dependent Variables

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
COLLABORATION	Between Groups	1.515	2	0.757	5.389	0.006*
	Within Groups	13.912	99	0.141		
	Total	15.426	101			
COMMUNICATION	Between Groups	0.010	2	0.005	0.044	0.957
	Within Groups	11.700	99	0.118		
	Total	11.711	101			
PARENTING	Between Groups	0.492	2	0.246	2.825	0.064
	Within Groups	8.626	99	0.087		
	Total	9.118	101			
SCHOOL	Between Groups	1.312	2	0.656	4.447	0.014
	Within Groups	14.605	99	0.148		
	Total	15.917	101			
STUDENT	Between Groups	0.013	2	0.007	0.110	0.896
	Within Groups	5.983	99	0.060		
	Total	5.996	101			
VOLUNTEERING	Between Groups	0.275	2	0.137	1.512	0.226
	Within Groups	8.999	99	0.091		
	Total	9.273	101			

* $p < 0.008$

With a Bonferroni-corrected alpha level of $p < 0.008$, these analyses revealed that race has statistical significant effect on one of the parental involvement attitude categories: COLLABORATION, $F(2,99) = 5.389$, $p = 0.006$.

Follow-up Tukey Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) t test indicated collaboration scores for African-American administrators (mean = 2.92) and White administrators (mean = 2.49) vary significantly from one another, indicating that African-American administrators have a higher level of positive attitude toward parental involvement in the category of collaboration (Table 31). However, there is no significant difference between these two groups and Hispanic principals.

Table 31

*Multiple Comparisons Tukey HSD Test Results for Calculated Variable
COLLABORATION and Race of the High School Principal*

(I) Race	(J) Race	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
African-American	Hispanic	-0.083	0.306	0.960
	White	0.431	0.158	0.020*
Hispanic	African-American	0.083	0.306	0.960
	White	0.514	0.268	0.139
White	African-American	-0.431	0.158	0.020*
	Hispanic	-0.514	0.268	0.139

* $p < 0.05$

As such, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is statistical evidence to support that a difference exists in the attitude of the principals toward parent involvement in schools and the race of the principal when controlling for the principal's gender, race, administrative experience, and the economic status or the location of the school.

Chapter Five : Findings, conclusions, and implications

Like palimpsests, beliefs and perspectives shape the way administrators perceive and interpret parental involvement within their own schools. In fact, explicit and superficial positions on parental involvement cannot be understood until the multi-faced, complex nature of beliefs is taken into account. Basically, high school administrators must experience the conscious realization that a different paradigm or “lens” is shaping their unconscious, preconceived reality. In this chapter, the researcher first summarizes the study, and then discusses the findings and conclusions of the study. The researcher also offers recommendations and implications based on the analysis of the data and review of literature in Chapter 2. Finally, the researcher provides further research recommendations on parental involvement.

Study summary

The purpose of the study was to analyze the perspectives of high school principals toward parental involvement in Pennsylvania schools. The study was designed to examine the relationship between secondary principal perspectives and each of the following six identified parental involvement categories: Communication, School Decision Making and Advocacy, Collaborating with Community, Volunteering, Student Learning and Parenting.

The participants for this study were secondary principals in the state of Pennsylvania, found on the Pennsylvania Department of Education database. The target population was the 501 schools in Pennsylvania, but sampling was conducted on a smaller, accessible population of 360 schools. The rate of return totaled 103 surveys, which resulted in an overall return rate of 28.6%. The final analysis in this research

involved correlation between principal perspectives and each of the independent variables: *race, gender, years of experience of the principal, socio-economic status, student enrollment* and *geographic location*. The relationship between principals' beliefs toward parental involvement (as measured by the ADMIN BELIEFS) and each one of the independent variables was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient.

Data were collected during the fall and winter of 2008-2009. A survey instrument was used for the study. The questions were placed on Zoomerang and e-mailed to 360 high school principals in Pennsylvania. The survey responses were statistically analyzed with the SPSS computer statistical analysis program. In an effort to better understand the relationship between principal perspectives as they relate to the six categories, descriptive statistics were used to rank the principal perspectives.

Findings

The first research question asked how strongly principals believe in parental involvement in schools. Findings from this study suggested that Pennsylvania principals overall held positive perspectives toward parental involvement in high schools. However, closer examination of the survey responses reveals that such findings are more complex and intertwined with the administrators' own set of beliefs. One striking divergence in terms of administrators' perspectives is evident as 100% of the administrators agreed that creating a partnership between the school and parent has a positive impact on student behavior. Likewise, all administrators agreed that parent involvement is important for student success in learning and staying in school. However, to the researcher's dismay, 85% of the administrators believe that declining parental involvement, as the student

progresses through school, is a “natural occurrence”. One more troublesome belief was uncovered as the survey responses show that 95% of the administrators believe that parents already know how to help their children on school work at home.

One significant set of layered beliefs and complex understanding of the nature of parental involvement was demonstrated as administrators expressed their opinions about teachers and parents within the context of their interactions. All administrators (100%) agreed with the statement that parent involvement can help teachers be more effective with more students. In spite of such unanimous belief, the same administrators offer very different opinions about parents and teachers’ role in the students’ well being. For example, when it comes to administrators’ opinion as to whether teachers desire large parent involvement in their classroom, three out five administrators disagree. Also, 78% of the administrators (almost four out of five), expressed disagreement with teachers having a primary role increasing parental involvement within their high school. Finally, only three out of ten administrators agree that parental input in the evaluation of the teacher is useful.

About two out of three administrators (64%) expressed disagreement with the statement that parental input is helpful in curriculum issues, such as textbook selection. That alone illustrates a significant gap between beliefs and practical implementation of fundamental parental involvement strategies. Therefore, it is quite challenging to identify what layer of beliefs, biases, opinions and perspectives are really driving any given high school parental involvement initiatives.

The second question explored how much principals’ attitudes vary toward parental involvement roles and categories. A closer comparative examination of several

calculated variables revealed some interesting information. To start, the calculated variable with the lowest mean was *COLLABORATION*, indicating that principals' attitudes toward school-community collaboration were the lowest among all other categories. The variable *COLLABORATION* had the second highest standard deviation from the mean, indicating that a wide range of perspectives were found across survey participants in terms of attitudes and beliefs on schools collaborating with the community.

The correlation analysis indicated that medium levels of correlation exist among administrators' beliefs and the parental involvement categories of collaboration, parenting, and volunteering. Thus, as administrators display levels of agreement or disagreement in terms of overall parental involvement, their positioning regarding collaboration, parenting, and volunteering tends to somewhat move in the same agreement/disagreement direction. A medium level of correlation also exists between parenting and collaboration. That indicates that administrators responses to parenting items tend to somewhat follow the same agreement or disagreement direction as their responses to items related to collaboration.

Overall, all principals agreed with the statement that creating a partnership between the school and parents has a positive impact on student behavior. In addition, 92% of the principals indicated agreement with parents assisting in the establishment of the educational goals for the school. Again, the layered and multidimensional complexity of beliefs, experiences, biases and preferences came to light after examining principals' answers to other questions related to school collaboration with the community.

One major disconnected area was related to how principals perceive the parents and community's role in the school budget planning. Since most schools rely significantly on the tax base of their community for income, it should be expected that principals would be more in favor of some level of involvement with the community. Instead, about three out of five principals disagree with the idea of parents being encouraged to participate in the school budget planning process.

Another area of divergence in principals' perspectives toward collaboration was identified after reviewing the responses to the question whether parents should participate in staff hiring decisions. About four out of five administrators indicated disagreement with that idea, contradicting their 100% expressed support for collaborating with the community and, to a more complex and deeper extent, undermining the significant role the community should have during the process of selecting and recruiting those who are going to interact with their children the most.

At the other side of the spectrum, the parental role with the highest average response across administrators was *STUDENT*, corresponding to the category of *Student Learning*. The data indicated that principals' attitude toward parent involvement and its relation to student learning is more positive than any other category. The variable *STUDENT* has the lowest level of variability, indicating that most principals closely share attitudes and beliefs toward parental involvement and its effect on student learning. Again, closer examination of the questions and answers in that parental role category revealed some interesting trends. All principals agreed that creating a partnership between the school and parents has a positive impact on student grades. Also, 95% of the responses indicated agreement with schools developing creative ways to overcome

barriers when parents do not participate in school events, such as parent teacher conferences. From these types of responses, one may conclude that principals, as a group, presented a very positive front in support of parental involvement and student learning. However, some of the responses on the same topic, provided evidence of how the multi-layered nature of human beliefs and perspectives can again be very complex.

For example, 85% of the administrators believe that declining parental involvement, as the student progresses through school, is a “natural occurrence”. Another example is that two out of three principals perceived middle and upper income parents as desiring more parental involvement than lower socio-economic parents. That response ties quite well with the perspective that minority parents and those of low socio-economic background are more likely to not be involved in their children’s education. Overall, these responses indicate that perspectives and beliefs are complex and multi-dimensional when it comes to administrators’ attitudes toward parental involvement and its correlation with student learning.

The third question asked whether the attitudes of principals toward parent involvement in school are related to various demographic variables. While examining the responses to this set of questions, it was evident that male respondents overwhelmingly surpassed females four to one. Likewise, the percentage of White high school principals is significantly higher than other races in the sample used for the study (nine out of ten respondents were White). There is not enough information to determine whether the sample is representative of the population in terms of gender or race; nevertheless, it is a quite interesting point.

After performing the corresponding statistical analyses, it was found that attitudes of Pennsylvania's high school principals toward parental involvement are not related to the principal's gender or years of experience, the student community's socio-economical status, geographical location, and enrollment size. However, there is significant relationship between the race of the principal and the parental involvement category of collaboration with the community. The statistical analyses revealed that, when comparing principals' attitudes toward parental involvement in the collaboration category, African- American principals were significantly different than White principals, but not significantly different from Hispanic principals. In fact, African-American principals reported higher levels of positive attitudes toward collaboration with the community as a category of parental involvement. These findings indicate that African-American administrators demonstrated a higher level of agreement in terms of having school and community collaborating toward more effective parental involvement. However, given the relatively small sample, generalization of these findings to the entire population of high school principals in the State of Pennsylvania may not be appropriate.

Overall, the study suggests that principals could benefit from educational programs where parental involvement and the opportunity to work with parents may create a stronger disposition and tendency to implement parental involvement practices more effectively into their school staff development activities. These opportunities would provide multiple sessions on the "how to" of traditional parental involvement practices (communication, parent conferences, open house, newsletters, decision making/advocacy and volunteering).

Limitations of the Study

Reading and understanding someone's beliefs is not done instantaneously or simply because beliefs are not immediate or straightforward representations. In fact, human nature forces us to approach belief development in a very different way. As with parental involvement, there are at least different levels in terms of beliefs and perspectives. First, the outmost, explicit and public position is commonly aligned with the framework of expectations and self-imposed structure surrounding administrators, teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders. At that superficial level, the tendency is to perform within the carefully crafted boundaries of political correctness, compliance, and compromised attitude toward parental involvement. There is at least another level, one that resides at a deeper level, where the real motivations and beliefs are found. It is clear that this study is not intended to reach that level, but such limitation should be highlighted to ensure there is clear awareness of what really is at stake: the eventual exposure of our own set of beliefs and biases.

In terms of the mechanics of the study, there are some explicit and implicit limitations. First, the number of responses received as well as the lack of authority of the researcher to obtain responses from the principals surveyed is a significant limitation of this study. Some of the findings of the statistical analyses found in this study should not be used to generalize the behavior of the entire high school population in the State of Pennsylvania (Type I statistical error). To minimize that potential limitation, the researcher used a more restrictive, demanding level of significance by correcting the 0.05 alpha levels using the Bonferroni adjustment to 0.008.

Every possible attempt was made for the researcher to remain personally detached and objective about the survey and the participants, thus creating the best possible scenario

for useful data and information. Nevertheless, it is always possible that the researcher's own beliefs and perspectives can create unintentional bias while analyzing emerging data. To help limit the degree to which bias will play a role in this study, the researcher applied significant amount of planning before and during the study.

Another limitation of this study is the concerns on the issue of social desirability of responses. Participants may have answered the survey from a perspective of what they think they should have answered. Therefore, the responses may not be honest reflections of the opinions held by the participants.

Finally, it is quite possible that some principals are relatively new to the school or in their first year as a principal and as such, have not had an opportunity to assess the school culture in regards to parental involvement. In fact, close to 50% of the survey respondents have five years or less of high school administration experience.

Implications

The first report on parental involvement was published in 1981, entitled *The Evidence Grows*. At that time 35 studies were identified as having documented significant, measurable benefit for students, families and schools. In 1994, 39 additional studies were included to show that parental involvement does have a positive impact upon students' achievement (Henderson & Berla, 1994). The positive impact is not localized to the elementary school setting. On the contrary, student in all grades benefit from the positive influences of parental involvement. However, principals, especially high school principals, appear to be unaware of the research or disregard it.

“Fifteen studies established increments or levels of involvement. Each one reported that the more parents are involved, the better students perform in school” (Henderson & Berla, 1994). The positive impact of parental involvement on high school

students has been identified by Coleman and Hoffer (1987), Nettles (1991), Simich-Dufgeon (1993). All principals, especially high school principals, need to hear the evidence supporting parent involvement and be given the type of training that will allow them to support parent involvement in their schools. In their responses, high school principals indicated that parental involvement is a significant component of an effective school. However, based on administrators' responses to other survey items, their beliefs appear to drift away from their superficial perspectives and opinions.

In terms of educational administration, preparatory classes should be enhanced to acknowledge the need for fundamental parental involvement practices. Leadership candidates should be aware and prepared to plan, design and execute parental involvement strategies, not just at the conceptual level, but all the way to successful implementation. As Lacey indicated, principal preparation programs should focus on research, information related to effective schools, the principal's role, and the obligations and the process and the mandate of involving parents (Lacey, 1999).

All entities responsible for the education of our children need to be aware of how parental involvement impacts the overall educational experience. Efforts should be placed in attracting, selecting, recruiting and retaining educational leaders who effectively demonstrate a positive attitude toward parental involvement. At the district level, superintendents and personnel committees should support and provide resources, skill sets and infrastructure to design and implement parental involvement initiatives and best practices.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have emerged from the study:

1. Colleges and universities should consider undertaking an in-depth revision of their educational administration courses to include content relevant to parental involvement and the significant role of administrators into successful implementations.
2. A study of staff development practices and in-service programs in school districts, at the Pennsylvania state level, to determine if best practices, information, and relevant research to parental involvement are being included for administrators and teachers.
3. A research initiative to identify, quantify and qualify parental involvement statewide programs, and the impact of these programs on overall student learning and achievement.
4. Design, implement and communicate a best-practice road-map for high school principals, demonstrating effective and efficient methods in which to implement parent involvement initiatives and programs.
5. A closer examination of the roles associated with parental involvement to qualify which serve high school environments the most.

Final Thoughts

Based on research studies and personal experience, parental involvement is a powerful tool. It can definitely benefit students academically, socially and emotionally along with enhancing the interactions among teachers, parents, and the community.

Everything possible should be done to encourage parents to become more effectively involved in their children's educational experience.

As educational leaders, high school principals should be the main supporters and promoters of parental involvement. Of course, the principal's beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes can impose a limitation or enhance the overall experience, depending on what they really believe and value. Hopefully, our main driver and motivator should be the common good and prosperity of our students, community and nation. At the end, what really counts is not necessarily the external representations of ourselves, but the inner set of beliefs that, like a compass, always should point us to true North.

Appendices

Appendix A: The Parental Involvement Inventory

Part I.

Instructions: After reading each item, please indicate the degree to which you feel the statement is true. Read each choice carefully and circle the appropriate response.

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Agree 4=Strongly Agree

1. Educators and parents have complementary expertise about the education of children.	1 2 3 4
2. Most parents, regardless of background, desire to be involved in their children's education.	1 2 3 4
3. Most parents feel welcome when they come to the high school.	1 2 3 4
4. Minority parents and those of low socio-economic background are less likely to be involved in their child's education.	1 2 3 4
5. Creating a partnership between the school and parent(s) has a positive impact on student grades.	1 2 3 4
6. The school should develop creative ways to overcome barriers when parents do not participate in school events, such as parent teacher conferences.	1 2 3 4
7. Most parents do not have the training or background necessary to take part in making school policies.	1 2 3 4
8. Only parents who have had positive school experiences themselves choose to be involved in their child's education.	1 2 3 4
9. Most parents are familiar with the school building and can successfully find their way around.	1 2 3 4
10. Parental input is helpful in curriculum issues such as textbook selection.	1 2 3 4

11. Parents should act as home tutors assisting their children with school assignments as needed.	1 2 3 4
12. Most parents desire little interaction with the high school.	1 2 3 4
13. Parents should hold fundraisers to support school needs.	1 2 3 4
14. It is a natural occurrence that parental involvement declines as the student progresses through school.	1 2 3 4
15. Parent input in the evaluation of teachers is useful.	1 2 3 4
16. Middle and upper income parents desire more parent involvement than do lower socio-economic parents	1 2 3 4
17. Parents should participate in staff hiring decisions.	1 2 3 4
18. Parents of high school students are not as interested in their child's education as they were during middle school.	1 2 3 4
19. Parents should be encouraged to participate in the school budget planning process.	1 2 3 4
20. Most teachers desire little parent involvement in their classrooms.	1 2 3 4
21. Parents should assist in the establishment of the educational goals for the school.	1 2 3 4
22. Most parents do not have adequate time to volunteer at the school.	1 2 3 4
23. Our school does a sufficient job of encouraging parental involvement.	1 2 3 4
24. The primary responsibility to increase parental involvement within a high school lies with classroom teachers.	1 2 3 4
25. Most parents have the knowledge and/or ability to help their child with academic work.	1 2 3 4

26. It is embarrassing for most teens to have their parents involved in school activities.	1 2 3 4
27. Creating a partnership between the school and parent has a positive impact on student behavior.	1 2 3 4
28. The primary responsibility for school success at the secondary level lies with the students' parents.	1 2 3 4
29. It is difficult to get working parents involved in their child's education.	1 2 3 4
30. Parents of teenagers are not as interested in their child's education as they were during the elementary years.	1 2 3 4
31. Parents of teenagers are not as interested in their child's education as they were during the elementary years.	1 2 3 4
32. I believe parental involvement is critical at the secondary level.	1 2 3 4
33. Parental involvement is important for a good school climate.	1 2 3 4
34. Every family has some strength that could be tapped to increase student success in school.	1 2 3 4
35. Parent involvement can help teachers be more effective with more students.	1 2 3 4
36. Some parents already know how to help their children on school work at home.	1 2 3 4
37. Parent involvement is important for student success in learning and staying in school.	1 2 3 4
38. Schools should have workshops for parents to build skills in parenting and understanding their children at each grade level.	1 2 3 4

Part II

Demographic and Professional Information

Instructions: The following items are intended to gather information on your background and your school. Please read each item and respond by placing an **X** on the appropriately line. Question 4 put the number of students.

1. Total number of years as a High School Principal: 0-5___ 6-11___ 12-19___ 20+___

2. I am employed in a school designated as:

Rural___ Urban___ Suburban___

3. Student enrollment in my school is ___0-500, _____501-1000, _____1001+

4. Socioeconomic status of the community: low income- 15,000-25,000___ , middle income- 26,000-40,000 _____, upper income 41,000-50,000+_____

5. Gender: Female___ Male___

6. Race: African-American ___ White ___ Hispanic_____ Other_____

Appendix B: Research Design Matrix

Research Question / Hypotheses	Variables	Instrument	Design	Analysis	Interpretation
<p>RQ1: How strongly do Pennsylvania secondary school principals believe in parental involvement?</p>	<p>DV: Strength of belief in parental involvement. IV: None.</p>	<p>Items on the inventory measuring principal beliefs. Items 33-38</p>	<p>Survey</p>	<p>Frequency distribution table, means and other descriptive statistics.</p>	<p>The highest levels of belief in parental involvement will be highlighted.</p>
<p>RQ2: What is the relationship between secondary principal perspectives and each of the following six categories: Communication School Decision Making and Advocacy Volunteering</p>	<p>DV: Principal Perspectives IV: Communication School Decision Making and Advocacy Volunteering Student</p>	<p>Items on the inventory measuring principal perspectives are: Communication items 3-9-23-24 School Decision Making and Advocacy Items 1-2-7-8 Volunteering items 18-22-28-29-31-32</p>	<p>Survey</p>	<p>Descriptive statistics, mean and frequency distribution table for each of the six categories. Composite means and standard deviation will be computed for each of the six categories and the means will be ranked to determine relative concern within each category. Correlation analysis between principal perspectives and each of the IV's will be calculated.</p>	<p>The highest levels of principles perspectives on each one of the six categories will be highlighted.</p>

Research Question / Hypotheses	Variables	Instrument	Design	Analysis	Interpretation
Student Learning	Learning	Student Learning Items 4-5-6-14-16-26			
Collaboration	Collaboration	Collaboration items 10-17-19-20-21-27			
Parenting	Parenting	Parenting items 11-12-13-15-25			
RQ3: What differences are there in principal perspectives based on the following demographic characteristics: principal gender, race, years of experience, size of school and school setting and socioeconomic status of the community?	DV: principal perspectives'. IVs: principal gender, race, years of experience, and school size (enrollment) School setting (rural, urban, suburban) (Socioeconomic status of the community)	Items on the inventory measuring principal perspectives' will be in Part 2 are: Gender: Male or Female Race: African American, White, Hispanic other. Years of experience: 0-5, 6-11, 12-19, and 20+ Socioeconomic status of the community(low community)(low	Survey	Descriptive statistics. Independent t – test for gender (male, female). ANOVA for race (African American, White, Hispanic and Other). ANOVA for years of experience (0-5, 6-11, 12-19 and 20+). ANOVA for Socioeconomic status of the community(low income- 15,000-25,000, middle income- 26,000-40,000 ,upper income	Descriptive statistics will be used in measuring principal perspectives. Comparisons in the areas of gender and professional title will be made using t-tests for independent means. In each ANOVA and t-test, the principals' demographic grouping will serve as the independent variable and the composite mean for each response category will serve as the dependent variable.

Research Question / Hypotheses	Variables	Instrument	Design	Analysis	Interpretation
		<p>income- 15,000-25,000, middle income- 26,000-40,000 ,upper income 41,000-50,000+)</p> <p>School Size: (student enrollment, small(0-500), medium(501-1000) and large(1001+) School setting (rural, urban, suburban)</p>		<p>41,000-50,000+)</p> <p>ANOVA for school size(student enrollment small(0-500), medium (501-1000)and large(1001+) School setting (rural, urban, suburban)</p>	<p>The principal's attitudes toward each category (communication concerns, School Decision Making and Advocacy Volunteering, Student Learning, Collaboration, Parenting) will then be compared based on the demographic categories (gender, race, years of experience, school setting (rural. urban, suburban), school size(student enrollment small, medium and large) Socioeconomic status of the community using a one-way analysis of variance.</p>

Appendix C: Reversal of negatively worded items

Negatively Worded Question	Original Distribution				After Reversing				Positively Worded Question
	SD	D	A	SA	SD	D	A	SA	
4. Minority parents and those of low socio-economic background <i>are less likely to be involved</i> in their child's education.	2	38	49	14	14	49	38	2	4. Minority parents <i>have</i> the training or background economic background <i>are more likely to be involved</i> in their child's education.
7. Most parents <i>do not have</i> the training or background necessary to take part in making school policies.	4	59	30	10	10	30	59	4	7. Most parents <i>have</i> the training or background necessary to take part in making school policies.
8. <i>Only</i> parents <i>who have had</i> positive school experiences themselves choose to be involved in their child's education.	12	65	25	1	1	25	65	12	8. <i>Most</i> parents, whether <i>have had</i> a positive school experiences themselves <i>or not</i> , choose to be involved in their child's education.
12. <i>Most</i> parents <i>desire little interaction</i> with the high school.	2	59	39	3	3	39	59	2	12. <i>Most</i> parents <i>desire large interaction</i> with the high school.
18. Parents of high school students <i>are not as interested</i> in their child's education as they were during middle school.	8	55	34	6	6	34	55	8	18. Parents of high school students <i>are as interested</i> in their child's education as they were during middle school.
20. <i>Most</i> teachers <i>desire little</i> parent involvement in their classrooms.	6	36	54	7	7	54	36	6	20. <i>Most</i> teachers <i>desire large</i> parent involvement in their classrooms.
22. Most parents <i>do not have</i> adequate time to volunteer at the school.	2	31	64	6	6	64	31	2	22. Most parents <i>do have</i> adequate time to volunteer at the school.
31. Parents of teenagers <i>are not</i> as interested in their child's education as they were during the elementary years.	5	49	37	12	12	37	49	5	31. Parents of teenagers <i>are</i> as interested in their child's education as they were during the elementary years.

SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree

Appendix D: Survey Responses in Percentages

QUESTIONS	Category	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
Question 1: Educators and parents have complementary expertise about the education of children.	<i>School decision making and advocacy</i>	0.0	41.7	58.3	0.0
Question 2: Most parents, regardless of background, desire to be involved in their children's education.	<i>School decision making and advocacy</i>	0.0	30.1	69.9	0.0
Question 3: Most parents feel welcome when they come to the high school.	<i>Communication</i>	0.0	20.4	71.8	7.8
Question 4: Minority parents and those of low socio-economic background are more likely to be involved in their children's education.	<i>Student learning</i>	13.6	47.6	36.9	1.9
Question 5: Creating a partnership between the school and parent(s) has a positive impact on student grades.	<i>Student learning</i>	0.0	0.0	42.7	57.3
Question 6: The school should develop creative ways to overcome barriers when parents do not participate in school events, such as parent teacher conferences.	<i>Student learning</i>	0.0	4.9	63.1	32.0
Question 7: Most parents do have the training or background necessary to take part in making school policies.	<i>School decision making and advocacy</i>	0.0	38.8	61.2	0.0
Question 8: Most parents, whether have had a positive school experiences themselves or not, choose to be involved in their children's education.	<i>School decision making and advocacy</i>	0.0	25.2	74.8	0.0

QUESTIONS	Category	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
Question 9: Most parents are familiar with the school building and can successfully find their way around.	<i>Communication</i>	1.9	44.7	45.6	7.8
Question 10: Parental input is helpful in curriculum issues such as textbook selection.	<i>Collaboration</i>	12.6	51.5	35.0	1.0
Question 11: Parents should act as home tutors assisting their children with school assignments as needed.	<i>Parenting</i>	0.0	8.7	65.0	26.2
Question 12: Most parents desire large interaction with the high school.	<i>Parenting</i>	0.0	40.8	59.2	0.0
Question 13: Parents should hold fundraisers to support school needs.	<i>Parenting</i>	10.7	42.7	42.7	3.9
Question 14: It is a natural occurrence that parental involvement declines as the student progresses through school.	<i>Student learning</i>	1.0	14.6	64.1	20.4
Question 15: Parent input in the evaluation of teachers is useful.	<i>Parenting</i>	27.2	40.8	30.1	1.9
Question 16: Middle and upper income parents desire more parent involvement than do lower socio-economic parents.	<i>Student learning</i>	2.9	32.0	51.5	13.6
Question 17: Parents should participate in staff hiring decisions.	<i>Collaboration</i>	42.7	42.7	11.7	2.9
Question 18: Parents of high school students are as interested in their children's education as they were during middle school.	<i>Volunteering</i>	5.8	33.0	53.4	7.8

QUESTIONS	Category	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
Question 19: Parents should be encouraged to participate in the school budget planning process.	<i>Collaboration</i>	26.2	31.1	39.8	2.9
Question 20: Most teachers desire large parent involvement in their classrooms.	<i>Collaboration</i>	0.0	59.2	40.8	0.0
Question 21: Parents should assist in the establishment of the educational goals for the school.	<i>Collaboration</i>	1.0	6.8	78.6	13.6
Question 22: Most parents do have adequate time to volunteer at the school.	<i>Volunteering</i>	5.8	62.1	30.1	1.9
Question 23: Our school does a sufficient job of encouraging parental involvement.	<i>Communication</i>	1.9	40.8	52.4	4.9
Question 24: The primary responsibility to increase parental involvement within a high school lies with classroom teachers.	<i>Communication</i>	4.9	72.8	22.3	0.0
Question 25: Most parents have the knowledge and/or ability to help their child with academic work.	<i>Parenting</i>	4.9	42.7	51.5	1.0
Question 26: It is embarrassing for most teens to have their parents involved in school activities.	<i>Student learning</i>	4.9	56.3	36.9	1.9
Question 27: Creating a partnership between the school and parent has a positive impact on student behavior.	<i>Collaboration</i>	0.0	0.0	50.5	49.5

QUESTIONS	Category	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
Question 28: The primary responsibility for school success at the secondary level lies with the students' parents.	<i>Volunteering</i>	0.0	64.1	35.9	0.0
Question 29: It is difficult to get working parents involved in their children's education.	<i>Volunteering</i>	1.9	36.9	59.2	1.9
Question 31: Parents of teenagers are as interested in their children's education as they were during the elementary years.	<i>Volunteering</i>	11.7	35.9	47.6	4.9
Question 32: I believe parental involvement is critical at the secondary level.	<i>Volunteering</i>	0.0	3.9	66.0	30.1
Question 33: Parental involvement is important for a good school climate.	<i>Principal beliefs</i>	0.0	4.9	60.2	35.0
Question 34: Every family has some strength that could be tapped to increase student success in school.	<i>Principal beliefs</i>	0.0	6.8	68.9	24.3
Question 35: Parent involvement can help teachers be more effective with more students.	<i>Principal beliefs</i>	0.0	0.0	68.0	32.0
Question 36: Some parents already know how to help their children on school work at home.	<i>Principal beliefs</i>	0.0	4.9	82.5	12.6
Question 37: Parent involvement is important for student success in learning and staying in school.	<i>Principal beliefs</i>	0.0	0.0	59.2	40.8

QUESTIONS	Category	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
Question 38: Schools should have workshops for parents to build skills in parenting and understanding their children at each grade level.	<i>Principal beliefs</i>	1.0	10.7	58.3	30.1

Appendix E: Permission Request to Dr. Peiffer

Re: Dissertation Survey - Yahoo! Mail

<http://us.mc305.mail.yahoo.com/mc/showletter?&fid=%2540S%25...>



Re: Dissertation Survey

Tuesday, May 13, 2008 10:27 AM

From: "Patti Peiffer" <PPeiffer@carsoncity.k12.nv.us>

To: hbatista@abcsolutions.org

I am a little surprised that you were able to contact me via email. I'm sorry you had such trouble finding me. Yes, you may use my dissertation. If I can be of any further assistance, please feel free to contact me at this address. Good luck to you. As we discussed, you have an unpopular topic, but one deserving greater examination. I would enjoy reading your dissertation, when finished (an unbound copy is all that is needed). My home address is 310 W. Linden Street, Carson City, NV 89801. Once again, Best Wishes. Home phone 989 584 3776 Patti

>>> "Hollis R. Batista" <hbatista@abcsolutions.org> 5/13/2008 9:35 AM >>>

Hello Patti,

My name is Hollis Batista and I am a doctoral student at Duquesne University.

My topic is very similar to your dissertation topic, HS principal perspectives on parental involvement in PA. I am looking at their perspectives from a belief and attitudes Theoretical framework, even though my dissertation is quantitative.

I am writing you for permission to use your survey. I know that Dr. Brittle originally developed the survey for elementary principals but I am surveying HS principals in PA. You adapted the survey for HS principals.

I am very interested in your validity and reliability results for the survey. If you can help me anyway I would truly appreciate it. If you agree to give me permission to use the survey, I will send you a copy of my dissertation upon completion and credit author and honor all copyright restrictions.

Looking forward to your response,
Hollis Batista

Hollis R. Batista
K-12 School Administration, Supervision & Leadership
Phone: 412-747-0139
Website: <http://www.abcsolutions.org/hollisbatista/index.html>

1 of 1

3/12/2009 8:06 PM

Appendix F: IRB Approval Letter



DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

Office of Research
424 RANGOS BUILDING ♦ PITTSBURGH, PA 15282-0202

Dr. Paul Richer
Chair, IRB-Human Subjects
Human Subjects Administrator
Office of Research
Phone (412) 396-6326 Fax (412) 396-5176
e-mail: richer@duq.edu

July 11, 2008

Mr. Hollis Batista
142 Nottingham Drive
Pittsburgh PA 15205

**Re: Principal perspectives toward parental involvement in Pennsylvania public schools
(Protocol # 08-76)**

Dear Mr. Batista:

Thank you for submitting your research proposal to the IRB.

Based on the review of IRB representative, Dr. Joseph Kush, and my own review, your study is approved as **Exempt** based on 45-Code of Federal Regulations-46.101.b.1 regarding research involving standard educational practices and also under 45-CFR-46.101.b.2 regarding anonymous surveys. Subjects' names will not appear on surveys they return to you.

Enclosed is the consent form stamped with approval and one-year expiration date. You should use the stamped form for copies that you distribute or show on the web site.

The approval is based on the submitted protocol. If you wish to proceed with changes to the research, you must first submit an amendment and receive approval from this office. In addition, if any unanticipated problems arise in reference to human subjects, you should notify the IRB chair immediately. In all correspondence, please refer to the protocol number shown after the title above.

Once the study is complete, please provide our office with a short summary (one page) of your results for our records.

Thank you for contributing to Duquesne's research endeavors.

Sincerely yours,

Paul Richer, Ph.D.

C: Dr. Joseph Kush
Dr. Gibbs Kanyongo
IRB Records

Appendix G: Zoomerang Survey Invitation

July, 2008

Hollis R. Batista, IDPEL Doctoral student

(Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program for Educational Leaders)

Duquesne University, Pittsburgh PA

Dear Pennsylvania Principals,

You will be receiving a *Zoomerang* online survey as part of a statewide study regarding parental involvement on a high school level. In Part I, you are asked to respond to a series of 37 statements reflecting your attitudes toward parent involvement. In Part II there are 6 statements, asking you to provide additional information about yourself and your particular school. You are not required to put your name on the questionnaire. Your responses to the items will be confidential. The results of this study will have national implications for educational administrators and will be published in my dissertation and I would be glad to share them with you. Please feel free to contact me at (412) 747-0139 or e-mail me at hbatista@abcsolutions.org if you have any questions.

I sincerely appreciate the time you will give to completing the survey.

Sincerely,

Hollis R. Batista

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