Parental Involvement at the High School Level: Parents' Perspectives

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Research has shown that parental involvement in the educational experiences of their children increases student achievement and strengthens school programs. The majority of this research, however, has concentrated on the primary and elementary levels, with little being known about parental involvement at the middle and high school levels. This study sought to add to the literature related to parental involvement at the high school level by examining the experienced meaning of parental involvement from the perspective of high school parents. Specifically, parents of tenth-graders attending a low-income urban high school located in the southwestern United States with an ethnically diverse population were interviewed. These parents varied with regard to their economic status, cultural background, educational background, and personal beliefs. The interview sessions were semi-structured and included open-ended questions. All interview data were transcribed, coded, and analyzed according to Kvale's (1996) and Creswell's (2007) processes for analyzing data. Results indicate that these parents experienced difficulties in participating at their child's school but often reaped benefits from their participation. While parental descriptions of their experiences of involvement were complex, multi-layered, and reflected the individuality of each participant, four major themes emerged from their stories: (1) technology and parental involvement; (2) economy and parental work schedules; (3) potential for parental growth; and (4) parental involvement outside the school. The implications of each of these themes is discussed in the context of providing suggestions to better utilize the benefits parental involvement can bring to the education provided at the high school level. To this end several suggestions are made regarding programs, practices, and services that could be implemented based on the educational and social needs of parents.

Keywords: High School, Parent, Parental involvement, Parents' Perspective, Technology

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Research has shown that parental involvement in the educational experiences of their children increases student achievement and strengthens school programs (Christensen & Sheridan, 2001; Lopez, Scribner, & Mahitivanichcha, 2001; McDermott, 2008; Riggins-Newby, 2004; Ritenour, 2004). Studies reveal benefits to students that include higher grades and test scores, better school attendance, higher graduation rates, improved self-esteem, and more positive attitudes about school (Henderson & Berla, 1994; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). These and other studies reported benefits to parents that include more confidence in the school, higher teacher expectations of their children, higher teacher opinions of them as parents, increased self-confidence, and increased likelihood that the parents would continue their own education (LaBahn, 1995). In fact, examinations of parents' educational aspirations might also inform and improve various educational policies and practices (Carter & Wojtkiewicz, 2000; Chen & Uttal, 1998).

While most educators and researchers agree that parental involvement is essential to children's academic success (Henderson & Berla, 1994; Henderson & Mapp, 2002), parents have been given few opportunities to share their experiences of school involvement with teachers and administrators who might use these experiences to benefit parents or teachers in some way. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) found that analysis of parental involvement views could be particularly beneficial to minority parents, whom research identified as at risk for limited school involvement.

This study focused on parents' descriptions of their experiences of parental involvement at the high school level. Participants' verbal descriptions as well as direct quotations were used to paint a picture of each shared experience. During the interviews participants reflected on their unique

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background, their own parents' involvement as they were growing up in a particular culture or setting, and decisions regarding finance and work. It became evident that parent descriptions of their experiences of involvement were complex, multi-layered, and reflected the individuality of each participant. Overall, parents in this study expressed a strong desire to help their children succeed and the need for better information and tools from the schools to do so, ranging from access and training in technology to better communication between teachers and parents. We hope the results of this study will prompt dialogue and action at the high school level to foster meaningful and ongoing collaboration between schools and parents.

Review of the Literature
        The majority of research on parental involvement in schools has concentrated on the primary and elementary levels, while little is known about parental involvement at the middle and high school levels (Ferguson & Rodriguez, 2005; Simons, 2000). According to Feuerstein (2000), most of the research studies examined the relationship between parental involvement and student achievement. Several studies found that parental involvement contributed to student learning (Henderson & Berla, 1994). However, Baker (1997) noted that the studies were more oriented towards the perspectives of educators, or on what the schools were doing and needed to do, rather than the parents' perspectives. While most educators and researchers agree that parental involvement is essential to children's academic success (Henderson & Berla, 1994; Henderson & Mapp, 2002), parents have been given few opportunities to share their experiences of school involvement with teachers and administrators. Acknowledging parents' points of view can improve the likelihood that school programs and practices will be created to address the wishes of all participants and expand the educational opportunities of children (Cotton & Wickelund, 2001).
        As society evolved, parental involvement in the American educational system changed as a result of a growing population, growth of industrial centers, urbanization of the nation, and the rise in management techniques in business and industry (Hiatt-Michael, 1994). Parents became separated from the daily decision-making operations of the schools and felt powerless under this new bureaucratic educational system. In short, the acceptance of teaching as a profession began to change the face of parental involvement in schools, and parents who tried to become active were viewed as intrusive (Cowan, Swearer, & Sheridan, 2004).
        Although parents and teachers support the concept of parental involvement, both groups routinely express differing and often conflicting beliefs about the ways parents should be involved and what involvement practices are most effective (Miretzky, 2004). Lopez, Scribner, and Mahitivanichcha (2001) concluded that many teachers and schools tend to see parental involvement in terms of participation in organized activities at the school and helping with homework. Parents view their involvement in more informal activities that can take place outside the school, such as providing nurturance, talking with their children, instilling cultural values, and checking homework. Parents further described their perspectives on involvement in terms of the academic benefits for their children, teacher awareness of the uniqueness of each child, and how the teacher would relate to their children. (Gonzalez-DeHass & Willems, 2003).
        Pelco, Ries, Jacobson, and Melka (2000) noted that the growing body of research in parental involvement supports findings that positive connections between families and schools influence a variety of outcomes. Pelco et al. (2000) explained in their research that parental involvement is a multi-dimensional construct that relates to a variety of outcomes and effects for parents, students, teachers, and school administrators. Patrikakou (2008) also found that parental involvement in education is like families themselves: multifaceted, multidimensional, and constantly changing.
        Schneider and Stevenson (1999) found that parents are more likely to be involved in their children's education when they understand how it connects to desired future education and work opportunities. The researchers also noted that educational aspirations are not the result of how parents live or survive in their environment; rather, they are the result of how parents feel they are treated in the school environment. Teachers who relate to rather than simply acknowledge parents' educational aspirations might be able to communicate more effectively with parents and, in turn, increase parental involvement in their children's education. Lawson (2003) suggested that parents and teachers have different perceptions of parental involvement. Parents tended to be community-centered, focusing their attention on children as members in the community and in society. Teachers were more inclined to be school-centered, focusing their attention on children within the school setting.
        A qualitative study by Barge and Loges (2003) on parent perceptions and experiences of involvement noted that many of the parents had a strong desire for a collaborative relationship between home, school, and community. Parents expressed the need for schools to become more familiar with the uniqueness of their child's home life, believing this knowledge could positively affect how teachers

relate to the students. A similar study on teacher perceptions of involvement conducted by Baker (1997) found that teachers were most concerned with support, communication, parental insight, homework help, and expectations of parents. Baker reported, "At the most general level teachers wanted parents to support them in their efforts to educate their children. Many of the teachers spoke very strongly about how they asked parents to support them as professionals who have their child's best interest at heart" (p. 157). The teachers felt strongly in their belief that the children and their education should be central to any involvement.

Writing about the divide among parents, teachers, and the school, Jacobson (2002) stated, "Because parents lack the language or the educational background, some educators view parents as incapable of anything that would make a difference in their child's education" (p. 1). Yet schools expect parents to provide academic support to their children at home and to provide financial and emotional support to schools. Today the role of parental involvement in schools has evolved from one end of the education spectrum to the other—from parental control to school control—and finally to parents seeking a voice in the education of their children (Jacobson, 2002). To better understand the parental involvement phenomenon, this study specifically focused on nine high school parents' descriptions of their experiences of involvement in their child's schooling.

Method

This research study used interviews and researcher notes taken during each of the interview sessions during which parents described their experiences of involvement in their child's high school. The interview sessions were semi-structured with open-ended questions. All interview data were transcribed, coded, and analyzed according to Kvale's (1996) and Creswell's (2007) processes for analyzing data. The parents interviewed for the study were recruited during parent-night activities. The site for this study was a low-income urban high school with an ethnically diverse population located in the southwestern region of the United States.

Participant Profiles

Parents of tenth-grade students were selected to be the population for this study because their children had a year of high school experience and the parents had time to establish a relationship with the school. With this sample, the school and parents will have two additional years to implement any ideas or information gleaned from the research before the child graduates. Also, having had only one year of high school experience, the parents and students were relatively new to the school, making it easier to implement changes because they were not overly familiar with old practices and might be more amenable to change. The ages of the participants ranged from 31 to 51 years; eight parents were female and one male. Ethnic make-up of the group included one African American, four Hispanic, and four Caucasian parents.

- Audrey, an African American parent with two years of college, a 51-year-old secretary, married, and the mother of four girls ranging from 16 to 29 years old. Only one child, the 16-year-old, was currently living at home.
- Barbara, a Caucasian, 47 years old, married, and the mother of six children, from 14 to 26 years old. Barbara was a high school graduate and was employed full-time.
- Beth, 40 years old, a divorced Hispanic mother raising three girls, ages 12, 16, and 17. Beth had a high school diploma and owned her own business.
- Claudia, a 33-year-old single Hispanic mother with three children, ages 10, 15, and 16. Claudia was a high school graduate.
- Keith, 35 years old, a Caucasian single parent of two, ages 12 and 16. Keith had completed high school and served in the military. His current occupation was a roofer.
- Linda, a 32-year-old divorced Caucasian mother of three children, ages 12, 14, and 16. Linda was employed as a food-and-nutrition worker at a local middle school.
- Mariah, a 36-year-old bi-lingual Hispanic mother of two children, ages 14 and 16. She completed one year of college. She worked at home because she could not find a job; and to make ends meet, she offered English classes in her home to Spanish-speaking parents. She also volunteered her time interpreting for other Spanish-speaking parents, both at the school and in the community.
- Melissa, a 48-year-old single Caucasian mother of two boys, ages 10 and 16, holds a high school diploma. Melissa described her work as random; that is, when she was needed on the job, she would get a call to report for work.

- Rosa, a 31-year-old Hispanic mother of two children, ages 11 and 16. Rosa did not speak English; the interview was conducted in Spanish and later transcribed into English. Rosa did not work outside the home.

Findings

During the interviews it became very clear that parental descriptions of their experiences of involvement were complex, multi-layered, and reflected the individuality of each participant. Four major themes emerged from the parents' stories: (1) technology and parental involvement; (2) economy and parent work schedules; (3) potential for parent growth; and (4) parental involvement outside the school.

Technology and Parental Involvement

The school district used the student records management software called Infinite Campus (formerly Edline) as one method of increasing parental involvement. Families could access their children's attendance records, grades, and class assignments through Infinite Campus, and more information through the confidential Campus Portal. Several parents in the study were concerned that this technology might be taking over and replacing interpersonal relationships.

Several parents had reservations about using Infinite Campus for communication with school:

Melissa: "Infinite Campus has served as one method of communication between the school and me. I rarely use the computer because I don't know how to operate it and there is no computer in my home. If schools want more parental involvement, then they should just call the parents or open the school's computer lab to the parents. This whole thing with computers is frustrating for me. I would like to have more calls from the school."

Rosa: "I use the Infinite Campus sometimes. It helps me keep up with my daughter's education and grades. The problem that I have with it is that everything is written in English and I only speak Spanish. My daughter translates everything for me. I don't always have her close by to tell me exactly what they want or what they said. So, whether it is the computer, email, or telephone call, I think that I am unable to communicate with the school."

Claudia: "I would like for the school to use a variety of communication strategies with parents and not rely so much on the Internet. The one practice that is good and that I like is the parent-teacher conference. I use Infinite Campus to keep track of how my children are doing in school. For me this practice is cold and impersonal. I prefer face-to-face interactions with the school personnel.

In contrast, several parents considered Infinite Campus to be an effective means of keeping parents involved and preferred it to other forms of communication:

Mariah: "The Infinite Campus Web site is good and is very helpful. This is a great tool for interacting with parents even though it is not face-to-face. It keeps me abreast of my children's grades and it lets me know when they are missing assignments. One thing about Infinite Campus is that it gives me the opportunity to immediately correct a situation and not wait till it gets out of hand."

Linda: Most of the communication I have with the school is through emails and Infinite Campus. I can go online and see what my children are doing in school. I work many long hours and the school's Infinite Campus Web Site helps me keep my children on track. I don't make many phone calls to the school, except for when I have a question. The school is very much up to date on technology and they use it to keep parents informed.

Audrey: "I use Infinite Campus a lot. It is not as personal as talking to a teacher, but you can still get as much information as you need. I like to see where the teachers think my child is as opposed to where she thinks she is. Sometimes those two things are totally different. When I get information from Infinite Campus that may not be complimentary, I digest the information first and then I talk to my daughter. This gives me a chance to get both sides of the story. If I see a problem then I can communicate with the teacher and if necessary set up a conference with the teacher and with my daughter.

Technology provides parents the tools for involvement without being visible themselves in the school. Several parents in the study were either resistant to or uncomfortable with this form of communication, did not possess the skills necessary to use computers, or did not have access to computers. Most parents preferred phone calls followed by face-to-face meetings to discuss their child's school life. All parents indicated that technology is a very powerful tool that can provide a variety of solutions to a variety of parental involvement issues. That is its strength.

Economy and Parent Work Schedules

Most parents described their concerns about the economy and its effect on their work schedule, which has resulted in a readjustment of parental involvement in their child's high school.

Mariah: "I do whatever I can to support my family. I have enrolled my children in the free and reduced lunch program as well as Operation School Bell. To make ends meet, I offer English classes in

my home to parents who do not speak the language, and I also try to help the parents understand the bureaucracy of educating a Hispanic child in the United States."

Parents employed outside the home expressed concerns about having to make choices between parental involvement activities and supporting their families.

Linda: "I do not have the option of taking off when my children are involved in an activity at the school. I can really only attend parent-teacher conferences and not be subject to a reduction in my pay. I wish I could do more, but I just can't. Right now the economy is so bad, I have to do everything possible to keep the job that I have. I would love to have some extra money and time to get a better education and then get a better job."

Keith: "My friend and I own a roofing company and we work long hours trying to stay afloat and supporting our family. Taking off may have been an inconvenience sometimes, but the way my schedule is I can pretty much go whenever I need to. However, there are things that I cannot miss and that have caused an occasional conflict between job requirements and the school. My daughter was getting into a lot of fights, always tardy, and stayed in detention. Nothing seemed to work. I was constantly being summoned to the school for conferences with the Dean, school counselor, and school nurse. When the school would call, especially if there was trouble, I would drop everything and go. I want my daughter to get on the right track. I did not feel obligated because the school called me and said you have to come down here. That was not my concern. My concern was to find out what was going on with my daughter and getting that straightened out."

Melissa, Barbara, and Claudia expressed similar concerns about their work schedules as a deterrent to active participation at the high school. The three parents stated that they felt lucky to have a job in this economy. Claudia stated that her supervisor would allow her to leave if there were an emergency, but she did not have the privilege of leaving and going to everything.

The current economic downturn has been a definite deterrent to more active participation by the parents interviewed for this study. The balancing act of maintaining employment, supporting the family, and involvement in the school is not easy. In addition, the issue of single parents raising their children added even more pressures on their available time. All parents in the study demonstrated a strong desire to support their children while at the same time struggling to make ends meet.

The painful reality is that parents are forced to prepare for the day when they will have to choose between going to work and attending a parent-teacher meeting. This becomes especially critical when parental availability to be involved is often determined by work schedules, job benefits, job autonomy, and working conditions. Single-parent families are most at risk for facing this dilemma.

Potential for Parent Growth

Overall, parents in this study felt that parental involvement not only helped the child but also helped them individually. Parent-child communication was improved, and parents were inspired to improve educationally. Volunteerism encouraged school participation, and contact with other parents was viewed as empowering to parents. Although time constraints hampered parental involvement and limited educational opportunities, many parents indicated a future desire to complete high school and college. Parents saw higher education as a means to improve not only their lives but also the financial stability of the family.

Keith: "I learned a great deal through involvement at the school, and what I learned helped me to better understand my daughter and treat her like a young adult. One of the best lessons I learned as a result of my involvement was how to communicate with other people. I feel that I am communicating with my partner, my clients, and my children more effectively. I am getting real good at listening to what is being said."

During the interview sessions, some parents appeared to have always been aware that they had the drive to continue their education. Still others appeared to experience a need or desire to grow as they gradually became immersed in parental involvement at the school. As Linda said: "I want to go back to school because when I help my child with some of the homework, I am lost."

Beth: "I like the education system in the United States. It is very different from education in my country [Mexico]. During my volunteering at the school I am learning things that I didn't know and had never heard before, such as how to work the Internet to get all kinds of information. I have decided to enroll in college, get a degree in education, and teach in the local high school."

And as a result of parental involvement, some of the parents became change agents, as the following excerpt from Audrey's interview indicates:

Audrey: "During some of my volunteer work I became friends with several other parents and together we provided some school improvement suggestions to the administrator. All of our suggestions were not implemented; however, what we learned is that the school administrators were willing to listen to the parents."

Parental Involvement Outside the School

Seven of the nine parents interviewed for this study were involved in some way with their children's education in a wide range of activities, including verbal support and encouragement outside of school. Parents who verbally supported their children felt that they, too, benefited by internalizing their messages of support and encouragement.

Rosa: "Every day I tell my daughter how proud I am of her and her grades. She also makes me proud of the way she involves herself in the school's swim team and the volleyball team. I tell her that she will always be a good student because she believes in her ability to excel. This is what I teach her. She always listens to me and that makes me feel very good."

Audrey: "My daughter wants to enter the medical field, the military, or maybe national security. I always tell her that she can do whatever she sets her mind to do. I also tell her that to reach her goal she must stay in school, keep up the good grades, and be willing to obey school and teacher rules. My parents always encouraged my two sisters and I to continue our education. Their limited education made it difficult to acquire high-paying jobs, and I watched how they struggled to keep us in school. That is why I encourage my daughter to do her best in school."

Seven parents described their experience with encouraging their children to do their homework. These experiences ranged from minimal help, to scheduling a certain time for homework completion, to encouraging the child not to give up.

Linda: "When my children come home from school, I always ask them if they have any homework. I always help my children with homework when they ask me, otherwise I just make sure that they study every night and have their work ready to turn in the next day. I must admit that I do not monitor everything they do in school. I really think that when a child reaches tenth grade they should assume some of the responsibility for getting a good education. Even though I don't help my children every day, I make sure they don't fall through the cracks by asking them about their homework and how school is going."

Rosa: "I always try to be around the house when my daughter is doing her schoolwork. I think that sometimes she needs me to help her, but since I don't read English she has to translate everything for me and that takes away from the time she could be doing her schoolwork. She is a very good student and always brings home good grades. Some of her classes are at the honors level and that is above my academic level."

Parents described outside activities as any activity with their child outside of the classroom. These included involvement at school-sponsored sports events, church programs, community Homeless Feeding Program, Girl Scouts, Boys' and Girls' Club, and the Big Brothers Big Sisters Organization. The parents felt that involvement in these activities enhanced their children's education and helped both parent and child give back to the community. Beth stated that her involvement in outside activities was limited. She and her older sister planned family activities that involved both families. During these events she stressed the importance of education, getting along with other people, obeying school rules, and family values that were transferable to every aspect of life.

Audrey: "Our church is involved in a community Homeless Feeding Program. We as a family participate in this activity. This activity teaches our daughter the value of giving back to the community. Whenever she is required to write a paper, we encourage her to write about her experience of feeding and interacting with families that are not privileged to have a home to return to at the end of each day."

Several parents stressed the importance of child-parent communication outside of school.

Keith: "My daughter was getting into a lot of fights, always tardy and in detention. Nothing seemed to work. I was constantly being summoned to the school for conferences with the Dean, school counselor, and school nurse. My daughter would fake being sick so she could go home. She hated school, she hated me for being at the school, she hated the Dean for disciplining her, and she hated having to sit in on the conferences. I don't know when it was or exactly what was said during these sessions that made the change, but my daughter and I began to talk about things other than school. During some of these talks we got to know each other's likes, dislikes, goals for the future, and her feelings about having to assume more of the role in keeping the house together. She felt that she was missing out on some of the fun of being a teenager. I really feel that being able to communicate with my child about her life outside of school activities is involvement to the highest degree."

Parental involvement outside the school centers in part on parents' motivations and abilities for involvement. Some parents were able to help with homework while others monitored and encouraged their children to complete all assignments. Non-school activities facilitated improved parent-child communication, served to strengthen family values, and provided opportunities for giving back to the community. Parents indicated that attending and participating in community events and

volunteering at school events brought their families closer together. Finally, parents experienced a feeling of personal pride when they could help their children do well in school.

Recommendations

The following recommendations for further research have been identified as a result of the study findings and literature review:

1. A study to determine advantages and disadvantages of using technology as a communication tool from the viewpoint of high school parents should be conducted.
2. Considering the relative newness of technology, such as Infinite Campus, for disseminating student information, additional studies should be conducted to determine the usefulness of such programs and the feelings of parents toward such programs.
3. A mixed-method study with a larger population of high school parents should be conducted to identify possible correlations between parents' descriptions of their experience of parental involvement in high school and parental desires to further their own education.
4. Further studies should be conducted to determine if there is a relationship between the volunteer involvements of parents outside the school and their participation in parental-involvement activities at the school.
5. A mixed-method study that describes how ethnicity, gender, marital status, income, age, employment, and education influence parent descriptions of involvement in their child's high school should be conducted.
6. Given that this study was conducted at one high school, further research is needed to explore whether factors that the nine parents said influence their description of their experiences apply to the experiences of other high school parents.
7. A study that investigates how schools bring parents and teachers together to better understand each other's perspectives on parental involvement and help teachers broaden their perceptions of parental involvement should be conducted with a larger audience.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn from the data analysis and findings of the study:

Technology and Parental Involvement

The results of this study indicate that not all parents are ready to fully embrace technology as the communication tool for enhancing their involvement experiences. While technology may appear to be the answer to the problems of family and school partnerships, it is only a partial answer and not a substitute for parental involvement. Parent responses indicate that technology is only a tool. It is a powerful tool with a variety of solutions to a variety of problems. That is its strength.

While technology may be one great avenue of communicating with parents, it cannot replace a teachers' friendly smile, a welcoming school atmosphere, telephone calls, home visits, parent-teacher conferences, open houses, and various school-based community activities. Technology provides parents the tools for involvement without being visible in the school. Several parents in the study were either resistant to or uncomfortable with this form of communication, did not possess the skills necessary to use computers, or did not have access to computers. Most parents preferred phone calls followed by face-to-face meetings to discuss their child's school life. With technology changing so quickly and young people who grew up with technology becoming parents themselves, research and development on the parent component will need to continually update strategies and opportunities that meet parents' needs and perspectives on involvement (Rothschuh & Lazarus, 2010).

Economy and Parent Work Schedules

Problems with inflexible work schedules were cited by seven of the nine parents interviewed in this study. Work schedules limited their ability to come to school during the day for parent-teacher conferences, workshops, and other activities presented by the school. The economic downturn since the late 1990s has limited the ability of some parents to either retrain or find better-paying jobs. Many parents are engaged in a tug-of-war between their family's financial livelihood and their children's education. Sadly, in this economic downturn, financial needs often win the day. All parents should prepare for the day when they will have to make tough decisions about their children—but choosing between going to work and attending a parent-teacher conference should not be one of them.

Potential for Parent Growth

Parents described their involvement as a learning process, and during this process their involvement became more broadly defined as each gained experience in parental involvement activities. Additionally, parents grow and benefit from an increased closeness with their child and a

more profound sense of their own significance in their child's life. They understand their children better as learners and themselves as parents. The study showed that when parents participate more in their child's education, they often take steps to advance their own education. The parent as teacher becomes the parent as learner. Parent and child alike are students; the family unites through education (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Parental Involvement Outside the School

It was clear that the majority of the parents described their experiences of involvement outside the school as an extension of their family life and of the roles they assumed as adults. Extending their involvement outside the school offered the parents an opportunity to live a more integrated life. Involvement experiences were viewed as a way to fulfill a social responsibility by connecting the family to the larger community.

Final Thoughts

Given the parents' insights related to technology and parental involvement, economy and parent work schedules, potential for parent growth, and parental involvement outside the school, educators must come to recognize the importance of parents' descriptions of their involvement experiences. Most importantly, there is an urgent need for educators to understand parents' perceptions of their involvement. The results of this study indicate that parents describe their experiences of involvement in relationships and activities that occur at home, at school, and in the community. More systematic and meaningful parental involvement has the potential of improving student behavior, fostering academic success, and improving the overall life of parents in the home and the community. When parental perspectives are acknowledged for the value they hold, appropriate programs can be developed that will allow students, parents, and schools to reap the rewards widespread parental involvement can offer.

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Dr. Nancy Hall recently completed her Doctorate in Education. Her dissertation was a qualitative study of Parent Perspectives of Involvement at the High School Level. Prior to that, for nine years, she was Director of a Title 1 Program in a large school district in the southwestern region of the United States. She coordinated district-wide efforts to increase home-school relations and encourage parental involvement.

Dr. Robert J. Quinn is professor of Secondary Mathematics Education at the University of Nevada, Reno. His research focuses on developing and studying innovative strategies to teach mathematics that involve the use of technology, manipulatives, problem-solving, and cooperative learning. He has a particular affinity toward probability and statistics.