Family-school partnerships in urban elementary school.

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by
Anne Adamson

A Thesis
Submitted to the College of Graduate Studies and Research
through the Faculty of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
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ABSTRACT

This study used data from nine teachers, 51 parents, 18 students and three key actors from three urban elementary schools in southwestern Ontario. It examined the connections between school programmes of parent involvement, teachers' attitudes and the practices that teachers use to involve parents of their own students as well as parents' attitudes and parents' levels of involvement with their own children at home and in the school setting. Current levels of school-family partnerships were assessed according to the Epstein model (1986) which included parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. General Statement of the Problem

Schools today are responsible for far more than simply teaching students basic academic skills. As the definition of family changes from the traditional two-parent family to encompass single parents, teens (who are an increasing number of children having children), divorced and reconstituted families and same-sex families, society is putting increasing pressure on schools to provide more social services to families - and in short to take on many of the roles which were previously delegated to the family.

Education systems and teachers are more closely scrutinized than ever before and indeed, some teachers feel that they are under attack by governments, parents and community members. As budgets are continually cut, schools and teachers are expected to do more with less. Many parents seem to feel that having gone through the education system they are experts, and are uniquely able to criticize and blame teachers for what they deem to be the weaknesses and failures in the system. A we-them mentality has developed on both sides.

Previous methods used by schools to involve families in education do not work for most of society at this time. Educators need to understand the barriers that keep some parents from participating in their children's schooling and be more sympathetic to their needs and circumstances. Families are more mobile
than ever and are under a great deal of stress. In many households both parents are forced to work and in a single-parent family, the parent often has no option but to work outside the home. Some parents who had negative experiences at school themselves, view the schools as unwelcoming and even hostile, and are unwilling to make contact with the schools. They may feel confused about typical school procedures and intimidated by the school staff. Inconsistencies in individual interactions between families and school personnel in various situations can undermine a positive school climate. Barriers of language and culture often affect a parents' willingness or ability to participate at school.

School-family partnerships should be the special focus of any school improvement plan. Research has shown that parental participation improves students' learning, whether in preschool or high school, regardless of the family's socio-economic status or the level of education the parents obtained (Epstein, 1996). When families are involved in their children's education, children achieve higher grades, attend school more regularly, and demonstrate more positive attitudes and behaviour toward school.

For school-family partnerships to work schools must work together with families to strengthen the bonds that already exist and work to build more connections. Educators must rethink the role of parents and be prepared to greet them more as partners than as adversaries. The entire community must be willing to cooperate. As the African proverb states "it takes an entire village to raise a child".
B. Significance of the Study

It is anticipated that this study will benefit society as a whole since all community members have a vested interest in education. The quality of education may be improved through family-school-community partnerships, resulting in improved programmes and school climate, improved family services and support, increased parental skills and leadership ability, increased connections between families and others in the school and community, and more help for teachers in the classroom.

The study may help to alleviate some of the apprehension that exists for teachers when they consider parents working within the school, and lead to a more collaborative relationship between teachers and families. Parents may gain a greater understanding for the job that teachers do and the challenges they face every day in trying to deliver a curriculum to students who need so much more than a 'sage on the stage'. Parents and teachers may find new and more meaningful ways to interact than quick conversations on interview nights or hurried greetings at fundraising events. In the end, schools, families and communities working together will benefit the children and the future.

C. Definition of Terms

For the purpose of the paper the following terms will be utilized:

1. Parent Involvement: Participation in workshops, classes, social events, newsletters, interviews, take-home activities, home visits, volunteer programs, advisory councils, counselling, support groups, home and school associations and
school councils.

2. Community members: People who reside within the electoral boundaries of the school but who do not have children who attend the school.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The content of schoolwork used to be limited to academics while families were responsible for the social and emotional development of children and the shaping of their values and morals. The disintegration of the traditional family and its resultant inability to cope with societal problems has broadened the role of schools to deal with social issues, and has encouraged the development of programmes and legislation to involve parents in the educational process. Changing demographics have dramatically altered the makeup of student populations. Increasing rates of poverty, divorce, single parenting, teen pregnancy, family mobility, family instability, and employment outside the home by women with children have placed many families under great stress. Conventional parent involvement efforts, aimed at the traditional family, have proven ineffective (Flaxman & Inger, 1991). Schools have been remarkably static in their view of family, community and school relationships, continuing to operate as if they were still serving Ozzie and Harriet's children (Heleen, 1992).

Instead of assuming that absence meant non-caring, educators needed to understand the barriers that hindered some parents from participating in their children's education. For many parents their own personal school experiences created obstacles to involvement. School brought back memories of their own failure and some felt uncomfortable, embarrassed, even guilty when they walked into a school. Many did not feel valued by schools, while others experienced feelings of inadequacy, shyness, resentment or fear. Those who
experienced feelings of inadequacy, shyness, resentment or fear. Those who dropped out of school did not feel confident in school settings. In many cases severe economic constraints prevented some children from full participation in the culture of the school (Finders & Lewis, 1994; Riley, 1994). Many urban families did not come to school unless summoned about problems related to their children. There were many reasons for this: conflicting work schedules, low interest, lack of experience in group activities and meetings, shyness, fear, negative personal experiences with schooling, and barriers of language and culture (Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms, 1986; Heleen, 1992).

Too often the social, economic, linguistic, and cultural practices of parents were represented as serious problems rather than as knowledge to be valued (Finders & Lewis, 1994). Parents who did not speak fluent English often felt inadequate in school settings. Having children translate often compounded the problem, because in some cultures this placed the children in a position of equal status with the adults and created disharmony within the family hierarchy. Parents often feared that they would appear foolish or would be misunderstood in parent-teacher interviews. They were also afraid that if their children were not doing well in school it would somehow be construed to be the fault of the parents because they were culturally, linguistically and ethnically different.

By the mid-90's parents were trying to juggle work schedules, family schedules, personal goals and effective nurturing activities. Because of changing family structures and competing obligations, opportunities for involvement were limited. More than 85% of the workforce were dual-career or single parent
families, with single-father families being the fastest growing segment of the population. Over a thirty-year span children lost approximately 12 hours per week of time that was previously spent with parents (Otterbourg, 1994).

While there was increasing support among the public and educators for parent involvement, parents appeared more difficult to reach. Working parents, especially single ones, did not have a lot of extra time to participate in their children's education. Inflexible time-off policies at work prevented them from attending school functions. In some cases the only way to attend assemblies, presentations or interviews was to take time off from work without pay (Black, 1993).

Working parents presented a formidable challenge to schools, especially working mothers who traditionally had been found at home raising children. The phenomenon of working mothers began after World War II and was now firmly entrenched in society. In 1993 it was reported that 69 per cent of mothers with school age children (6-16) were working (Statistics Canada). The fact that the majority of mothers had to work, either as the sole provider or as a contributor to the family income, contributed largely to the lack of parental involvement (Rothwell, 1996; Epstein, 1996).

According to Seeley (1989) a basic structural factor called the 'delegation model' kept parental involvement from achieving full potential. In much the same way that various functions were delegated to government, the author felt that parents often signaled, both subconsciously and overtly, that they did not have to be involved because the job had been delegated to the schools. School
staffs often did not see parent involvement as complementary to their professional role but rather viewed it as interference in their jobs.

The Report of the Royal Commission on Learning (Begin & Caplan, 1995) described the engine of its reform proposal as a new kind of school-community alliance. Society had increasingly higher expectations of schools and teachers, and expected them to deal with many new problems that were not necessarily related to teaching. The same people then criticized teachers for failing to provide a good education for their children. Schools, however, could not raise children alone. Many of the responsibilities that were thrust upon teachers and school systems were in fact those of parents. The Report considered that teachers were "overwhelmed, overburdened and ill prepared (and could) handle no more." (p. 10)

The Report concluded that entire communities must share with their schools the responsibility of raising children. Schools had to become part of a local network which included businesses, community colleges and service organizations. Teachers could not be expected to be experts in all fields but they could invite those experts into their classrooms. Every community had its own unique resources. Teachers, parents and other community members working together could improve the quality of education and help children to achieve.

In an Arizona study (Vandegrift & Greene, 1992) four types of parents were identified: parents who were supportive of their children and who were active participants in the school; parents who were supportive of their children and were inactive participants in the school; parents who were not supportive of
their children but who were active participants; and parents who were not supportive of their children and who were inactive participants in the school.

These and other studies showed that all families could take concrete steps that would significantly help their children succeed in school, regardless of income, education, or knowledge of the English language. Ways had to be found to give these families the support they needed. School reform worked best when it was school and community-based, voluntary, inclusive and bottom-up. It had to involve parents, teachers, and the entire community (Vandegrift & Greene, 1992; Riley, 1994).

In a 1994 study done in Cyprus (Phtıaka, cited in Sanders & Epstein, 1996), there were three types of families. The first type was the highly involved family: people who were university-educated professionals with privileged access to school. They participated in the school at all levels, were leaders of parent groups, and were satisfied with their children's school, the information they received from the school and their children's school performance. The second group of families were people who were largely skilled labourers. They contacted the school when they had specific concerns but wanted more information and feedback from the school and desired more opportunities to be involved in school activities. The third type of family was described as marginalized. Fathers, if present, were often unskilled labourers and mothers were generally housewives. These people had difficulty communicating with the school and often felt a sense of powerlessness when faced with the school's position and authority. These marginalized families experienced more anxiety
than the other two groups about their children's school work and homework. They acknowledged that it was their responsibility to assist in their children's learning but reported a lack of knowledge, time and energy to do so. From data Phtia, concluded that although wealthier, more educated families were more involved in the educational process, all families regardless of income or status cared about their children and were interested in their education. They were willing to help and were receptive to teacher advice. However, their perceptions of school made them hesitant to initiate contact with teachers and this was often perceived by the schools as lack of interest. Phtia concluded that to bridge this gap, schools must learn to communicate with all families, especially those who were marginalized, and respond to those families with the understanding that the schools too wanted the best for their children.

Distinctions among groups of highly involved to uninvolved families had also been made in studies in other nations. In 1989, in Australia, Toomey (cited in Sanders & Epstein, 1996) contrasted enthusiasts with a silent majority. Enthusiasts became involved on their own while the silent majority needed guidance from the schools. Toomey concluded that schools needed to take innovative approaches, such as implementing home reading programmes in order to involve those families who would not become involved on their own.

Historically, educators had viewed parents as the source of their children's problems, but increasingly a change was occurring in the ways educators viewed the relationship between parents and schools. It had been suggested that a collaborative relationship, rather than an adversarial one, benefited students
(Sussel, Carr, & Hartman, 1996). School, family and community partnerships could improve school programmes and climates, provide family services, and help parents to increase their parenting skills and leadership abilities. Parents and other adults could help in schools by acting as tutors, lunch aides, librarians, office helpers and classroom assistants. Parents contributed to the schools in two major ways: they encouraged their children and were committed to them and their education; and they were active and were seen doing things in and around the school. This combination of level of commitment and active participation was what defined an involved parent. When these parents worked with educators an improved learning environment was created for children.

Parents were their children's first and most influential teachers. During the first eighteen years, children spent only 13% of their waking hours in school and 87% of that time with their families. One very important type of parent involvement took place before children began to attend school. By creating a positive learning environment at home and establishing high expectations for their children, parents laid the groundwork for subsequent achievement at school (Amundson, 1988).

Research (Finn, 1998) identified three types of parental involvement that were consistently associated with school performance: (1) actively organizing and monitoring the child's time; (2) helping with homework; and (3) discussing school matters with the child. Finn considered a fourth set of activities to be equally important: parents reading to and being read to by their child. These behaviours helped explain why some students succeeded academically despite
poverty, minority status or native language barriers.

Parent activities fell into two broad categories: on the individual level where the efforts of a parents were focused on helping their own child achieve; and on a collective level where the benefits of the involvement influenced all students in a class or programme (Stouffer, 1992). Research supported the idea that parent involvement occurred primarily with elementary children, particularly those between Junior Kindergarten and Grade Five. Sometime between the fifth and eighth grades most parents who had previously been visible in the schools and active in their children's education became less so.

Of the many types of involvement, the one that most families in different nations wanted to know about was how to enhance their children's learning at home. This involvement included strategies for becoming an effective parent at each age level and how to interact with children at home about classwork, homework, academic plans and decisions across the grades. Recognizing the need to reach out to families in order to improve the academic success and educational experiences of students, more schools were conducting programmes and practices to strengthen parenting skills and to help parents provide home environments which supported their children's learning. Research suggested that activities such as workshops and home visits had positive influences on family practices at home, parent and student attitudes about schools, and students' academic achievement (Sanders & Epstein, 1996; Finn, 1998).

In Canada, the Learning and Reading Partners (LRP) program (1998) encouraged parents to remember that "you know - you just don't know you
know!" LRP, which began in Prince Edward Island in 1994, was an adult learning model that assumed parents already knew most of the strategies they needed to help their children in school. The programme assumed that parents were their children's life-long learning partners. These parents needed to learn how to use what they already knew in ways that focussed on learning and reading. The founders of LRP did not believe that it was the responsibility of schools to formally teach parents how to work with their children. Parents needed support from community-based approaches that met their needs to assist in their children's learning. LRP supported teachers and schools and found that parents who took the course, which offered over 70 strategies to help children 'learn how to learn', had a greater respect and admiration for teachers and their work. The founders of the programme felt that parents were the single greatest untapped resource to meet the time, one-to-one, and emotional needs of learners. Parents had to be provided with opportunities to learn and rediscover their role as teachers - a role that was accepted as natural 40 years earlier.

According to Lamm (1986) most educators and parents were not trained in shared decision-making. Old patterns had to be changed and new patterns developed. Partnership was the key ingredient needed in the campaign to improve schools (Seeley, 1984).

At an elementary school in Colorado the group Friendly Observations Can Unify a School (FOCUS) developed as a result of parent dissatisfaction concerning playground supervision (Meadows, 1993). After an initial confrontation, parents and educators worked together to build a FOCUS team
composed of two parent observers, the principal and two teachers. The team had two goals: to increase the quality of parent-school partnerships; and to model and build the students’ self-esteem through the use of parent observers in the classroom. Despite the initial apprehension of the teachers, the plan worked well and the school received a clear picture of what they did well and what they needed to improve.

In Arlington, Texas, the Principal Assistants Committee (PAC) was formed initially to give the principal more free time to expand his instructional leadership role (Kenner & Gribbin, 1992). The elementary school already had a very strong volunteer support programme. Its volunteers logged an amazing 15,000 volunteer hours per year. The PACs were built on a strong foundation of site-based management and were able to assist in programmes regarding the school’s educational programmes and activities. The committees helped to promote a sense of pride and responsibility through direct and active involvement of parents and community volunteers in the day-to-day operation of the school. Each committee had a chairperson who directed its involvement and worked with school administration to plan and coordinate activities according to the charter of the committee. The charter of each committee consisted of goals and guidelines developed by school administrators in conjunction with the staff. The chairpersons from each committee formed a steering committee, which met monthly with administrators to share information and to plan activities. In this way educators, parents and community members met and worked collaboratively to improve their school.
Hunter (1989) enjoined parents and educators to join the 'par-aide' in education. She believed that parents were rich resources that teachers had to tap for help in three areas: skills in hobbies and crafts, direct knowledge and experience in occupations, and knowledge of different cultures. Hunter directed schools participating in her study to send letters to parents asking them to volunteer. Those who responded were invited to participate in a two-hour training session where they were given information about, and training in, how to plan and conduct their presentations. Teachers modelled lessons for par-aiders and gave advice when asked. The response to 'par-aide' was enthusiastic. Parents gained a new and deeper respect for the job that teachers did and teachers saw parents as valued partners in extending and enriching their programmes.

In 1986 the Tennessee General Assembly appropriated $1,000,000 to design and implement a statewide parent involvement initiative. The purpose was to enhance and develop parent involvement models in local school systems in order to demonstrate the benefits of a strong partnership between families and schools. The programmes were funded in two phases. In the first, schools with existing parent involvement programs received funds to expand and enhance their programmes, while in the second phase, nationally validated programmes were replicated in different school systems to determine if they would work effectively in Tennessee. The state also independently initiated one additional model and piloted it at six sites around the state. During its first year of operation, the Tennessee programme recorded the total number of parents
involved to be 2,400, contributing a total of 43,000 hours of parent participation. Results of a parent survey indicated that over 95% of 1,100 parents who completed the questionnaire agreed that they were more involved with their children’s education. Ninety percent reported that their children’s skills and attitudes had improved and 81% perceived an improvement in their children’s behaviour (Lueder, 1989).

According to Henderson and Berla (1995) all families, regardless of income, education level or cultural background, were able to contribute to their children’s success. When parents encouraged learning and voiced high expectations for the future, they promoted attitudes that were key to achievement. Students who felt they had some control over their destiny, who realized hard work would be recognized and rewarded, were students who did well in school. Although these attitudes were formed at home, they could have been either strengthened or discouraged at school. When schools encouraged families to work with their children and provided helpful information and skills, they reinforced a positive cycle of development for both parents and students. When parents were involved at school and not just at home, children did better in school and stayed in school longer.

Becher (1984), in a study of how the effects of parent involvement influenced children, found that there were several key family ‘process variables’ or ways of behaving that were related to student achievement. Children with high achievement scores had parents who had high expectations for them, who responded to, and interacted with them frequently, and who saw themselves as
'teachers' of their children. Parents of high-scoring children also used more complex language, provided problem-solving strategies, acted as models of learning and achievement, and reinforced what their children were learning at school.

Parent education programmes, particularly those training low-income parents to work with their children, were effective in improving how well children used language skills, performed on tests and behaved in school. These programmes also produced positive effects on parents' teaching styles, the way they interacted with their children, and the home learning environment (Dauber & Epstein, 1991; 1993).

Bringing educators, parents, students and other community members together to actively participate in decision-making resulted in less blaming and finger-pointing, and more genuine problem-solving behaviour by all members. It was otherwise too easy for parents to blame teachers, for teachers to blame parents, and for students and community members to be left out. The solution came from working together to share problems and solutions while recognizing and supporting the efforts of others (Jennings, 1989).

School, family and community partnerships improved school programmes and climates, provided family services, and helped parents to increase their parenting skills and leadership abilities. Parents and other adults helped in schools by acting as tutors, lunch aides, librarians, office helpers and classroom assistants. Parents contributed to the schools in two major ways: they encouraged their children and were committed to them and their education; and
they were active and were seen doing things in and around the school. This combination of level of commitment and active participation was what defined an involved parent. When these parents worked with educators an improved learning environment was created for children (Epstein, 1991).

The Comer School Development Program at Yale's Child Study Center created a strategy that combined the principles of site-based management and parental involvement (Squires & Kranyik, 1996; Ramirez-Smith, 1995). Malen and colleagues (1989 as cited in Squires & Kranyik), listed six benefits of site-based management: (1) stakeholders, particularly parents and teachers, would be able to influence school policy decisions; (2) employee morale and motivation would be boosted; (3) schoolwide planning processes would be strengthened; (4) instruction would improve; (5) effective schools' characteristics would develop; and (6) students' academic achievement would improve. In addition to these factors the Comer Project added a parents' programme, the aim of which was to make the school more inviting for parents in order to increase their communication with teachers and students, and to involve them more fully in school planning. In this way the programme sought to break down the supposed professional barriers which separated home and school. A school mental health team, later called the School Support Team (O'Neill, 1997), was also added and its measures were directed at the school as a whole, rather than the more typical individual case approach. The team was given the responsibility of examining schoolwide mental health problems, designing ways to improve the school climate and building positive relationships among the children and adults.
in the school. A school planning and management team coordinated the other two teams, established guidelines regarding curriculum and instruction, and planned and coordinated school operations. Collaboration changed the school culture from an assembly line model churning out students to one founded on the conviction that "it takes a whole village to raise a child".

At Magruder Primary School in Newport News, Virginia, the Comer Model was implemented in 1993 (Ramirez-Smith, 1995). Prior to that time only one per cent of Magruder's second grade students read at grade level, compared to 53% city wide. Two years later 86% of the students moving on to grade three were passing their achievement tests. Three full-time reading recovery teachers were hired, as was a home-school coordinator, whose task it was to set up home-school visits, organize luncheons for parent volunteers and keep in touch with parents via the telephone. For parents without telephones or transportation communications were maintained through personal notes. A social calendar for the year was created and for the first time parents learned about the school's goals and could make suggestions for achieving them. Based on a survey, the management team organized workshops on Saturdays and provided lunches and babysitting services so parents could attend. Topics like 'how to help with homework' drew record crowds. As a result of their positive experience at Magruder school several parents decided to further their own education. By raising its expectations for students and involving their parents, Magruder had made possible greater success for the whole community.

In Rankin Inlet where the school and the community have worked
together since the school was erected in 1988 (Belsey, 1998) Inuit elders taught native culture and language and the staff gained a greater respect for the community. In 1995 the Community Education Council created The Community Access Centre in the school computer room. Elders who had been born on the land in igloos or tents were overawed by demonstrations of the Internet and agreed quickly to provide and help raise funds for more equipment. In two years they raised $100,000 to equip the centre. The centre has been used more than 3,000 times by community members, more than 25% of whom have e-mail accounts. Many students have their own e-mail accounts and web pages as well. The community, parents, elders and businesses, worked together with the school to link their community with the much larger global community.

According to Brandt (1998), schools could not reform without first doing a better job of connecting with parents and community members. The following recommendations from Listen, Discuss, Act (Education Commission of the States, 1996, cited in Brandt), supported this statement:

1. make involving parents and the community a top priority;
2. be clear about what it means to set high standards for all students, and what it will take to meet them;
3. show how new ideas enhance, rather than replace, old ones;
4. educate parents about the choices available to them; and
5. help parents and other community members understand how students are assessed and what the results mean.

(PP. 15-17)
Coaching was identified by Nettles (1992) as a way to engage community members in the life of the school. As coaches, adults shared the following skills and talents: sports, music, chess, art, dance, science and other interests. Nettles proposed a framework whereby coaching programmes could be implemented successfully to offer social support to students.

In 1992 a programme called Senior Exchange was launched in 19 elementary and junior high schools in Illinois (Conyers, 1996). The programme gave seniors an opportunity to help schools while earning money to pay a portion of their property tax bill. Seniors worked in computer labs, resource rooms, offices and lunchrooms. They helped students with reading, writing or math. The schools also offered another programme called Generations Exchange where students taught seniors computer skills and seniors and children performed together and displayed works of art in an Arts Fest. The district adopted all the senior housing complexes in the area so that children could be taken to the residences for additional programmes.

The term 'Full-Service Schools' was used in Florida's Department of Health and Rehabilitation Services legislation in 1991 (Dryfoos, 1996). Schools became one-stop centres where in addition to education, the physical, psychological and social requirements of students and their families could be met in a holistic way. Successful programmes relied upon a full-time program director and overall response to the programmes was good. Students, teachers and parents appreciated the accessibility, convenience and confidentiality of school-based services such as immigration, employment, health, dental, police,
probation, and other service agencies. Attendance and graduation rates were significantly higher in these schools and reading and math scores were improved. Students were eager to attend schools that were stimulating, nurturing and respectful of cultural values. Parents were heavily involved as classroom helpers and advisory council members and were also involved in classes and cultural events. Property destruction and graffiti diminished and neighbourhood violence rates decreased. Collaboration among students, teachers, staff, parents and community members created stronger institutions which improved the lives of children and families.

Schools in Chicago adopted The Parent Project which was developed by Vopat in 1994 (Daniels, 1996). The model was a series of weekly workshops that demonstrated progressive classroom techniques and complex curriculum topics to parents. Participants were quick to volunteer for further involvement and helped teachers co-teach some classes, participated in staff development and conferences, worked with children, completed designated portions of report cards, and formed local school councils. Every summer 100 participants - parents, teachers, principals and staff gathered at the Walloon Institute in northern Michigan to learn more about constructivist pedagogy and school reform as outlined in this project. The Parent Project was found to have engendered mutual trust and understanding among parents, teachers and students.

School, family and community partnerships improved school programmes and school climate, provided family services and support, increased
parents' skills and leadership ability, connected families with others in the school and community, and helped teachers in their work (Epstein, 1995). In a 1982 study of 60 grade five classrooms, Epstein concluded that the most consistent positive effect of parent involvement measures on any response from students were the students' reports that the teacher knew their family. Teachers were more likely to contact families when they knew the family would respond in a positive, helpful manner. Parent involvement was also found to be important for establishing regular homework patterns and extending learning time to weekends. Ability was not found to be an independent influence on student attitudes toward learning. Teachers active in involving parents did report an unusually high level of participation in school activities by some of their students' parents. The results of this study suggested that teachers who were leaders in parent involvement or who communicated frequently with parents were considered by the parents to be better teachers (Epstein, 1984, 1986).

According to Epstein (1984) the positive effects of having parents involved in the school was dampened by the fact that few parents participated. In the author's study of 3,698 first, third and fifth grade teachers and principals in 600 elementary schools in Maryland, information was requested about teachers' and principals' attitudes toward parent involvement and how they involved parents in their children's learning at home. Eighty-two case and control teachers were selected. The parents from these classrooms were surveyed. Completed questionnaires were returned at a rate of 59%. In the research the author discovered that 40% of the teachers surveyed had parents in their classrooms a
few days each month. Only a few parents were involved frequently and some parents never participated. About 70% of parents never helped in fund-raising activities. About 88% never helped in the library, cafeteria or other school areas. Most parents could not or did not become involved in the school. Over 40% of the mothers in this sample worked full time and 18% worked part time. The average number of days per year parents spent helping the school were as follows: 4.1 helping the teacher, 7.0 days helping with fundraising and 3.5 days helping in the school cafeteria, office or library. Only 4% of the respondents (51 parents from 82 classrooms) were very active, spending more than 25 days per year at the school or were becoming involved in board business.

A report from the School, Family and Community Partnerships Project (Epstein, 1991) concluded that while it was not the parents' responsibility to teach their children new skills from a school curriculum, or to take over a teacher's job, parents and teachers did share a responsibility to their children to both monitor and understand their progress at school. This included assisting students to master the skills needed to pass each grade and to help them develop a positive self-image as learners. Parents reported that they wanted teachers to tell them that it was all right to help their children and that they needed teachers to explain how parents could best use their time at home productively to work toward school goals. Parents were an available, but untapped and undirected resource that teachers could mobilize to help more children master and maintain needed skills for school.

Epstein (1986) developed a framework of five types of parent
involvement known as the Epstein Model, which included: (1) parenting, which helped families establish home environments to support children as students; (2) communicating, which designed effective forms of communication between school and home, and home and school, about school programmes and children's progress; (3) volunteering, which recruited and organized parent helpers and supporters; (4) learning at home, which provided information and ideas to families about how to help students with homework and other curriculum-related ideas; and 5) decision-making, which included parents in school decisions and developed parent leaders and representatives.

Five years later Epstein (1991) expanded and redefined this framework to include the following: (1) basic obligations of families, which included providing for children's health and safety, developing parenting skills and child-rearing approaches that prepared children for school and that maintained healthy child development across the grades, and building positive home conditions that supported school learning and behaviour across all the school years. Schools assisted families to develop the knowledge and skills needed to understand their children at each grade level through workshops at the school or in other locations, home visits, family support programmes, and in other forms of education, training, and information giving; (2) basic obligations of schools, which included communications with families about school programs and children's progress. These communications included memos, notices, phone calls, report cards, and conferences that most schools conducted and other innovative communications with parents that some schools created. Schools had
the ability and influence to vary the forms and frequency of communications and as a result affected whether the information sent home could be understood by all families; (3) involvement at school, which included parents and other volunteers who assisted teachers, administrators, and children in classrooms or in other areas of the school. It also referred to family members who came to school to support student performances, sports or other events. Schools could improve and vary schedules so that more families were able to participate as volunteers and as audiences. Schools could also improve recruitment and training so that volunteers were more helpful to teachers, students and school improvement efforts; (4) involvement in learning activities at home, which included requests and guidance from teachers for parents to assist their own children at home on learning activities that were coordinated with the children's class work. Schools assisted families to help their children at home by providing information about skills required of students to pass each grade. Schools provided information to families on how to monitor, discuss, and help with homework and when, and how to make decisions about school programmes, activities, and opportunities at each grade level so that all students could be more successful in school; (5) involvement in decision making, governance and advocacy, which included parents and others in the community in participatory roles in the parent-teacher association/organization, advisory councils, or other committees at the school, district, or state level. It also referred to parents as activists in independent advocacy groups in the community. Schools assisted by training parent leaders and representatives in decision-making skills, by
providing ways to communicate with all the parents they represented, and by providing information needed by community groups for school improvement activities; (6) collaboration and exchanges with community organizations, which included connections with agencies, businesses, and other groups that shared responsibility for children's education and future success. These connections included school programmes that provided children and families access to community and support services, including after-school care, health services, and other resources, and that coordinated these arrangements and activities to support children's learning. Schools varied in the amount they knew and shared about their communities and how much they were able to draw on community resources to enhance and enrich the curriculum and other experiences of students.

Expected results of the six types of parent involvement (Epstein, 1995) for students, parents and teachers were as follows: type (1) parenting, resulted in students being made more aware of family supervision, leading to more respect for parents and a greater appreciation of the importance of school. Parents gained a better understanding and more confidence with parenting, child and adolescent development, and derived a feeling of support from school and other parents. Teachers gained an understanding of families' backgrounds, cultures, concerns, a respect for families' strengths and efforts, and an understanding of student diversity. Type (2) communicating, resulted in students gaining an awareness of their own progress and of actions needed to maintain or improve grades, an understanding of school policies regarding behaviour and attendance,
and an awareness of their own role in partnerships, by serving as couriers and communicators. Parents were able to better understand school programmes and policies, monitored their children's progress and experienced more interactions with teachers and an ease of communication with schools and teachers. Teachers used an increased diversity of communications with families and gained an appreciation for the use of the parent network for communications. Type (3) volunteering, resulted in students gaining more skill in communication with adults and a greater appreciation of the many skills, talents, occupations and contributions of other parents and volunteers. Parents gained an understanding of the teacher's job, enjoyed increased comfort at school and participated in a carry-over of school activities at home. Teachers increased their readiness to involve families in new ways, including those who did not volunteer at school, and gave more individual attention to students with help from volunteers. Type (4) learning at home, resulted in greater gains in skills, abilities, and test scores linked to homework and classwork, improved homework completion, a more positive attitude toward schoolwork and a better self-concept as an able learner for students. Parents supported, encouraged and helped students at home, gained an appreciation of the teacher's skills and an awareness of the child as a learner. Teachers designed better homework assignments, exhibited greater respect of family time, and reported increased satisfaction with family involvement and support. Type (5) decision making, resulted in students' greater awareness of the need for family representation in school decisions and an understanding that student rights were protected. Parents had input into
policies that affected childrens’ education, felt an ownership of the school, and shared experiences and connections with other families. Teachers gained an awareness of parent perspectives as a factor in policy development and decisions, and viewed parents as equals on committees and in leadership roles. Type (6) collaborating with the community, resulted in students gaining increased skills and talents through enriched curricular and extracurricular experiences, and an increased awareness of careers and options for future education and work. Parents gained knowledge, and through the use of local resources, increased skills and talents and obtained needed services. Teachers became more aware of community resources to enrich curriculum and instruction, used mentors, business partners, community volunteers and others to assist students and to augment teaching practices, and gave knowledgeable, helpful referrals of children and families to needed services.

The major types of parent involvement are related but separable. In an 1989 study (Dauber & Epstein), type two activities, communications from the school to the home, were more prevalent. In contrast, type four activities, involvement in learning activities at home, were difficult for many teachers to organize and were implemented in fewer places by fewer teachers.

In the same study (Dauber & Epstein, 1989), teachers said that parents and others in the community were not strong supporters of parent involvement, but surveys of parents in the same schools contradicted the teachers’ beliefs about parents. Educators may have created false or exaggerated discrepancies between themselves and others concerning parent involvement. More similarities existed
than schools realized. There was an important, though often hidden, base of shared goals, interests and investments in children's success on which to build more effective programmes of school and family partnerships (Epstein, 1991). Elementary school practices were stronger, more positive, and more comprehensive than those in the middle or junior grades. Programmes and practices were more prevalent in schools where teachers perceived that they, their colleagues, and parents all felt strongly about the importance of parent involvement. Parents who were better educated were more involved at school and at home than parents who were less educated. Parents with fewer children were more involved with their children at home, but family size was not a significant factor for explaining parent involvement at school. Parents who worked were significantly less likely to participate at the school, but working outside the home was not a significant predictor of involvement at home. Marital status had no significant effect on the extent of involvement either at school or at home. Parents also tended to be more involved in their children's education if the children were better students (Dauber & Epstein in Chavkin, 1993).

The strongest and most consistent predictors of parent involvement at school and at home were the specific school programmes and teachers' practices that encouraged and guided parent involvement. When parents believed that schools were doing little to involve them, they reported doing little at home. When parents perceived that the school was doing many things to involve them, they were more involved in their children's education at school and at home.
The schools' practices, not just family characteristics, made a difference in whether parents became involved in and felt informed about their children's education.

The Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) program was initiated in Baltimore (Epstein, 1990). Research conducted showed that there was a subject specific connection between parents' involvement at home in reading and student gains in reading skills. Epstein began to work with teachers to consider means of increasing parent involvement and student skills in other subjects. The TIPS Manual for Teachers was published in 1992 (Epstein, Jackson, Salinas) and the programme was described as follows: a teacher-parent partnership process, in which teachers could help all families stay informed and involved in their childrens' learning activities at home, and help all students complete homework in order to promote greater success in school. The TIPS activities kept school on the agenda at home so that children knew their families believed schoolwork was important and worth talking about. Over time, as TIPS was used each year, students learned that their teachers wanted their families to know about what they were learning and to participate in their homework assignments.

Homework became a three-way partnership involving students, families and teachers (Rioux & Berla eds., 1993). The TIPS Language Arts programme provided a format for students to share a variety of skills in reading, writing, thinking, grammar, and related language activities with their parents, and to interact with family members by interviewing, gathering reactions, discussing ideas, reading written work aloud, and exchanging ideas. Parents were informed
in many ways about the TIPS programme, including letters during the summer from principals, orientation sessions at the schools, material distributed on open house nights, information in newsletters, and information from their children.

When the homework was completed, the teachers conducted a short, stimulating follow-up activity in class to give students opportunities to share their work and their families' responses and reactions. Follow-up activities reinforced the importance of homework, the importance of family involvement, and the contributions of family interactions to enrich thinking about the curriculum. It was up to the teacher whether the TIPS homework assignments were given the same weight in the grading system as the regular homework.

Teachers who systematically involved families began to see more parents as allies - interested in their children and in the schools. Parents who received frequent requests for involvement from teachers reported that they learned more about the school programme, recognized and appreciated the teachers' efforts, obtained ideas about how to help their children at home, and rated the teachers higher in interpersonal skills and overall teaching quality. Students reported that they learned things about their parents they would not have known without assignments that required and guided interaction at home. Student and parent communications about school, schoolwork and homework increased (Epstein, Jackson, Salinas, 1992; Epstein, 1996).

Similar outcomes were found in evaluations of Impact, a project that originated in England to involve parents in their children's mathematics learning. In a two year qualitative evaluation of the programme, Border and Merttens
(1993, cited in Sanders & Epstein, 1996), found that parents reported that Impact made math more enjoyable and less frightening for their children, helped them to understand how their children learned mathematics, and provided opportunities to share and discuss their children’s curriculum with other parents and teachers. Parents also voiced concerns over the programme, including complaints about activity instructions, unclear connections between homework activities and mathematics learning and lack of teacher follow-up in the classroom. The authors concluded that although Impact successfully involved many parents in their children’s school work, it may also have led to disruptions stemming from differing expectations and attitudes between teachers and parents.

Another programme reporting positive results for schools, parents and their children was the Home-School-Community Liaison Scheme (HSCL) in Ireland. Ryan (1995, cited in Sanders & Epstein, 1996), found that students’ attitudes and skills improved as a result of increased communication and interactions between families and schools. The HSCL program was introduced in Dublin in 1990 to increase the academic success and school persistence of economically disadvantaged students through greater cooperation between families and schools. Through parent courses and activities and home visits, the programme encouraged the involvement of parents of primary school children at home and at school.

Over two-thirds of the families involved in HSCL reported that as a consequence of their involvement, they had learned how to help their children
with school learning. Parents who volunteered in classrooms reported learning more about the teacher's job and problems, and about the classroom life of children. As a result they found it easier to talk to teachers and to ask questions. Parents also reported that they had more positive attitudes about the school, greater trust of school personnel and greater confidence in approaching the school and teachers; in addition, attendance at parent-teacher meetings increased.

Some parents in HSCL did not get involved. Compared to more involved parents, less-involved parents were more likely to be single parents, to have more children, be unemployed, and/or to perceive their children to be low achievers. Increased efforts were needed to advance the level of involvement of families who for economic and social reasons were most in need of assistance.

Similarly, Toomey (1989, cited in Sanders & Epstein, 1996) followed 79 working class families of preschool students in a study of home reading activities. Toomey found that subject-specific information and training for families in reading helped many to become involved who would not otherwise have done so. Families who participated in the programme significantly increased their reading skills. Toomey concluded that in economically disadvantaged communities, special efforts were needed to reach parents who were less confident about assisting their children in reading or contacting the schools. If the effort was extended, parents responded and children benefitted.

At Hempshill Hall in England, teachers, parents and students participated fully in the culture of the school (Joyce & Calhoun, 1997). When comment books were used to communicate between home and school teachers felt that these
interchanges extended the influence of the school into reading and writing activities at home. The parents felt the same process kept them in close touch with the student-teacher-parent triad that made education work. Parents and students became acquainted with the school before the child reached school age. They were welcomed to 'Thursday Club' and given a chance to participate weekly if they desired. In addition parents were welcomed in the school with an open door policy. They could come and go freely and often participated in whatever activity was taking place. Many parents were recruited as teaching assistants, with one person from every six families volunteering for this important job. The collaborative process at Hempshill Hall resulted in fewer discipline problems, increased cooperation in socialized groups, higher academic achievement and enhanced family values.

Sanchez and Baguedano (1992, cited in Sanders & Epstein, 1996) cautioned that such gains were not guaranteed for all home-school links. They argued that in order for desirable educational and instructional outcomes to occur, several elements were required, including: (1) well-designed and well-implemented training for parents; (2) sufficient funds to implement the practice effectively; (3) sufficient time to ensure parental competence and understanding; (4) committed and knowledgeable education specialists, teachers and counsellors, and (5) clear, specific subject content. When these elements were in place, the authors were optimistic about the positive influence of family-school collaborations on students' learning.

The theory of overlapping spheres of influence (Epstein, 1995; Epstein &
Lee, 1995; Epstein, 1996) recognized that three major contexts in which children learn and grow - the family, the school and the community - might be drawn together or pushed apart. In some schools there were still teachers who felt that they could do their job if the family would just do its job, and families who felt that since they had raised the child it was the school's job to educate the child. These examples illustrated separate spheres of influence. Other parents felt a need to know what was happening in school in order to help their child, thus demonstrating an overlapping sphere of influence. This theory located the student at the centre of the model of school, family, and community partnerships. Students were the main actors in their education, development and success at school. School, family, and community partnerships could not simply produce successful students, but partnership activities could be designed to engage, guide, and challenge students to produce their own successes. Children who felt cared for and encouraged were more likely to do their best and stay in school.

The overlapping spheres of influence model derived from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) conducted by National Centre for Educational Statistics, identified an external structure of movable spheres and an internal structure of interpersonal exchanges and interactions of the members in the influential contexts (Epstein & Lee, 1995). The external structure of the model showed that the extent of overlap was affected by forces of behaviour, to account for the background characteristics, philosophies, and practices of each environment, and time, to account for changes in the ages and grade levels of
students, and the influence of historic or periodic conditions. The external model recognized that there were some practices that schools and families conducted separately and others that were conducted jointly, in partnership. The internal structure of the model depicted the interrelationships of the participants in the family, school, and community contexts who worked in the partnership. It represented institutional connections that involved all families, educators and students (such as 'back to school' night to which all are invited, or attendance or report card policies which apply to all students), and individual connections that involved one parent, teacher, and student (such as a parent/teacher conference about an individual student's grades or behaviour). The internal structure identified the central role of the child as the focal point for the interactions of school, family, and community in partnerships.

Partnership 2000 schools were established by Epstein (1995,1996) to help link state, district and other leaders who were responsible for helping elementary, middle and high schools implement programmes of school, family and community partnerships. The national network of Partnership 2000 Schools began its activities in the fall of 1995 and planned to continue until at least the year 2000. State and district coordinators received financial support.

Benson, Buckley and Medrich (1980) found in their study of time use contributions to education that cultural activities and parent involvement showed a significant relationship to children's achievement. Five activities were the most highly rated: visits to cultural centres, participating in hobbies together, parent-facilitated participation in organized activities, dinnertime patterns and doing
things together on weekends.

A study of three Michigan school districts which involved parents in performance contracts to improve the reading skills of low-income elementary school children found that the district with the most comprehensive parent programme made the greatest gains. The study involved nearly 2,000 disadvantaged students in grades 2 to 6 in 12 schools. They were tested at the beginning and end of the school year on the Stanford Achievement and Metropolitan Achievement Tests. The later scores were compared to the national norm tables to determine if student achievement was higher than would have been expected from their earlier scores. Averages were computed for each of the three districts. In all three districts the participating students scored considerably higher in reading than was expected but in the district where parental involvement was the highest, students scored considerably higher than those in the other two districts. The programme design was nearly identical in all three districts, the only difference being the amount of parental involvement (Gillum, 1977).

A 1993 research study found that from birth to age 18, children spent only about 13% of their waking hours at school. Parents continued to have the major responsibility for the remainder of their children's time. The home environment was the most powerful factor in determining the level of school achievement, interest in school learning and the number of years of schooling. School personnel were likely to find any efforts they made to link home and school rewarding, not only in terms of improved student behaviour and achievement,
but also in the support network that a close home-school partnership provided for their work (Kellaghan, Thomas, Sloane, Alvarez, & Bloom, 1993).

In studies reviewed by Leler (1987), most of which were unpublished or doctoral dissertations, the author analysed the effects of various parent-education programmes on student achievement. Of the 18 studies in the group, 13 showed positive effects on one or more variables. None showed any negative results. Studies that did not show significant results were not particularly well-designed and the material contained jargon that parents might not have understood. Leler concluded that the types of involvement that worked best were those where parents played a variety of roles, including decision-making, and those where there was a structured training programme for both parents and educators.

In a study by Melnick and Fiene (1990) questionnaires were sent to 4,979 parents of children attending grades K - 5 in 11 urban schools. The response rate was 67% or 3,328 returned surveys. The instrument used was the Parent Attitude Toward School Effectiveness Survey (PATSE) which used a five-point Likert rating scale (5 = strongly agree to 1 = strongly disagree) to represent attitudes toward school effectiveness. Parents who visited their child's school for positive reasons tended to rate the effectiveness of the school higher than did those parents who visited the school for negative reasons or those who did not visit at all. The authors found that the parents' attitudes toward school effectiveness were also linked to student achievement. The achievement scores of children whose parents expressed high regard for the quality of the schools
were higher than the scores of children whose parents did not rate the schools as highly.

Nettles (1991) reviewed 13 studies of community-based programmes which were designed to improve the achievement of students at risk. The author defined community involvement as "the actions that organizations and individuals (e.g. parents, businesses, universities, social service agencies and the media) take to promote student development" (p. 380). The findings indicated that community-based programmes had positive effects on school related behaviours and achievements as well as on attitudes and risk-taking behaviour.

In an article summarizing findings from over 2,500 studies on learning, Walber (1984) concluded that an academically stimulating home environment was one of the chief determinants of learning. From 29 more recent studies the author concluded that the home learning environment had an effect on achievement that was three times as large as family socio-economic status.

Most parents wanted to limit the amount of television their children watched. In 1993 Puma et al. (cited in U.S. Department of Education's, Strong Families, Strong Schools, 1994) reported that 44% of seventh grade students watched three or more hours of television daily. Although moderate amounts of viewing did not interfere with schoolwork, academic achievement dropped sharply for children who watched more than 10 hours a week, or an average of two hours a day. The quality of television programmes selected was also a concern. Although the evidence was not conclusive, possible effects on children who viewed television violence included less sensitivity to the pain and suffering
of others, greater fear of the world around them, and an increased likelihood of engaging in aggressive or harmful behaviour. Families were encouraged to limit the amount of television viewed, help children select educational programmes, watch programmes together and discuss them.

The National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Standards for Parent/Family Involvement (1997), noted that in programmes that were designed to involve parents in full partnerships, student achievement for disadvantaged children not only improved, but it reached levels that were standard for middle-class children. In addition the children who were the furthest behind made the greatest gains. Conversely, students were more likely to fall behind in academic performance if their parents did not participate in school events, develop a working relationship with their child’s teacher, or keep up with what was happening in their child’s school.

Ziegler (1987) noted in a report prepared for the Toronto Board of Education that school personnel could intervene positively and effectively to show parents how to help their children be successful. The attitudes and behaviour of parents who felt powerless and excluded could be changed. The author concluded that the presence of parents in the school not only provided more adults to help teachers and children but also transformed the culture of the school. Parents’ academic and school-related activities at home, whether indirectly as models, or directly as readers or tutors, were a very strong influence on children’s long-term academic success.

The popular press also began to debate the merits of parent involvement.
Purvis (1998) advised parents to adhere to the following eight steps in order to better help their children to succeed in school: (1) Be role models - children should see parents reading, working through problems and learning from mistakes; (2) Don't jump ahead - preschool isn't high school: emphasis should be on play. Elementary school isn't college; too much time on homework can be counterproductive; (3) Keep on reading - bring on the books when they are babies and don't stop - even when they're excellent readers themselves; (4) Be involved - know what's going on in the classroom - support it, enrich it, but don't do your childrens' work for them; (5) Applaud the effort - parents need to praise hard work and persistence - not just outcomes. Make praise specific; don't just offer generic esteem boosting; (6) Allow mistakes - errors are learning opportunities and can be good practice for dealing with life's setbacks; (7) Respect their style - while educators advise a quiet homework spot with distractions, some kids work better to background noise. Let them do it their way unless their work suffers; (8) Don't forget morals - a strong ethical framework, religious or otherwise, will help children resist the ever present siren call of negative peer pressure. The best students had parents who responded to their curiosity, nourished and supported things the children were interested in and opened up their frame of reference. These students had a broad fund of general knowledge and had travelled and experienced many different real-life situations.

Scott-Jones (1995) noted that families and schools were major contexts for children's development. The impact of the two institutions became linked and
interconnected as children grew and developed in their families, and then entered and advanced through the formal education systems. In the past the socioeconomic status of the family had been declared the major force in predicting students' ultimate success. A consensus was building that status variables such as socioeconomic status were not as important in predicting academic success as were the family process variables. Knowledge of the relationships of socioeconomic status, family structure, ethnicity and other status variables to children's achievement in school needed to be supported by knowledge of children's experiences in the home.

Scott-Jones hypothesized four levels of parental interaction that could contribute to children's academic performance: valuing, monitoring, helping and doing. In the first level, valuing, parents conveyed to children the value of education in general and the value of specific kinds and aspects of education. In the second level, monitoring, parents monitored children's behaviour and performance. Valuing and monitoring together were assumed to affect the students' motivation and engagement in the processes of learning. The third level, helping, focused on the acquisition of basic academic skills in math, reading and other subjects. In communicating values, monitoring children's performance and behaviour, and helping with academic work parents contributed greatly to their children's success. At the same time parents were cautioned that they must also take into account children's conflicting needs for autonomy and self-direction and for guidance and assistance. The fourth level, doing, was one in which parents were actually doing the work for children thereby diminishing the
students' autonomy and initiative. This four-level framework - valuing,
monitoring, helping and doing, acknowledged that parents contributed in
different ways to their children's level of success in school and that support of
achievement was possible in a range of families. High socioeconomic status or
advanced formal education ought not to be assumed to be prerequisites for
parental contributions to children's academic achievement.

In encouraging children to be aware of their own intellectual potential,
parents may have conveyed their aspirations and expectations for educational
attainment and achievement. High-achieving children tended to have families
who held high educational expectations (Segliner, 1983; Wood, Chapin &
expectations were related to performance in specific subject areas. In 1984, Hess
et al. found that parents' expectations for achievement were related to children's
reading performance, and in 1991 Reynolds and Walberg found that math and
science achievement corresponded to parental expectations (Ryan et al, 1995).

Family structure was also related to parents' educational expectations.
Parents' educational expectations for their children were higher in two-parent
than in single-parent or step-parent families (Astone & McLanahan, 1991;

Cross-cultural differences in mothers' aspirations and expectations have
been reported. In 1988, Chen and Uttal (as cited in Ryan et al, 1995), compared
Chinese and American mothers of first, third and fifth graders. Both Chinese
and American mothers expected their children to earn similar scores on a
mathematics test - 80% to 85%. American mothers indicated that they would have been satisfied with scores seven points lower than their expected grade. Chinese mothers indicated that the score which would satisfy them was ten points higher than that expected by the American mothers. Chinese mothers appeared to have higher standards for their children than did U.S. mothers and the Chinese children scored higher on mathematics achievement tests. In 1994 Whang and Hancock (as cited in Ryan et al., 1995), reported that Asian American fourth, fifth and sixth graders performed significantly higher than Caucasian students on mathematics achievement tests, but the Asian American students were less likely to believe they were meeting their parents' expectations, which presumably were higher than those of U.S. parents. Siu & Feldman (1996), reported that familiarity and experience with American schools influenced how Chinese parents approached their childrens' education and that Chinese parents who felt less secure about their socioeconomic status were more deliberate in their efforts to ensure their children's achievement.

In contrast to their seemingly lower expectations for elementary school children, U.S. mothers, compared to Japanese mothers, appeared to have greater expectations for academic involvement of kindergarten students. In 1988 Bacon and Ichikawa (as cited in Ryan et al., 1995) reported that U.S. mothers were more likely to believe that kindergarten pupils should have academic experiences and should be rewarded for school performance; U.S. mothers were less likely than Japanese mothers to object to homework assignments and were less likely to believe that kindergarten teachers should assist with childrens' socioemotional
development. In this study, American mothers' higher academic expectations were construed to be unrealistic and their early emphasis on academic experiences to be inappropriate. Generally, talented ethnic minority youth in the U.S. had parents with high educational aspirations and expectations; these parents encouraged their children to pursue high levels of education and challenging careers (Lee, 1985, 1989 as cited in Ryan et al, 1995).

In communicating to children an awareness of their own intellectual potential, parents conveyed to children the value of effort and the role of ability in academic achievement. Parents who emphasized the importance of effort and downplayed the role of ability appeared to promote children's achievement. Parents were models that children observed every day. Parents read and used other academic skills and may themselves have been students on occasion. Parents communicated stories about their own education and schooling and provided a positive role model emphasizing the value of education. Parents who were not highly educated valued education for social mobility and encouraged their children to see a clear connection between education and success. The value of education was also communicated through the provision of educational resources: books, computers and other educational materials. The availability of reading material in the home was found to be directly related to children's reading performance.

Parents contributed to their children's academic achievement by monitoring school performance and activities that enhanced or diminished school performance. Monitoring may have included explicit or implicit rules
regarding homework and other school-related activities, having established routines for students’ studying, having checked that homework was completed, having checked on the child’s performance and behaviour at school, and having set limits on activities such as watching television, playing computer games or spending time with friends. Parents’ monitoring was most effective when it was accompanied by responsiveness and warmth toward the child and did not curtail the child’s initiative or autonomy. Ideally, parental monitoring led to self-monitoring and self-management strategies in the child (Scott-Jones, as cited in Ryan et al., 1995).

Parents helped with school skills and were knowledgeable about the topics students were learning. They could establish the appropriate emotional tone in the teaching and could gauge when they had provided the appropriate amount of help. In the U.S. the language spoken in the home has received a great deal of attention as a possible influence on students’ school performance. Parents who could not speak English would have great difficulty helping their children with English language school work. In a 1994 study by Kennedy & Park (as cited in Ryan et al., 1995), the use of English was found to be positively related to achievement test scores and unrelated to grades of Mexican American eighth grade school children. For Asian American eighth graders the use of English in the home was unrelated to achievement tests scores and surprisingly was negatively related to mathematics grades.

A second model of parent helping was learning together - parents learned about a subject along with their children. When parents were not proficient in
English, and their children had more advanced English skills, children in these homes improved their own English language skills by helping their parents (Scott-Jones in Ryan et al., 1995).

Some parents became over involved in helping their children and took too much responsibility for their children's school performance. In 1993, Ginsberg and Bronstein (in Ryan et al., 1995) found that parental over control, which the authors called 'surveillance', was negatively related to fifth grade students' motivation, grades and achievement.

Epstein and Sander's review (1996) of selected studies by researchers in 20 countries revealed the following:

*Parents varied in their level of involvement with schools.* In nearly all nations, some parents were closely connected to their children's schools and interacted easily with teachers. Others, particularly parents with less formal education, were reluctant to contact their schools if they viewed them as hostile places. Family structure, family life, and parents' work patterns were changing in many countries. More mothers were educated and more were employed outside the home during the school day. Family forms were diversifying as parents divorced and remarried. Close ties with relatives were stretched as families immigrated to new communities or new countries. These factors affected families, children, and schools in all nations, and required schools to consider many different ways to communicate with the families of their students. There was more involvement by more families in the elementary than in the secondary grades, in part because, internationally, more parents felt comfortable
in the early grades, and in part because educators in the early grades did more to involve families. Most parents in most countries were eager to become more involved in their children's education in all grade levels at home or at school, but needed to know that they were welcomed and respected by the schools and needed useful information from the schools about how to assist their children.

Parents were concerned about their children's success in school. Parents wanted their children to be happy and successful in school. In different cultures these concerns were expressed in different ways. Even when they were free to choose the schools their children attended, parents and students selected schools based on a number of factors (not just academic test scores) to maximize children's chances of success and happiness. Parents wanted their schools to understand and respond to their children's talents and needs.

Students needed multiple sources of support to succeed in school and in their communities. Students in all nations reported that their families loved and cared for them, and that they learned things at school and at home. Surveys in many locations indicated that children and parents were often more in tune with each other than with teachers when asked about family goals, students' aspirations or about the kinds of assistance that students and families needed to reach their goals. Research showed that students who received support from home, family and community benefitted, and were more likely to be academically successful than those who did not.

Teachers and administrators were initially resistant to increasing family involvement. Some educators in most locations feared that involving families
and others decreased their professional status. There was more resistance to involving families in school decision making and curriculum design, but less opposition to involving families in fund-raising, volunteering and communicating in traditional ways from school to home. Other types of involvement (e.g., two-way communications and involving families with their own children in schoolwork at home) met mild initial resistance, but were growing areas for action and improvement.

**Teachers and administrators needed pre-service, in-service and advanced education.** Education and training were necessary for teachers and administrators to understand diverse families and to obtain the knowledge and skills needed to establish and maintain good programmes of partnerships with all families and communities. Most educators in all nations were unprepared by their education and training to understand and work with families. In some countries, educators were required to accrue credits or other evidence of continuing education every five years, but these improvements did not have to include school, family and community partnerships.

**Schools needed the input of families and communities.** Schools needed assistance from their students' families and their communities to provide rich and varied educational experiences to help all students succeed in school and in life. In most nations, funding for education was too low to meet all needs. School systems needed to be able to identify, mobilize, and organize all available resources and talents to support and extend programmes and opportunities for all students. Most parents needed assistance to understand their children, the
schools, and ways to help both. Schools were in a unique position to address the fears and concerns of uninvolved parents by establishing programmes and practices that encouraged all parents to participate in their children's education. These conditions - parents' readiness, students' needs, teachers' resistance, schools' insufficiencies - set the stage for action to improve school-family-community partnerships. As a result researchers and educators identified some common approaches to increase partnerships:

Policies were important precursors to programme development.

Progress in family participation in education was made, in large part, by national, state, and local policies, but these policies were at odds with the actions that most parents wanted to take to support their children's education. Most governmental policies began with tightly controlled mechanical systems for parents to choose their children's schools or to include a few parent representatives in existing decision-making bodies. If well-designed, these mechanical systems could have become part of full programmes of partnership, but they could not take the place of more responsive systems that involved all families in school activities, children's progress, decisions about courses, and other aspects of children's learning and development. The information and activities that families sought were based on relationships and regular communications with educators.

Programmes and practices of partnership made a difference in whether, how, and which families were involved in their children's education. Well-designed and well-implemented programmes and practices enabled families to
become involved at school and at home, including families who were unlikely to become involved on their own. Good programmes provided the climate, tools, skills, and confidence that parents needed to assist their children and the schools. Positive effects of programmes that reached out to involve families were reported by researchers in such diverse locations as Australia, Chile, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Ireland, Portugal, New Zealand, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States. In particular, teachers' attitudes about parents' interests and skills changed after they had begun to work with families; parents learned how to help at home and conducted many more activities with their children and school; and students benefitted in various ways when they saw that their parents and teachers knew and respected one another and communicated regularly.

Subject-specific practices involved families in ways that directly assisted students' learning and success. Studies across nations indicated that students benefitted when they interacted with family members about topics they were learning in class. Examples tested across countries included parent-child reading, cued spelling, and interactive math or writing homework that children conducted with family members at home. Benefits were reported in studies in more than one country in mathematics and language arts. Across cultures researchers cautioned that in order for all families to become involved, subject specific interventions must be clear, appropriate for the skills and needs of students and families, monitored and rewarded by teachers, and continually improved with input from all participants.

Programmes were most useful to schools and to families if they were
customized, comprehensive, and continually improved to help meet goals set for students by students, families and schools. Epstein's set of challenges and redefinitions for each of six major types of involvement were essential for effective programmes to help schools establish a varied menu of practices to involve present-day families at home, at school, and in the community. Many studies showed that when schools implemented appropriate practices, many more parents communicated with their school and their children, and had more positive attitudes toward the school.
CHAPTER III
METHODS AND PROCEDURES

A. Subjects

The subjects selected for this study were 118 male and female, nine to ten year old grade four students, their parents and teachers from three elementary schools of an urban city board in Southwestern Ontario. The schools were chosen randomly, by pulling names out of a hat, from three differing geographical areas in the urban area. In this way one school was chosen to represent the east, another the west and the third school the south location of the urban centre. In addition, three prominent persons associated with parent involvement in the urban area participated in key actor interviews. Key actors are those people found in any group who are more informed about the culture and history of their group than others. These subjects were chosen randomly, again by pulling names, from a group of people who were very active in the area of parent involvement and School Councils within the city. This group was a convenience sample as it was already established. Since the number of teachers and principals involved in the study was so small they all received copies of the questionnaire. Every parent in the study received a copy of the questionnaire but only a randomly selected 15 students from each class were asked to be interviewed. Teachers and students had no way of knowing which students would be interviewed since the permission letters were enclosed in sealed envelopes. Surveys were handed out and one week later the researcher collected
the returned questionnaires and interviewed students who had returned signed letters of consent.

B. **Instrumentation**

The instruments used for this study were the *School And Family Partnerships: Questionnaires for Teachers and Parents in Elementary and Middle Grades* developed by Epstein and Salinas in 1993 (see Appendixes A and B). The teacher questionnaires asked for professional judgments about parent involvement, the practices teachers were currently utilizing and the partnership programmes teachers would like to see developed or extended within their schools and classrooms. The parent questionnaire asked for general attitudes regarding the school, how parents were currently involved, how the school should elicit or guide their involvement, and the partnership programmes the parents would like to see implemented or improved upon within the school or their child’s classroom. Both forms requested basic demographic data to help interpret the survey responses, and all included open-ended questions that allowed respondents to express personal opinions and/or suggestions. The questionnaire functioned as a closed-fixed response interview in which the questions and response categories were fixed in advance. The respondents chose from among the fixed responses on the questionnaire. In addition the researcher asked the students 20 questions which were based on the survey (see Appendix C). These questions elicited comments about how good the school was, how they thought they were doing in school, the amount of homework, who helped
with homework, the amount of television watched, and how often they attended special events within the community. The student interviews were in the form of standardized open-ended interviews in that students were all asked the same questions in the same order and the exact wording and sequence of the questions had been determined in advance. The questions were worded in a completely open-ended format and allowed students to elaborate on some answers if they so desired. During the key actor interviews, participants were asked to give their opinion on the most important features of parent involvement and to elaborate upon these features. The key actor interviews were informal conversational interviews. The only set question concerned the most important features of parent involvement, and since the answers varied with each respondent, different information was collected from each subject.

Validity and reliability of the study were enhanced by triangulation or the collection of data by different instruments. In this study four were used: teacher survey, parent survey, student interviews and key actor interviews.

C. Procedures

This was a case study in which parents and teachers of grade four students from three different schools within an urban area were surveyed using the School and Family Partnerships: Questionnaires for Teachers and Parents in the Elementary and Middle Grades (Epstein & Salinas, 1993). Randomly selected students from each classroom were interviewed by the researcher. The students were asked
questions which were similar to those answered by their parents and teachers. Key actors were interviewed at the same time and these people were asked to give their opinion on what they regarded as the most important aspect of school-family partnerships at that time in their community. Responses from the four subject groups were then examined to see if any relationships existed among them. Quantitative data was obtained from the questionnaire and qualitative data was obtained from the interviews with the students and the key actors.

Written permission was obtained from the Faculty of Education Graduate Committee (see Appendix D) and the Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee at the University of Windsor (see Appendix E). Written consent was obtained from the urban school board involved in the study (see Appendix F). This permission allowed the questionnaires to be distributed to parents, principals and teachers within the study. Written permission was also obtained from the parents of students who agreed to be interviewed by the researcher (see Appendix G).

Questionnaires were distributed to the school by the researcher and were given to the homeroom teachers to be sent home. A total of nine teacher questionnaires were distributed. One hundred and eighteen questionnaires were distributed to students in the classrooms to take home to their parents. Parent and teacher packages contained a cover letter asking them to take part in the survey. A return date of one week was requested. A box to collect returned questionnaires was placed in the office of each school. At the end of one week the researcher again visited the schools to pick up returned questionnaires and to
conduct interviews with the students who had permission to take part in the study. Questionnaires continued to be returned during the following week and the final subject response rate was determined two weeks after the initial delivery date. The sample for the study included nine teachers and 118 families of grade four students. Respondents included nine teachers who represented 100% of the sample, and 51 parents who represented 43.2% of the sample. The analyses then followed. Key actor interviews were held at the convenience of the subject of the interview within the same time period as the administration of the questionnaires. Two of the key actors were interviewed at schools and the third was interviewed at home. Two of the key actors were interviewed twice and answers remained consistent in both cases.

D. Limitations of the Design

There are important factors to consider with respect to the limitations of the design of this study. The Hawthorne effect is possible because some students were asked to be interviewed while others were not. This increased attention and recognition may have led the subjects to believe they were in some way special and may have influenced their answers during the interview. There may have been a problem with the researcher assuming the role of observer-as-participant in that responses to the questionnaires and the interviews may have been influenced by the observer's purpose. The possibility of observer bias must also be taken into consideration. Certain characteristics or ideas of the researcher may have biased the results even though every attempt to remain impartial was
made. There may have been a problem with the implementation of the study because the questionnaires may have been completed in a variety of conditions in a number of different locations, and as a result the filling out of the questionnaires may not have been performed in a consistent manner where the subjects were able to respond with complete concentration and without undue distraction. Since the study is rather distinctive in format and small in size, especially in the number of teachers and administrators who were surveyed, generalizability is reduced. Replicating the study in other settings by other researchers may increase generalizability.
Chapter IV

Analysis of Results

This was a case study which examined the various facets and differing levels of school-family partnerships in three grade four classrooms in a Southwestern Ontario city. A questionnaire was answered by both educators and parents to determine attitudes toward school-family partnerships and parental involvement. Responses were measured using a Likert scale technique to tally degrees of positive and/or negative belief statements. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability coefficient estimate. The alpha reliability formula reflects the intercorrelation of a set of items, accounting for variations in response to the items. The reliabilities of the teacher and parent scales range from alpha = .1999 to alpha = .9517.

The sample size for the parent interview was 51 and the sample size for the educators was 9. While there was 100% participation from the educators a caution must be issued when considering the results because the sample size was small. In spite of this, results determined from this survey are very close to those reported by Epstein (1994).

For each scale, the scale name and code, number of items, internal reliability coefficient, mean, variance, range and N were reported. The teacher survey included 12 questions with more than 125 items of information on teacher attitudes about involvement, school programs, and teacher's practices to involve families at school and at home. The parent survey included 10 questions with
more than 80 items of information on family attitudes about school, family practices of involvement in children's education, school practices to inform families, information desired by families about children, classes, school, and community services, homework patterns, family background and experiences.

Statistics and responses from student interviews follow the summary of scales. Verbatim reporting of the key actor interviews is included at the end of the chapter.
Teacher Attitudes about Family and Community Involvement - Full Scale (TATTFULL)

The 11 items of this scale have a reliability coefficient of .4859

All items are coded from a low of 1 (strongly disagree) to a high of 4 (strongly agree).

Mean = 3.1125
Variance = .3627
Range = 2.1250 to 3.8750
N = 8

Parent involvement is important for a good school. (GOOD)
Most parents know how to help their children on schoolwork at home. (KNOWHELP)
Every family has some strengths that could be tapped to increase student success in school. (STRENGTH)
All parents could learn ways to assist their children on schoolwork at home, if shown how. (ASSIST)
Parent involvement can help teachers be more effective with more students. (EFFECT)
Parents of children at this school want to be involved more than they are at most grade levels. (WANTMORE)
Parent involvement is important for student success in school. (STUSUCC)
This school views parents as important partners. (PARTNERS)
This community values education for all students. (COMVALU)
This community supports the school. (COMSUP)
Compared to other schools, this school has one of the best school climates for teachers, students, and parents. (BESTSCH)

All items in this scale are drawn from Q-1.
Teacher Views of Family Strengths - (TVWFASTR)

The 2 items of this scale have a reliability coefficient of .7236

All items are coded from a low of 1 (strongly disagree) to a high of 4 (strongly agree).

Mean = 3.1111  
Variance = .0247  
Range = 3.0000 to 3.2222  
N = 9

Every family has some strengths that could be tapped to increase student success in school. (STRENGTH)

All parents could learn ways to assist their children on schoolwork at home, if shown how. (ASSIST)

Both items in this scale are drawn from Q-1.
Importance to Teacher of Type 2 Activities - (TRIMPT2)

The 6 items of this scale have a reliability coefficient of .8614

All items are coded from a low of 1 (not important) to a high of 4 (very important).

Mean = 3.6042
Variance = .1026
Range = 3.0000 to 3.8750
N = 8

Have a conference with each of my students' parents at least once a year. (EACHCONF)
Contact parents about their children's problems or failures. (CONPROB)
Inform parents when their children do something well or improve. (INFOIMPR)
Inform parents of the skills their children must pass in each subject I teach. (INFOPASS)
Inform parents how report card grades are earned in my class. (INFOGRAD)
Request information from parents on their children's talents, interests, or needs. (REQINFO)

All items in this scale are drawn from Q-6.
How Volunteers are Involved in Classrooms - (TVOLCLS)

The 7 items of this scale have a reliability coefficient of .7906.

Items 1-6 are coded 0=No and 1=Yes. Item 7 is coded from a low of 1 (not important) to a high of 4 (very important).

Mean = .9167
Variance = 1.1979
Range = .2500 to 3.1250
N = 8

Listen to children read aloud. (VOLLISTE)
Read to the children. (VOLREAD)
Grade papers. (VOLGRADE)
Tutor children in specific skills. (VOLTUTOR)
Help on trips or at parties. (VOLTRIPS)
Give talks (e.g., on careers, hobbies, etc.). (VOLTALKS)
Involve some parents as volunteers in my classroom. (INVVOLUN)

Items 1-6 are drawn from Q-3 and item 7 is drawn from Q-6(e).
How Volunteers are Involved in School - (TVOLSCH)

The 7 items of this scale have a reliability coefficient of .3473

All items are coded 0=No and 1=Yes.

Mean = .4127
Variance = .0976
Range = .1111 to .8889
N = 9

Monitor halls, cafeteria, or other areas. (VOLMONIT)
Work in the library, computer lab, or other area. (VOLLIB)
Teach mini-courses. (VOLMINI)
Teach enrichment or other lessons. (VOLENRIC)
Lead clubs or activities. (VOLLEAD)
Check attendance. (VOLATTEN)
Work in 'parent room'. (VOLPARRM)

All items in this scale are drawn from Q-3.
Importance to Teacher of Type 4 Activities - Learning at Home (TRIMPT4)

The 6 items of this scale have a reliability coefficient of .9008.

All items are coded from a low of 1 (not important) to a high of 4 (very important).

Mean = 3.4259
Variance = .2490
Range = 2.5556 to 3.8889
N = 9

Provide specific activities for children and parents to do to improve students' grades. (ACTHELP)
Provide ideas for discussing specific TV shows. (TVSHOWS)
Assign homework that requires children to interact with parents. (HOMETALK)
Suggest ways to practice spelling or other skills at home before a test. (PRACTEST)
Ask parents to listen to their children read. (LISTENRE)
Ask parents to listen to a story or paragraph that their children write. (LISTEN)

All items in this scale are drawn from Q-6.
Importance to Teacher of Type 6 Activities - Collaborating with Community
(TRIMP6)

The 2 items of this scale have a reliability coefficient of .9517.
All items are coded from a low of 1 (not important) to a high of 4 (very important).

Mean = 2.8125
Variance = .0078
Range = 2.7500 to 2.8750
N = 8

Work with community members to arrange learning opportunities in my class.
(COMLEARN)
Work with area businesses for volunteers to improve programmes for my students. (BUSINESS)

Both items in this scale are drawn from Q-6.
Importance to Teachers of All Practices to Involve Families - (TRIMPALL)

The 18 items of this scale have a reliability coefficient of .9419.
All items are coded from a low of 1 (not important) to a high of 4 (very important).

Mean = 3.3403
Variance = .1963
Range = 2.5000 to 3.8750
N = 8

Have a conference with each of my students' parents at least once a year.
(EACHCONF)
Attend evening meetings, performances, and workshops at the school. (EVEMTG)
Contact parents about their children's problems or failures. (CONPROB)
Inform parents when their children do something well or improve. (INFOIMPR)
Involve some parents as volunteers in my classroom. (INVVOLUN)
Inform parents of the skills their children must pass in each subject I teach. (INFOPASS)
Inform parents how report card grades are earned in my class. (INFOGRAD)
Provide specific activities for children and parents to do to improve students' grades.
(ACTHELP)
Provide ideas for discussing specific TV shows. (TVSHOWS)
Assign homework that requires children to interact with parents. (HOMETALK)
Suggest ways to practice spelling of other skills at home before a test. (PRACTTEST)
Ask parents to listen to their children read. (LISTENRE)
Ask parents to listen to a story or paragraph that their children write. (LISTEN)
Work with other teachers to develop parent involvement activities and materials. (DEVPI)
Work with community members to arrange learning opportunities in my class. (COMLEARN)
Work with area businesses for volunteers to improve programmes for my students. (BUSINESS)
Request information from parents on their children's talents, interests, or needs. (REQINFO)
Serve on PTA/PTO or other school committee. (SERVCOM)

All items in this scale are drawn from Q-6.
Teacher Reports of Total School Programme to Involve Families -
(TSCPRGAL)

The 12 items of this scale have a reliability coefficient of .1334.

All items are coded from a low of 1 (not important) to a high of 4 (a strong programme now).
Mean = .1334.
Variance = .1861
Range = 2.1111 to 3.4444
N = 9

Workshops for parents to build skills in parenting and understanding their children at each grade level. (WKSHPPAR)
Workshops for parents on creating home conditions for learning. (WKSHPHOM)
Communications from the school to the home that all families can understand and use. (COMUND)
Communications about report cards so that parents can understand students' progress and needs. (COMREPOR)
Parent-teacher conferences with all families. (CONFER)
Surveying parents each year for their ideas about the school. (SURVEY)
Volunteers at the school. (VOLUN)
Volunteers in classrooms to assist teachers and students. (VOLUNCLA)
Information to parents on how to monitor homework. (MONIHW)
Information to parents on how to help their children with specific skills and subjects. (INFOTALK)
Involvement by families in PTA/PTO leadership, other committees, or other decision-making roles. (PARTCOMM)
Programmes for after-school activities, recreation, and homework help. (PROGRAMS)

All items in this scale are drawn from Q-5.
Teacher Reports of School Programme of Type 3 Activities - Volunteering

(TSCPRGT3)

The 2 items of this scale have a reliability coefficient of .7608

All items are coded from a low of 1 to high of 4.
   = not important.
   = needs to be developed.
   = needs to be improved.
   = a strong programme now.

Mean = 3.2278
Variance = .0556
Range = 3.1111 to 3.4444
N = 9

Volunteers at the school. (VOLUN)
Volunteers in classrooms to assist teachers and students. (VOLUNCLA

Both items in this scale are drawn from Q-5.
Teacher Reports of School Program of Type 4 Activities - Learning at Home
(TSCPRGT4)

The 2 items of this scale have a reliability coefficient of .6469.

All items are coded from a low of 1 (not important) to a high of 4 (a strong programme now).

Mean = 2.6111
Variance = .0556
Range = 2.4444 to 2.7778
N = 9

Information to parents on how to monitor homework. (MONTW)
Information to parents on how to help their children with specific skills and subjects. (INFOTALK)

Both items in this scale are drawn from Q-5.
Teacher Estimates of Parents' Involvement - (TRPARINV)

The 8 items of this scale have a reliability coefficient of .8394.

All items are coded from a low of 0% to a high of 100%.

Mean = .8394
Variance = 538.0071
Range = 3.3333 to 65.5556
N = 9

Attend workshops at school. (ATTWKSHP)
Check that their child's homework is done. (CHKHW)
Practice schoolwork in the summer. (PRACSUM)
Attend PTA meetings. (ATTPTA)
Attend parent-teacher conferences. (ATTPTCON)
Understand:
- reading skills at your grade level. (UNDREAD)
- writing skills at your grade level. (UNDWRITE)
- math skills at your grade level. (UNDMATH)

All items in this scale are drawn from Q-4.
Teacher Estimates of Parents' Type 4 Activities - Learning at Home (TRPART4)

The 5 items found in this scale have a reliability coefficient of .8927

All items are coded from a low of 0% to a high of 100%.

Mean = 42.7778
Variance = 207.8704
Range = 17.7778 to 53.3333
N = 9

Check that their child's homework is done. (CHKHW)
Practice schoolwork in the summer. (PRACSUM)

Understand:
- reading skills at your grade level. (UNDREAD)
- writing skills at your grade level. (UNDWRITE)
- math skills at your grade level. (UNDMATH)

All items in this scale are drawn from Q-4.
The 14 items of this scale have a reliability coefficient of .8626.

All items are coded from a low of 1 (not important) to a high of 4 (very important).

Mean = 3.4872
Variance = .1060
Range = 2.8889 to 3.8889
N = 9

Send children to school ready to learn. (READYLRN)
Teach children to behave well. (BEHAVE)
Set up a quiet place and time for studying at home. (STUDY)
Encourage children to volunteer in class. (VOLCLAS)
Know what children are expected to learn each year. (EXPECT) Check that homework is done. (HW)
Talk to children about what they are learning in school. (TALKHOME)
Ask teachers for specific ideas on how to help their children at home with classwork. (ASKIDEA)
Talk to teachers about problems the children are facing at home. (HOMPROB)
Attend PTA/PTO meetings. (ATTPTA)
Serve as a volunteer in the school or classroom. (VOLCLAS)
Attend assemblies and other special events at the school. (ASSEMBLY)
Take children to places and events in the community. (COMPLACE)
Talk to children about the importance of school. (IMP)

All items in this scale are drawn from Q-7.
Parent Attitudes About Child's School - (PATSCHEL)

The 5 items of this scale have a reliability coefficient of .8074.

All items are coded from a low of 1 (strongly disagree) to a high of 4 (strongly agree).

Mean = 3.3957
Variance = .0762
Range = 3.0000 to 3.6304
N = 46

This is a very good school. (RGOODSCH)
The teachers care about my child. (RCARE)
I feel welcome at the school. (RWELCOME)
My child is learning as much as he/she can at this school. (RLEARNIND)
This school is a good place for students and for parents. (RGGOODPLA)

All items in this scale are drawn from Q-1.
Parent Reports of School Program of All Types of Activities - (PSPRGALL)

The 17 items of this scale have a reliability coefficient of .8285.

All items are coded from a low of 1 (the school does not do this) to a high of 3 (the school does this well).

Mean = 2.5464
Variance = .0559
Range = 2.0667 to 2.8444
N = 45

This school:
- tells me how my child is doing in school. (CHILDOIN)
- tells me what skills my child needs to learn each year. (SKLEAYR)
- explains how to check my child's homework. (CHECKHW)
- assigns homework that requires my child to talk with me about things learned in class. (SHARE)
- asks me to volunteer for a few hours at the school. (VOLUNTER)
- sends home clear notices that can be read easily. (NOTICES)
- invites me to programmes at the school. (INVPROG)
- has a parent-teachers conference with me. (PTCONF)
- sends home news about things happening at school. (SCHNEWS)
- includes parents on school committees such as curriculum, budgets, and school improvement. (BUDGET)
- helps me understand my child's stage of development. (UNDDEV)
- gives me information about how report card grades are earned. (INFO)
- contacts me if my child is having problems. (CONPROB)
- contacts me if my child does something well or improves. (CONIMP)
- invites me to PTA/PTO meetings. (INVPTA)
- asks me to help with fundraising. (HLPFUND)
- provides information on community services I may want to use. (INFO)

All items in this scale are drawn from Q-4
Parent Reports of School Programme of Type 2 Activities - Communicating (PSCPRTG2)

The 7 items of this scale have a reliability coefficient of .6662

All items are coded from a low of 1 (the school does not do this) to a high of 3 (the school does this very well).

Mean = 2.5893
Variance = .0542
Range = 2.1875 to 2.8333
N = 48

This school:

- tells me how my child is doing in school. (CHILDDOIN)
- sends home clear notices that can be read easily. (NOTICES)
- has a parent-teacher conference with me. (PTCONF)
- sends home news about things happening at school. (SCHNEWS)
- gives me information about how report cards grades are earned. (INFOREP)
- contacts me if my child is having problems. (CONPROB)
- contacts me if my child does something well or improves. (CONIMP)

All items in this scale are drawn from Q-4.
Parents' Involvement on All Types of Activities - (PARDOALL)

The 18 items on this scale have a reliability coefficient of .7577.

All items are coded from a low of 1 (never do) to a high of 4 (have done many times).
Mean = 3.1042
Variance = .3966
Range = 1.7708 to 3.8125
N = 48

Talk to my child about school. (TALKSCH)
Visit my child's classroom. (VISITCLA)
Read to my child. (READCHIL)
Listen to my child read. (CHILREAD)
Listen to a story my child wrote. (LISTEN)
Help my child with homework. (HELPW)
Practice spelling or other skills before a test. (PRACTTEST)
Talk with my child about a TV show. (TVSHOW)
Help my child plan time for homework and chores. (PLANTIME)
Talk with my child's teachers at school. (TALKTCH)
Talk to my child's teacher on the phone. (TALKPHON)
Go to PTA/PTO meetings. (PTA)
Check to see that my child has done homework. (HWDONE)
Volunteer at school or in my child's classroom. (VOLSCH)
Go to special events at the school. (SPECEVEN)
Take my child to special places or events in the community. (COMEVEN)
Tell my child how important school is. (IMPORTAN)

All items are drawn from Q-3.
Parents' Type 1 Activities - (PARDOTY1)

The 2 items of this scale have a reliability coefficient of .5401.

Both items are coded from a low of 1 (never do) to a high of 4 (have done many times this year).

Mean = 3.7549
Variance = .0094
Range = 3.6863 to 3.8235
N = 51

Talk to my child about school. (TALKSCH)
Tell my child how important school is. (IMPORTAN)

Both items on this scale are drawn from Q-3.
Parents' Type 3 Activities - Volunteers/Audiences - (PARDOTY3)

The two items of this scale have reliability coefficient of .1999.

Both items are coded from a low of 1 (never do) to a high of 4 (have done many times this year).

Mean = 3.1078
Variance = .0002
Range = 3.0980 to 3.1176
N = 51

Visit my child's classroom. (VISITCLA)
Go to special events at the school. (SPECEVEN)

Both items in this scale are drawn from Q-3.
Parents Type 4 Activities - Learning Activities at Home - (PARDOTY4)

The 9 items of this scale have a reliability coefficient of .7467.

All items are coded from a low of 1 (never do) to a high of 4 (have done many times this year).

Mean = 3.3356
Variance = .0987
Range = 2.7347 to 3.6735
N = 49

Read to my child. (READCHIL)
Listen to my child read. (CHILREAD)
Listen to a story my child wrote. (LISTEN)
Help my child with homework. (HELPHW)
Practice spelling or other skills before a test. (PRACTEST)
Talk with my child about a TV show. (TVSHOW)
Help my child plan time for homework and chores. (PLANTIME)
Check to see that my child has done homework. (HWDONE)
Take my child to a library. (LIBRARY)

All items in this scale are drawn from Q-3.
Overall the teachers surveyed had a very positive attitude to family and community involvement. The 11 items on the scale, \( \text{TATTFULL} \) scored from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) had an average mean of 3.1125 with a variance of .3627 indicating strong agreement overall with little variation in attitude. These teachers agreed that parent involvement was important for their students to succeed and contributed to a good school. They felt that parent involvement could help teachers be more effective and that parents were important partners in education.

Results for school programme type 1 activities - parenting, (e.g. workshops for parents to learn how to improve parenting skills and how to create home conditions for learning) were not available. Too many items were deleted and there was zero variance in the results.

School programme type 2 activities - communicating, utilized a scale of six items all coded from 1 (not important) to 4 (a strong program now). The average mean was 3.6042 and the variance was .1026 with a reliability coefficient of .8614 indicating that teachers agreed strongly that communicating with parents in conferences, through report cards, and phone calls or letters was important. Teachers were also in agreement that parents should be contacted when children had problems or were not doing well in school and that it was equally important to let parents know when children excelled or showed improvement in an area.

Teachers strongly supported school programme type 3 activities, volunteering, at the school and in their classrooms. The two items on the scale
had a reliability coefficient of .7608 with a mean of 3.2278 and a variance of .0556. The items were coded from 1 (not important) to 4 (a strong program now).

Teacher reports of school programme type 4 activities - learning at home, were not as positive. The two items on the scale were coded from 1 (not important) to 4 (a strong programme now). The mean was 2.611 with a variance of .0556 and a reliability coefficient of .6469. Teachers agreed that programmes delivering information to parents on how to monitor homework or how to help children with homework needed to be developed or improved.

The importance to teachers of type 6 activities - collaborating with the community was less important than type 2 or type 3 activities. The two items of the scale had a reliability coefficient of .9517, a mean of 2.8125 and a variance of .0078. Teachers who took part in the study, while agreeing that working with community members or volunteers from area businesses was important, seemed to rely more heavily on communicating with parents or working with volunteers in the classroom as ways to involve parents.

Teacher’s estimates of parent involvement (TRPARINV), through attending workshops at school, checking to see that their child’s homework was done and attending parent-teacher conferences was quite high. Teachers also felt strongly that parents were responsible for ensuring that their children arrived at school ready to learn and that parents were responsible for supporting them at home in their educational endeavours (TRPARRESP).

While teachers felt that it was important to involve all families in their child’s education (TRIMPALL), by contacting parents, attending extra curricular
activities and assigning homework that required children to interact with parents, they reported that school programmes to involve families (TSCPRGAL), either were not important or needed to be developed.

Teachers responded positively to questions regarding traditional parent-teacher involvement. They were comfortable communicating information about their students to the students' families (type 2 activities) and they strongly supported the idea of parents volunteering at the school or in their classrooms (type 3 activities). Teachers were not as positive in their responses regarding type 4 activities (learning at home). They said that programmes for parents on how to monitor, or help children with homework needed to be developed, indicating that teachers did not feel that these programmes were important enough for teachers to implement the programmes themselves. Traditionally learning at home activities have consisted of work which was not finished in school or special essays or projects students were expected to do on their own. Teachers may have felt that parents would not be able to help their children as well as a teacher might. Teachers might also have felt that parents who were well-trained in teaching techniques might be a threat to the profession in that if parents were capable of teaching competently teachers' jobs might be devalued or the number of jobs reduced. Type 6 activities also received a lower response, indicating that working with community members was less important to teachers than communicating with parents or working with volunteers. The teachers who took part in the questionnaire seemed to prefer working and communicating within the physical framework of the school. They were
reluctant to get involved in activities within the home to help parents or to venture outside their school to reach out to, or collaborate with community members. This may in part explain the lack of data available for type 1 activities - parenting. Teachers may not have felt that they were qualified or knowledgeable enough to respond to questions regarding the parenting skills of families of students in their classrooms.

Parents' attitudes toward school were overall very positive. On a five item scale coded from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), the mean was 3.3957 with a variance of .0762 and a reliability coefficient of .8074, indicating that parents felt strongly that their children attended good schools with caring teachers. Parents felt welcome in the schools and agreed that their children were learning at a high rate.

Parent reports of the school programme in all types of activities were equally positive (PSPRGALL). The 17 items coded from 1 (the school does not do this) to 3 (the school does this well) had a reliability coefficient of .8285, with a mean of 2.5464 and a variance of .0559. Parents agreed that the school communicated well and generally made a good effort to involve them in their children's education.

Parents' views of type 1 activities (parenting) were very high. The two item scale had a reliability coefficient of .5401. Items were coded from 1 (never do) to 4 (have done many times this year). The mean was 3.754 with a variance of .0094. Parents felt they did an excellent job of talking about school and emphasizing its importance to their children. Parents' involvement with all types
of activities (PARDOALL) again was high. Parents felt that they were very involved with their children, in school, at home and in the community.

Parent reports of type 2 activities - communicating, were positive (PSCPRTG2). In this they were in agreement with the teachers who also rated this activity very highly. The seven items coded from a low of 1 (the school does not do this) to a high of 3 (the school does this very well), had a reliability coefficient of .6662. The mean was 2.5893 and the variance was .0542. Parents felt they were getting the information they required about their children and were kept well-informed about things happening at school.

Parents felt that they were doing a good job of type 3 activities - volunteering in the school (PARDOTY3) and type 4 activities, learning at home (PARDOTY4). They helped in classrooms and went to special events at the school. At home they were reading to their children and listening to their children read. They helped with homework activities and were willing to practice spelling or other skills before a test. They checked homework and were willing to take their children to the library to gather information for special projects.

Whereas teachers were reluctant to comment on the type 1 (parenting) activities of the parents of students within their classrooms, the parents were strongly agreed that they had very good parenting skills and were doing an excellent job of raising their children. Parents and teachers were in agreement regarding the importance of type 2 (communicating) activities. Both groups rated this activity highly. Teachers felt that it was important to communicate
with parents about their children and parents felt they were kept well-informed about their children's progress and events at the school. Parents and teachers also agreed that type 3 (volunteering) activities were important. Teachers wanted volunteers in their schools and classrooms. Parents felt that their presence in the school was important and that when they volunteered they did a good job. Parents also felt that they did a very good job of implementing type 4 (learning at home) activities in contrast to the opinion of teachers who did not rate this activity a highly.
Student interviews were conducted in the libraries of the schools involved or in one case, in the principal's office, it being the only truly quiet, private place available. The response rate was 18 out of 45 students or 40%. This is somewhat misleading, however, since two of the schools had relatively high response rates, 53.3% and 60% respectively, while the third school was quite low, 6.7%. Requests for 15 interviews were issued at all three schools and parental permission was required before the students could be interviewed. At the third school there was a very low response rate to the questionnaire itself and as a result fewer student interviews were approved. Student responses to the interview questions were for the most part positive. They also tended to support very strongly the opinions of their teachers and parents in that their views were very similar.

Every student thought that their school was a 'good school' and gave the following reasons for their view: 'It's fun'; 'Kids get breakfast and special lunch days'; 'The Home & School is good'; 'We learn about nature in Nature's Way'; 'A lot of kids come here'; 'The teachers and people are nice'; 'You learn stuff you never knew about'; It's got good teachers and a good playground'; 'The teachers care about students'; 'I've got lots of friends'; 'We learn a lot every day'; 'The teachers teach you a lot'; 'I feel safe at school because no one is allowed to fight'; 'The Home & School does a lot'; 'It's got lots of books in the library and good games like 4-square and basketball'; 'The teachers are helpful and don't yell'; and 'There's a lot of stuff to learn here'. 
Eighty-eight percent of the students talked to their parents about what they did at school. Response ranged from reports about test results, watching interesting videos, special studies they were involved in, what they learned, what they did with friends, gym class, field trips, 'another' way to do math, the trouble they got into and what they did with friends outside.

All of the students said that their parents had helped them with reading. Some were continuing to do so, but most stated that their parents had helped them when they were younger. One student stated that his dad tried to help him with reading but that since his dad was 'on the road a lot', it didn't happen very often.

Ninety-four percent of the students reported that their parents helped them with math. One student said that the way his teacher taught him to do math was easier than that which his mother tried to teach him. Another student reported that his mom had 'extra' math books for him at home and yet another said that her mom always gave her problems at home that she had to figure out.

All of the students reported that their parents asked about school every day. The two most common questions were: 'What did you do today?' and 'What did you learn today?'

Ninety-four percent of the students interviewed said that their parents had visited the classroom with the most common reason being for an interview with the teacher. Other reasons for visits ranged from parents who worked as lunch aides, volunteers on field trips, volunteers to help out with special events in the classroom, to relatively quick visits to drop off lunch or pick up children for
appointments.

Every student said that their parents read to them and while many seemed to have done it in the past, only a few were continuing to do so. One girl said that her father was currently reading *The Hobbit* to her. Likewise, all students said that their parents either used to or continued to listen to them read every night. Eighty-nine percent of these nine year olds said that being read to, or reading to parents, was an event that happened when they were younger.

Eighty-two percent of the interviewed students reported that they shared the stories they wrote at school at home. One student said that he never did because that was something you just did at school and another said he didn’t do it because he never wrote stories! Seventeen percent of the respondents said that they read and practiced their speeches with their families.

All of the students reported that their parents were willing to help them with homework if they needed it.

Seventy-six percent said that they regularly practiced spelling words with someone at home before a test. Most of the 24% who did not do this said it was because they were good spellers and didn’t need to.

Seventy-one percent of the children said that they either watched television with their parents or talked about the shows they watched with their parents afterwards. One student reported watching family movies with his parents which they then discussed so he could better understand what he saw. Sixty-five percent of the children said they watched between 1/2 hour to two hours daily. One student said that she watched 1/2 hour or less because she was
studying Arabic and another said that he also watched that amount because he was 'outside a lot'. One student said that she never watched television on school days but usually watched between one to two hours on weekends. Twenty-nine percent of the students watched between three and four hours daily, more on weekends.

Forty-one percent of the students said that their parents attended school meetings. Three of these parents were active on Home & School committees and one was a member of a School Council. Most of the students (59%) reported that their parents were too busy, with other events their children were involved in, working, or looking after younger children at home, to be able to attend meetings.

Ninety-four percent of the students interviewed reported that their parents either checked that they had completed their homework or asked if it was done.

Fifty-three percent of the students said that their parents volunteered in the school or in some cases in their classrooms. In two cases (12%) parents were classroom aides. Five students (29%) had parents who regularly accompanied their child's class on field trips. Twenty-four percent of parents did not volunteer because they worked.

All of the students reported that their parents were able to come to special events at the school. Forty-four percent of the parents came to the school to see their child in an assembly.

Eighty-eight percent said that they had visited the public library with their
parents. Fifty-nine percent of the students visited the library once per month or more often. The remaining 31% of students used the library to research special projects.

Ninety-four percent of students said that their parents had taken them to special events within the community. Events included theatre performances, Eric Nagler concerts, Back Street Boys concerts, Spice Girls concerts, Windsor Symphony concerts, the ballet, hockey, baseball and football games, Art in the Park, movies, and visits to Point Pelee.

In response to the question, 'how well were they doing in school?', 35.2% of the students said that they were getting 'A's, 29.4% were getting 'B's, 17.6% were getting 'C's and 11.7% hoped that they would pass. One student didn't know how she was doing, but it was 'better than last year'.

The last question the students answered was whether or not they always completed their homework on time. Thirty-five percent of the students said that they always did their homework. Forty-seven percent of the students 'usually' did their homework or completed it 'most of the time'. One student said the reason she didn't always get her homework done was because she also attended Arabic school and some nights she just had too much to do. Other students said that sports, (e.g. travel hockey, soccer or baseball), interfered. One student replied that he always did his, otherwise he had to stay in. Another student said that she did hers because at the end of the year the teacher had a party for all the students who always did their homework. Eighteen percent of the students said they never did their homework, and of these students, one boy said it was
because he 'always finished everything in class'.

Students agreed with their parents that they attended good schools with caring teachers. They also said that they felt welcome and learned a lot in the school. Students agreed with their parents and teachers that type 2 (communicating) activities were important. They reported that they regularly talked about school learning and school events with their parents and that their teachers communicated with their parents about their progress. Parents, teachers and students also agreed upon the importance of type 3 (volunteering) activities. Students reported that their parents regularly volunteered in the school or their classroom and often accompanied the class on field trips. Parents and students agreed that type 4 (learning at home) activities were important and that they practiced them regularly. Parents helped students with homework and checked to see that it was done. Students reported that they often practiced spelling and other skills before a test at home, read aloud to their parents and listened to their parents read to them, discussed television shows that they watched and often shared stories and other work at home.
Key Actor Interviews

Key actors are those members of organizations whose knowledge and experience within the organization gives them expert status. They usually are members of long standing who have a great knowledge of the history of the organization.

Key actor interviews were undertaken with a member of the School Council Steering Committee, a principal from one of the participating schools in this study and a parent who volunteers in another school which participated in this study. All three contributed comments and ideas that supported the findings of the surveys and the information contributed through the student interviews. They were not asked to respond to specific questions about school-family partnerships because their knowledge and experiences varied. Instead they were asked to comment and express their opinions upon what they considered to be the most important aspect of school-family partnerships. The verbatim text of those interviews follows:

The Text of Interview #1

Relationships of all kinds are ever evolving, changing in response to social norms and expectations and the interpretation of those involved. We have seen and experienced this in our marriages and personal relationships. The very definition of partnership has changed in these relationships. Within our memory was the expectation that 'partnership' meant that one person was really in
charge, while the other was in a supportive position. For some, this continues to be the expectation. However, for others it is expected that 'partnership' means a sharing of responsibility, information and support. The definition of partnership for school councils has experienced a similar changing definition.

The need for school councils has been driven by both educators and parents. In the sixties, with increasing professionalization of education and educators, parents increasingly took a more hands off approach, seeing their role as being supportive and assisting with tasks such as fundraising. However, many educators realized that education for children is more successful where there is parent involvement, particularly if parents were focused on actual educational tasks such as reading and interpreting curriculum in the everyday world, as well as supporting the completion of homework and proper discipline.

Parents on the other hand, expressed the need for involvement, wanting to be better informed. Many felt that the task of raising their child was being shared with educators, as the teaching of important information, moral values and the shaping of ultimate long term life choices were taking place. Parents wanted a voice in this process. In addition, parents wanted both information and a say as educational methods were openly debated. The discussions about open concept schools, child-focused education, whole language and new math have been just a few of the topics of interest to parents. In addition, the need for fundraising has increasingly become more necessary, with funds being used for more fundamental items within the schools. Parents wanted to be involved in decision making about these funds.
Many schools established some kind of forum for parent involvement, including parent associations, Home & School associations and others. However, the mandate of these associations varied, along with access to information, the role of the group and the support for its existence. The key to the success of the relationship lay in the hands of the principal within the school.

As both of these forces came together, the government proposed the idea of school councils. The idea behind these school councils was to provide an avenue for parent involvement that was consistent across the province, while offering suggestions about the areas of involvement for parents. It was clear that their role was to be advisory in nature.

We now have had a couple of years to implement this model. Feedback from the Education Improvement Commission would indicate that there has been some success and many areas for needed improvement. The Commission has responded with many recommendations which, if implemented, would strengthen and support the councils. Many of these recommendations focus on the need for greater clarity of purpose, defining opportunities for information sharing, the development of meaningful involvement and clearer mechanisms for demonstrating accountability, support and effectiveness.

How have these councils had impact since their inception? I believe that they have had an impact in many areas and that there is great hope as they continue to evolve. However, the greatest struggle continues to be this definition of partnership and the interpretation of the roles of parents and educators working together.
Like any relationship there continue to be some who are quite content with the more traditional models, where one is in charge and the other plays a supportive role. For school councils, this has meant that typically the principal is in charge of information, resources and determines the nature of involvement of the school council. Other councils have taken on a more mutual relationship, with councils playing a key role in the discussion of many topics including curriculum, discipline, school improvement plans, budget decisions and a host of other topics. This evolution has been somewhat tentative on both sides. Some parents have worried about the impact of increased responsibility. Some educators have worried about parents overstepping their boundaries. However, despite this tension, the evolution primarily seems to be a positive one, where both sides are learning more about the possibilities that occur with increased involvement and trust continues to build.

Locally, in the -------- area there has been very positive development. Discussion with other parents shows that school councils are becoming more informed about important issues regarding education. School councils have played an important role providing information to other parents and have provided feedback to the principal and staff regarding issues in their school. The councils have also advocated for information and involvement at a Board wide level and many were vocal during the debate regarding Bill 160.

Where are we at this point in time with school councils? Like the changing understanding of marriage relationships, there is always some tension when one person has either real or perceived power over the other. Understanding some
of the literature written about feminism and women's rights would help us to understand this phenomenon.

In school councils, the principal still has this power, to be used for good or not. In schools where the principal perceives the school council as an invaluable tool and strives to create a balanced partnership, the school council typically flourishes. Our experience locally demonstrates this for the most part. Some schools continue to struggle where parents doubt either their own value and worth, or where parents have other barriers such as a transient lifestyle, cultural differences or are challenged with their everyday existence. In these situations collectively, we bear some responsibility to look at the model for school councils to see if we can make it a more flexible outreach mechanism.

However, even for those schools who have flourishing school councils there continues to be the ever present fear that the success of the relationship depends on the good will of the principal. Continued experience working together, supported by policies within the school board and within the Ministry of Education will hopefully help to change this. However, we will not progress to a true partnership until there is more accountability defined for all parties.

School councils represent potential. They have the potential to provide invaluable support, to represent an important viewpoint in discussions regarding the education of our children and to assist educators to create educational strategies for children that reach beyond the classroom and into the fabric of children's lives. Whether this potential is realized depends on our ability to define our relationships, valuing the role of parents, educators and the
community working together. I continue to be optimistic, having seen the growth in the last five years, but we must work hard to stay focused on our true purpose and remember that the development of school councils was born of mutual need. At the heart of all is the desire to support children in their growth and development. Councils are not institutions or bureaucracies, but a mechanism for a relationship will help parents and educators to work together to help our children learn.

The Text of Interview # 2

In my school where an active Home & School already exists there is little additional parental involvement. There are some (few) individuals who have come out for school council who had not come forward for Home & School. They have, by the way we have structured our group, been basically co-opted by the Home & School issues, committees and concerns. I think this reflects our particular situation and parent mix. Our Home & School was already strong and viable as an organization.

I have concerns about just where the government is going in terms of increased decision-making powers for school councils. I don't want a mini 'Board of Education' on my doorstep needing to be consulted about various decisions.

As you know parental involvement is not limited to school councils. Parents are involved in many different ways depending on their interests, available time and our needs. Some people are wonderful volunteers, working one-on-one with children or in small groups and they never have come to a
parent meeting. Others come to the meetings, make various pronouncements about how things should be run, but are not in the school otherwise. Others pick their opportunity such as driving, special lunch days, or library helper. The ones who are here working with children are far less likely to be critical of what they see and hear.

The Text of Interview #3

This subject is very close to my heart. I believe I speak from a somewhat unique perspective as I have basically had two families. My oldest two children are now 27 and almost 25, while my youngest two children will be seven and five in February. My involvement with school is drastically different with my youngest two children.

When my older two were attending school I was a full-time working mom and the only involvement I had was parent/teacher interviews, appointments and assemblies that my children were involved in. I had a very negative experience in kindergarten and unfortunately that experience stayed with me throughout most of my life. I was not an advocate for my son who experienced great difficulty due to learning disabilities. I have regretted those choices for a number of years and that has led to my involvement in my younger children's education and school itself.

In September of 1997 our then five year old started junior kindergarten. We chose our school after visiting and talking with our school and two other
schools in our neighbourhood. One of the deciding factors was that parents were welcomed as volunteers and visitors in the classroom and I volunteered one morning a week. The Home & School association sponsored a hospitality night at the school and that is when I joined. This year my husband has become very active in the school council and comes with a perspective of being employed in post-secondary education.

In the fall of 1997 I read a newspaper article about a program being run in Leamington called Learning & Reading Partners, Making Connections, Program B. This course originated from the East coast and was designed by three educators, two of whom have learning disabilities. When I called for information I discovered this was a course taught by two educators and a mom that helped parents, educators and care-givers give children the tools they needed to learn how to learn. I registered for the spring of ’98 course and was totally amazed. This program is not a quick fix to a problem a child is experiencing in learning but a total process that helps children learn how to learn. After discussing this with the rest of our Home & School association, funding was allocated to allow myself, a grade two teacher and the vice principal to take the training to teach the course at our school. Our first course that we taught ran during the fall of ’98 and we had tremendously positive feedback from the parents registered. We are looking at running a second one in the spring of ’99. The strategies taught cover such areas as understanding the learner, the process of thinking, reading, writing, processing information and life management. The emphasis is on reassuring parents that they are their child’s primary teacher and they know
what and how to teach what is needed but they just don’t know they know!

I believe it is imperative for parents to participate actively in their child’s education and school. Children spend half of their waking day directly or indirectly in school activities and learning situations. School is their community. If we want education and learning to be important to them, then we need to demonstrate that is important to us. We need to develop relationships with educators that allow for two-way communication and our children need to be involved in that communication. Just being in the school gives children the message that we care and are willing to spend time to make school a good place to be. Our children take great pride in the fact that a parent volunteers in any way at their school, be it in the classroom, parent groups, Home & School, fundraising events, bringing crafts home to prepare, library, field trips, bingo’s, bakesales, etc.

Due to staff retirements at the end of the 1997/98 school year, our school experienced a change in morale. It wasn’t that bad before, but for example, our new principal has made a great effort to have a very positive impact on our students and school. The kids recognize, like and respect him and all this is reflected in behaviours. Even the atmosphere at the school has changed to a lot more up-beat and this has a lot to do with the respect the students are receiving and therefore demonstrating in return.

Our school has a small, dedicated core of parents but has a great need for others to become involved. From a Home & School perspective we seem to be able to recruit one or two parents a year from the kindergarten community and
they remain committed for the duration of the child's years at the school. But the ironic thing is, if every parent would volunteer for only one, or at the most two events, we would be amazed at what we could pull off.

I don't know what the answer is and as an ex full-time working mom, I realize how difficult it can be sometimes to find the energy as well as the time. But demonstrating to my children how important they are by being involved directly with their learning and development is the most rewarding thing I have done.

The key actor interviews supported and validated the results of the questionnaires and student interviews. Key actors number one and number three agreed with teachers, parents and students that type 2 (communicating) activities were important. Key actor number three was the only person to comment upon type 1 (parenting) activities, agreeing with both parents and students about the importance of talking about school and understanding their children at each grade level. Key actor number three also stressed the importance of establishing and creating home conditions for learning, again agreeing with parents and students. Key actors number two and number three supported data from teachers, parents and students regarding the importance of volunteers in the school and in the classrooms (type 3 activities). Key actor number one and three regarded type 4 (learning at home) activities to be very important. Here they agreed with parents and students. The key actors were the only respondents who commented upon type 5 (decision making) activities.
They were not entirely in accord as key actor number one advocated for more
decision making power for parents, key actor number two was concerned that
parents would be given too much power and key actor number three was in
favour of a collaborative approach between educators and parents.

Data gathered from all four sources, parents, teachers, students, and key
actors, confirmed that all groups agreed that it was important for parents to
participate actively in their child's education. More specifically type 2
(communicating), type 3 (volunteering) activities were the most important to all
groups. Type 1 (parenting) and type 4 (learning at home) activities were very
important to parents and students. Teachers did not consider these programs to
be as important, perhaps because they were not part of the traditional parent-
teacher interaction.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

A. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine family-school-community partnerships within urban elementary schools. Attempts were made to analyse the levels of involvement which presently exist in the schools and also to try to determine where levels could be increased. Data from School and Family Partnerships: Questionnaires for Teachers and Parents in Elementary and Middle Grades (Epstein & Salinas, 1993) was examined as well as the opinions expressed during the student interviews and the key actor interviews.

It is interesting to note that although the number of participants in this study was quite low (especially the number of educators), compared to those involved in a much larger study conducted by Epstein (1986), the results (means, standard deviations) were quite close in a lot of cases. These results validate and support the results obtained by this researcher.

Seventy-eight percent of the educators (principals and teachers) involved in the study agreed that all families had some strengths that could be utilized to help students succeed at school and the same number also agreed that all parents could learn how to better help their children at home if they were shown how.

Seventy-eight percent of educators rated the importance of type 2 involvement, communicating, as being very important. This type of involvement - conferring about students' progress, contacting parents about
students' successes or failures, report card interviews - is one that most teachers excel at, partly because they do so much of it, and partly because of the six types of parent involvement it is the easiest to do (Epstein, 1986).

Teachers rated the importance of involving volunteers, type 3 activities, in their schools quite low. This could be due in part to the long-standing tradition that teachers view parents, in part, as the source of many of their children's problems. Teachers also have been reluctant to allow other people into their classrooms because they have felt that this was somehow threatening to their professional status (Sussel, Carr & Hartmann, 1996). Type 3 involvement included having volunteers read to children as well as listening to children read, tutoring children in specific skills, helping on field trips and giving talks in the classroom. The following activities were rated even lower: monitoring lunch rooms or other areas, working in libraries or computer labs, teaching mini-courses and taking lead roles in clubs or activities. These are all activities that have been traditionally delegated to teachers and again teachers may tend to feel that their professional status would be threatened if 'unqualified' people were allowed to assume these roles. However, some teachers also were of the opinion that volunteers at school and volunteers in classrooms to assist teachers and students were programs which needed to be developed and improved in their schools. As reported in the second key actor interview, parents who were working in the school were far less likely to be critical of what they saw and heard and as a result would be more likely to express appreciation and support for teachers.
Teachers rated the importance of type 4 activities, learning activities at home as important. These included: activities for students and parents to do to improve students' grades, ideas for discussing TV shows, practicing spelling or others skills before a test, asking parents to listen to their children read or asking parents to listen to a story their children had written. Teachers also said that these programmes needed to be developed and/or improved in their schools and their estimate of how much parents were actually doing at home with their children was low (42.7%). This included such activities as checking to see that homework was done or practicing schoolwork in the summer. Teachers also felt that parents did not really understand the reading, writing, or math skills that their children needed to master at their grade level.

Type 5 activities, decision making, were not reported on by the questionnaire but were commented upon in two of the key actor interviews. The first key actor interviewed advocated for more power and responsibility to be given to parents through School Councils. School Councils could be a mechanism for a relationship that would enable educators and parents to work together to help children learn. This key actor worried however, that the principal still held too much 'power' and as a result was able to control information, resources and determine the nature of the involvement of the School Council. The second key actor worried about the direction the government was taking with School Councils and did not want the School Council at that particular school to turn into a mini Board on the doorstep which needed to be consulted about every decision made at the school. Clearly there is
a lot of room for negotiation and improvement in this area. As parents demand more authority and control in decision-making, educators are just as clearly worried that they will be asked to relinquish too much power. It may take years before both sides feel comfortable and confident enough to meet somewhere in the middle.

Type 6 activities (collaborating with the community) were rated by teachers as somewhat important to important. These activities included working with community members to arrange learning opportunities in their classrooms and working with area businesses to improve programs for students. In this community schools very often invite ‘experts’ in to talk to students or perform for them. Active participation is seen by fire, police, health care, music, sports, education and commercial organizations.

All practices to involve families were important to teachers (TRIMPALL), and teacher estimates of parent involvement were quite high (80%). Teachers also felt quite strongly that parents were responsible for ensuring that their children were sent to school ready to learn, made sure that their children knew how to behave well, and that conditions in the home were conducive to helping children with their schoolwork. Teachers expected parents to talk to their children about school and to check to see that homework was completed and completed on time.

Parents who participated in the survey all agreed that their children attended good schools with caring teachers. They felt their children were learning in the school setting. They also felt welcome in the schools and agreed
that their schools were good places for students and parents.

Parents rated their involvement in type 1 activities, parenting, rather highly, with 82% reporting that they talked to their children many times this year about school and 86% reporting that they emphasized how important school was on a regular basis.

With regard to type 2 activities, communicating, parents agreed that while their schools did do this, they could do better. Parents rated the following ways of communicating: report cards, notices about school events or news, and communications about student problems, improvements or successes. Fifty-six percent of the parents felt that the school did a good job of letting them know how their child was doing in school but 44% felt that they school could do better. Seventy-five percent of parents reported that they school did well at parent-teacher conferences, 20% felt they could do better and 4% reported they never went to conferences. Sixty-three percent of parents felt the school did a good job of communicating about how report grades were earned but 33% felt the school could do better. Eighty-four percent of parents felt that notices sent home by the schools were clear and easy to read. Sixty-one percent of parents said that school contacted them if their child was having problems but 25% felt the school could do better in this area. Forty-one percent of parents reported that the school contacted them if their child did something well or improved but 33% felt the school could improve in this area, and 26% said that the school did not do this.

All parents reported that they had visited their child’s classroom or attended special events at the school a few times that year, (type 3 activities,
volunteering / audiences). Twenty-nine percent of parents surveyed reported that they had visited their child's classroom many times that year, 53% said that they had visited a few times, and 18% said that they had visited one or two times. Thirty-seven percent of parents reported that they had gone to special events at the school many times that year, 43% said that they had gone a few times, 12% said that they had gone once or twice and 8% said that they had never attended a special event. These numbers reflect the fact that many parents work full-time and that more mothers are working outside the home. Those mothers who are at home, often have younger children and find it difficult to make child-care arrangements or bring younger siblings to school events.

Parents agreed that they had participated in type 4 activities, learning activities at home, a few times this year. Thirty-five percent of parents said that they had read to their child many times in the past year and 41% of parents said that they had listened to their children read many times in the school year. Very few of the students interviewed reported that their parents read to them or listened to them read. Rather the students stated that this was an activity they used to do when they were younger. An increasing number of parents had listened to their child read a story the child had written however, as 51% of parents said that they had done this many times. Seventy-five percent of parents surveyed said that they helped their students with homework many times and 63% of parents helped students with spelling many times during the year. Research has shown that parents who read to their children or help them with homework give those children a significant advantage over other children whose
parents do not engage in the same activities (U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

Fifty-five percent of parents reported that they talked to their children about what they watched on television many times during the year. Seventy-one percent of the students who were interviewed reported that they either watched television with their parents or talked about the shows with an adult. Sixty-five percent of the children interviewed reported watching 1/2 hour to two hours daily, while a further 29% reported viewing between three and four hours daily, more on weekends. According to Puma et al. (1994) students who watched more than 10 hours of television per week could suffer a sharp drop in academic achievement. Of these students 64% were achieving A's or B's and the other 44% were achieving C's or lower. Only 35% of the students reported always completing homework on time.

Parents felt that they were doing a good job being involved with their children’s education and school. They reported that they were involved in learning activities at home (checking homework, reading to their children and being read to in turn, practicing spelling or other skills); in addition they visited their child’s school and classroom and talked to the teacher more than twice during a school year.
B. Recommendations

1. The Government, Ministry of Education and Boards should play a stronger role in ensuring that opportunities exist for parents to be fully involved in their children's education. This could include encouraging companies to offer more flexible leave time in order to allow parents to attend school activities and providing legislation, e.g., a parents’ bill of rights, which would ensure opportunities for parents to be involved in schools.

2. Additional maternity or paternity time should be considered after children enter school to allow parents to be trained in the most effective ways to help their children achieve their educational goals. These courses could be offered within the schools by teachers who are qualified in parent-community involvement techniques.

3. Teachers should be given training, either as part of the Bachelor of Education degree or as an additional qualification, in order to better understand families and to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to establish and foster partnership programmes with all families and communities.

4. Boards and schools should consider more flexible hours in order to meet and communicate with parents. Instead of offering the traditional evening and following morning during the week for interviews, they could consider taking a
Saturday and making it a school-family-community day. Teachers and students could be granted the following Monday as a day off in order to compensate for having worked on the weekend.

5. Schools should consider involving more community members to participate regularly within their programmes. Senior citizens have many experiences, talents and abilities they would be able to share with students. Seniors would benefit from this exchange as well.

6. Boards and schools should consider establishing a 'parent room' in every school where parents, seniors, or high school students as part of their recently mandated 30 hours of community service, could offer to baby-sit while other parents volunteered in classrooms or other areas of the school. The room could also be a space where parents could hold meetings or coffee mornings. Literature could be provided for a parent 'lending library' - a place where parents could gain access to professional literature they might otherwise not see.

7. The Ministry should consider designing interactive, subject specific homework books which support the new curriculum, much like the Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) program developed by Joyce Epstein (1993). These homework books would require the student to first explain to the parent what they had learned in school and then would provide opportunities for the student and parents or family to work on some problems together.
Chapter VI

REFERENCES


Chapter VII

APPENDIXES
Dear Teacher:

Presently I am employed by the Windsor Board of Education and teach at M. S. Hetherington Public School. In order to fulfill the requirements for a Master of Education degree at the University of Windsor I am conducting a study of parent involvement in selected elementary schools. Permission has been obtained from Dr. John Berek and your principal to include your school in the study. I am therefore requesting your cooperation in taking part in a survey concerning parent involvement in your class. Participation is strictly voluntary; you may withdraw at any time. Data from the survey will be available on request; however, the identity of persons and schools participating in the survey will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you in advance for your help and cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Adamson
Q-1. The first questions ask for your professional judgment about parent involvement. Please CIRCLE the one choice for each item that best represents your opinion and experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Parent involvement is important for a good school.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Most parents know how to help their children on schoolwork at home.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. This school has an active and effective parent organization (e.g., PTA or PTO).</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Every family has some strengths that could be tapped to increase student success in school.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. All parents could learn ways to assist their children on schoolwork at home, if shown how.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Parent involvement can help teachers be more effective with more students.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Teachers should receive recognition for time spent on parent involvement activities.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Parents of children at this school want to be involved more than they are now at most grade levels.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Teachers do not have the time to involve parents in very useful ways.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Teachers need in-service education to implement effective parent involvement practices.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Parent involvement is important for student success in school.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. This school views parents as important partners.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. The community values education for all students.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. This school is known for trying new and unusual approaches to improve the school.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o. Mostly when I contact parents, it's about problems or trouble.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. In this school, teachers play a large part in most decisions.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. The community supports this school.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r. Compared to other schools, this school has one of the best school climates for teachers, students, and parents.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q-2. Teachers contact their students' families in different ways. Please estimate the percent of your students' families that you contacted this year in these ways:

a. Letter or memo  NA 0% 5% 10% 25% 50% 75% 90% All
b. Telephone  NA 0% 5% 10% 25% 50% 75% 90% All
c. Meeting at school  NA 0% 5% 10% 25% 50% 75% 90% All
d. Scheduled parent-teacher conference  NA 0% 5% 10% 25% 50% 75% 90% All
e. Home visit  NA 0% 5% 10% 25% 50% 75% 90% All
f. Meeting in the community  NA 0% 5% 10% 25% 50% 75% 90% All
g. Report card pick-up  NA 0% 5% 10% 25% 50% 75% 90% All
h. Performances, sports, or other events  NA 0% 5% 10% 25% 50% 75% 90% All

Q-3. Some teachers involve parents (or others) as volunteers at the school building. Please check the ways that you use volunteers in your classroom and in your school THIS YEAR. (CHECK all that apply in columns A and B.)

A. In my CLASSROOM, volunteers...
   __ (a) I do NOT use classroom volunteers
   __ (b) Listen to children read aloud
   __ (c) Read to the children
   __ (d) Grade papers
   __ (e) Tutor children in specific skills
   __ (f) Help on trips or at parties
   __ (g) Give talks (e.g., on careers, hobbies, etc.)
   __ (h) Other ways (please specify) ______________________

B. In our SCHOOL, volunteers...
   __ (a) Are NOT USED in the school now
   __ (b) Monitor halls, cafeteria, or other areas
   __ (c) Work in the library, computer lab. or other area
   __ (d) Teach mini-courses
   __ (e) Teach enrichment or other lessons
   __ (f) Lead clubs or activities
   __ (g) Check attendance
   __ (h) Work in "parent room"
   __ (i) Other ways (please specify) ______________________

THIS YEAR, how many volunteers or aides help in your classroom or school?
   C. Number of different volunteers who assist me in a typical week = ________.

D. Do you have paid aides in your classroom? __NO__ __YES (how many?____)

E. Number of different volunteers who work anywhere in the school in an average week = ________ (approximately)

Q-4. Please estimate the percent of your students' families who did the following THIS YEAR:

a. Attend workshops regularly at school 0% 5% 10% 25% 50% 75% 90% 100%
b. Check daily that child's homework is done 0% 5% 10% 25% 50% 75% 90% 100%
c. Practice schoolwork in the summer 0% 5% 10% 25% 50% 75% 90% 100%
d. Attend PTA meetings regularly 0% 5% 10% 25% 50% 75% 90% 100%
e. Attend parent-teacher conferences with you 0% 5% 10% 25% 50% 75% 90% 100%

Understand enough to help their child at home:

f. ...reading skills at your grade level 0% 5% 10% 25% 50% 75% 90% 100%
g. ...writing skills at your grade level 0% 5% 10% 25% 50% 75% 90% 100%
h. ...math skills at your grade level 0% 5% 10% 25% 50% 75% 90% 100%
Q-5. Schools serve diverse populations of families who have different needs and skills. The next questions ask for your judgment about specific ways of involving families at your school. Please CIRCLE one choice to tell whether you think each type of involvement is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOT IMPORTANT</th>
<th>=&gt; NOT IMP</th>
<th>(Means this IS NOT part of your school now, and SHOULD NOT BE.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEEDS TO BE DEVELOPED</td>
<td>=&gt; DEV</td>
<td>(Means this IS NOT part of your school now, but SHOULD BE.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED</td>
<td>=&gt; IMPRV</td>
<td>(Means this IS part of your school, but NEEDS TO BE STRENGTHENED.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A STRONG PROGRAM NOW</td>
<td>=&gt; STRONG</td>
<td>(Means this IS a STRONG program for most parents AT ALL GRADE LEVELS at your school.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TYPE OF INVOLVEMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AT THIS SCHOOL...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. WORKSHOPS for parents to build skills in PARENTING and understanding their children at each grade level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. WORKSHOPS for parents on creating HOME CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. COMMUNICATIONS from the school to the home that all families can understand and use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. COMMUNICATIONS about report cards so that parents understand students' progress and needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Parent-teacher CONFERENCES with all families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. SURVEYING parents each year for their ideas about the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. VOLUNTEERS in classrooms to assist teachers and students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. VOLUNTEERS to help in other (non-classroom) parts of the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. INFORMATION on how to MONITOR homework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. INFORMATION for parents on HOW TO HELP their children with specific skills and subjects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Involvement by families in PTA/PTO leadership, other COMMITTEES, or other decision-making roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Programs for AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, recreation, and homework help.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q-6. Teachers choose among many activities to assist their students and families. CIRCLE one choice to tell how important each of these is for you to conduct at your grade level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS PRACTICE TO YOU?</th>
<th>NOT IMPORTANT</th>
<th>A LITTLE IMPORTANT</th>
<th>PRETTY IMPORTANT</th>
<th>VERY IMPORTANT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Have a conference with each of my students' parents at least once a year.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Attend evening meetings, performances, and workshops at school.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Contact parents about their children's problems or failures.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Inform parents when their children do something well or improve.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Involve some parents as volunteers in my classroom.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Inform parents of the skills their children must pass in each subject I teach.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Inform parents how report card grades are earned in my class.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Provide specific activities for children and parents to do to improve students' grades.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Provide ideas for discussing TV shows.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Assign homework that requires children to interact with parents.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Suggest ways to practice spelling or other skill: at home before a test.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Ask parents to listen to their children read.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Ask parents to listen to a story or paragraph that their children write.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. Work with other teachers to develop parent involvement activities and materials.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o. Work with community members to arrange learning opportunities in my class.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. Work with area businesses for volunteers to improve programs for my students.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. Request information from parents on their children's talents, interests, or needs.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r. Serve on a PTA/PTO or other school committee.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NOT IMPORTANT</th>
<th>A LITTLE IMPORTANT</th>
<th>PRETTY IMPORTANT</th>
<th>VERY IMPORTANT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Send children to school ready to learn.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Teach children to behave well.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Set up a quiet place and time for studying at home.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Encourage children to volunteer in class.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Know what children are expected to learn each year.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Check daily that homework is done.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Talk to children about what they are learning in school.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Ask teachers for specific ideas on how to help their children at home with classwork.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Talk to teachers about problems the children are facing at home.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Attend PTA/PTO meetings.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Serve as a volunteer in the school or classroom.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Attend assemblies and other special events at the school.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Take children to special places or events in the community.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. Talk to children about the importance of school.</td>
<td>NOT IMP</td>
<td>A LITTLE IMP</td>
<td>PRETTY IMP</td>
<td>VERY IMP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q-8. The next question asks how you perceive others' support for parent involvement in your school. Please circle one choice on each line. How much support does each give now to parent involvement?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strong Support</th>
<th>Some Support</th>
<th>Weak Support</th>
<th>No Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. You, personally</td>
<td>STRONG</td>
<td>SOME</td>
<td>WEAK</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Other teachers</td>
<td>STRONG</td>
<td>SOME</td>
<td>WEAK</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. The principal</td>
<td>STRONG</td>
<td>SOME</td>
<td>WEAK</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Other administrators</td>
<td>STRONG</td>
<td>SOME</td>
<td>WEAK</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Parents</td>
<td>STRONG</td>
<td>SOME</td>
<td>WEAK</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Others in community</td>
<td>STRONG</td>
<td>SOME</td>
<td>WEAK</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. The school board</td>
<td>STRONG</td>
<td>SOME</td>
<td>WEAK</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. The district superintendent</td>
<td>STRONG</td>
<td>SOME</td>
<td>WEAK</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q-9. Over the past two years, how much has the school involved parents at school and at home?

____ (1) School involved parents less this year than last
____ (2) School involved parents about the same in both years
____ (3) School involved parents more this year than last
____ (4) Don’t know, I did not teach at this school last year

The last questions ask for general information about you, your students, and the classes you teach. This will help us understand how new practices can be developed to meet the needs of particular schools, teachers, and students.

Q-10. YOUR STUDENTS AND TEACHING

A. (a) What grade(s) do you teach THIS YEAR? (Circle all that apply.)

PreK  K  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8

(b) If you do not teach, give your position: ________________________________

B. How many different students do you teach each day, on average?

Number of different students I teach on average day =

C. Which best describes your teaching responsibility? (CHECK ONE)

____ 1. I teach several subjects to ONE SELF-CONTAINED CLASS.
____ 2. I teach ONE subject to SEVERAL DIFFERENT CLASSES of students in a departmentalized program.
____ 3. I teach MORE THAN ONE subject to MORE THAN ONE CLASS in a semi-departmental or other arrangement.
____ 4. Other (please describe):

D. Check the subject(s) you teach in an average week (PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):

____ (a) Reading  ______ (e) Social Studies  ______ (i) Advisory  ______ (m) Other (describe)
____ (b) Language Arts/English  ______ (f) Health  ______ (j) Physical Education  ______
____ (c) Math  ______ (g) Art  ______ (k) Home Economics  ______
____ (d) Science  ______ (h) Music  ______ (l) Industrial Arts

E. (a) Do you work with other teachers on a formal, interdisciplinary team?  __ No  __ Yes

(b) If YES, do you have a common planning time with all of the teachers on your team?  __ No  __ Yes

F. (a) On average, how many minutes of homework do you assign on most school days?

none  5-10  25-30  35-45  50-60  over 1 hour

(b) Do you typically assign homework on weekends?

yes  ___  no  ___

G. About how many hours each week, on average, do you spend contacting parents?

____ (a) None
____ (b) Less than one hour
____ (c) One hour
____ (d) Two hours
____ (e) Three hours or more

H. About what percent of your students are:

____ ___ % (a) African American
____ ___ % (b) Asian American
____ ___ % (c) Hispanic American
____ ___ % (d) White
____ ___ % (e) Other  __________

100%

I. About how many of your students are in (circle the estimate that comes closest):

(a) Chapter 1  0%  10%  20%  30-50%  60-80%  90-100%
(b) Special education  0%  10%  20%  30-50%  60-80%  90-100%
(c) Gifted and Talented  0%  10%  20%  30-50%  60-80%  90-100%
(d) Free or reduced lunch  0%  10%  20%  30-50%  60-80%  90-100%
J. About what percent of your students are:
   _____ % (a) Above average in achievement
   _____ % (b) Average in achievement
   _____ % (c) Below average in achievement
   __00%

K. About what percent of your students:
   _____ % (a) Promptly deliver memos or notices home from the school
   _____ % (b) Complete all of their homework on time

Q-11. YOUR EXPERIENCE AND BACKGROUND

A. What is your experience?
   _____ (a) Years in teaching or administration
   _____ (b) Years in this school

B. What is your gender?
   _____ (a) Male
   _____ (b) Female

C. What is your highest education?
   _____ (a) Bachelor's
   _____ (b) Bachelor's + credits
   _____ (c) Master's
   _____ (d) Master's + credits
   _____ (e) Doctorate
   _____ (f) Other (describe) ________________________

D. How do you describe yourself?
   _____ (a) African American
   _____ (b) Asian American
   _____ (c) Hispanic American
   _____ (d) White
   _____ (e) Other (describe) ________________________

Q-12. OPTIONAL: We would value your ideas on the following questions if you have a few more minutes.

a. What is the most successful practice to involve parents that you have used or that you have heard about?

b. In what ways could better partnerships with families help you as a teacher?

c. In what ways could better partnerships with the community help you as teacher?

d. In what ways has parent involvement changed over the past year or two at this school? Give examples.

e. Do you have any other ideas or comments that you would like to add? (Feel free to add other pages.)

PLEASE RETURN THIS BOOKLET TO ___________________________
You may seal it in an envelope if you wish.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP!
APPENDIX B

LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Parent:

Presently I am employed by the Windsor Board of Education and teach at M. S. Hetherington Public School. In order to fulfill the requirements for a Master of Education degree at the University of Windsor I am conducting a study of parent involvement in selected elementary schools. Permission has been obtained from Dr. John Berek and your principal to include your school in the study. I am therefore requesting your cooperation in taking part in a survey on parent involvement in your school. Participation is strictly voluntary; you may withdraw at any time. Data from the survey will be available on request; however, the identity of persons and schools participating in the survey will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you in advance for your help and cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Adamson
### Q-1. We would like to know how you feel about this school right NOW.  
This will help us plan for the future. Please CIRCLE one choice for each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>Means you AGREE STRONGLY with the statement.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Means you AGREE A LITTLE with the statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>Means you DISAGREE A LITTLE with the statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Means you DISAGREE STRONGLY with the statement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THESE?

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. This is a very good school.</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. The teachers care about my child.</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. I feel welcome at the school.</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. This school has an active parent organization (e.g., PTA/PTO).</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. My child talks about school at home.</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. My child should get more homework.</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Many parents I know help out at the school.</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. The school and I have different goals for my child.</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. I feel I can help my child in reading.</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. I feel I can help my child in math.</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. I could help my child more if the teacher gave me more ideas.</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. My child is learning as much as he/she can at this school.</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Parents at this school get involved more in the younger grades.</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. This school is known for trying new programs.</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o. This school views parents as important partners.</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. The community supports this school.</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. This school is one of the best schools for students and for parents.</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Q-2. Some families want more information about what their children are learning in each subject. CHECK which SUBJECTS you want to know more about to help your child.

- (a) Math skills
- (b) Reading skills
- (c) Writing stories
- (d) Spelling
- (e) Social studies
- (f) Science
- (g) Handwriting
- (h) Speaking skills
- (i) Current events
- (j) Study skills
- (k) Other (describe)
Q-3. Families get involved in different ways at school or at home. Which of the following have you done this year with the OLDEST CHILD you have at this school? Please CIRCLE one choice for each item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NEVER</th>
<th>1-2 TIMES</th>
<th>FEW TIMES</th>
<th>MANY TIMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Talk to my child about school.</td>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>1-2 TIMES</td>
<td>FEW TIMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Visit my child's classroom.</td>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>1-2 TIMES</td>
<td>FEW TIMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Read to my child.</td>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>1-2 TIMES</td>
<td>FEW TIMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Listen to my child read.</td>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>1-2 TIMES</td>
<td>FEW TIMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Listen to a story my child wrote.</td>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>1-2 TIMES</td>
<td>FEW TIMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>Help my child with homework.</td>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>1-2 TIMES</td>
<td>FEW TIMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g.</td>
<td>Practice spelling or other skills before a test.</td>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>1-2 TIMES</td>
<td>FEW TIMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.</td>
<td>Talk with my child about a TV show.</td>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>1-2 TIMES</td>
<td>FEW TIMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Help my child plan time for homework and chores.</td>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>1-2 TIMES</td>
<td>FEW TIMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j.</td>
<td>Talk with my child's teacher at school.</td>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>1-2 TIMES</td>
<td>FEW TIMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k.</td>
<td>Talk to my child's teacher on the phone.</td>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>1-2 TIMES</td>
<td>FEW TIMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l.</td>
<td>Go to PTA/PTO meetings.</td>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>1-2 TIMES</td>
<td>FEW TIMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
<td>Check to see that my child has done his/her homework.</td>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>1-2 TIMES</td>
<td>FEW TIMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n.</td>
<td>Volunteer at school or in my child's classroom.</td>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>1-2 TIMES</td>
<td>FEW TIMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o.</td>
<td>Go to special events at school.</td>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>1-2 TIMES</td>
<td>FEW TIMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p.</td>
<td>Take my child to a library.</td>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>1-2 TIMES</td>
<td>FEW TIMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q.</td>
<td>Take my child to special places or events in the community.</td>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>1-2 TIMES</td>
<td>FEW TIMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r.</td>
<td>Tell my child how important school is.</td>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>1-2 TIMES</td>
<td>FEW TIMES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q-4. Schools contact families in different ways. CIRCLE one choice to tell if the school has done these things THIS YEAR.

DOES NOT DO

COULD DO BETTER

DOES WELL

means the school DOES NOT DO this

means the school DOES this but COULD DO BETTER

means the school DOES this VERY WELL now

THIS SCHOOL . . .

a. Help me understand my child's stage of development.  DOES NOT DO  COULD DO BETTER  DOES WELL

b. Tell me how my child is doing in school.  DOES NOT DO  COULD DO BETTER  DOES WELL

c. Tell me what skills my child needs to learn each year.  DOES NOT DO  COULD DO BETTER  DOES WELL

d. Have a parent-teacher conference with me.  DOES NOT DO  COULD DO BETTER  DOES WELL

e. Explain how to check my child's homework.  DOES NOT DO  COULD DO BETTER  DOES WELL

f. Send home news about things happening at school.  DOES NOT DO  COULD DO BETTER  DOES WELL

g. Give me information about how report card grades are earned.  DOES NOT DO  COULD DO BETTER  DOES WELL

h. Assign homework that requires my child to talk with me about things learned in class.  DOES NOT DO  COULD DO BETTER  DOES WELL

i. Send home clear notices that I can read easily.  DOES NOT DO  COULD DO BETTER  DOES WELL

j. Contact me if my child is having problems.  DOES NOT DO  COULD DO BETTER  DOES WELL

k. Invite me to programs at the school.  DOES NOT DO  COULD DO BETTER  DOES WELL

l. Contact me if my child does something well or improves.  DOES NOT DO  COULD DO BETTER  DOES WELL

m. Ask me to volunteer at the school.  DOES NOT DO  COULD DO BETTER  DOES WELL

n. Invite me to PTA/PTO meetings.  DOES NOT DO  COULD DO BETTER  DOES WELL

o. Ask me to help with fund raising.  DOES NOT DO  COULD DO BETTER  DOES WELL

p. Include parents on school committees such as curriculum, budgets, and school improvement.  DOES NOT DO  COULD DO BETTER  DOES WELL

q. Provide information on community services that I may want to use.  DOES NOT DO  COULD DO BETTER  DOES WELL
Q-5. Some families want to attend WORKSHOPS on topics they want to hear more about. CHECK THE ONES that interest you . . . or suggest a few . . . .

____ (a) How children grow and develop at my child’s age
____ (b) How to discipline children
____ (c) Solving school problems and preventing dropping out
____ (d) Preventing health problems
____ (e) How to deal with stress
____ (f) Raising children as a single parent
____ (g) How to help my child develop her/his talents
____ (h) Helping children take tests
____ (i) Understanding middle schools
____ (j) How to serve on a school committee or council
____ (k) Other topics you want? ____________________________

(1) In the past year, did you attend a workshop at the school?
____ No  ____ Yes  On what topic? ____________________________

Q-6. Over the past two years, how much has the school involved you at school and at home?

____ (1) School involved me less this year than last
____ (2) School involved me about the same in both years
____ (3) School involved me more this year than last
____ (4) My child did not attend this school last year

Q-7. All communities have information that would help families. Which services in your community would you like to know more about? CHECK the information you want.

____ (a) Health care for children and families
____ (b) Family counseling
____ (c) Job training for parents/adults
____ (d) Adult education
____ (e) Parenting classes
____ (f) Child care
____ (g) After-school tutoring
____ (h) After-school sports activities
____ (i) Other after-school clubs or lessons to develop talents
____ (j) Community service that children can do
____ (k) Summer programs for children
____ (l) Information on museums, shows, and events in the community
____ (m) Other (describe the community information you need) ____________________________
Q-8. ABOUT HOMEWORK
a. About how much time does your child spend doing homework on most school days?
   Minutes my child does homework on most school days: (Circle one.)
   none 5-10 25-30 35-45 50-60 over 1 hour
b. How much time do you spend helping your child with homework on an average night?
   Minutes of my time: none 5-10 15-20 25-30 35-45 50-60 over 1 hour
c. How much time could you spend working with your child if the teacher showed you what to do?
   Minutes I could spend: none 5-10 15-20 25-30 35-45 50-60 over 1 hour
d. Do you have time on weekends to work with your child on projects or homework for school?
   Yes ____ No ____

Q-9. ABOUT YOUR CHILD AND FAMILY
a. How is your oldest child at this school doing in schoolwork?
   _____ (1) TOP student
   _____ (2) GOOD student
   _____ (3) OK, AVERAGE student
   _____ (4) FAIR student
   _____ (5) POOR student
b. How does your oldest child at this school like school this year?
   _____ (1) Likes school a lot
   _____ (2) Likes school a little
   _____ (3) Does not like school much
   _____ (4) Does not like school at all
c. How often does your oldest child at this school promptly deliver notices home?
   _____ (1) Always
   _____ (2) Usually
   _____ (3) Once in a while
   _____ (4) Never
d. How often does your oldest child at this school complete all homework on time?
   _____ (1) Always
   _____ (2) Usually
   _____ (3) Once in a while
   _____ (4) Never
e. WHEN can you attend conferences, meetings, or workshops at the school? Check all that apply.
   Morning Afternoon Evening Cannot ever attend
f. How many adults live at home? _____ Adults (include yourself)
g. How many children live at home? _____ Children
h. What is your highest education? CHECK ONE.
   _____ (1) Did not complete high school
   _____ (2) Completed high school
   _____ (3) Some college or training
   _____ (4) College degree
i. Are you employed now? CHECK ONE.
   _____ (1) Employed full-time
   _____ (2) Employed part-time
   _____ (3) Not employed now
Q-10. WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE YOUR IDEAS...

a. What is your greatest concern as a parent?

b. What school practice to involve parents has helped you most, and why?

c. What is one thing that you or your family could do to help this school?

d. What is the best thing that this school could do next year to help you with your child?

e. Any other ideas or suggestions?

PLEASE HAVE YOUR OLDEST CHILD AT THIS SCHOOL RETURN THIS TO THE TEACHER TOMORROW OR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. You may seal it in an envelope if you wish.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR HELPING US!
APPENDIX C

Student Interview

1. Is this a good school? Why?
2. Do you talk about school at home?
3. Do your parents help you with reading?
4. Do your parents help you with math?
5. Do your parents ask you about what you do at school?
6. Do your parents visit your classroom?
7. Do your parents read to you?
8. Do your parents listen to you read?
9. Do you read the stories you write at school to your parents?
10. Do your parents help you with homework?
11. Do your parents help you practice spelling words before a test?
12. Do you talk to your parents about what you watch on television?
13. Do your parents attend Home & School or School Council meetings?
14. Do your parents check your homework every night to see if it's done?
15. Do your parents volunteer at school or in your classroom?
16. Do your parents go to special events at school? (i.e. assemblies, concerts)
17. Do your parents take you to the public library?
18. Do your parents take you to special events in the community? (i.e. concerts, plays, parks, sports events)
19. How are you doing in school this year?
20. Do you always get your homework done on time?
APPENDIX D

LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

Dear Principal:

This letter will serve as confirmation of our earlier telephone conversation regarding the surveys to be administered in your school. Permission has been obtained from Dr. John Berek to conduct a study on parent involvement in your school. You, your grade four teachers, and your grade four parents will be asked to complete a survey on parent involvement. In addition to this permission will be requested from parents to interview a random sample of your grade four students. All information will be kept confidential and participation is on a voluntary basis. Participants may withdraw at any time. Results of the study will be available upon request.

Please contact me at 948-0951, or my advisor, Prof. McKay at 253-4232, ext. 3800, if you have any additional questions or concerns. I look forward to working with you.

Thank you for your help and cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Adamson
Dear Parent:

Presently I am employed by the Windsor Board of Education and teach at M. S. Hetherington Public School. In order to fulfill the requirements for a Master of Education degree at the University of Windsor I am conducting a study of parent involvement in selected elementary schools. Permission has been obtained from Mr. Chuck Smith and your principal to include your school in the study. I am therefore requesting your cooperation in allowing your child to take part in a survey on parent involvement in your school. Participation is strictly voluntary: you, or your child, may withdraw at any time. Data from the survey will be available on request; however, the identity of persons and schools participating in the survey will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you for your help and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Anne Adamson

______________________________

I, _______________ give permission for my child, _______________, to participate in the survey on parent involvement on _______________________, 1998.