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Family Partnerships with High Schools: The Parents' Perspective

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Abstract

This study analyzes survey data from 423 parents at six high schools in Maryland — two rural, two urban, and two suburban. Multiple regression analysis was used to explore the effects of the high schools' programs of partnership on parental attitudes and reports of involvement in their teens' learning at home and school. The findings show that parental attitudes toward school are positively influenced by schools' programs of partnership. Further, the study suggests that different types of school practices result in different parental involvement behaviors. Specifically, parental reports of involvement at home are positively and significantly influenced by school practices that assist parenting, and facilitate interactions with teens on learning activities at home. Similarly, parental reports of involvement at school are most strongly influenced by school practices that encourage volunteering and participation in school decision making. School communications are positively and significantly correlated with all other school practices to involve families. The results remain constant even when controlling on family and student background characteristics, such as race, gender and academic performance, and parental employment and educational background. The authors conclude that high schools that develop strong programs of partnership that include practices for different types of involvement are likely to improve parental attitudes toward the school, and encourage greater family involvement at school and at home.

Introduction

As children mature into adolescence, family involvement in their learning remains important. Family involvement practices at home and at school have been found to influence secondary school students' academic achievement, school attendance, and graduation and college matriculation rates (Dornbusch and Ritter, 1988; Plank and Jordan, 1997). Despite its importance, however, families' active involvement in their children's education declines as they progress from elementary school to middle and high school (Dauber and Epstein, 1993; Lee, 1994). Research suggests that schools can reverse the decline in parental involvement by developing comprehensive programs of partnership (Eccles and Harold, 1993; Epstein and Connors, 1994). To better understand the relationship between programs of partnership and parental involvement at the high school level, this study examines the effects of different types of high school partnership practices on parental attitudes toward school, and parental reports of involvement in their teens' learning at home and at school.

Previous Research

Research illustrating the importance of parental involvement for the school success of adolescents spans nearly two decades. Duncan (1969), for example, compared the attendance, achievement and drop-out rate of two junior high classes. In one class, students' parents had individual meetings with counselors before their children entered junior high school. In the other class, counselors did not meet with students' parents. After three years, students whose parents

met individually with the school counselors had significantly higher attendance, grade point averages and fewer school dropouts.

More recently, Dornbusch and Ritter (1988) studied the effects of parental involvement in high school activities on student outcomes. The study was based on questionnaire data from students, parents and teachers at six San Francisco Bay Area high schools. The authors found that regardless of educational background, adolescents whose parents attended school functions received higher grades than adolescents whose parents did not. The authors also found the lowest levels of family involvement in school programs and processes among the parents of average students, minority parents, step-families and single parent families. The authors concluded that without interventions designed to encourage greater family involvement in these subgroups, educational and economic inequalities will persist for many poor, minority students.

Using nationally representative student, parent, and school administrator data from follow-up surveys of the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988, Plank and Jordan (1997) found that communication and discussion among high school students, parents and school personnel about academic matters and post-secondary preparation increased students' chances of enrolling in four-year colleges or other post-secondary educational institutions. The authors noted that parent-student-school discussions should begin prior to the sophomore year to have the greatest impact on students' plans after high school. They also emphasized the importance of parent-student-school connections for low income students; fewer qualified students in this population advance to four year colleges or other post secondary institutions.

Despite these and similar findings, most families are not involved in their adolescents' learning at school or at home (Epstein and Lee, 1995; Stevenson and Baker, 1987). A study

conducted by Search Institute found that four practices of parental involvement -- discussions about homework; discussions about school and school work; helping with homework, and attending school meetings and events -- decline significantly between grades six and twelve. The study revealed that by the junior or senior year in high school relatively few adolescents have parents who maintain an active interest in school and education (George, 1995).

Why aren't more families actively involved in the education of their adolescents? Research suggests that school and family characteristics and experiences significantly affect levels and types of parental involvement. Dornbusch and Glasgow (1996) found that the organizational structure of secondary schools is one factor that often inhibits effective and productive parent-school interaction and communication. The authors argue that because middle and high school students are assigned to multiple teachers and these teachers are responsible for teaching large numbers of students, the nature of teacher-student relationships, as well as teacher-family relationships changes. Due to constraints on time and resources, secondary school teachers are less likely to regularly communicate with or encourage the active involvement of the families of all their students.

In a study that examined parental involvement among minority families in Catholic high schools, Bauch (1991) found that socioeconomic status was significantly related to how often African American parents communicated with teachers about school programs and their adolescents' progress. Useem (1992) also found that educational background affected families' involvement in their young adolescents' placement in the mathematics tracking system. According to Useem, "the involvement of highly educated parents in their children's placement at critical decision points in the tracking system is one mechanism by which educational

advantage is transmitted from one generation to the next." These findings of the influence of socioeconomic status on parental involvement support the work of other social scientists, who contend that parental involvement in school activities is lower among low-income and minority families than other families due to feelings of alienation (Calabrese, 1990; Winters, 1993), distrust (Lightfoot, 1978), or a devaluation of their cultural resources (Lareau, 1989).

Epstein, however, argues that all schools can encourage greater participation among all families, including minority and low-income families, by developing comprehensive programs of partnership that build meaningful connections between families and schools. Based on earlier data, she contends:

Status variables are not the most important measures for understanding parent involvement. At all grade levels, the evidence suggests that school policies and teacher practices, and family practices are more important than race, parent education, family size, marital status, and even grade level in determining whether parents continue to be part of their children's education (p. 109; 1990).

Lucas, Henze and Donato (1990) also found that schools play a central role in determining levels of parental involvement in students' learning. In a study of six high schools in California and Arizona that were providing an environment in which language minority students and others achieve academic success, the authors found that the schools actively encouraged parental involvement. Through newsletters, parent advisory committees, parent nights, and student-parent-teacher conferences, the high schools fostered families' active participation in their teens' education.

To further explore the effects of high schools' programs of partnership on parental attitudes and reports of involvement in their teens' learning at home and school, this study

analyzes survey data from parents in six high schools in Maryland — two rural, two urban, and two suburban. The high schools used Epstein's framework of family involvement to begin developing comprehensive partnership programs, including practices for each of six types of involvement. The types are: 1) parenting - helping all families establish home environments that support children as students; 2) communicating - designing and conducting effective forms of two-way forms of communication about school programs and children's progress; 3) volunteering - recruiting and organizing help and support for school functions and activities; 4) learning at home - providing information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with school work and related activities, 5) decision-making - including parents in school decisions, and 6) collaborating with the community - identifying and integrating resources and services from the community to strengthen and support schools, students and their families, and from schools, families and students to support the community (for a more detailed discussion, see Epstein 1995; Epstein et. al., 1997).

Background

In 1991, six high schools in Maryland began to work with researchers to better understand school-family-community connections at the secondary level. These schools were participating in the Maryland's Tomorrow program, a state funded project to reduce high school dropout rates by providing students who met certain "at-risk" criteria with extra guidance and counseling services. The program's design also included a family involvement component to encourage greater family participation in students' schooling experience.

Two of the schools were rural, two were suburban, and two were urban. The high schools

ranged in size from about 500 to over 1200 students, of whom 20% to 100% were from racial minority groups, and 15% to over 60% were from low-income families. Each of the schools administered surveys to ninth grade teachers, parents and students to measure each group's perceptions of family involvement in high school. This paper analyzes data from 423 parent surveys.

Preliminary descriptive analysis of data from parents elicited a number of important findings about parents' attitudes toward school involvement. For example, over 90 percent of the parents surveyed agreed that parent involvement was needed at the high school level. More than 80 percent of these parents indicated that they wanted to be more involved in their teens' learning, and needed more information in order to effectively help teens at home. While few parents reported being involved in school activities such as volunteering, fund-raising or committee participation, 75% of these parents reported that the school had never contacted them about such activities, and felt that such contact was important for their teens' school success. About 72 percent of the parents surveyed believed that high schools should start or improve their programs of partnership to help families understand more about adolescent development and other topics related to their teens' growth and learning (Epstein and Connors, 1994; Connors and Epstein, 1994). The present report further analyzes these data to determine the effects of different school practices of school-family-community partnership on families' attitudes and levels of involvement in the education of their teens.

Data Sources and Methods

The surveys were designed to help the high schools take stock of where they were starting

from in their connections with families, and to determine areas requiring growth and further development. The parent surveys were completed by the parent or guardian who had the most contact with the high school about the teen. The majority of surveys were completed by students' mothers, aunts or grandmothers, although 15% of the surveys were completed by fathers or grandfathers.

The parent survey took about 20 minutes to complete and contained scales measuring parents' involvement in their teens' schooling, attitudes toward the school, and perceptions of the schools' programs of partnership. The survey also included items to measure family and student background variables, including race, parental education and work status. For a full description of the survey scales, see Epstein, Connors-Tadros, Horsey and Simon (1996).

Parent Scales

Dependent Variables: Reports of Family Involvement. The dependent measures used in the this study are: *Parent Attitudes about High School*; *Parent Involvement at Home*, and *Parent Involvement at School*. The *Parent Attitudes about High School* scale contains 14 items and has an internal reliability coefficient of .86. Items in the scale measure the extent to which parents perceive that their teen's school is a good and positive learning environment. The scale includes items such as, *This is a very good high school*; *The teachers here care about my teenager*; and *This school is a good place for students and for parents*. The parent was asked to select a response on a four-point range from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The *Parent Involvement at Home* scale contains 14 items that measure the extent to which families reinforce students' learning and school engagement at home. The scale has an internal

reliability coefficient of .82 and contains items such as, *I talk to my ninth grader about school; I help my teen plan time for homework, chores and other responsibilities, and I tell my teen how important school is.* The parent or guardian completing the survey was able to select a response on a five-point range from *never* to *I do this everyday.*

The *Parent Involvement at School* scale contained eight items with an internal reliability coefficient of .81. The scale measured the extent to which parents supported the school and students by participating in activities at the school. For example, parents were asked how frequently they attended open houses or back-to-school nights, attended parent-teacher conferences, or worked as volunteers. Responses ranged from never (1), indicating low parental involvement at school, to many times (4), indicating high parental involvement at school.

Independent Variables: Reports of School Programs and Practices. The independent variables in the study were measured by six scales: *Parent Reports of School Type 1 Activities -- Parenting; Parent Reports of School Type 2 Activities -- Communicating; Parent Reports of Frequency of Requests from School to Volunteer; Parent Reports of School Type 4 Activities -- Learning At Home; Parent Reports of School Type 5 Activities -- Decision making, and School Support for Parent Involvement.* (No measure for schools' practices of Type 6 Activities -- Collaborating with Community — was available in these data.) For detailed descriptions and reliabilities of these scales, and the student and teacher scales, see Epstein, Connors-Tadros, Horsey and Simon (1996).

Background Variables

Several student and family background variables were also measured. Parents' *race/ethnicity* was coded as a dichotomous variable (White=1; Black and Latino=0). The variable *single parent* indicates the number of adults at home (1 adult at home=1; more than one=0). *Employment* was coded as a dichotomous variable (parents working full time =1; parents not employed outside the home or employed part-time=0). *Parent education* is a continuous variable measuring reported levels of educational attainment from less than a high school diploma to having received an advanced degree (coded 0 to 6). Parents also reported the *gender* of their teen(s) (female=1; male=0); the *number of children in the home* (coded as a continuous variable), and *how the student is doing in high school* (coded from mostly Fs=0 to mostly As=5).

Data Analysis

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to identify the independent effects of the schools' partnership programs to encourage parental involvement on parents' attitudes about the high schools, and reports of involvement in their teens' education at home and at school. Each dependent variable was predicted by two equations. The first equation tested the effects of the family and student background variables on the dependent variable. Then, variables measuring the schools' different types of family partnership practices were included in the second equation to determine the effects of these practices on parental attitudes and behaviors, net of the effects of the background variables.

Results

(Insert Table 1 about here)

Table 1 shows the frequencies for the family and student background variables. The sample was largely White (73%) and Black (21%). The majority of parents (73%) reported working full time or part time. About 18% of respondents headed households as single parents. On average, the families included two children at home. The educational backgrounds of the parents varied widely. About 12% reported not having received a high school diploma, while close to 15% reported having received a college or advanced degree. Most had a high school diploma (32%) or some post-secondary education or training (39%). Respondents also differed in reports of how their teens were doing in school. The majority of parents (about 60%) reported that their children were earning mostly Bs and Cs in their school work. Fourteen percent reported that their children were earning mostly As, and nearly one fifth of the respondents, reported that their children were earning mostly Ds and Fs.

(Insert Table 2 about here)

Parent Attitudes About High School. Table 2 shows the zero-order correlations of the background and school program variables with the key dependent variables in the study. There is a significant, positive correlation between how well students are doing and their parents' attitudes toward the school. Parents whose teens are doing well give their schools more positive ratings. No other background variable was strongly correlated with parental attitudes about their

teens' high schools. It is also interesting to note the strong, positive correlation between measures of the schools' overall program and different types of partnership practices, and parental attitudes toward their teens' high schools. High schools that reach out to families are more likely to be rated positively by those families than are high schools that do not.

Parent Involvement at School. Parental reports of involvement at school were significantly and positively correlated with several background variables included in the study, including *how the student is doing in school, parental education, and parental employment* (Table 2). There is a significant correlation between families' reports of their involvement at school and all school partnership practices, but most strongly with school practices that encourage volunteering (Type 3), and those that involve families in school decision making (Type 5).

Parent Involvement at Home. Table 2 also shows that there is a significant correlation between parental education and parental reports of involvement in their teens' learning at home. Parents with more formal education are more likely to report being involved with their teens' learning at home than families with less formal education. In addition, there are equally strong correlations between schools' practices of Type 1 — Parenting and Type 4 — Learning at Home and parental reports of involvement at home. These correlations suggest that certain high school practices can influence parental involvement in their teens' development and learning activities. To learn more about the basic relationships shown in Table 2, a series of regression equations were tested.

(Insert Table 3 about here)

Table 3 shows the effects of high school partnership programs on families' attitudes toward school. When only background variables are considered, student academic performance ($\beta=.35, p<.001$) is the only significant predictor of family attitude toward school. Parents whose teens are academically successful are more likely to rate the high school positively than are parents whose teens are not doing well academically. When the strength of the school's overall program of involvement is added to the regression equation, the variance explained by the equation is increased from 13 percent to 35 percent. Of the variables examined, the strength of a school's overall program of school-family partnership is the strongest predictor of family attitude toward the school ($\beta=.48, p<.001$). With student academic achievement and all other background characteristics statistically controlled, parents in schools with stronger programs of partnership are more likely to rate the school positively. To measure school effects, dummy variables were added to the equation. There were no changes in the effects described above, and only a 2% increase in the variance explained (from 35% to 37%).

(Insert Table 4 here)

Table 4 shows the effects of different types of partnership practices on parents' reports of their involvement at the school. As shown in the first equation in Table 4, parent education ($\beta=.20, p<.01$) and student academic performance ($\beta=.23, p<.01$) are significant predictors of family involvement at school. Families with more formal education and those whose teens are doing well academically are more likely to report that they are involved in their teens' high

schools.

Equation 2 shows the effects on parental involvement at high school of different types of partnership practices. Of the five types of involvement, school practices for Type 3 -- Volunteering ($\beta=.35, p<.01$) and Type 5 -- Decision Making ($\beta=.20, p<.01$) have a significant, independent and positive influence on parents' reported involvement in school activities. This indicates that if schools encourage parents to volunteer or participate on school decision making committees, more families will become involved in these school-based activities, regardless of their formal education or their students' academic achievement. The results further suggest that schools may be able to offset the influence of educational background or student success on parental involvement at school by developing strong partnership programs that encourage all families' participation in school events and decisions. The variance explained by the addition of the partnership variables increases from .13 to .27. The addition of the school dummy variables does not change the effects shown in Equation 2 and increases the adjusted R square by only 1%.

(Insert Table 5)

Table 5 reports the effects of different types of partnership practices on parents' reports of involvement at home. Perhaps the greatest challenge for high schools is to help families' understand how they can encourage and guide their adolescents' learning at home in developmentally appropriate ways. Table 5 indicates that families with more formal education are more likely to report assisting their children at home than parents with less formal education. Indeed, of all the background variables tested, parent education ($\beta=.15, p<.01$) is the only one

that significantly influences families' reports of involvement in their teens' learning at home.

Equation 2 in Table 5 shows the effects of different types of partnership practices on parents' reports of involvement at home. With these variables included in the equation, the strongest predictor of family involvement at home is the strength of the school's practices of Type 4 activities — Learning at Home ($\beta=.21, p<.01$). Equation 2 also shows that schools' Type 1 practices that help families strengthen parenting skills also significantly predicts parents' reports of involvement at home ($\beta=.17, p<.05$). The results reported in Table 5 suggest that high schools with partnership programs that include practices supporting family involvement in their children's learning at home increase the likelihood that, regardless of their formal education, parents will conduct more supervisory activities and interact with their teens around homework.

The negative and significant ($\beta=-.23, p<.01$) influence of schools' practices of Type 2 involvement -- Communicating on parental involvement at home is most likely a result of this variable's high zero-order correlation with both Type 4 involvement ($r=.70, p<.001$) and Type 1 involvement ($r=.68, p<.001$). The high correlations underscore the significance of good communication to the successful implementation of the other types of partnership practices.

The addition of the school dummy variables does not change the relationships shown in Equation 2 and increases the adjusted R square by 1% to .06. The low R square indicates that more research is needed on factors affecting parental involvement in their teens' learning at home, and other academic activities. Such research will help educators better plan and implement school practices to help families communicate with their adolescents about homework and guide their adolescents' school-related decisions about courses, summer programs, and future educational and employment plans. Other studies indicate that on-going parent-child

communication and interaction through high school have positive effects on students' skills and avoidance of harmful behaviors (Blum, Rinehard, and Associates, 1997).

Discussion and Conclusion

This study's findings suggest that when schools' develop programs of partnership that include practices for different types of parental involvement, families respond favorably. Indeed, the study shows that families' attitudes toward school are positively influenced by schools' programs of partnership. Further, the results indicate that different types of partnership practices result in corresponding parental involvement behaviors. This suggests that comprehensive programs of partnership that include practices for each of the six major types of involvement will ensure that more families are provided the guidance and information necessary to become effectively involved in their teens' education in various ways.

For example, parental reports of involvement at home are positively and significantly influenced by Type 1 Involvement — Parenting and Type 4 Involvement — Learning at Home. Many high schools, however, do not provide families with information on how to support their adolescents' learning at home. Most high schools assign homework that is designed to be done alone, without conversations or interactions with families (Epstein and Lee, 1995). Most families know very little about high school course offerings, the consequences of special school programs for student advancement or remediation, and requirements for promotion, graduation, or post-secondary education and are, therefore, less equipped to be effectively involved in their teens' learning. As this study confirms, this is especially true for families with less formal education. Plank and Jordan (1996) report that adolescents whose families cannot or do not

discuss course selections and school plans with them during high school are less likely to attend college than adolescents whose families engage in these discussions and activities at home. However, even parents with less formal education can become more involved in their teens' education if schools conduct partnership practices that provide families with useful information and guidance.

Similarly, parental reports of involvement at school are significantly and positively influenced by Type 3 Involvement — Volunteering and Type 5 Involvement — School Decision Making. High school educators are becoming increasingly aware of ways in which volunteers and parent associations can assist in meeting the needs of high school youth. For example, Sanders (1998) reports that high school teachers voice a need for volunteers to assist with activities, including attendance and hallway monitoring, and academic tutoring. Further, administrators state the importance of having viable PTAs or PTOs that can, among other things, advocate for improved school resources. This study suggests that when high schools develop partnership practices that encourage families to volunteer or become active participants in school decision making, families respond.

As indicated previously, school practices for Type 2 — Communicating are essential for improving the other types of involvement. Many high schools begin developing their programs of partnership by focusing exclusively on communications about school programs and students' needs and progress (Sanders, 1998). In an early study of home-school communication at the secondary level, Gotts (1983) reported that families responded positively to receiving two types of information from high schools. First, families responded favorably to regular and timely newsletters detailing the school's programs and extracurricular events and activities. Most

families in the study (90%) reported reading school newsletters. Second, families at the secondary level wanted to receive early notification when their teens were having difficulty or needed assistance or corrective action. Families also wanted information on appropriate courses of action to address difficulties. The author concluded that families of high school students, contrary to stereotype, have strong interests in their adolescents' school performance and school activities and programs. Schools can encourage this interest and promote stronger partnerships with families at each grade level by communicating with them regularly about the school and their children. To do so effectively, however, schools must tailor their communications so that they are understandable to all families, regardless of educational or linguistic background (Epstein, 1995; Lucas, Henze, Donato, 1990).

The findings of this study suggest that high schools that develop programs of partnership, including practices for different types of involvement, are likely to improve parental attitudes toward the school, and enable more families to become involved in their teens' education at school and at home. Some families will be actively involved in the education of their adolescents without the school's assistance. However, with comprehensive programs of partnership, more families, including families with lower educational backgrounds, will become involved in their adolescents' learning and school success.

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Table 1

Frequencies for Family and Student Background Variables (N=423)

Variable	Value Label	Frequency	Percent
Race/Ethnicity	White	309	73.0
	Black	90	21.3
	Hispanic	5	1.2
	No response	19	4.5
Employment	Work full time	245	57.9
	Work part time	64	15.1
	Does not work	106	25.1
	No response	8	1.9
Number of adults in the home	Single parent	78	18.4
	More than one adult	326	77.1
	No response	19	4.5
Number of children in the home	0	2	.5
	1	116	27.4
	2	171	40.4
	3	71	16.8
	4	31	7.3
	5	8	1.9
	6 or more	6	1.4
	No response	18	4.3
Parent education	Less than HS diploma	51	12.1
	HS diploma	137	32.4
	Other training or ed	51	12.1
	Some college	116	27.4
	College degree	43	10.2
	Advanced degree	21	4.9
	No response	4	.9
How the student is doing in high school	Mostly Fs	21	5.0
	Mostly Ds	70	16.5
	Mostly Cs	141	33.3
	Mostly Bs	114	27.0
	Mostly As	61	14.4
	No response	16	3.8
Student gender	Female	195	47.8
	Male	213	52.2

Table 2
Zero-Order Correlations of Background and School Program with Parental Attitudes and Involvement at Home and School

Variable	Parent Attitudes about High School	Parent Involvement at School	Parent Involvement at Home
<u>Background Variables</u>			
Race/Ethnicity (White)	.056	.109	-.082
Employment (Work full-time)	-.052	.132**	.041
# of adults in the home (Single parent)	-.064	-.092	.043
# of children at home	-.050	-.075	-.008
Parent education	.057	.247**	.143**
How the student is doing in h.s.	.354**	.272**	-.015
Student gender (female)	.093	-.012	.034
<u>Parental Perceptions of School Program and Specific Practices of Involvement</u>			
School Support for Parent Involvement	.549**	.224**	.106
Parent Reports of School Type 1 Activities — Parenting	.531**	.178**	.134**
Parent Reports of School Type 2 Activities — Communicating	.525**	.206**	.033
Parent Reports of Frequency of Requests from School to Volunteer	.311**	.451**	.062
Parent Reports of School Type 4 Activities — Learning At Home	.424**	.133**	.150**
Parent Reports of School Type 5 Activities — Decision Making	.338**	.286**	.077

** .120 or higher is significant at $p < .01$
N=423

TABLE 3

The Effects of High School Programs of Partnership on Family Attitude toward School

Variables	Equation 1		Equation 2	
	β	T	β	T
<u>Background Variables</u>				
Race of Parent (White = 1)	.02	.48	-.02	-.54
Parent Work Full-Time	-.09	-1.64	-.06	-1.33
Parent Work Part-Time	.02	.45	.02	.38
Single Parent	-.06	-1.27	-.04	-.83
Number of Children at Home	-.08	-1.69	-.07	-1.76
Parent Education	.02	.37	.00	.00
How the Student is Doing in H.S.	.35***	7.33	.24***	5.56
Sex of Student (Female = 1)	.07	1.50	.04	1.04
<u>School Overall Program of Partnerships</u>				
School Support for Parent Involvement			.48***	11.46
<hr/>				
Adjusted R Square			.13	.35
Total # of Respondents			423	423

***p<.001

TABLE 4

The Effects of Different Types of Partnership Practices
on Family Reports of Involvement at High School

Variables	Equation 1		Equation 2	
	β	T	β	T
<u>Background Variables</u>				
Race of Parent (White = 1)	.09	1.71	.05	1.07
Parent Work Full-Time	.10	1.75	.08	1.49
Parent Work Part-Time	.06	1.03	.05	.88
Single Parent	-.06	-1.18	-.03	-.72
Number of Children at Home	-.06	-1.21	-.04	-.99
Parent Education	.20***	4.09	.15**	3.16
How the Student is Doing in High School	.23***	4.75	.17***	3.55
Sex of Student (Female = 1)	-.02	-.49	-.02	-.48
<u>Parental Reports of Practices for Different Types of Involvement</u>				
Parent Reports of School Type 1 Activities — Parenting			-.06	-.81
Parent Reports of School Type 2 Activities — Communicating			-.05	-.64
Parent Reports of Frequency of Requests from School to Volunteer			.35***	6.95
Parent Reports of School Type 4 Activities — Learning at Home			-.03	-.41
Parent Reports of School Type 5 Activities — Decision Making			.20***	3.66
Adjusted R Square		.13		.27
Total # of Respondents		423		423

***p<.001; **p<.01

TABLE 5

The Effects of Different Types of Partnership Practices
on Family Reports of Involvement At Home

Variables	Equation 1		Equation 2	
	β	T	β	T
<u>Background Variables</u>				
Race of Parent (White = 1)	-.07	-1.22	-.08	-1.37
Parent Work Full-Time	-.01	-.13	-.01	-.14
Parent Work Part-Time	-.06	-1.00	-.07	-1.13
Single Parent	.01	.19	.01	.22
Number of Children at Home	-.01	-.25	-.02	-.46
Parent Education	.15***	2.57	.16**	2.78
How the Student is Doing in High School	-.04	-.70	-.09	-1.51
Sex of Student (Female = 1)	.03	.58	.02	.46
Student in Academic Program	.01	.16	.04	.68
<u>Parental Reports of Practices for Different Types of Involvement</u>				
Parent Reports of School Type 1 Activities — Parenting			.17*	2.08
Parent Reports of School Type 2 Activities — Communicating			-.23**	-2.86
Parent Reports of Frequency of Requests from School to Volunteer			.03	.51
Parent Reports of School Type 4 Activities — Learning at Home			.21**	2.75
Parent Reports of School Type 5 Activities — Decision Making			.01	.11
Adjusted R Square		.01		.05
Total # of Respondents		423		423

***p<.01; **p<.01; *p<.05

SCHOOL AND FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS: SURVEYS AND SUMMARIES

- **Section 1 -- Questionnaires for Teachers and Parents in Elementary and Middle Grades**
- **Section 2 -- How to Summarize Your School's Survey Data**

**Joyce L. Epstein
Karen Clark Salinas**

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Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships
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These surveys and summary forms may be reproduced with permission from the authors by writing to the Publications Office, Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships, 3003 North Charles Street, Suite 200, Baltimore, MD 21218. Appropriate references must be included on the surveys and on reports of survey results.

Publications based on data from these surveys are available from the authors.

SCHOOL AND FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS:

QUESTIONNAIRES FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS

IN ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE GRADES

Joyce L. Epstein

Karen Clark Salinas

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SCHOOL AND FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS
Survey of Teachers in Elementary and Middle Grades

Date: _____

Dear Teacher:

Our school is working to learn more about how schools and families can assist each other to better understand and improve family and school connections. The questions in this survey were developed by teachers and administrators working with researchers at Johns Hopkins University. They also designed questions for families to learn about their ideas and needs. Many teachers and families have completed the surveys as a first step toward improving their schools' practices of partnerships.

The results of our surveys will be tabulated and shared with you. We will use the results to plan school and family partnership projects for the future.

All information you provide is completely confidential. Responses will be grouped to give this school a "portrait" of present practices, opinions, and trends. No one is ever identified individually. Of course, your participation is voluntary and you may leave any question unanswered. To make the results useful for our school, however, we need every teacher's ideas and experiences. We are counting on you to help.

Please complete the survey and return it to: _____
You may seal it in an envelope if you wish.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP!

NOTE: In all questions in this booklet, "parent" means the adult in the family who has the most contact with the school about the child.

Feel free to expand your answers in the margins or back page of the booklet.

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.

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

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.)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>A. In my CLASSROOM, volunteers...</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (a) I do NOT use classroom volunteers</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (b) Listen to children read aloud</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (c) Read to the children</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (d) Grade papers</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (e) Tutor children in specific skills</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (f) Help on trips or at parties</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (g) Give talks (e.g., on careers, hobbies, etc.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (h) Other ways (please specify) _____</p> | <p>B. In our SCHOOL, volunteers...</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (a) Are NOT USED in the school now</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (b) Monitor halls, cafeteria, or other areas</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (c) Work in the library, computer lab, or other area</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (d) Teach mini-courses</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (e) Teach enrichment or other lessons</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (f) Lead clubs or activities</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (g) Check attendance</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (h) Work in "parent room"</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (i) Other ways (please specify) _____</p> |
|--|---|

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:

- NOT IMPORTANT => NOT IMP (Means this IS NOT part of your school now, and SHOULD NOT BE.)
- NEEDS TO BE DEVELOPED => DEV (Means this IS NOT part of your school now, but SHOULD BE.)
- NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED => IMPRV (Means this IS part of your school, but NEEDS TO BE STRENGTHENED.)
- A STRONG PROGRAM NOW => STRONG (Means this IS a STRONG program for most parents AT ALL GRADE LEVELS at your school.)

TYPE OF INVOLVEMENT

AT THIS SCHOOL...

- | | | | | |
|---|---------|-----|-------|--------|
| a. WORKSHOPS for parents to build skills in PARENTING and understanding their children at each grade level. | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |
| b. WORKSHOPS for parents on creating HOME CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING. | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |
| c. COMMUNICATIONS from the school to the home that all families can understand and use. | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |
| d. COMMUNICATIONS about report cards so that parents understand students' progress and needs. | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |
| e. Parent-teacher CONFERENCES with all families. | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |
| f. SURVEYING parents each year for their ideas about the school. | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |
| g. VOLUNTEERS in classrooms to assist teachers and students. | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |
| h. VOLUNTEERS to help in other (non-classroom) parts of the school. | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |
| i. INFORMATION on how to MONITOR homework. | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |
| j. INFORMATION for parents on HOW TO HELP their children with specific skills and subjects. | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |
| k. Involvement by families in PTA/PTO leadership, other COMMITTEES, or other decision-making roles. | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |
| l. Programs for AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, recreation, and homework help. | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |

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.

HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS PRACTICE TO YOU?

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

Q-7. The next questions ask for your opinions about the activities that you think should be conducted by the parents of the children you teach. Circle the choice that best describes the importance of these activities at your grade level.

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

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?

	Strong Support	Some Support	Weak Support	No Support
a. You, personally	STRONG	SOME	WEAK	NONE
b. Other teachers	STRONG	SOME	WEAK	NONE
c. The principal	STRONG	SOME	WEAK	NONE
d. Other administrators	STRONG	SOME	WEAK	NONE
e. Parents	STRONG	SOME	WEAK	NONE
f. Others in community	STRONG	SOME	WEAK	NONE
g. The school board	STRONG	SOME	WEAK	NONE
h. The district superintendent	STRONG	SOME	WEAK	NONE

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
- 100%

- 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!

SCHOOL AND FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS
Survey of Parents in Elementary and Middle Grades

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Date: _____

Our school is working to improve ways that schools and families can help each other and help all children succeed in school. We would like your ideas about this. We will use your responses to plan new projects. To do the best job, we need ideas from **EVERY FAMILY**.

Your answers will be grouped together with those from many other families. No individual will ever be identified. Of course, you may skip any question, but we hope you will answer them all. We will share the results with you in a summary report.

We are counting on your ideas so that our projects will be useful to all families.

Please have your child return this booklet to the teacher **TOMORROW** or **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**. If you have more than one child in this school, please return only **ONE BOOKLET** for the family.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH for your help!

Sincerely,

A. This booklet should be answered by the **PARENT** or **GUARDIAN** who has the **MOST CONTACT** with this school about your child.

Who is filling in the booklet? PLEASE CHECK IF YOU ARE . . .

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| _____ (1) mother | _____ (5) aunt | _____ (9) guardian |
| _____ (2) father | _____ (6) uncle | _____ (10) other relative |
| _____ (3) stepmother | _____ (7) grandmother | _____ (11) other (describe) |
| _____ (4) stepfather | _____ (8) grandfather | _____ |

B. **HOW MANY CHILDREN** in your family go to this school **THIS YEAR**? (Circle how many.)

1 2 3 4 5 or more

C. What **GRADES** are they in? **CIRCLE ALL** of the grades of your children in this school.

PreK Kindergarten Grade 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Other

If you have more than one child at this school, please answer the questions in the booklet about your **OLDEST CHILD** at this school.

D. Is your oldest child a: _____ boy or _____ girl?

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.

YES Means you **AGREE STRONGLY** with the statement.
 yes Means you **AGREE A LITTLE** with the statement.
 no Means you **DISAGREE A LITTLE** with the statement.
 NO Means you **DISAGREE STRONGLY** with the statement.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THESE?

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

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 | _____ (e) Social studies | _____ (i) Current events |
| _____ (b) Reading skills | _____ (f) Science | _____ (j) Study skills |
| _____ (c) Writing stories | _____ (g) Handwriting | _____ (k) Other (describe) |
| _____ (d) Spelling | _____ (h) Speaking skills | _____ |

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.

NEVER
1 - 2 TIMES
A FEW TIMES
MANY TIMES

means you do NOT do this or NOT YET this year
means you have done this ONE or TWO TIMES this year
means you have done this a FEW TIMES this year
means you have done this MANY TIMES this year

- | | | | | |
|--|-------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| a. Talk to my child about school. | NEVER | 1 - 2 TIMES | FEW TIMES | MANY TIMES |
| b. Visit my child's classroom. | NEVER | 1 - 2 TIMES | FEW TIMES | MANY TIMES |
| c. Read to my child. | NEVER | 1 - 2 TIMES | FEW TIMES | MANY TIMES |
| d. Listen to my child read. | NEVER | 1 - 2 TIMES | FEW TIMES | MANY TIMES |
| e. Listen to a story my child wrote. | NEVER | 1 - 2 TIMES | FEW TIMES | MANY TIMES |
| f. Help my child with homework. | NEVER | 1 - 2 TIMES | FEW TIMES | MANY TIMES |
| g. Practice spelling or other skills before a test. | NEVER | 1 - 2 TIMES | FEW TIMES | MANY TIMES |
| h. Talk with my child about a TV show. | NEVER | 1 - 2 TIMES | FEW TIMES | MANY TIMES |
| i. Help my child plan time for homework and chores. | NEVER | 1 - 2 TIMES | FEW TIMES | MANY TIMES |
| j. Talk with my child's teacher at school. | NEVER | 1 - 2 TIMES | FEW TIMES | MANY TIMES |
| k. Talk to my child's teacher on the phone. | NEVER | 1 - 2 TIMES | FEW TIMES | MANY TIMES |
| l. Go to PTA/PTO meetings. | NEVER | 1 - 2 TIMES | FEW TIMES | MANY TIMES |
| m. Check to see that my child has done his/her homework. | NEVER | 1 - 2 TIMES | FEW TIMES | MANY TIMES |
| n. Volunteer at school or in my child's classroom. | NEVER | 1 - 2 TIMES | FEW TIMES | MANY TIMES |
| o. Go to special events at school. | NEVER | 1 - 2 TIMES | FEW TIMES | MANY TIMES |
| p. Take my child to a library. | NEVER | 1 - 2 TIMES | FEW TIMES | MANY TIMES |
| q. Take my child to special places or events in the community. | NEVER | 1 - 2 TIMES | FEW TIMES | MANY TIMES |
| r. Tell my child how important school is. | NEVER | 1 - 2 TIMES | FEW TIMES | MANY TIMES |

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? _____

(l) 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) _____
- _____

The last questions will help us plan new programs to meet your family's needs.
(Please answer these questions about your **oldest child** in this school.)

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 !

HOW TO SUMMARIZE YOUR SCHOOL'S SURVEY DATA

**Joyce L. Epstein
Karen Clark Salinas**

**(FOR USE WITH)
SCHOOL AND FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS:
QUESTIONNAIRES FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS
IN ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE GRADES**

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