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by

Luis Ricardo Landa

May 2018

AN EXAMINATION OF PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN PRIMARILY HISPANIC
HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUSES IN A LARGE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Doctoral Thesis Presented to the
Faculty of College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education
In Professional Leadership

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Abstract

Background: Research shows parent engagement positively impacts student academic performance, motivation, behavior, and attendance. The impact has been of such significance that legislation, such as the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), has mandated parental engagement and tied campus funding to it. Unfortunately, legislation, funding, and awareness of the importance of engagement have not prevented the ‘secondary slump’ of parent engagement. **Purpose:** The purpose of this comparative case study was to fill a gap in the literature by focusing on parent engagement at predominantly Hispanic high schools. Guided by the Framework of Six Types of Involvement and the Ecologies of Parent Engagement Framework, this study aimed to understand what primarily Hispanic secondary campuses do to strengthen parent engagement, why and how parents engage with schools, and ways to strengthen their partnership. **Methods:** This study included two primarily Hispanic, Title I high schools identified by their district as “high parental engagement” campuses. Data were collected through informal observations, semi-structured focus groups and interviews, and document analysis. Interviews were transcribed, organized, and prepared for analysis to identify emergent themes. **Results:** Findings revealed that schools focus on educating families on high school expectations, academic and social impacts on student health, college and career readiness, and opportunities for parents’ personal growth. Resources provided to families included medical, employment, and recently, immigrant legal assistance. Parent engagement appeared motivated to hold students accountable for decision-making, while student aging and inherited independence deterred engagement. On-going communication, a welcoming environment, and staff member, such as a parent

liaison, served to support engagement. Challenges included language barriers, demanding schedules, and negative impressions or experiences in school. **Conclusion:** The findings have implications for school and district policy, as well as for current and aspiring educational leaders who seek to serve and impact student achievement by improving parental engagement.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Years of research suggest parental engagement affects students at many levels, including academic performance, motivation, attendance, and behavior directly and indirectly. For instance, Jeynes' (2007) meta-analysis involving 52 empirical studies with as many as 300,000 participants established a positive relationship between parental involvement and student academic achievement. The potential for parental engagement to improve student outcomes is believed to be so important federal legislation, such as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001-2015) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), was based on the principle that families, educators, and the community must work together to improve teaching and learning (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

As a result, a provision in Title I, Part A of the ESEA, mandated campuses involve parents in the educational processes of their institution (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Additionally, funding meant to augment state and local finance to meet the academic needs of highly impoverished students was provided with the contingency campuses involve students' parents (Roza & Lake, 2015). Consequently, schools developed written policies and initiatives to encourage for parents to become active participants in their child's education (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

Despite the important role parental engagement is believed to play in student achievement, decades of research indicate levels of parent engagement decline at the secondary level. For example, past studies by Dauber and Epstein (1993) demonstrated parent engagement decreased as students move from primary to secondary education,

especially in high school. Catsambis and Garland's (1997) study also found similar differences in parental involvement between students in the eighth and twelfth grade. More recently, Marshall and Jackman (2015) and additional studies by Epstein, Sanders, Simon, Salinas, Johnson, and Van Voorhis (2002) continued to support evidence of declining parental engagement as students moved from the middle grades to the early years of high school.

There are many reasons for the observed decline in parent engagement from the primary to secondary level. Epstein (2014) suggested that while many schools and districts could build a solid volunteer network at the elementary level, this was generally not the case at the secondary level. Other researchers suggested the possibility that parents sensed their children did not welcome their participation in middle school and above (Brannon, 2007). Additionally, it was reported that parents who had negative experiences in school felt alienated, while others unprepared because of their child's accelerated curriculum (Brannon, 2007). The National Education Association (NEA) (2008) added that demanding schedules and discomfort with schools, attributed by language or cultural difference, left other parents from engaging.

Regardless of the reasons, the declining or "secondary slump" of parent engagement results in lessened opportunities for parent impact on student achievement. As a practitioner and educational leader in a large urban school district, the researcher aimed to maximize resources available to impact student achievement. Thus, the intent was to comprehend varying factors associated with parent engagement specifically at the secondary level in the district of study primarily composed of Hispanic students. In doing so, the researcher aspired data gathered may provide educational leaders working with

similar demographics relevant information in addressing and overcoming the potential “secondary slump” of parent engagement seen on their campus.

As a result, the purpose of this study was to fill gaps in the literature, specific to the Hispanic population at the secondary level, by merging what primarily Hispanic campuses are doing to support parent engagement with an understanding of parent beliefs and means of navigating the school system. Working with predominately Hispanic high school campuses located in a large urban school district in Texas, this study built and combined Epstein’s *Overlapping Spheres of Influence and Framework of Six Types of Involvement*, viewed as the school-centric component of parent engagement in this study, with Barton and colleague’s, *Ecologies of Parent Engagement Framework*, viewed as the parent-centric component of parent engagement in this study, to more fully comprehend what it means for high schools to engage Hispanic parents.

Background

As previously discussed, much evidence suggests parent engagement positively impacts student achievement, attendance, behavior, and motivation. The impact is believed to be of such importance that legislative laws have mandated and tied funding to parent engagement. However, data (Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Catsambis & Garland, 1997; Marshall & Jackman, 2015) have suggested regardless of its significance, parental engagement drops as students move from the primary to the secondary level. This phenomenon is seen across all demographics, however is focused on the Hispanic population in this study. The reasons are that the ethnicity makes up a large percentage of the state and are a majority group in the district of study.

The following section aims to provide an overview of Hispanic demographics and academic struggles as a means of stressing the importance and need to strengthen understanding of parent engagement specific to Hispanic families. Information gained in this study may assist educational leaders working with similar demographics with a more thorough understanding of parent engagement as it relates to their campus. Perhaps, this understanding could lead to better planning and means of building parent partnerships to overcome the “secondary slump” (Epstein, 2005) of parent engagement and provide additional support for student achievement.

Hispanic Demographics

According to Passel and Taylor (2009) and the Pew Research Center, Hispanics are defined traditionally as “a member of an ethnic group that traces its roots to 20 Spanish-speaking nations from Latin American and Spain itself (but not Portugal or Portuguese-speaking Brazil).” However, they state the simpler and much more acceptable definition of Hispanics are, “Anyone who says they are. And nobody who says they aren’t” (Passel & Taylor, 2009). This is the same definition utilized by the Census Bureau, the Texas Education Agency (TEA), and the district of study which all rely on self-identification of individuals. As a result, the use of the term ‘Hispanic’ in this study is based on the self-identification of individuals and the data provided by TEA, and does not affiliate any individual with a place of origin.

Overall, Hispanics make up roughly 17.4% of the United States population, which corresponds to approximately 55,481,127 people (United States Census Bureau, 2015). However, the Hispanic population is expected to make up 29% of the total population or grow by 115%, by 2060 (Colby & Ortman, 2015). The six largest populations of

Hispanics according to the Pew Hispanic Research Center originate or self-identify an affiliation with Mexico, Puerto Rico, El Salvador, Cuba, and Guatemala. However, nearly 45% of all Hispanics live in just ten metropolitan areas, with six in California and Texas (Motel & Patten, 2012).

In the state of Texas, which is where this study took place, Hispanics account for almost 39% of the population and compromise over 10 million individuals (United States Census Bureau, 2015). This is drastic increase from which was reported by Motel and Patten (2012), who indicated that the Hispanic total population was 5.6 million people in 2010. However, because self-identification is the key in accounting for the Hispanic demographic, both these numbers may not be entirely accurate. They do, though, appear to show an increase in the population, and in the author's opinion make additional understanding of parent engagement specific to Hispanic families that much more necessary.

In the district of study, Hispanics account for over 61% of the student population (2016). Although the district data is not specific of the self-identified origins of these Hispanic students, the Pew Hispanic Research Center states most Hispanics in the city are Mexican, 78.6%, followed by Salvadorian, 7.2%, and then Honduran, 2.5%. Additionally, the center adds an astounding 45.9% of the total number of Hispanics in the city are under 18. This large percentage of students, which in the district of study include over 100,000 students stresses the need for educational leaders, such as the researcher, to comprehend the many components of parent engagement. By being more informed, perhaps a thorough, comprehensive plans that aims to build parent partnerships and overcome the "secondary slump" (Epstein, 2005) in parent engagement may be attained.

Academic Performance

As mentioned earlier, parent engagement has been shown by numerous researchers to positively impact student achievement (Jeynes, 2007; Fan & Williams, 2010; Martinez, 2004). Fan and Chen's (2001) meta-analysis revealed that parent involvement in general, parent-child communication, home supervision, educational aspirations, and school contact and participation, among many other variables contribute to student achievement. However, is this the case for all students, including Hispanic students? Also, are there practices predominately Hispanic campuses engage in that are more effective, as well as barriers specific to Hispanic parents that can be overcome to encourage parent engagement? The author believes these are important questions, especially at the secondary level, as nationally there appear to be areas of academic struggles among Hispanic students.

Some of these include concerns expressed in data from the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) that showed that reading exams given to 4th and 8th graders in 2015 and 12th grade students in 2013, 21%, 21%, and 23% of Hispanic students performed at or above a *Proficient* level, respectively. Additionally, NAEP Mathematics exams given to 4th and 8th graders in 2015 and 12th grade student in 2013, 26%, 19%, and 12% of Hispanic students, respectively, performed at or above *Proficient* standards. Troublesome data shared by Aud and colleagues (2010) indicated that Hispanic students also had lower number of students compared to other demographics complete advanced math and science courses, including geometry, algebra II, and statistics, as well as biology, physics and chemistry.

A similar occurrence was seen in Advanced Placement (AP) courses, which aimed to raise rigor in learning, prepare students for college, and allow for college credit. As Aud et al. (2010) describes, Hispanics students more than tripled the number of AP classes taken from 1999 to 2008 from 63,853 to 209,721. However, the demographic is almost five times below other students who took almost one million classes. Curiously, there is no indication or clarification of whether AP classes are offered at the same rate as they are to other demographics, which may account for this discrepancy. However, the lack of college preparation courses may have impacted data observed on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and American College Testing (ACT), which are typically used for college or university entrance.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, roughly only 13% of 12th grade Hispanic students took the SAT exam, and scored 74 to 141 points below other students in the Mathematics, Critical Reading, and Writing sections of the exam in 2015. This same occurrence was seen on the ACT exam where only 13.6% of Hispanic students took the exam nationally, and scored 3.7 to 4.8 points lower than the average in 2010, as indicated also by the National Center for Education Statistics. Furthermore, scores indicated a low percentage of 49%, 26%, 35%, and 13% of Hispanic students meeting college readiness benchmark scores in English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science, respectively (Aud et al., 2010).

However, some of the most worrisome data observed was seen in the dropout rate among Hispanic students. As described in *Trends in High School Dropout and Completion in the United States: 1972-2012* (Stark, et al., 2015), 13.9% of Hispanic males and 11.3% of Hispanic females dropped out in 2012. As stated in the *Secondary*

School Completion and Dropout report by TEA (2014), 39, 430 students were reported as dropouts across the state of Texas. Of those students, 8.2% were Hispanics. Motel and Patten (2012) added that in the city of study, 44% of Hispanics over the age of 25 do not have a high school diploma. These same statistics are also seen in the district of interest for this study, where of its roughly 50,000 high school students, 3.0% of Hispanic students dropped out in the 2012-2013 school year (Texas Education Agency, 2014).

In summary, the author does not intend to indicate that Hispanic student are the only demographic that have shown areas of academic concerns. Additionally, the author also does not mean to communicate that parent engagement will be the solution to these reported achievement gaps. The full intent of the researcher is to demonstrate a growing population of Hispanic students and academic needs that parent engagement, especially at the secondary level, could assist in remedying. As a practitioner and educational leader in a large, majority Hispanic school district, additional information regarding improving parent engagement could serve as an additional resource for all similar campuses.

Statement of the Problem

Parent engagement has been shown to impact multiple levels of student achievement. The impact has been of such significance, legislation has urged and tied funding to parental engagement. However, parent engagement diminishes as students age, particularly from the primary to the secondary level. This phenomenon is troublesome for all students as it limits a potential resource that could support achievement across many areas including academics, behavior, motivation, and attendance. For this study, parent engagement is focused on the Hispanic population, as

the ethnicity is a growing population in the country, have achievement gap concerns, and make up over 100,000 students in the author's district of study.

When analyzing parent engagement, it is not enough to understand the methods campuses utilize to involve parents, or the school-centric component; doing so suggests parents are only on the receiving end of engagement. This approach does not consider that parents can also be agents and authors of engagement, and the relationships they build sustain and define engagement, which as reported by Carpenter, Young, Bowers, and Sanders (2016) is oftentimes vague and typically unagreed upon.

Parent engagement is not linear and unilateral, but rather flows in both directions between the campus and parents. Thus, it is crucial from the campus perspective to understand parents' perception of parent engagement and the impact that grade level, culture, relationships, resources, and values place on ultimate engagement (Carpenter, et al., 2016). Overall, it is important to look at parent engagement from many angles; the perspective of the campus, and how administrators and staff aim to involve parents, the perspective of the parents' which include their beliefs and ability to engage, as well as how both constituents build and support a positive relationship that ultimately encourages student achievement.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to understand parent engagement at the secondary level specific to the Hispanic population. In doing so, the author considered that engagement is not solely a school-based responsibility, but also considered beliefs' regarding engagement and their abilities to take advantage of campus parent engagement initiatives. Additionally, the author aimed to understand the relationship-building

component of parent engagement more thoroughly, as it is not a unilateral process but rather flows in multiple directions.

As a result, this study merged two prevalent parent engagement frameworks, Epstein's *Framework of Six Types of Involvement* (school-centric) with Barton and colleagues' *Ecologies of Parent Engagement Framework* (parent-centric). Merging the two frameworks yielded an alternative framework that includes actions schools use to engage families, the viewpoints parents have with engaging campuses, as well as insight into the relationship-building component from both perspectives. The study, thus, saw the merging of the two as an opportunity for both researchers and educational leaders to learn about and maximize parent engagement, or the ongoing, multidirectional relationships of parents and campus constituents that aim to address student learning, progress, and means of intervention, both in and out of the school environment.

Research Questions

To achieve the purpose of the study, the following research questions were answered:

1. What do "high parent engagement" high school campuses do to engage parents?
2. What are parents' beliefs and perspectives regarding the importance of parent engagement?
3. What factors facilitate or discourage parents' ability and willingness to engage with campuses?

Conceptual Frameworks

The conceptual frameworks utilized for this qualitative collective case study were Epstein's (2013), school-centric, Framework of Six Types of Involvement and Barton et

al.'s (2004), parent-centric, Ecologies of Parental Engagement. The use of both frameworks addressed a shortcoming of previous research on parental engagement, which often neglects to view engagement as multidirectional and involving interactions between schools and parents. Rather, the literature often tends to focus on parental engagement as one-sided, focusing on the school or parents' perspective versus an understanding of how both compliment and support one another. This section will describe both and explain how they guided the research.

Framework of six types of involvement. Epstein's (2013) Framework of Six Types of Involvement is utilized by over 200 campuses in the United States. These campuses also are members of the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at John Hopkins University (Epstein, 2004). The intent of the research-generated framework, which was viewed as a school-centric framework in this study, is to provide schools, and thus their educational leaders, a guide in developing a comprehensive program of school, family, and community. Educational leaders, however, should choose the components and practices that best meet student and family needs (Epstein, 2002).

In this research, the Framework of Six Types of Involvement was selected because it addressed a multitude of areas educational leaders could keep in mind when developing parent engagement plans. Initially developed to meet the requirements of the former No Child Left Behind Act (2001), the framework describes six types of parent involvement including components for parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaboration with the community (Epstein, 2013). The following aims to briefly describe each of those components and how they require support to fully comprehend parental engagement.

The parenting component of the framework strives to educate parents in crucial academic supporting skills, cognitive development, and ensuring home settings are supportive in assisting their child's continual learning. Likewise, the parenting component aspires to ensure school faculty and staff are educated in understanding the culture and practices of its population (Epstein, 2013). This component also stresses the need for educational leaders to interact and build relationships with their parents. As previously mentioned, not all Hispanic people come from the same place of origin, and as a result may have different values, expectations, goals and traditions. It cannot be assumed because a campus has a desire to educate parents or ensure home settings are supportive, as described in this component, that parents welcome those initiatives or see their importance. For those reasons, communication, as discussed next, is instrumental.

The communication component of this framework involves establishing a two-way interchange with parents and all faculty of their child's learning progress and areas of weakness. This component is vital because as Comer (1995) suggests, secondary-level parents tend to lack the opportunity to create mutually valuable relationships with teachers and students. Although this is a historical finding, the author concurs from experience, as a recently former secondary level educational leader, that communication often is negative and includes discussion of misbehaviors, consequences, and student failure.

Volunteering and learning at home are following components in the framework. Epstein (2013) describes the volunteering aspect of the framework as an important component aimed at recruiting, training, and scheduling parents to be an active process of the campus and the overall learning process of their child. As previously mentioned,

Epstein (2014) argued while many schools and districts could build solid volunteer networks at the elementary level, this has not been the case at the secondary level. The learning at home component aspires to ensure parents are aware and able to help their child's learning at home, as well as motivate their child by inquiring about their ideas and academic interests.

Lastly, Epstein (2013) describes decision-making and collaboration with community as the last two components in the framework. The decision-making component seeks to involve parents in the decision-making processes on campuses, such as interactions with Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO), site-directed decision-making committees (SDMC), and the school improvement plan committees. On the other hand, collaboration with community is the component whose goal is to coordinate resources for parents, students, and the school with business partners, non-profit agencies, and local community centers to support the outside needs of families, which can impact academic achievement, attendance, motivation, and behavior (Epstein, 2013).

Overall, the Framework of Six Types of Involvement (Epstein, 2013) serves as a guide for schools, and thus educational leaders, in developing a holistic plan to build parent, school, and community partnerships. Components address a multitude of areas that appear to support parent engagement, which may impact student achievement. Each component, however, serve as a campus, or school-centric, initiative, and does not stress the importance of understanding parent beliefs and attitudes toward parental engagement. In addition, the components do not communicate the need to comprehend the obstacles that impede engagement so that they could be overcome. Furthermore, there is not an emphasis on the necessary collaboration of parental engagements, and means to

strengthen relationships between parents and schools. The following framework, Ecologies of Parent Engagement (2004), will aim to support this conceptual model by bridging *what* campuses can do to engage parents with an understanding of *how* and *why* parents engage with campuses.

Ecologies of parental engagement. Barton et al.'s (2004) Ecologies of Parental Engagement framework focuses on parent understandings of the *hows* and *whys* of their engagement. Likewise, it frames parents as both agents and authors of parental engagement rather than solely receivers. As communicated by Barton and colleagues (2004), understanding why parents are engaged necessitates comprehending parents' beliefs and perspectives pertaining towards their engagement. It is necessary to understand their definition of parent engagement, how their beliefs were instilled, and whether they have changed over time. Trying to understand how parents are engaged with schools requires an analysis of parents' ability to maneuver within a school setting and the external factors that play a role.

Barton et al. (2004) suggests being engaged on a campus is a relational phenomenon facilitated by parents' experiences in and out of the school community, and their mediation between space and capital. Simply stated, Barton et. al (2004) describes parental engagement by the confidence or lack thereof parents have based on knowledge and occurrences with the educational system, and the impact it has in differing spaces on a school. For instance, parents who believe parental engagement is important and have been involved on their child's campus for many years may find it easier to maneuver the system, knowing who to call with concerns, and being more assertive in their expectations of the school or classroom. On the other hand, a parent who does not see the

importance in being engaged, with few experiences on a campus may not know where to begin if an issue arises.

Additionally, there are parents who may not have understood the importance of their engagement, however over time and by building relationships with peers and the school have found a way to mediate the capital they have grown to possess and the multiple spaces that reside on campuses. It is with this understanding Barton et al. (2004) views parental engagement as a multidirectional relationship between parents and the school, where parents are agents and authors, or rather dictate the ultimate level of engagement on a campus. When viewing parents as active constituents of engagement, one cannot solely look at campus initiatives or school-centric components, but rather how those practices coincide and are impacted by parents' beliefs, experiences, and relationships that influence overall engagement.

Research Methods

This study utilized a comparative case study design (Creswell, 2013; Creswell, 2014) to answer the research questions posed above. A comparative case study design allows for a phenomenon to be explored across several settings and, in the case of this study, those setting are high schools (Creswell, 2013; Creswell, 2014). Parental engagement was examined both from a campus, or school-centric, perspective and from parents', or parent-centric, perspectives across two high school campuses where the majority of students are Hispanic.

The campus sites were initially identified because they ranked at the top of the parent engagement component of a district-wide comprehensive survey given to all parents, students, teachers, and administrators at over 280 schools in a large urban school

district at the end of the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school year. These “high parental engagement” campuses, which are Title I high schools, are predominately Hispanic as identified in this study as 80% and above. Although the results of both surveys were made public, the reference to those surveys were not made available as it reveals the district of study and identification of sites. The questions utilized in the survey are however listed in Appendix A and B.

Data for this study were collected in many ways and guided by Creswell’s (2014) qualitative methods data collecting procedures. These methods included site-visits during parent-centered events, focus group sessions with parents, and individual interviews with staff associated with parental engagement such as the parent liaison, principal and assistant principal. Data were also ascertained by a collection of documents such as agendas, handouts, or resources given to all attendees at site events.

Prior to analysis, all data were organized and prepared, as suggested by Creswell (2014) for analysis by typing up field notes, transcribing interviews, and scanning documents attained at site visits. Data were then analyzed in a series of multi-iterative, reflexive steps. First, an etic approach utilizing Epstein’s Six Types of Involvement framework (2013) and Barton and colleagues’ Ecologies of Parent Engagement framework (2004) guided the establishment of *a priori* coding, which was drawn from the research, reading and theory, to help understand the *what, how, and why of* parent engagement (Blair, 2015).

Following, data analysis progressed from the etic or top down approach to the use of open coding across all cases (Blair, 2015, Khandkar, 2009). This emic approach, which utilized an alternative lens of gaining the insider’s point of view, allowed the

researcher to uncover themes not included in the literature review in addition to relationship building between parents and schools. This emic approach also served to support the merging of the parent-centric and school-centric components of parent engagement in the study's alternative framework.

Assumptions

There is an assumption that parent responses to the district wide survey, specifically the parent engagement component, were truthful and honest. This assumption was of great importance, as the responses to parent engagement questions were used in identifying the campuses of study. Furthermore, the author assumed the survey was developed and accurately tested for reliability before use, as indicated by the district website. However, as the author was not evaluating the survey, this assumption was not further investigated. The district did utilize the same company one year later to conduct a similar survey, thus supporting the author's assumption. Lastly, the researcher assumed all participants would be truthful while interviewed for the study as the responses to inquiries would be aligned to the conceptual frameworks, analyzed for recurring themes, and aim to address the research questions of study.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. These included the possibility that the district survey, which was utilized to identify campuses, may not have captured the full range of parental voice. For example, voices from illiterate parents or those who did not have time to respond to the survey may have been excluded. On the other hand, in a diverse district of over 200,000 students, gathering input from all parents would appear very difficult. Also, there existed limitations pertaining to the acquisition of data for the

study, as it did not include input from all stakeholders, but rather was limited primarily to parents, students, and select staff members. As a result, teacher and community input regarding perspectives of parental engagement practices were not evaluated. Also, the term “Hispanic” in this study includes a very large, diverse category of people from varying country spanning from many generations to recent immigrants. Thus, results cannot be assumed to be pertinent to all Hispanic populations.

Additionally, because the author only examined two schools in one district, results could not be generalizable to other campuses or districts. The hopes were, however, that practices and other data collected could be utilized as a resource for educational leaders with similar demographics. Another limitation was that the study utilized two different types of campuses and thus, a comparison of the two may not be appropriate. The author, on the other hand, felt that because both campuses had similarities in being Title I and majority Hispanic, they should be compared. After all, the two schools consecutively ranked among the highest of all high schools in the district on the survey, and perhaps the differences each had would provide an array of practices, perspectives, and relationship-building ideas not seen among completely identical schools. Furthermore, additional interviews or visits to campus events may have strengthened both the analysis and results of the study.

Significance

The study was significant in two ways. First, it filled several gaps in the literature over parent engagement, and second it provided a more thorough understanding of the complexities regarding parent engagement. The literature is filled with parent engagement studies, however this study focused on the secondary level of education

rather than the elementary level to better understand the “secondary slump” phenomenon (Epstein, 2005). The study also was specific to the Hispanic population, which aimed to assist in closing the achievement gaps seen in this demographic. Additionally, this study examined both campus initiatives, and parent perspectives and their means of navigating the educational system to more fully understand the ongoing collaborative nature of parent engagement.

Because the study not only looked at the practices high parental engagement campuses utilized but also parents’ perspectives towards engagement, and the factors that weighed on overall engagement, a more thorough understanding of the complexities regarding parent engagement emerged. This significance coupled with the presentation of an alternative model of parent engagement merged two prominent parent engagement frameworks highlighted the need to understand both campus and parent perspectives regarding parental engagement. This alternative model thus could serve as a resource and guide for practitioners, such as district and campus leaders, in developing a more complete and practical parent engagement plan focused on the Hispanic community.

Summary

In summary, parent engagement over the last several decades have been shown by researchers such as Epstein and Sheldon (2006), Steinberg (1996), Hoover-Dempsey and colleagues (1995), Finn (1998), and Estell and Perdue (2013) to positively impact students’ academic achievement, attendance, behaviors, and attitudes towards school. Given the importance of parent engagement, legislation such as the NCLB Act (2001), the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), and Title I funding mandated parent involvement on campuses. However, the fact that parental engagement decreases as students move

from the primary to secondary level may hinder the full potential of academic successes of students (Marshall & Jackman, 2015; Epstein et al., 2002).

Therefore, the study aimed to understand, utilizing a comparative case study design, how primarily Hispanic secondary campuses in a large urban school district engage parents. In addition, it viewed parents as not only at the receiving end of campus initiatives, but also active players in engagement. As a result, the study builds an understanding of parents' beliefs and perspectives toward parental engagement, as well as factors that impact engagement. The hopes are that by analyzing both sides of the engagement spectrum, the *What* campuses are doing with the *How* and *Why* parents engage, practitioners such as district and campus leaders can better design a model of parent engagement that is multidirectional, supports relationship building, and best serve student needs.

Definition of Terms

- *Parent Engagement* in this study is defined as the ongoing, multidirectional relationships of parents and campus constituents that aims to address their child's learning, progress, and means of intervention, both in and out of the school environment.
- *Hispanics* are technically defined as individuals whose culture, language, and people originate from Spain or Portugal, but also includes those from Latin America including Central and South America. However, for this study the term is taken from the Texas Education Agency demographic profile of each campus. The term, thus, does not denote an affiliation to a country of origin but rather the self-identification of the parent or guardian of the student.

- The “*secondary slump*” phenomenon in this study was, “a term coined by Epstein (2005) which refers to a reduction in the level of parental involvement as students became older” (Marshall & Jackman, 2015, p. 84).
- The *secondary level* of education in this study referred to middle school and high school. The *high schools* in this study are described as one that only has ninth through twelfth grade.
- The *School of Choice high school* described in this study is one where students must apply, meet standards, and be accepted into.
- *Comprehensive high schools* in this study are those where students are zoned and attend based on where the student lives. Students outside of zoning areas can also apply to a *comprehensive high school* however most students attending the campus live in its zoned area. *Comprehensive high schools* also tend to have sport teams and additional extracurricular activities not found in a *School of Choice high school*.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this study was three-fold: First, to ascertain how predominantly Hispanic high schools in a large urban school district engage parents. Second, to understand parents' beliefs and perspectives regarding parent engagement, and those factors that impact a parent's ability to engage with campuses. Third, to gather insight in how schools and parents build relationships that support student achievement. This literature review will define parent engagement, outline its impact on student achievement, and discuss issues surrounding parent engagement, including those specific to the Hispanic population. Additionally, the literature review will provide an in-depth overview of Epstein's *Overlapping Spheres of Influence* and *Framework of Six Types of Involvement*, Barton and colleague's, *Ecologies of Parent Engagement Framework*, and a suggested alternative model that merges the two.

Defining Parent Engagement

For this study, parent engagement was defined as the ongoing, multidirectional relationships of parents and campus constituents that aim to address their child's learning, progress, and means of intervention, both in and out of the school environment (McKenna & Millen, 2013; Barton et al., 2004). Unlike the term parent involvement, which describes only what parents do, parent engagement takes into consideration the active roles parents have with campuses, both in terms of participation and influence on campus engagement initiatives. The definition views parents as agents or authors of parental engagement and not purely as receivers of engagement practices.

McKenna and Millen (2013) posit parent engagement includes a combination of parents' voice and presence. Parents' voice refers to the feelings, thoughts, and opinions of their child's goals and desires, as well as their frustrations and challenges. Parents' voice also includes a receptiveness on the part of teachers and leaders to listen to those beliefs and engage in a multidirectional flow of communication with the parent. Parents' presence, on the other hand, refers to the actions and involvement, both in and out of school, parents have with their child's education (McKenna & Millen, 2013). These activities include having discussions with their child, assisting with homework, communicating with instructors, taking part in volunteering opportunities, and attending campus events.

Barton and colleagues (2004) expand on the definition of parent engagement by adding that it is a dynamic and interactive process, which could be viewed as a relational phenomenon. The researchers suggest the relationships parents build with other parents and the school, as well as their beliefs, experiences, and knowledge of the educational system establish what is known as "capital" among them (Barton, 2004). It is this capital that defines the impact parents have in differing settings or spaces. For example, a parent who has a history of being highly involved in schools and understands whom to seek in times of need establishes a strong sense of capital which helps him or her maneuver through the campus. This type of parent can be a more effective advocate for his/her child, as well as influence ongoing campus practices. This component of parent engagement is what is referred to as the mediation between space and capital (Barton, 2004).

Impact on Student Achievement

Parent engagement has long been shown to impact students at many levels, including academic performance, attendance, motivation, and behavior. For instance, Henderson and Mapp (2002), after examining 51 parent engagement studies, found students with involved parents, regardless of background and social economic status, are more often promoted, attend school more regularly, and graduate and pursue postsecondary studies at higher rates than students whose parents were less engaged. The National Education Association (2008) concurred with these findings adding that when families and schools work together, students are also less likely to drop out of school. The sections below examine other studies, which together, continue to add to the importance of engaged parents at all grade levels.

The first area in which parental engagement matters is student achievement. Fan and Chen (2001) reported the perception of parental engagement's positive impact on student academic success is so intuitively appealing that policy makers, educators, parents and even pupils agree that it is critical for student's academic success. As a result, a voluminous body of research over the impact of parent engagement on academic achievement have occurred over the last few decades.

Historical data by researchers indicated parental engagements impact on student achievement. For examples, Steinberg (1996) found a statistically significant correlation at all grade levels between academic achievement and parent engagement. Steinberg (1996) also noted parents who are "disengaged" in their child's education may have children who are lacking developmentally, psychologically, and socially. Similarly, Hoover-Dempsey and colleagues (1995) found campuses help parents with parenting

skills, such as providing structure for their child, and training to expand learning at home have improved academic performance. Finn (1998) concurred parent engagement can lead to academic benefits; however, specific practices of teaching, supporting, and monitoring students at home gain the largest rewards.

More recent studies found similar findings and added the most important factor in academic success is the partnership between parents and schools (Smith, Wohlsetter, Kuzin, & Pedro, 2011). Wilder (2014) agreed with the positive role of parent engagement, but stated the impact depends largely on how it is defined. Interestingly, Carpenter, Young, Bowers, and Sander (2016) reported similarly, stating, “After years of research, there continues to be no agreed on definition that includes or excludes all the elements asserted by different actors” (p.100). Thus, it appears that there is a consensus parent engagement positively impacts student achievement, but whether it is parental aspirations/expectations, parent-child communication, assistance with homework, volunteering at school, or other factors that have the greatest impact continues to be debated (Smith et al., 2011, Fan & Chen, 2001).

Student participation in learning is another area that can be enhanced through parent engagement. Estell and Perdue (2013) illustrated parent engagement impacts participation in learning tasks, both in and out of the classroom, proper behavior, and participation in extracurricular activities. On the other hand, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s (1997) literature review revealed what is most important in parent engagement are the parents’ personal construction of parenting roles, that is, what they believe they are to do in relation to their child’s education. Following this construct are parents’

personal sense of efficacy for helping their child, and lastly the campuses opportunity for parent involvement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

Parent engagement also enhances attendance. At the elementary school level, which is the focus of the preponderance of parent engagement literature, Epstein and colleagues (1997) reported in a study of 80 public elementary schools, campuses with strong parent involvement demonstrated significant gains in attendance. Additionally, by involving parents in partnerships, scores in writing and math showed improvement (Epstein et al., 1997). Students at the middle school level also benefitted from parent engagement. Hoover-Dempsey and colleagues (2005) observed parent engagement attributed to student proximal academic outcomes. These proximal academic outcomes include academic and social self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation for learning, and the use of self-regulated strategies in study techniques and allocation of time that may contribute to academic success.

At the high school level, Catsambis (1998) illustrated the strongest effects on student achievement were based on parents actively encouraging, advising, and guiding their children to plan and attend post-secondary studies. This is of importance because evidence by Aud et al. (2010), Dauber and Epstein (1993), and Marshall and Jackman (2015) indicate parent engagement decreases tremendously as students move from primary to secondary education, especially in high school. This phenomenon known as the “secondary slump” (Epstein, 2005) is why Wheelock and Miao (2005) believe more students fail the ninth grade than in any other grade.

As can be observed, over thirty years of research have demonstrated the importance and positive impact of parent engagement across many areas including

student academic achievement, motivation, attendance, and behavior. There are however many questions that remain to be answered including defining parent engagement, understanding whether strategies learned are applicable across all grade levels, and whether practices vary among differing groups of people. This study aimed to address a few of these questions by aspiring to understand parent engagement, and its multiple components, at the secondary level specific to the Hispanic population.

Obstacles to Parent Engagement

Fan and Chen (2001) stated in their meta-analysis that policy makers, administrators, parents, and even students believe parental engagement is a key to academic achievement. Why, though, do some parents not engage in their child's education? Why, also, does it appear that parent engagement decreases as student get older? After all, parents want what is best for their children and desire ongoing open communication with the campus, including its administrators and teachers (Martinez, 2004).

The fact, though, remains that there is no consensus about what defines parent engagement and parent expectations are not always clearly communicated (Carpenter, et. al, 2016, Wilder, 2014). As a result, confusion about what it means to engage with campuses and expectations from parents perhaps inhibit parent engagement from the onset. The following sections aim to review parent expectations, obstacles parents come across that impede engagement at the secondary level, and how each relate to the Hispanic community.

According to McKenna and Millen (2013), parents want teachers to hold high expectations for their child and desire opportunities to “check in” with them to discuss

both positives and concerns. They want to be informed about their child's progress more and desire to be involved in a capacity congruous with their daily lives. However, communication by teachers with parents especially in high school are predominately concerns that occur once a student has failed or is on the track to fail a course (McKenna & Millen, 2013).

The same can be said about opportunities for parents to be engaged and the welcoming of a campus, which appear to diminish as students grow older. Parents in McKenna and Millen's (2013) study shared that opportunities provided by schools for them to be actively involved in their child's lives are limited in high school. In general, opportunities for involvement are reduced to a few PTO meetings per year that are during the day when many parents work and an Open House (McKenna & Millen, 2013). Parents also stated that secondary schools do not have an open-door policy like elementary schools, which as Hoover-Dempsey (2005) shared defines the overall welcomed feeling of the campus, and impacts parental engagement.

Other issues such as working long hours, having multiple jobs, and a lack of transportation can create obstacles for parent engagement (Kraft et al., 2015). However, Saunders (2001) suggests legislative pressures are also to blame for a lack of parental engagement, a hindrance not often explored in the literature. They state that high stakes testing shifts teacher's intent of involving parents to focusing on academics and areas tested in many state assessments (Saunders, 2010). Grant and Ray (2010) also discuss an obstacle not typically acknowledged, the reality many education programs do not prepare teachers to interact with families. This lack of experience can, at times, make teachers hesitant to reach out and engage parents (Grant & Ray, 2010).

Overall, parents have the greatest intent of being engaged in their child's education. There may be confusion, though, from both the campus and parents' perspective of what engagement means or the expectations for both sides. Additionally, there are numerous obstacles that impact the degree of engagement. From an educational leader's perspective, campuses, especially at the secondary level, ought to be proactive and purposeful in creating opportunities for parents to engage, a welcoming environment, positive communication, and mindful of the importance of parent engagement. An important aspect in doing this, however, requires knowing your stakeholders and their perspective and beliefs, because as previously noted parent engagement is a multi-directional flow of communication and interactions between parents and schools.

Hispanic Perspective

It is important for educational leaders, other practitioners, and researchers, to understand the perspectives, values, and beliefs of the stakeholders they serve or hope to impact (Barton,2004). Without doing so suggests that all practices and knowledge concerning parental engagement are applicable to all groups of people and grade levels. This is not the case as differences in values and priorities among differing ethnicities exist, and parent engagement is not the same at all grade levels. The following aims to understand perspectives, values, and beliefs pertinent to the Hispanic population, as the ethnicity makes up a large percentage of people in the nation, have shown areas of academic struggle, and are the focus of this study.

The literature states there is a growing body of scholarship that reveal misunderstandings and misconceptions about Hispanic family goals, beliefs, roles in education, and perspectives regarding engagement (Hill & Torres, 2010; Quiñones &

Kiyama, 2014; Lopez, 2001). Hispanic families also want what is best for their children and possess values that place their children as priority (Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013). They value parent engagement and want to be a part of their child's education (Hill & Torres, 2010). Hispanic families understand that *una buena educación*, or a good education, is the key to success in the United States (Quiñones & Kiyama, 2014), and work extremely hard, often times in multiple, low paying jobs to ensure their children have the resources necessary to succeed academically (Lopez, 2001).

Research states three key principals in general are held by Hispanic populations. These include *familismo*, *respeto*, and, as previously mentioned, *educación* (Carpenter, et. al, 2016, Hill & Torres, 2010, Valenzuela, 1991). *Familismo* is characterized by the heavy emphasis on the culture's identity and closeness among family. It is *familismo* that drives a loyalty for one another, often forgoing individual needs for the sake and need of the family. It, too, is in *familismo* that Hispanic members develop a sense of respect for others, especially their elders, and a strong sense of work ethic. (Carpenter, et. al, 2016). Lopez (2001) supports these findings expressing that it is through their work ethics, Hispanic parents teach their children three lessons: 1. To become acquainted with the type of work they do, 2. To understand the work is difficult, and 3. To demonstrate that without an education, this is the type of work they may end up doing.

Respeto, simply translated to respect, goes beyond the literal translation, and communicates an understood sense of obedience in daily actions and interactions with others. Taught to children by parent modeling, *respeto* helps account for the instinctual interdependence and assertiveness that is seen among Hispanic families, which give way

to independence and autonomy (Tafoya, 2016; Valenzuela, 1999). It should be noted that *respeto*, at times, can impede parent engagement. Such as, Whitaker and Hoover-Dempsey (2013) reported that Hispanic families have much respect for educators; They hold teachers at the esteem of doctors and priests, and thus they may feel it is not their role to interfere. Some Hispanic families, actually, may view questioning educators as disrespectful (Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013).

Lastly, attaining an *educación* is an important goal and principal that guides many Hispanic families (Hill & Torres, 2010; Valenzuela, 1999). The term, however, does not suggest only doing well academically. It also denotes developing the moral and ethical character that is expected among Hispanic individuals, such as having respect for others, developing a sense of loyalty, and making decisions based on what is best for all, not the individual. The academic endeavors, though, is what Hill and Torres (2010) stated are the driving force for the majority who immigrate to the United States. It is this 'luxury' of education that is unattainable among many of our Hispanic family homelands (Hill & Torres, 2010).

As can be seen, Hispanic families have a desire to be involved, they hold education as a priority, and want what is best for their child. Additionally, Hispanic families want to raise children that assist and have respect for others, and value their culture. What then impedes Hispanic families from engaging with campuses? As noted, it could at times be not wanting to appear disrespectful in questioning teachers (Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013) but, are there other obstacles that Hispanic parents face?

Previous studies that focused solely on the ethnicity illustrated varying obstacles that impacted engagement included low levels of receptivity by campuses, lack of effective communication, ineffective recruitment, and difficulties with child care (Lopez, 2001, Gibson, 2002; Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995). Worthy and Rodriguez-Galindo (2006) added limited English language proficiency also impacted parental engagement, as language barriers may limit an understanding of campus expectations, communication, and ability to guide their children through the education process. Schmid (2001) also stated some family's inability to assimilate to U.S. standards, as well as work schedules, and, limited means of transportation added to inability to fully engage with campuses.

Smith, Stern, and Shatrova's (2008) study that specifically looked at factors that inhibited Hispanic parent school involvement confirmed several of the previously mentioned obstacles, and also reported language barriers as the major factor impacting family engagement. The researchers shared school communication such as information letters, school calendars, lunch menus and newsletters were often distributed in English only. As a result, confusion arose and, "children would arrive at school on 'free dress day' wearing the required daily school uniform or would be dressed and waiting on the bus on the professional development day for teachers" (Smith, et. al, 2008, p. 10).

Smith, et. al (2008) also shared that many Hispanic families were reluctant to question authority or advocate for their child's rights. Perhaps the reasons stem from the key principal of *respeto*, as suggested by Carpenter, et. al (2016), although one family shared it was awkward to do so when their child served as the interpreter. Another family, whose child was quietly removed from a classroom due to discriminatory

actions, acknowledged they simply did not want to create a larger problem by reporting it to the principal.

Interestingly, among the data that reviewed obstacles that impeded Hispanic family engagement were Hispanic parents' expectations for what children should be taught in school (Smith, et. al, 2008). The researchers reported expectations among parents varied widely with the only subject in agreement being English. Some families favored traditional academic subjects of math, history, and science, while others preferred behavioral objectives such as proper etiquette or citizenship. The families in this same study did, however, agree that their role was to motivate their child to work hard, behave appropriately, and ensure completion of their homework (Smith, et. al, 2008).

In summary, Hispanic families have a number of crucial principles that guide their everyday practices, including *familismo*, *respeto*, and *educación*, among others. The ethnicity appears to share similar obstacles seen among other demographics, such as working multiple jobs or lack of transportation, but also face obstacles unique to Hispanics, such as ineffective communication attributed to language barriers. From the author's perspective, it is crucial for educational leaders to be able to overcome these obstacles, and accommodate language barriers by having translators for parents that request this. It is also important to communicate the importance of engagement by being clear about expectations and roles for parents, as well as provide opportunities for participation. Ultimately, it is understanding one's stakeholders that will create an effective parent engagement plan that is not unilateral, but considers the needs and perspectives of everyone involved.

Parent Engagement Frameworks

Throughout generations of research over parent engagement, multiple frameworks have been created and utilized (Ajzen, 1991; Garbacz, McIntosh, Eagle, Dowd-Eagle, Hirano, & Ruppert, 2016; Montemayor & Chavkin, 2016). For this study, however, Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement and Barton's Ecologies of Parent Engagement Framework will be utilized to frame the collection and analysis of data. Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement was selected because it provides a research-based, comprehensive, school-centric approach for what campuses can do to engage parents. On the other hand, Barton's Ecologies of Parental Engagement Framework, viewed in this study as a parent-centric approach, examined the *how* and *why* parents engage, as well as parent perspectives and their means to capitalize on those initiatives.

Because each framework addressed either a campus-centric or parent-centric approach, the study aimed to provide an alternative approach by merging the two. This alternative approach had the intention of viewing parent engagement as a multidirectional phenomenon rather than the traditional unilateral, one-sided, or push-pull model (Kraft et al., 2015), suggested in much of the literature. In doing so, the alternative approach aspired to comprehend the relationship-building factors that supported parent engagement at primarily Hispanic, secondary campuses. The following, thus, includes an in-depth overview of each framework, as well as the proposed alternative framework.

Epstein's Six Types of Involvement Framework. Epstein's Six Types of Involvement framework (2013) emerged from a broader, research-supported framework, Epstein and Sheldon's (2006) Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence (Figure 1)

This theory stresses the importance of three contexts (school, home, and community) and their influence on student learning and development. The theory argues for the establishment of partnerships among these contexts to support student academic success and behaviors, as well as a means to mold attitudes of education, goals, and desires (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006). Epstein and Sheldon's work stands in contrast to classical theories of Waller (1932) and Weber (1947), which suggested that having separate goals, roles, and responsibilities was a more effective and efficient means of approach for schools and family organizations.

The external structure of Epstein and Sheldon's theory takes into account the overlapping of contexts and the unique influence they have on student perspectives and cognitive development. Each of these contexts moves within proximity or distance themselves from one another as a result of external forces and internal interactions. As Epstein and Sheldon (2006) state, external forces include the developmental characteristics of students and the actions of families, schools, and community. Furthermore, each context is pushed or pulled towards another and influence students based on respective backgrounds. Internal interactions refer to the respective lines of communications among all contexts with students and each other (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006).

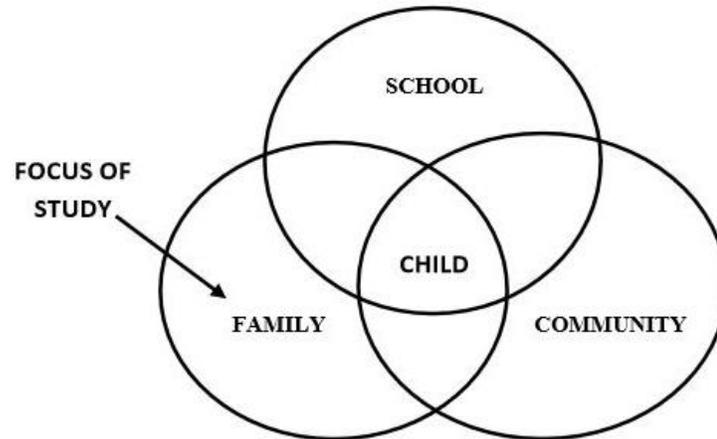


Figure 1. Overlapping Sphere of Influence.

The theory of overlapping spheres was influenced by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecology of human development, and Coleman's (1991) social capital theory, among others. In brief, the ecology of human development theory (Figure 2) states that an individual's development is a holistic result of complex, reciprocal, ongoing interactions between a person and five organized environmental subsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These systems include microsystems, which refers to the relationship between a person and their immediate environment, and macrosystems that include the impact of cultures. These systems are, too, influenced by mesosystems that are the linkage between microsystems, exosystems that impact mesosystems, and chronosystems that incorporate a third dimension, time (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

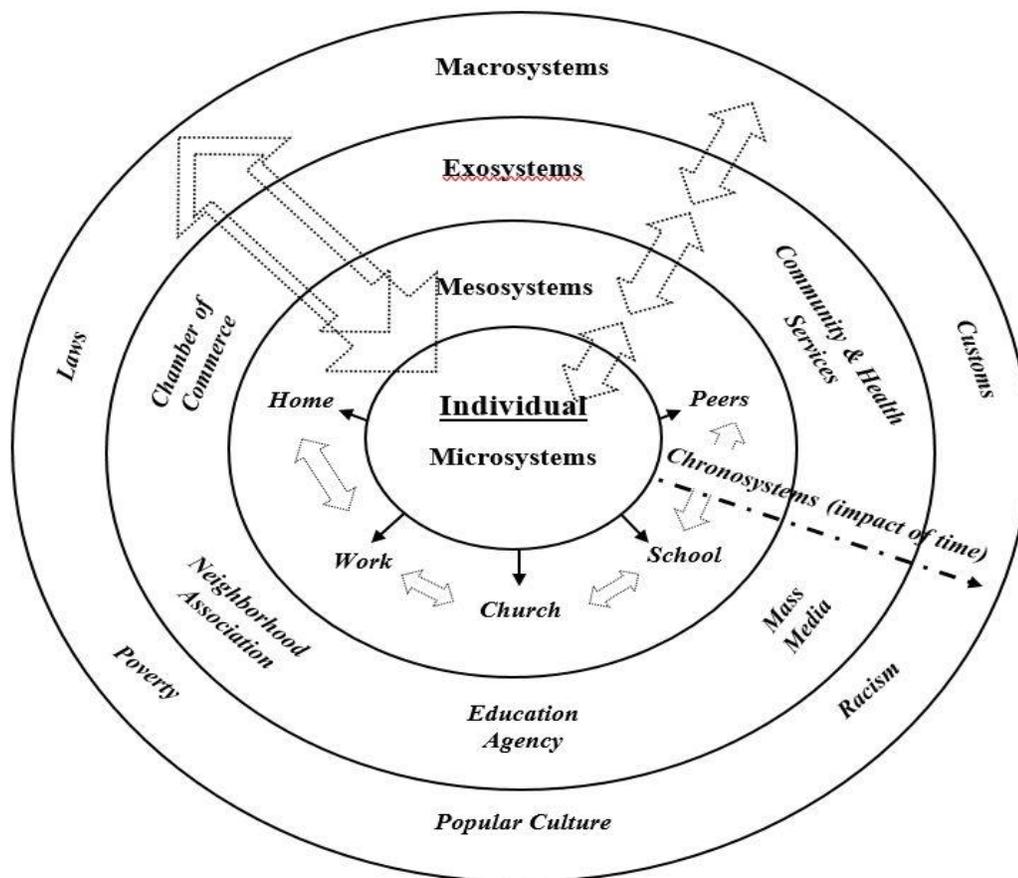


Figure 2. Bronfenbrenner's Ecology of Human Development Theory

Social capital theory describes the impact that social relationships between a person and their environment, including family and community, have in decision-making, achievement, behavior, and attitude, as well as establishing the norms and acceptable behaviors in society (Coleman, 1991). These relationships, which are meant to enable society to function effectively and efficiently, build social capital, or a foundation of knowledge for which students make decisions or overcome challenges (Coleman, 1991). For example, if a child has a trustworthy relationship involving exposure to positive values, morals, and/or activities with an adult, the social capital built in the relationship can serve as a resource when dealt with dilemmas involving friends, schoolwork, or

teachers. Likewise, positive relationships with a community such as a campus that explicitly defines proper behavior and expectations can serve as the social capital necessary in dealing with peer pressures (Coleman, 1991).

As should be clear, this work stresses the interactions and lessons attained within respective components of an environment and their influence on student actions, perspectives, motivation, and perhaps achievement. As demonstrated by Epstein and Sheldon (2006), the explicit and ongoing partnership with schools, parents, and communities positively impacts academic achievement, attitudes, and behavior. This data is not being contested in this study but rather being dissected by focusing on strictly the parent component (Figure 1).

It is this component that is addressed by the Framework of Six Types of Involvement (Epstein, 2013) and serves as part of the conceptual framework for gathering and analyzing data in this qualitative comparative case study that aimed to describe how primarily Hispanic high schools engage parents, as well as understand parent perspectives toward engagement and factors that impact their ability to engage with campuses. The research-generated framework, which according to Epstein (2004) is utilized by over 200 campuses that are members of the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at John Hopkins University in the United States, is guided by components for parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaboration with the community. Each component appears to be important to consider when developing a campus engagement plan, however may require additional support to fully understand parental engagement.

The reasons are that, though, the holistic guide for educational leaders encompasses a campus-centric approach to engaging parents, it does not stress the need to comprehend parent perspectives toward parent engagement nor their abilities to engage if desired. Additionally, there is a lack of emphasis on the relationship-building aspect of parent engagement that is necessary, as engagement is a partnership and not a unilateral initiative. As a result, the researcher aspires to support this conceptual model by bridging *what* campuses can do to engage parents with an understanding of *how* and *why* parents engage with campuses in using the following Ecologies of Parental Engagement framework (Barton, et. al, 2004).

Barton and colleagues' Ecologies of Parental Engagement. The Ecologies of Parental Engagement (2004) framework addresses two key aspects of parent engagement; *how* parents utilize familiarity and experience in maneuvering the education system to advocate for their child, and *why* they do so in the first place. *Why* a parent does so, if they desire, is based on personal or perhaps cultural perspectives and attitudes, and is important because parent engagement requires input and a partnership from both families and campuses to truly support one another. Thus, focusing on just *what* a campus can do to engage parents may lead to ill-informed planning that may not target campuses crucial stakeholder's goals, desires, and ability to engage. As a result, the author aimed to merge Epstein's (2013) school-centric framework with Barton and colleague's (2004) campus-centric approach.

The latter, Ecologies of Parental Engagement framework (2004), is rooted in both cultural-historical and critical race theories. Cultural-history theory, developed by Lev Vygotsky and Alexander Luria in the 1920s, helped provide an understanding for how the

differing interactions and changing contexts on campuses impact parental engagement (Barton et al., 2014). Specifically, the theory addresses how higher order cognitive functions, such as language acquisition, learning, and motivation, are influenced by interactions with people and their social environment (Vygotsky, 1978, 1987).

Vygotsky (1978, 1987) suggested individual learning is not only influenced by social environments, such as with other adults, schools, and community organizations, but also by the cultural beliefs and attitudes both interacting parties possess. These cultural values give order, purpose, and motivation towards initiatives, such as parental engagement, based on the normalized social practices and values of the players, tools, and rules that facilitate the practice (Barton et al., 2004). For example, parents who value engagement and are in an environment that promotes and welcomes their presence, as well as provides the tools and settings for them to engage on campuses, will be more likely motivated, want to further learn about how to become more involved, and interact with schools.

On the other hand, differing cultural beliefs, attitudes, and normalized social practices between an individual and their social environment or organization potentially constrain desires and motivation. For example, an individual who does not value parent engagement may not seek to interact with campuses that welcome their presence. The same can also be said for people who seek to engage with a campus, but are not provided with a receptive environment or have to face multiple obstacles to be heard and impactful at a school. This occurrence can unfortunately occur as a result of differing cultural values and assumed power differences, and is described by the other foundational theory, Critical Race Theory (CRT).

CRT, which proposes that race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequality, can help explain how differing social norms and assumed power differences influence parental engagement (Landson-Billings & Tate, 1995). According to Barton et al. (2004), schools tend to maintain the values of capitalist culture, positioning the cultures of poor and minorities as subordinate. This view, thus, can impact the motivation of a parent who feels unvalued and negatively judged as a result of their ethnicity, language, and beliefs. As a result, minority parents may not be as engaged on their children's campuses not out of want or desire, but because they do not feel accepted.

Understanding the influences that shape perceptions and motivations for parent engagement are important; however, there is need to understand the other factors that impact a parent's ability to engage on campuses. These include, as mentioned in the Ecologies of Parental Engagement (2004) framework, a need to understand how to maneuver the educational system's spaces by building capital to fully engage in a child's learning. Barton and colleagues (2004) define spaces as both academic and non-academic that are supported by underlying structures and resources, possessing weak boundaries, and are characterized by the individuals that interact within the space, the roles they play, the tools utilized, and the artifacts that are produced as a result of shared participation.

An example of an academic space could be a science classroom that is defined by the rules that regulate the expectations of students, welcomes parent engagement, and provides a means for parents to communicate with the teacher, be present in classes, or help make decisions pertaining to the class. An example of a non-academic space could be the library where a Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meeting is being held. This space could be defined by the expectations of parents to sign in and not be heard, or by

the belief that they should be active members of the dialogue and initiatives being discussed, as well as the tools and resources they have available to them. As can be seen, numerous spaces exist on a campus and, depending on the multiple conditions that define them, these spaces help address the degree to which parents are engaged.

According to Barton et al. (2004), capital, on the other hand, also plays a role in parent engagement. Capital includes the beliefs, experiences, and actions, individuals, such as parents, possess and utilize when interacting in any given space (Barton et al., 2004). Various forms of capital exist including social capital, which was mentioned earlier, as well as linguistic, aspirational, familial, navigational, and resistance, which will be explained below (Yosso, 2005). Social capital, which was described in part by Coleman (1991) in the Social Capital theory, can be understood as the networks of people and community resources that provide both instrumental and emotional support to navigate through society's institutions (Yosso, 2005).

Yosso (2005) challenges traditional notions of social capital by defining other types of capital including aspirational capital as the ability to maintain hopes and dreams regardless of the obstacle, linguistic capital as the intellectual and social skills attained through communication, and familial capital as the cultural knowledge obtained and nurtured through family that carry a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition. Additionally, navigational capital refers to the ability to maneuver through a social institution, such as an educational space, while resistance capital are the knowledge and skills that were fostered as a result of racial inequality (Yosso, 2005). Yosso (2005) argues that, "These various forms of capital are not mutually exclusive or static, but

rather are dynamic processes that build on one another as part of community cultural wealth” (p.77).

Although, Barton et al. (2004) does not go into detail about the varying types of capital, they do concur that the total amount of capital possessed, which Yosso (2005) states make up a person’s community cultural wealth, impacts the ability and degree to which parents engage on campuses. For instance, a parent with a strong sense of aspirational capital, which includes the ability to overcome obstacles and continually move forward towards a goal, may not be as impacted by an unwelcoming space in comparison to a parent who is quickly discouraged due to a lack of aspirational capital. However, for this study, like Barton et al. (2004) utilizes in their Ecology of Parental Engagement framework, capital will be described solely as the overall beliefs, experiences, and actions, individuals, such as parents, possess and utilize when interacting in any given space, rather than by the various forms described by Yosso (2005).

Ultimately, the Ecologies of Parental Engagement (2004) possesses three assumptions that describe the relationship between space and capital, which together impact overall parent engagement:

1. Parental engagement is the mediation between space and capital in relation to others in a school setting. By building capital in the formal and non-formal spaces in a school setting, parents are more than likely to become truly engaged and advocates of their child’s learning.

2. Engagement as mediation must be understood as both an action and mediation to action. Thus, parental engagement can be described as the physical action or response

to an educational stimulus, as well as the forthcoming negation of the situation or lack thereof, as a result of the capital possessed and built through the experience.

3. Differences in parental engagement across different kinds of spaces in urban schools are both micro, or directly impacted, and macro or a much larger phenomenon. Each of these assumptions play a role in the degree to which a parent is able to engage in campus initiatives.

Alongside an understanding of parent perspectives and beliefs regarding engagement, the Ecologies of Parental Engagement (2004) provides a crucial understanding of the parent-centric aspects of parent engagement. By the same token, the campus-centric Six Types of Involvement (2013) provides valuable information for methods to engage parents. However, parental engagement is not a static, unidirectional phenomenon but rather includes both parent and campus communication, interactions, and relationship building. As a result, merging the two frameworks provides insight into *what* campuses can do to engage families with *how* and *why* parents engage. The following, thus, aims to describe an alternative framework that merges the two to truly understand the complexities of parental engagement.

An Alternative Framework. Parent engagement is a complex phenomenon that includes and is impacted by a number of components. These factors include campus initiatives that aim to encourage parent engagement, an understanding of parent cultures, goals, desires, and expectations, insight into obstacles that impede engagement, and an efficient means of building relationships. Parent engagement frameworks, however, typically focus on one perspective in building plans for or understanding parent engagement. Thus, from the educational leader's perspective, understanding both the

parent-centric and school-centric components, as well as insight into establishing and sustaining a relationship between the two may institute a more solid foundation from which to initiate parent engagement strategies.

The subsequent, alternative framework proposed in this study aimed to bridge and provide an understanding of both the school-centric and parent-centric components illustrated by Epstein's Six Types of Involvement framework and the parent-centric Barton et, al.'s (2004) Ecologies of Parent Engagement framework. By understanding the campus-centric, or *what* campuses do to engage parents, and the parent-centric components, which addresses *how* and *why* parents engage, a clearer, more realistic view of parent engagement is presented. This view is one that includes parents as both authors and agents in parent engagement, and not strictly as receivers of campus initiatives as often presented in the literature. Likewise, the framework addresses how both components interact and influence the ultimate level of engagement. This framework, as outlined in Figure 3, is meant to serve as a resource for district and campus leaders who are developing a more complete and practical parent engagement plan focused on the Hispanic community.

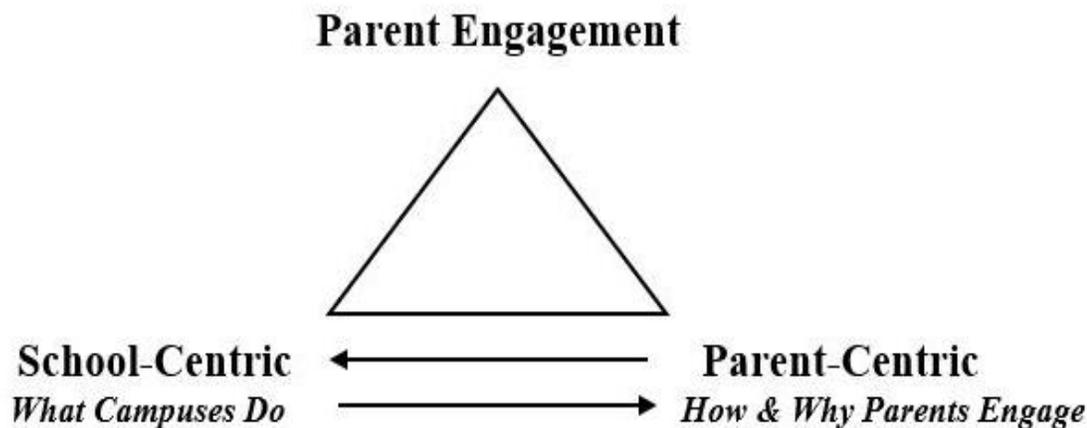


Figure 3. Parent Engagement: Bridging School and Parent Centric Approaches

Conclusion

Parent engagement has been shown over the last several decades to positively impact academic achievement, behaviors, and attitudes towards school (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006, Steinberg, 1996, Hoover-Dempsey, et. al, 1995, Estell & Perdue, 2013). Given the importance of parent engagement, legislation such as the former NCLB Act (2001), the current Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), and Title I funding mandated parent involvement on campuses. However, parent engagement has been shown to decrease as students move from the primary to secondary level especially high school (Dauber & Epstein, 1993). As a result, the study aimed to understand, utilizing collective case study techniques, how primarily Hispanic secondary campuses in a large urban school district engage parents. In addition, the study aspired to comprehend parents' beliefs regarding parent engagement and factors that impacted their engagement, as well as insight in building and sustaining a relationship between both constituents.

These campus and parent-centric perspectives described by Epstein's (2013) Six Types of Involvement and Barton et al.'s (2004) Ecologies of Parental Engagement are

crucial for understanding parent engagement, although they only present a limited picture of the phenomenon. They do not stress that parent engagement is an ongoing, multidirectional process that involves interactions between both campuses and parents, nor do they assess a means of building and sustaining a relationship between both. As a result, an alternative framework that merges the philosophies and intents of the Six Types of Involvement and the Ecologies of Parental Engagement was presented as to assist educational leaders in planning and implementing a holistic parent engagement plan.

Chapter III

Methods

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to 1) fill gaps in the literature pertaining to parent engagement and the lack thereof, known as the “secondary slump,” at the secondary level, 2) understand the practices that “high parent engagement” campuses utilize to engage parents, 3) understand parents’ beliefs towards parent engagement and the factors that facilitate or discourage their engagement, and 4) examine how the relationship between parents and campuses ultimately support parent engagement. The study addressed this purpose by collecting and analyzing data from two different types of high school campuses, one School of Choice and one comprehensive high school in order to examine the diverse approaches.

This chapter is organized as follows. The study’s research questions along with research design will first be explored to provide an understanding of the focus and intent of the research. Following, an overview of the comparative case study’s site selections is discussed to share characteristics of each campus. Data collection and analysis is later communicated to provide the reader the step by step approach used to ascertain findings. Lastly, the reflexivity and positionality of the researcher are reviewed to allow insight of the author, their intent, and perhaps unforeseen bias. Ultimately, this study focused on providing researchers and educational leaders a holistic understanding of parent engagement, specific to the Hispanic community, to better serve the needs of their students.

Research Questions

The comparative case study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What do “high parent engagement” high school campuses do to engage parents?
2. What are parents’ beliefs and perspectives regarding the importance of parent engagement?
3. What factors facilitate or discourage parents’ ability and willingness to engage with campuses?

Research Design

This qualitative study used a comparative case study design described by Goodrick (2014) comprising multiple school sites in order to answer the research questions posed above. Comparative case study research allows for an in-depth study of multiple cases, which are bounded by time and place, within a real-life, context or setting (Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2013). They involve the in-depth collection of data, including fieldwork visits, observations, interviews, pertinent documents, and/or audiovisual material to provide a thick description of the case and emerging themes (Creswell, 2013; Goodrick, 2014).

Goodrick (2014) notes that comparative case studies should begin by clarifying the purpose of the study and research questions based upon the identifying theories and frameworks that focus the study. Comparative case studies require identification of the cases, which can be concrete such as a person or organization, or less concrete, such as a relationship or decision process (Yin, 2009; Goodrick, 2014). In this study, two Title I predominately Hispanic high school campuses were compared to provide a holistic view

of parent engagement at campuses that parents have rated as having high levels of engagement as determined by a comprehensive district-wide survey. Specifically, this study sought to examine *what* a campus does to engage parents, *why* and *how* parents engage with schools, and which factors support relationship building between both constituents to maximize parent engagement.

Cases in this study were selected based on the similarities they exhibited including being perceived by parents for multiple years as highly parent engaging campuses, being identified as 100% Title I or a campus that served primarily low socioeconomic status (SES) families, and having at least a population of 80% Hispanic student body and above. Although each case differed in size and the type of high school, comprehensive versus School of Choice, both cases were explored to offer educational leaders a range of ideas for developing holistic parent engagement plans. Cases were compared to ascertain differences in campus driven initiatives, parent perspectives, and approaches to relationship building that all supported the common goal, increasing parent engagement that could perhaps support student achievement.

Site Selection

The comparative case study included two 9th – 12th grade high schools located in a large urban school district in Texas. Each campus, one comprehensive high school and one School of Choice, were identified utilizing a district-wide survey, made up of 50 questions, given to parents, students, and administrators at the end of the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school year. For this study, though, only results from high school parents were used in identification of sites. The survey addressed perceptions of several campus

criteria, including overall satisfaction, academic rigor, campus safety, faculty and staff, and parent engagement.

In the parent engagement component of both surveys, there were seven questions, each of which had possible responses of “Yes” or “No.” Each question was either prompted with “Parents answered “Yes” or “No” to the following questions” (Survey, 2013-2014), as seen in Appendix A, or “Based on your experience, do you agree with each of the following statements about Family and Community Engagement at your child’s school” (Survey, 2014-2015), demonstrated in Appendix B. Results released to the public to these sections included the percentage of parents answering “Yes” to each parent engagement question at each campus.

First, potential high school campuses for this study were initially identified by the researcher as “high parent engagement” by taking an average of the percentages of each question in the parent engagement component of the 2013-2014 survey and filtered in descending order. Results across over 30 high school campuses indicated a range of 94% to 56% of parents expressing positive parent engagement practices on respective secondary campuses. Following, high schools were filtered to fit the need and intent of the study, which focused on Title I, primarily Hispanic campuses. Consequently, predominately Hispanic campuses were identified in this study as those with a student population of 80% or more Hispanic. As a result, filtering of high schools narrowed the list of potential school sites from over 20 to 9.

After this, similar averages of parent engagement questions and filtering of the nine Title I, predominately Hispanic high school campus’ 2014-2015 survey data were assessed to evaluate consistency and support the 2013-2014 findings. Overall, two Title I,

majority Hispanic high school campuses ranked highest among over 30 high schools in the 2013-2014 survey with 94% and 92% of parents noting positive parent engagement practices at each school. The following year's data, 2014-2015, again showed the two high schools among the highest compared to other Title I, predominately Hispanic secondary schools with an 96% and 86% average. As a result, the researcher decided to select these two campuses as the sites for this study.

One campus, a School of Choice high school named P. Deleon High School ranked among the highest for both consecutive years. The other high school, a comprehensive high school campus named C. Martinez High School ranked in the top five among all high schools in 2013-2014 and similar schools in 2014-2015. (Both P. Deleon High School and C. Martinez High School are pseudonyms given to each site to protect their identity.) Although C. Martinez High School average was lower the following year, the school still ranked among the top tier of all high schools in parent engagement, and thus the author maintained the decision to include it in the study.

Schools of Choice and comprehensive high schools were very different campuses. They both were held to the same academic expectations and state accountability, however varied in several areas discussed next. Comprehensive high schools, such as C. Martinez High School, were made up of a mix of both zoned students, or those who live within proximity to the campus, and out-of-zone students who applied because they wanted to attend the campus' magnet or specialty program. Students zoned to comprehensive high school campuses were automatically accepted, while out-of-zone acceptance was based on differing criteria, such as historical academic performance and behavior.

Schools of Choice high schools such as P. Deleon High School, which began as a charter school, on the other hand, were not made up of zoned students, but rather consisted of a body where everyone applied and were accepted based on academic or performance merit. Magnet or specialty programs varied among Schools of Choice campuses, though some had none. While the application for some Schools of Choice high schools were completed by a district lottery, others such as P. Deleon were conducted purely internally. Both comprehensive high school out-of-zone students and all Schools of Choice students were evaluated yearly to determine whether they could attend the following year. Typically, misbehaviors and poor academic performance were causes for students not to be accepted to the comprehensive high school magnet program or a School of Choice the ensuing year.

Other differences between the two types of campuses were that comprehensive high schools were normally larger than Schools of Choice. For instance, C. Martinez had roughly 2700 students, while P. Deleon enrolled a little over 400 in the 2017-2018 school year. Additionally, comprehensive high school campuses commonly had University Interscholastic League (UIL) sports and activities such as basketball, baseball, softball, volleyball and band, which were not normally observed in many Schools of Choice. Lastly, Schools of Choice did not have student transportation served by the district, while comprehensive high schools did.

Although the campuses utilized in this study differed in a number of areas, the author felt it important to include both in the study for several reasons. First, both campuses were noted by parents as being “high parent engagement” campuses. Second, both campuses served similar, low social economic status (SES), primarily Hispanic

student bodies. Third, the differences in types of campuses perhaps would lead to differing approaches to engage parents, as well as varying beliefs by parents. Lastly, the ultimate goal of the study was to provide educational leaders serving similar student bodies an assortment of ideas that best fit their needs to engage parents. It was with this goal in mind that the author saw even more value in including differing type campuses.

Case 1. Ranking first, overall and in comparison to other Title I, predominately Hispanic schools, in the survey for both consecutive years was P. Deleon High School, a School of Choice high school located in the eastern part of the district. This area of the city, according to the region's Chamber of Commerce, whose reference was not made available to protect the identity of the campus and district, is made up of over 238,000 residents, characterized as 70% Hispanic with 25.9% possessing high school diplomas and 10.6% having college degrees. P. Deleon High School was established in 1999 and had, according to the school's 2016 Texas Education Agency's (TEA) report card, 419 students, 95% of whom are Hispanic.

In the state of Texas, campuses are categorized yearly as having Met Standards, Met Alternative Standard, or Improvement Required based on state goals for student achievement and progress, closing the achievement gap, and post-secondary readiness. Campuses that do extremely well in meeting these state goals and rank in the top tier of similar type schools are given Distinction Designations in varying areas. Similar type schools are those that are comparable in size and demographics, and are determined by the state. High schools in the state of Texas have an opportunity to gain up to seven Distinction Designations.

Having a tradition of academic success, P. Deleon High School currently has Met Standards as defined by the state, and far surpassed the threshold in the four main indexes the state assesses including Student Achievement, Student Progress, Closing the Achievement Gap, and Post-Secondary Readiness. As a result, the campus is recognized with all Distinction Designations, including those in Mathematics, English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Top 25% in Student Progress, and Post-Secondary Readiness. P. Deleon's attendance, 97.4%, is roughly 2% above both the district and state average of 95.6% and 95.7%, respectively (TEA, 2016). Additionally, the campus has a 0.0% dropout rate, and 100% 4-Year Longitudinal Graduation Rate.

Case 2. Ranking second, overall and comparison to similar schools, in the 2013-2014 survey and in the top five in comparison to primarily Hispanic, Title I one high schools in the 2014-2015 survey was C. Martinez High School. C. Martinez is a comprehensive high school located in the northern part of the district. According to the city website's area demographics, this part of the district is made up of over 84,797 residents, characterized as 83% Hispanic with 31.3% possessing high school diplomas and 9.9% having college degrees.

C. Martinez High School, founded in 1955, is composed of, according to the school's 2016 Texas Education Agency's (TEA) report card, 2,661 students, 91% of whom are Hispanic. C. Martinez High School currently has Met Standards as defined by the state, and surpassed the threshold in the three of the four main indexes the state assesses including Student Progress, Closing the Achievement Gap, and Post-Secondary Readiness, just missing the Student Achievement metric by two points. Additionally, the campus is recognized with Distinction Designations in English Language Art/Reading

and Social Studies. C. Martinez's attendance is slightly below both the district and state average of 95.6% and 95.7%, respectively (TEA, 2016). Though, the campus has a dropout rate of 2.3%, which is almost half the district's 3.9% and an 87% 4-Year Longitudinal Graduation Rate in comparison to the district's 82%.

Procedures

For each case, principals were first contacted through either a phone call or email during the latter part of the 2015-2016 school year. Each campus leader was informed of the researcher's preliminary intentions of the research and the rationale for why their campus was selected. Both principals agreed to take part in the study, and either personally invited the researcher to participate in parent -focused events, or referred him to a parent liaison who provided information regarding upcoming parent centered events. After the invitations were issued, the researcher began to attend events informally, depending on his availability, to begin to learn how these campuses engaged parents, as well as to build a relationship with both administrators and staff members. Informal follow-up conversations with the principals continued as adjustments were made to the study, and feedback was received from the researcher's committee members. Interviews with parents and school personnel were conducted after the researcher obtained IRB and district permission in October and November of 2017.

As a means of encouraging participation, light refreshments as well as a \$20 gift card were provided as incentives in attracting parents. These parents were recruited verbally at a prior parent engagement event by the researcher as well as with the assistance of the principal at one site and the parent liaison at the other. Flyers were also created (See Appendix E) to assist in recruiting parents. At focus group sessions, parents

were first welcomed, given an overview of the study, and asked for their consent to be a part of the study and tape recorded as shown in Appendix F before initiating the session (Krueger, 2002).

The storing of data, original handwritten fieldwork or site visit notes, as well as documents ascertained to address practices campuses utilize to engage parents were scanned as a pdf file. Original documents were stored in a locked file cabinet, while scanned pdf files were stored in the researcher's DropBox account, which was password protected. Audio recordings of focus group sessions and interviews were backed up on the researcher's iCloud account, which was also password protected. After the transcribing of these recordings, transcriptions were also kept in the researcher's DropBox account. In protecting the anonymity of participants, names and identifying data were masked. To protect the anonymity of the sites, pseudonyms were also assigned.

Data Collection

The following section aims to describe the multiple means of data collection for this comparative case investigation. Those methods stem from suggestions provided in Creswell's (2014) qualitative methods data collective procedures and Goodrick's (2014) comparative case study method, and aspire to help answer *what* campuses can do to strengthen parent engagement, *how* and *why* parents engage with schools, and ways to strengthen the partnership between both. These data collection methods include fieldwork or site visits, focus group and one-on-one interviews, and a variety of documents utilized during parent-centered events.

In this study, at least five site-visits were made to both P. Deleon High School and C. Martinez High School between December 2016 and November 2017. These included

attending a mix of parent-centered events including several Coffee with the Principal meetings, a Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meeting, a Parent Instructional Walkthrough, a Health Fair, and a special meeting addressing a current issue of immigrant rights. Utilizing a similar protocol (See Appendix C) obtained from Tufts University and guided by Angrosino (2007), the researcher aimed to become familiar with each case by taking notes of the campus' physical setting, as well as the format, context, and manner of parent engagement events.

While at parent-centered events, the researcher initially intended to act as described by Creswell (2013) as a “nonparticipant/observer as participant.” This role places the researcher as an outsider who is seen but limits interaction with others, as a means of focusing on the objective at hand. The difficulty, however, lay in not interacting with others, which the researcher viewed as being rude, particularly given the fact they were an acting principal in the district. As a result, the researcher ultimately played the role of “participant as observer,” which they felt would assist in developing trust with the campus and participants (Creswell, 2013).

Data was also collected by conducting focus group sessions with parents and an individual interview with the Principal and an administrator or staff member responsible for parent engagement at each campus. Focus groups and individual interviews took place in October/November 2017, after receiving Institutional Review Board (IRB) permission from both the university and district of study in September 2017. Focus group interviews with parents were semi-structured in nature and guided by Krueger's (2002) *Designing and Conducting Focus Group Interviews* protocol. This protocol gives advice

for moderating, creating questions, note taking, and following up afterwards (Krueger, 2002).

The initial goal of the study was to have two focus group sessions at each site with a preferred four to six participants at each session. In the end though, the researcher was able to have three focus group sessions, two at C. Martinez and one at P. Deleon, due to scheduling conflicts, with total of eighteen participants, six in each. The intent of the focus groups was to further understand practices the campus of study employs to engage parents, as well as parent beliefs regarding parent engagement, factors that facilitate or discourage parent abilities to engage with the campus, and aspects that support relationship building between parents and the school. The focus group interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish, depending on the native language and preference of participants, and included open-ended questions identified in the Focus Group Interview Protocol (See Appendix D).

One-on-one interviews took place with a campus administrator, the principal at both sites, and staff member responsible for parent engagement, the parent liaison at one site and assistant principal at the other, to further understand the research questions, although this time from the school-centric perspective. These interviews, whose anticipated time was a half hour, were also semi-structured in nature and guided by open-ended questions listed in the interview protocol (See Appendix F). As with the focus group format, interviews were initiated with a welcoming, an overview of the study, the amount of time needed, and plans for utilizing the results (Creswell, 2013). Participants were then asked for their consent to participate in the study as mandated by IRB, and for their permission to be audio recorded.

Lastly, data collected and utilized in this study included 2016-2017 meeting agendas shared with the researcher by both campuses and the handouts/pamphlets attained while attending parent-centered events. These agendas were important because the researcher could not attend every meeting or event, and thus this data added to *what* the campus did to engage parents. It was through the triangulation of these documents along with other data that the researcher aimed to understand the varying ways campuses sought to engage parents. Topics and content outlined in these data sources were coded and aligned to major components in Epstein's Six Types of Involvement Framework (2013), and ultimately served as a resource for educational leaders looking for ideas to engage parents in the particular areas of volunteering, decision making, connection with the community, communication, parenting, and learning at home.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis according to Kerry (2007) requires an emic/etic stance by the researcher. An emic approach refers to one that initiates from the insider perspectives, while an etic approach utilizes an outsider perspective based on established theory, hypothesis, and frameworks. Kerry (2007) argues that a good analysis utilizes a mix of both approaches, such as initiating a study with an emic approach to understand insider points of view followed by utilization of etic tools of scientific theory and research to make sense of those data.

The researcher's stance in the multi-iterative, reflexive data analysis of this study utilized a mix of both an emic and etic approach to assess the data with the use of pre-existing research and theory (etic) as well as with an insider's perspective (emic) to understand the thoughts and perceptions of participants as they relate to the multiple

components of parent engagement. Prior to analysis, all data were organized and prepared, as suggested by Creswell (2014), for analysis by typing up field notes, transcribing interviews, and scanning documents attained at site visits. During the initial phase of analysis, data were reviewed as a whole to gather a sense and make meaning of the entire database. Termed the reading and memoing stage by Creswell (2013), the pre-coding phase by Saldaña (2009), and the skimming or superficial examination phase by Bowen (2009), this step served as the first analysis step, and included short notes and thoughts about data, prior to dissecting data into parts (Agar, 1980).

Following that, data were coded by hand with pre-determined, *a priori* codes derived from Epstein's (2013) and Barton and colleagues' (2004) conceptual frameworks to assess and understand the *what*, *how*, and *why* of parent engagement for each case (Blair, 2015). After that, data analysis progressed from the etic, otherwise known as top down or deductive, approach to the use of open coding (Blair, 2015; Khandar, 2009), which is inductive, across all cases to uncover emergent themes not included in the literature review. In this phase of analysis, data underwent multiple stages of coding and analysis including axial coding/content analysis, which organizes information into categories, and selective coding/thematic analysis, which is an evaluation of codes and categories to support developing themes (Creswell, 2014; Saldaña, 2009; Bowen, 2009; Blair, 2015).

Data analysis was first communicated, in the findings section of this study, as they related to both cases. Following that, analysis of individual cases and included emergent themes related to defining parent engagement, understanding the *what*, *how* and *why* of parent engagement, areas for improvement, and suggestions for building a

stronger relationship between parents and schools were presented. All conclusions, however, were first reviewed for validity and reliability through the use of data source triangulation. This was the process of examining outcomes among differing sources of data such as interviews, focus group sessions, and documents to substantiate results and minimize inadequacies seen in one data source (Creswell, 2014).

Reflexivity and Positionality

Creswell (2013) states that qualitative researchers need to “position” themselves in their writing, making it explicit, as their experiences can create values that lead to unintentional biases and interpretations of data. It is in this reflexivity that the researcher can also reflect on how their role and personal background potentially shape emergent themes and the direction of the study (Creswell, 2014). Thus, it is important for me to present my experiences with the phenomenon being explored, as well as how my past experiences may shape the interpretation of the phenomenon.

I am currently a primary school principal and have over a decade of experience, as a teacher and administrator, at the secondary level. This experience at both the middle and high school was set in inner-city, primarily Hispanic campuses in the same large urban school district of study. It was also in these roles as an educator that I observed a lack of parent engagement, which provided the impetus for this study.

As a teacher, I struggled finding ways for parents to engage in their child’s learning. Many parents would come to Open House, but their engagement would dwindle for the remainder of the year. As a result, finding a means for parents to assist their child academically was difficult. Perhaps it was attributed to parents working numerous jobs,

not comprehending the material, or because they felt it was purely my role to assist their child. Regardless, it was an obstacle that was difficult to overcome as a teacher.

As an administrator, struggles with engaging parents were also seen, but from a different perspective. Typically, few parents would attend school functions including meetings or extracurricular events, finding parents to serve in the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) or for volunteering opportunities was cumbersome, and communication with parents was difficult as phone numbers and addresses often changed. I saw students struggling academically and at times dropping out of school as a result, but how exactly could they encourage engagement? For these reasons, I sought to better understand how “high parental engagement” secondary campuses motivated parents.

These personal experiences in the same district in which I am employed may have presented challenges for individuals not wanting to portray any negative aspects of their district. For this study, however, which aimed partially at understanding best practices utilized by campuses to engage parents, this concern did not appear to be an issue because it is focused on ways to engage parents, which logically would appear to be positive. Regardless of the connection with the district of study, it is my intention to conduct all research for this study in an honest, ethical, and scientific manner.

Summary

The chapter reviewed the methods that would be used by the researcher to examine parent engagement practices, parent perspectives regarding engagement and factors that impact their degree of engagement, as well as the components of relationship building between campus constituents and parents. After purposeful sampling of sites, an

array of qualitative techniques, including conducting site visits, collecting documents, and leading both focus group and one-on-one interviews were used to answer the research questions of study. All data were transcribed, organized, and prepared for analysis, which involved gathering an overview of the database, undergoing multiple layers in the coding process, and presenting of emergent themes. In addition, means of supporting validity and reliability of data, and reflexivity and positionality were discussed to add support to the findings.

Chapter IV

Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this comparative case study was to understand parent engagement at two secondary schools that are predominantly Hispanic. In doing so, the study sought to fill gaps in the literature pertaining to parent engagement and the lack thereof, known as the “secondary slump,” to identify *what* strategies two campuses utilize to engage parents, with an understanding of *how* and *why* parents engage, as well as to highlight factors that support relationship-building between both parents and schools. As an educational leader in the district of study, the researcher appreciated the opportunity to learn from other leaders in similar-type campuses to better serve the needs of their own student body, in addition to providing other school administrators ideas and/or resources in overcoming parent engagement obstacles on their campus.

To achieve the purpose of the study, the following research questions were answered:

1. What do “high parent engagement” high school campuses do to engage parents?
2. What are parents’ beliefs and perspectives regarding the importance of parent engagement?
3. What factors facilitate or discourage parents’ ability and willingness to engage with campuses?

This chapter begins by describing the settings or sites utilized in this study followed by an overview of emergent themes found across both sites, and lastly by a

presentation of both etic and emic analysis for individual cases that includes defining parent engagement, understanding the *what, how* and *why* of parent engagement, and suggestions for building a stronger relationship between parents and schools.

Settings

The sites utilized in this study are part of a large, urban school district made up of over 200 campuses, including over 30 high schools. Located in Texas, the district serves over 200,000 students characterized as 62% Hispanic, 24% African American, 9% White, and 4% Asian. Aiming to continually make progress, the district celebrates a 43% decrease in dropouts and a 23% increase in graduation rate over the last decade, while attaining over 300 million dollars in scholarships in 2017. With a mission to educate the whole child and provide them the tools to be successful, the district aims to overcome obstacles for its 92% Title I campuses, 77% economically disadvantaged families, and 67% student body defined as At-Risk by ensuring to have qualified leaders and teachers in each of their schools and classrooms. The following describes the two campuses that triumph considerable challenges and contribute to the overall success of the district, P. Deleon and C. Martinez High School.

P. Deleon High School. An institute that has overcome and beat the odds, P. Deleon High School is a Title I, low socio-economic status (SES) School of Choice high school with 419 students, 95% of whom are Hispanic. Under the leadership of Principal Mora, the campus has maintained a tradition of academic success, including attaining every academic recognition the state of Texas awards when assessing campuses yearly and 8.3 million dollars in scholarships for its 109 graduating seniors. Ranked as a top high school in the city, state, and nation (Texas by Children at Risk, 2017, Washington

Post, 2015), P. Deleon has also been recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School for the second time in six years. This recognition makes it one of 349 campuses across the country and the only high school in the large urban city to receive the prestigious award.

Having maintained similar academic successes for over a decade, P. Deleon is housed in a former Baptist church and made up of roughly 25 classrooms with 56% of its teaching staff possessing over eleven years' experience and 40% with masters and doctoral degrees. Currently, the campus has achieved a 100% graduation rate and a 0.0% dropout rate, with 60% of its graduates moving on to 4-year higher education institutes (TEA, 2017). Regardless of being characterized as 83% economically disadvantaged and having over 36% of its student body defined as At-Risk, P. Deleon excelled this last year with 100% of students passing Algebra I, U.S. History, and English I End of Year state exams. 99% and 96% of students also passed Biology and English II, respectively, on the first attempt (TEA, 2017). Comparable achievements, however, are observed in TEA school report cards dating back to 2008, which rank the campus as "Exemplary" for the five consecutive years the state assigned this highest rating.

Although the focus of the campus is academic as can be seen by the multitude of awards, recognitions, and trophies displayed immediately upon entering the campus, as well as university décor of college banners and logos, student work that adorns the hallways, and the academic successes of the school, the feel of the campus is relaxed, familial, and collaborative. For example, during site visits the researcher observed collaboration amongst students, staff, and parents engaged in multitude of initiatives described below. Principal Mora best illustrates the environment at P. Deleon saying,

“Here we are a family. We value collaboration in everything we do. Here, we all support one another. We are like brothers and sisters.”

The collaborative nature and comfort of the campus is one that is easily seen as students worked together on projects in classrooms, which are arranged with both a mix of traditional desks as well as alternative work areas including tables, couches, and nooks. At-ease as they lounge on couches in the classroom, groups of students were observed on one visit quizzing one another for the upcoming Chemistry exam. Others in a different classroom were seen enthusiastically celebrating, giving one another high fives as they achieved progress on a joint, computer programming assignment. Furthermore, students in an engineering classroom collaboratively completed their Capstone or senior projects. Additionally, several other students worked together in the library reviewing their presentations for the upcoming Coffee with the Principal meeting. When casually asked how they like “P. Deleon, one student responds much like Principal Mora, “It’s great. We’re like family here.”

Collaboration is also observed amongst staff members and teachers. P. Deleon is a Linked Learning campus, which means they emphasize the integration of content among varying disciplines. For instance, materials learned in English, Science, History, and Math aim to “link content” with one other, creating connections for student learning among classes, rather than fragmented learning typically seen in traditional class formats. Along with both additional funding and district support, the focus of P. Deleon is on Project Based Learning (PBL), which is a means of supporting the Linked Learning initiative. PBL stresses learning through collaborative efforts on authentic, engaging, and

complex questioning and problems that dictate an understanding and requirement of overlapping various disciplines to address.

On one instructional walk, which was an opportunity to visit classrooms along with parents and other community members, the researcher observed students working in pairs in a math class, calculating the amount of pressure needed to create adequate blood flow through the arteries and veins learned about in biology, in a mannequin made in art class. Connecting different discipline objectives within a single class requires teamwork among the teachers, which is not an easy task given the lack of interrelating state assessment requirements for subjects, as well as the pressures to perform well; however, as noted by Principal Mora, “We know what we are faced with (demands from the state) and so we have to work together to connect content and meet those requirements.” As a result, P. Deleon strategically arranges professional learning communities (PLCs) for teachers to collectively calendar, plan, and organize lessons and objectives.

Collaboration is also emphasized amongst families, as evidenced by the routine parent presence seen on campus, voluntary efforts ranging from PTO participation to hallway duty to Spring and Fall festival involvement, and active engagement with teachers in monitoring student academic progress. Indeed, this collaboration may contribute to the low number of disciplinary infractions on the campus, only fifteen in the last three years compared to the one-year district discipline referral count of 58, 981 or on average 205 discipline referrals amongst its 287 campuses (TEA, 2017). Principal Mora states,

We have a change in focus. Typically, [behavioral] offenses at other campuses are faced with consequences. We aim to change behaviors by tapping into the social

emotional aspects of students and utilize counseling with parents and students. Students and parents comes up with the growth plan. Here, we have almost no suspensions and literally have not had a fight in over 4 years.

This familial and cooperative atmosphere is one the administrative staff sense supports their successes. It is a priority at the campus, as evidenced by a recent family field trip to a local festival for every student and parent meant to foster unity and partnership between families and the school. In this way, the school has managed to balance the high stakes and demands of the state and district, with the need to engage students and parents in the building of a strong school community. The school faces challenges with a positive, confident, and enthused spirit that P. Deleon takes pride in and seeks to carry over to their brand-new school building, which is scheduled to open January 2018.

C. Martinez High School. Founded in 1955, C. Martinez High School is a Title I, low SES comprehensive high school made up of approximately 2800 students, 91% of whom are Hispanic. Under the leadership of Principal Brown, C. Martinez continues to make academic progress yearly erasing a connection as being a “drop out factory,” as described by John Hopkins researchers in an Associated Press study (2007), a decade ago. It was during this time the campus was ordered by the state of Texas to shut down after several consecutive years of unacceptable ratings, but since then C. Martinez has advanced and met standards in three of the four areas the state rates including Student Progress, Closing Performance Gaps, and Postsecondary Readiness (TEA, 2017).

From 2008, C. Martinez High School has marched forward, improving with strong leadership, and overcoming the odds of past disappointments. Ninety percent of

students at C. Martinez are economically disadvantaged and 22% are English Language Learners (ELL), and the overall mobility rate is 25%. Despite what these demographics would predict, C. Martinez has an 89% graduation rate and a third of its graduates attend some form of post-secondary studies. The campus has recently received distinctions in three of the six areas the state awards (TEA, 2017). With over 145 teachers, 38% of whom have masters and doctoral degrees, C. Martinez aims to support its motto of “Whatever it takes” to also prepare students with occupational skills by ensuring 100% take career and technical classes, which include robotics, plumbing, computer maintenance and programming, automotive technology, cosmetology, and biomedical sciences.

Although housed in an older, traditional building, the atmosphere at C. Martinez is energetic and lively. Students are respectful and courteous, and staff are visible and welcoming. With over 30 sports and clubs ranging from football to soccer and student council to debate, the campus has much to offer its student body. Indeed, the mariachi club is showcased as one of its elite groups. The club has been televised nationally and abroad and has won numerous state awards, as well as routinely is the highlight of district and city events. The passionate Hispanic heritage musical group, which begins to train and recruit members early in middle school, is also the pride of the other major stakeholders on campus, the parents.

On any given day at C. Martinez, a visitor is bound to run into students, staff members, and parents in the hallways. Initially in disbelief to see several hundred parents at a parent meeting, the researcher quickly learned this was the culture of the campus. Parents come to take part in the “fiesta” or opening of every event, which entail lots of

music, dancing, and food, as well as an opportunity to socialize with others, and then they stay to learn how they could assist the campus, their child, and take advantage of opportunities for personal growth.

Led for over a decade by the dynamic and enthusiastic parent liaison, Mrs. Reza, who often loses her voice by the end of the meeting, parent events are truly a festival of learning. In a transformed library adorned with Hispanic decorations, hundreds of parents attend meetings that last several hours because, as Mrs. Reza stated, “This is the place to be. This is where all the neighbors are once a month and where the residents feel at home.” The researcher believes part of the level of comfort derives from the fact that Spanish is the primary language used at all meetings, and English is translated for the few who do not speak Spanish. Continual parental support is what many at C. Martinez believe has helped make a difference, and one they hope will continue as the campus also moves to a brand-new building in January 2019.

Findings

Findings revealed similarities in how campuses define parent engagement, *what* schools do to engage families, *how* and *why* families engage, as well as ways to encourage a supportive relationship with school and parents. Overall, the two campuses focus on educating families on high school expectations, academic and social impacts on student health, college and career readiness, and opportunities for parents’ personal growth. Both schools provided resources that met family needs and included medical, employment, and recently, immigrant legal assistance. Parent engagement appeared motivated to hold students accountable for decision-making, while additional findings suggested student aging and inherited independence may have deterred parents’

engagement. A welcoming environment and staff members, such as a parent liaison to connect parents and the school, served as factors to support engagement. Challenges included language barriers, demanding work schedules, and negative first impressions or experiences in school.

Differences between the two campuses were site-specific focuses and unique engagement practices. While one campus focused on ongoing communication through multiple platforms such as various social media site, the other placed emphasis on overcoming language barriers. Likewise, one high school aimed to help parents understand school settings and student experiences by taking part in routine instructional walkthroughs of classes, while the other focused on building a PTO that could offer the campus parental assistance. Both sites, however, gave priority to establishing a parent-friendly campus that was welcoming and met the needs of its stakeholders. The following sections describe the components of parent engagement specific to each site.

Case I: P. Deleon High School

Defining Parent Engagement. Parent engagement from both the school's and parents' perspective focused on parents' active efforts to be informed and conscious of campus and classroom occurrences. While the school focused on parent engagement to support student learning and campus initiatives, parents concentrated on its importance in a crucial time in their child's lives. This critical time, as described by parents, was filled with social and academic pressures, including the responsibility to prepare and make life-impacting, post-secondary decisions and remaining persistent in their goals, and excluding influence by the "wrong crowds." Parents viewed parent engagement's bearing so crucial, they desired it mandatory. The following describes both points of view.

School's Perspective on Defining Parent Engagement. From the school's perspective, parent engagement is a parent's active efforts to be conscious and informed about campus initiatives and classroom occurrences. Although the perspective entails physical presence by parents, it stresses more the awareness and purposeful inquiry with students and school happenings. The view emphasizes communicating and asking students questions about their day, monitoring their homework and assignments, and aiming to be as involved as possible. It is this awareness of school activities and student expectations that allow parents to best support the campus and their child.

In separate interviews with Principal Mora and Assistant Principal Rodriguez, the two differed only slightly in how they defined parent engagement. Both shared the interpretation that parent engagement is parents being conscious about what is occurring on campus and in the classroom. Principal Mora added to this definition by stating that parent engagement is a partnership between both school and parents that allows for insight into a child's education. She explained that,

It's a partnership between the campus and the community at-large. It's not just coming for the Coffee with the Principle or having Donuts with Dad, but being involved with your child's instructional content in a meaningful way. Yes, it's about being able to help your child at home with their homework, but it's more than that. It's knowing what's happening in classrooms and being able to supplement that somehow. It doesn't mean that you have to know how to answer the calculus equations, or anything like that, but just checking in with your child.

Assistant Principal Rodriguez added that parent engagement included attending events, though also stressed that being informed of what was going on in a child's education was of ultimate value for both the child and the campus. He stated that,

An engaged parent is a parent who comes to meetings we have, like open house, or volunteers at a festival, but also is aware and informed of what's going on in their child's classroom. Being aware and informed is more important than physically being here. If the parent is informed, the parent can be the best ally for the student. If the parent is left out in the dark about what is going on in school or in class, and the opportunities that are available at school, then they can't help their child or the school.

Both definitions address the importance of being aware of occurrences at school and the classroom. This consciousness of school and academic happenings is not the result of purely physical presence at campuses, but rather actively inquiring or investigating either with their child or through a campus means of communication, such as the school website or social media. Ultimately, it is, according to both administrators, the "checking in" and not "left in the dark" that best support active parent engagement, and benefit the school and student performance.

Parents' Perspective on Defining Parent Engagement. From the parent perspective, parent engagement is also a parent's active efforts to be conscious and informed about campus initiatives and classroom occurrences. That said, parents noted that its importance lies not only in supporting campus initiatives and classroom expectations, but also in providing students guidance in making post-secondary decisions and straying away from persuasions from the "wrong" crowds. Given these influential

and crucial years in a child's life, parents sought parent engagement mandated by campuses, as actions and choices made by children in these years yielded life-changing impacts.

Analysis of two focus group sessions at P. Deleon High School also revealed that the definition of parent engagement differed across parents. A minority of the parents interviewed described it as passive participation or attendance at events, such as meetings, while the majority of the parents interviewed explained that being actively engaged in their child's education involved knowing as much as possible about school occurrences. Most also viewed engagement at the secondary level as the most crucial time to be involved in their child's education, and desired it mandatory. As one parent explained,

I think parent engagement is being a part of the school. Some people think it's just, "If there's a meeting, we go to it." For me it's more. I want to know everything that is going on, so I can help the school and my child.

Parents also communicated because their children were getting older, this was the most crucial time to be involved. They did not want them influenced by the "wrong" crowd or do "the types of things (they) see in the streets," thus they made it a priority to be involved. They acknowledged children would not inform them of what was going on in school, and as a result, were proactive in finding out. One parent explained,

I have a son who's 16 and he never gives me anything. If I didn't call or go to the office, I wouldn't know what is going on. I go into the office all the time and ask if anything is going on that week. I think that parent engagement is the

participation of parents and their will to investigate what is happening in their child's school.

Another parent shared that,

I am always contacting my son's teacher to see how they are doing. I know they must be getting tired of me, but I want to know if my son is falling behind or has work to do. I think my son shares more with me now because he knows I am going to call the teacher anyway.

Most parents also shared their desired for parent engagement to be mandatory on campuses. They understood in the public-school district, it could not be obligatory, but because several parents had past experiences at charter schools, they questioned the reasoning. One parent shared,

Well, where my children used to be, at the (charter school), they have 100% involved. Over there it is required. All parents. Even if it is just mom or dad, but someone has to sign in. There, all parents get involved in everything.

Another parent communicated,

I do not understand why they cannot make it mandatory (parent engagement).

This is one of the most important times in our children's lives and many parents do not know how to help their child.

These sentiments of mandating parent engagement were echoed numerous times because parents desired to help their child in making post-secondary decisions, including choosing and applying to a college or university and making career choices. Though, as equally important were parents' desires to mandate parent engagement to help their child

avoid the “wrong crowds.” Many parents acknowledged seeing other youths in the streets engaged in negative behaviors and actions, and desired to help their child “stay on track.”

The What of Parent Engagement. Findings relating to the *what* of parent engagement, or practices campuses utilize to involve parents are presented from both the school and parent perspective, and align with the study’s conceptual framework, Six Types of Involvement (Epstein, 2013). Emergent themes correlating to the parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community components of the framework reveal P. Deleon High School provides a variety of formats and means of communication to help parents learn of academic expectations and methods to support their child’s mental health and post-secondary goals. Additionally, parents are given opportunities for personal growth and continuing education, as well as avenues to help families address medical, financial, and legal needs. Parents highly favor the campus’ emphasis on communication, as well as its proactive approach to involving parents in student academic support. The following portrays specifics relating to *what* P. Deleon does to engage families from both the campus and parent point of view.

The School’s Perspective Regarding the What of Parent Engagement. Findings indicated P. Deleon High School helps parents understand and address social/emotional issues students may experience in high school, provides ways for parents to support post-secondary aspirations, allows insight into student learning, and gives parents opportunities for personal growth. Likewise, P. Deleon places much emphasis on communication, offering a variety of meetings and utilizing varying platforms discussed below to share student academics, campus events, and district updates. Parents have

opportunities to assist with numerous campus initiatives, be exposed to colleges and universities, and learn of immediate industry opportunities to best guide post-secondary decision making. P. Deleon also ensures parents are equipped with medical, mental health, and legal assistance, while they have the opportunity to participate in campus decision making through involvement with the Site Decision Making Committee and the Parent-Teacher Organization. Each of the emergent themes correlating Six Types of Involvement framework are discussed below.

Parenting. P. Deleon employs a plethora of strategies that align with the parenting component of Epstein's Six Types of Involvement framework (2013), which aim to help families establish home environments to support children as students. Those included helping parents learn of emotional/psychological issues students may experience in high school, being aware of ways to support post-secondary goals, having personal growth opportunities, as well as insight into student learning.

According to separate interviews with P. Deleon administrators, secondary expectations along with social influences appear to emotionally impact student wellbeing. To assist parents understanding of the mental impacts of high school pressures, P. Deleon utilizing a Counselor's Corner, which are meetings given by the counselor that provide an opportunity for parents to learn of student social emotional needs and how to respond. Assistant Principal Rodriguez shares a little more about this recent initiative,

Lately, we've noticed there has been an increase in student mental health issues, so we began our Counselor's Corner. We noticed students with depression, anxiety issues, and range of other emotional issues that arise from daily pressures. And, parents didn't know what to do or doctors to go to. So, our counselors began

to meet with our parents and educate them on signs of these issues and provide a list doctors they can visit that don't require insurance.

P. Deleon also helps educate parents on supporting student preparation for college entrance exams, as well as college admissions, financial aid, and scholarship opportunities. These informational sessions are also provided by the counselor.

Additionally, P. Deleon allows parents opportunities for personal growth by providing General Education Diploma (G.E.D), English as a Second Language, and career skills training. One of these needed skills is computer literacy, which the campus finds is an emerging need. Mr. Rodriguez shares below,

Unfortunately, many of our parents are not computer savvy, and (the district), at the high school level, focuses entirely on using the computer. Every one of our students have a laptop. It would benefit the school for our parents to know how to check emails and grades. Most have smart phones and know how to text, but when it comes to emailing or downloading an application like the one we use (Living Tree), you have to show them. Many do not have an email, so you have to start there. We decided offering a technology course would be the next thing we do. We want our parents better informed.

Lastly, P. Deleon offers Instructional Rounds or opportunities for parents to visit classrooms and gather insight about what students are learning. These occasions allow parents to see the environment students work in, and, with the help of a district observation rubric, understand the expectations their child's teacher are held to. Parents visit numerous classes on these walkthroughs, and then regroup in the library to share thoughts. Although these classroom visits are typically conducted on Thursdays, Mrs.

Mora acknowledged, “Anytime you (parents) want to step foot on campus, let’s go. I’ll take you.”

Communicating. The communicating component of Epstein’s Six Types of Involvement framework (2013) at P. Deleon High School is an area on which the campus places much emphasis. P. Deleon employs multiple strategies including offering a variety of meetings and utilizing varying platforms to communicate student academics, calendar events, and district/campus updates to parents. By conducting meetings such as Coffee with the Principal, Discussion with the Dean, and Donuts with Dad, parents learn much about what is occurring on campus, with their children’s academics, or campus needed assistance. In these meetings, which are conducted in English and translated into Spanish, students take the lead in sharing their work, successes, and future endeavors.

These same messages are also shared with an assortment of social media platforms including LivingTree, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat. The goal of the campus as shared by Mr. Rodriguez below is to “blast” families with communication.

So, what we do is just blast them (families) with communication. We do call-outs. We use LivingTree, which is like a private Facebook platform. We will also ask parents to talk to other parents so there’s word of mouth. We have a marquee, so we put information right at the front. (Mrs. Mora), the principal, is excellent with social media. She tweets, she Instagram’s, she’s on Facebook. When we’re done with that, we use paper and stand out in the driveway, and hand out flyers. We do whatever it takes to get the message across.

Mrs. Mora concurs with Mr. Rodriguez stressing the importance of communication with parents,

It's about communication. Parents want to know what is going on. So, we make that happen, whether it be through social media or a digital platform of sorts, even if it's just a call out, sometimes they want to hear someone's voice. They just want to be kept in the loop. And so, even if they never step foot on campus to help volunteer for anything, at the very least, they know what is going on. And it goes beyond sending the handout home with the child because we're talking about adolescent teens who lose things from one class to another. So, to put something in their hand and expect it to get to parents, it's not the right approach. Sure, that helps sometimes, but there needs to be something beyond that. Just like we differentiate with our kids in the classroom, you have to differentiate with communication to parents. Some parents want it just digitally, some parents want it in their hands. And so, communication through a variety of means is key.

Volunteering. Volunteering as aligned with Epstein's Six Types of Involvement framework (2013) at P. DeLeon involves the giving of time to help with the numerous events and fundraisers the campus has. These include an assortment of thematic dances, Photos with Santa, and the Homecoming soccer game that was created with initiating an intramural league amongst other School of Choice campuses. The Fall and Spring Festivals are also opportunities for parent participation. Parents help with selling tickets, managing games, and distributing food. They also monitor and assist numerous organizations that take part in the festivals and distribute information. These include the local colleges, neighborhood and health centers, and drug and alcohol counseling services. Lastly, parents volunteer as hall monitors for state or college entrance assessments, as well as chaperones on university, industry, and conference fieldtrips.

Learning at Home. P. Deleon High School also emphasizes supporting learning at home by ensuring parents are aware of ongoing student projects, have exposure to post-secondary campuses, and are knowledgeable of immediate industry opportunities to best guide student goals and decision making. During several of the Coffee with the Principal meetings the researcher attended, students shared information regarding their ongoing projects and upcoming competitions. At one meeting, students taking courses in cybersecurity showcased their work on creating an extremely affordable, \$37 computer. As stated by a student, “In the future, we hope to market ourselves and build computers at a reasonable price for the community.”

Other projects shared by students included building hot air balloons, planes, and cars for campus-based competitions, as well as furniture made of donated warehouse pallets. These furnishings were not only extremely affordable, simple, and creative, but also served as permanent fixtures throughout the campus. Lastly, students shared their senior or Capstone projects. These impressive creations were the outcome of four years of engineering and computer programming classes taken at P. Deleon. Examples of these projects included L.E.D. illuminated clothing, a mechanic, self-propelling bicycle, a treat dispenser and ball thrower for dogs, and numerous types of robotics. Although it may be difficult for many parents to offer assistance with these projects at home, being aware of what students are working on allows parents opportunities to discuss thoughts, monitor, or offer other types of support. As stated by Mrs. Mora,

It’s knowing what’s happening in those classrooms and being able to supplement that somehow. It doesn’t mean that you have to know how to answer the calculus equations, or anything like that, but just checking in with your child. “Hey, I saw

that (Mrs. Mora) post you guys were doing a structured engineering layout of the new building. What does that look like? What did you do?" Just asking questions about what is happening in the room and engaging your child with that somehow.

P. Deleon additionally encourages learning at home and discussions of post-secondary/career goals and plans by providing parents opportunities to join and visit an abundance of university trips including those to Texas A&M University, University of Texas, University of Houston, Rice University, and Sam Houston State University, among others. Because students take computer programming and engineering courses, as well as fulfill requirements for their OSHA 30, or entry level construction certification, industry-based fieldtrips are also taken to provide student and parents exposure to immediate employment.

Lastly, learning at home at P. Deleon High School is supported by providing ongoing intervention meetings when a student falls behind academically. Mrs. Mora stated,

We have weekly intervention meetings. Whenever we see that students are falling behind academically we immediately bring in a parent to create a social contract to say, "Hey, these things are not happening so far and here's how we can help you with them," and then we all agree to a set of expectations or changes in behavior.

Many times, action plans created at these intervention meetings call for a change in behavior, although not from a conduct standpoint but rather from changes in study habits, which parents can monitor from home. Mrs. Mora added,

When we address behavior, its academic behavior. Do they have a plan? Are they organized? Are they writing down their homework? Are they focused within the classroom? So, not only are we looking at academics from a quantitative standpoint, but what does the behavior look like in the classroom. Are they coming prepared? Are they sitting down and immediately taking out their binder for the day? Or are they just sitting there and socializing? A parent may say, "Well, my child has always been an A student when they were at XYZ Middle School and they've never had a problem." But, we're not just looking for grades at [P. Deleon]. We're looking for habits that are going to help them be successful beyond high school.

Decision Making. The primary means parents are involved in decision making at P. Deleon is through participation with the Site Decision Making Committee (SDMC) and the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO). The SDMC allows parents to serve on a committee with the principal, teachers, non-teaching staff, community members, and students to hear and discuss topics of academics, safety, and proposed initiatives. The PTO is primarily a parent lead and fairly new organization, but aids in multiple ways. Mr. Rodriguez shared that,

Five years ago, the PTO was almost nonexistent. There were two years when there was no organized parent organization. Three years ago, I made it a point to get the PTO off the ground. I sat down with parents and together we wrote our constitution. We had discouraging times when only seven people would show up. Now we have over 50 consistent members, which is good for a campus our size.

Now they have a strong board. The parents, they recruit on their own and help us fund trips, pay student fees, and help make school purchases.

Collaboration with Community. In aligning with the collaboration with community component of Epstein's Six Types of Involvement framework (2013), P. Deleon aims to provide community resources based on family needs. Those resources include medical, mental health, and legal services offered by local agencies. These organizations assist families with clinic visits, vaccinations, eye glasses and dental assistance, as well as with issues of depression and anxiety. However, one of the most requested needs from families is legal aid and information regarding immigrant rights. The result of national political threats regarding deportation and suspension of work visas, parents are expressing concerns and requesting assistance. Both Mrs. Mora and Mr. Rodriguez acknowledged these worries and arranged an informational evening by the Mexican Consulate and the local neighborhood center to address these concerns. Mr. Rodriguez added,

The far majority of our students come from Hispanic descent. We don't ask questions regarding immigration status, but there's a high probability some may be undocumented. Parents feel comfortable with us and so, they bring us their concerns and questions. They want to know if ICE will raid schools, what protections do they have, and what agencies can offer assistance. So, we looked for organizations that offer assistance. This was the first time we had such a meeting.

The Immigrant Rights meeting addressed issues of deportation, visas, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA), and Cuban Immigration. Discussions proceeded

with topics of ensuring a safe place for important documents and knowing your rights if the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) were to visit your home and workplace. Parents were also given a list of nearby organizations that offered free or reduced immigration consultation. Ways to minimize traffic stops were also discussed and included registering your car, having insurance, following speed limit, etcetera. Overall, the feel of the room was tense with worries; however, parents appeared grateful to have found resources of assistance.

Other ways P. Deleon connected parents with the community were with Alumni Association meetings, and notification of area blood drives and events, such as parades and festivals. Additionally, parents learned of opportunities to take sewing, computer, ESL, and tax classes or workshops in neighboring venues, and after-school assistance for their children that offered tutoring and leadership building. Lastly, parents were allowed opportunities for collaboration with community members by taking part in the campus' new building groundbreaking and construction update events. These events encouraged dialogue and input from parents regarding the future new home of P. Deleon High School scheduled to open in January 2018.

Summary. In summary, P. Deleon utilizes multiple ways to support parent engagement. These included providing varying meetings and means of communication to help parents learn of academic expectations and methods to support their child's mental health and post-secondary goals. Additionally, parents are given opportunities for personal growth and continuing education, as well as avenues to help families address medical, financial, and legal needs. Furthermore, parents are provided several volunteering opportunities and ways to impact campus decision making. Table 1, located

in Appendix G, summarizes P. Deleon's approaches for engaging parents. Aligned with the Six Types of Involvement Framework (Epstein, 2013), the researcher aspires it could serve as a resource for other educational leaders looking for parent engagement ideas.

Parents' Perspective Regarding the What of Parent Engagement. *What P.*

Deleon High School does to engage families, from the parent perspective, is place an emphasis on practices aligned with the parenting, communicating, and learning at home components of the Six Types of Involvement Framework (Epstein, 2013). These practices include educating parents on high school expectations and supporting post-secondary goals, developing effective means of communicating student academics and school initiatives, and providing intervention opportunities and university exposure. Though parents briefly shared volunteering opportunities at the Fall/Spring Festivals and dances, they did not communicate practices aligned with decision-making and collaboration with community during this focus group session. As a result, the following communicates the prevalent practices revealed that correlate to the parenting, communicating, and learning at home components of the study's conceptual framework.

Parenting. P. Deleon High School employs numerous strategies that align with the parenting component of Epstein's Six Types of Involvement framework (2013), which aim to help families establish home environments to support children as students. These included educating parents on high school requirements and expectations by visiting classrooms, as well as preparation for student post-secondary goals. Parents shared their appreciation to learn, "about credits needed to graduate high school and how to apply for college and scholarships that students need later."

Parents appreciated visiting classes during Instructional Rounds. Instructional rounds are routine opportunities P. Deleon uses as a means of “getting real insight into what occurs in classes” as described by the principal, because as one parent expressed,

I have never been in my son’s classroom until now. I had no idea what they learn or do, or how the class looks daily. Now, when we talk I can ask questions about a class, or can picture the class and have a better understanding of what he is talking about.

Additionally, parents acknowledge their gratitude for learning how to best support their children’s goals of attending college after high school. They shared understanding the impact of a Grade Point Average (GPA) and opportunity to take college credit courses saved them later expenses. One parent commented about her efforts to keep her child’s GPA high. She stated that,

We are trying to get scholarships. I know my son wants to take AP (Advanced Placement) classes but he is not doing well. So, I tell him to drop the class. It is better for him to drop the class and have a regular class with a good grade than an AP class with a failing grade. I need him to have a high GPA if we are going to get a scholarship.

Another parent shared her encouragement of taking college credit courses. They shared that,

If you sign up for college courses in this school, you will receive college credit. This saves us money for college. I motivate my child to take these classes. I tell them, “We are going to help you pay for college, but you need to help us by taking classes that are free and will save us money.”

Having opportunities to visit classes, help their child make academic decisions, and being aware of how to apply for college, financial aid, and scholarships pleased and comforted parents. They acknowledged their appreciation and awareness of the “special place” their child attended school. One last parent commented,

Ever since my child has been coming here, he has been supported. He gets help with continuing his education; University. Other schools do not give out this much information, so many students miss opportunities.

Communicating. The communicating component of Epstein’s Six Types of Involvement framework (2013) at P. Deleon High School is an area of engagement parents spoke very highly of. They shared the multitude of meetings including Coffee with the Principal, Discussions with the Dean, and Counselors Corner P. Deleon utilized to share information. Additionally, they noted the school’s emphasis to communicate in a variety of ways and encouragement of two-way communication by making parents feel welcome. One parents stated, “If you are not informed, it is because you don’t want to be.”

When discussing P. Deleon’s focus on communication, one parent stated that, (P. Deleon) gives you information on all activities happening in the school. They also give you information of student achievements, motivating parents to communicate with their children. I always know what is going on at school, which I think also motivates the students.

They continued in sharing the multiple means of sharing information P. Deleon utilizes including many social media platforms, the school website, phone calls, and flyers.

Parents cherished the varying means of communication because each had a different preference. One mother shared,

Every day, I get a phone call from school. If they don't communicate with me through phone, they send an email, flyer, or put it on the bulletin. I know they put information on Facebook and other places, but I am still learning to use that.

"Mrs. Mora" is accessible to our needs. She has an open-door policy and always lets us know what is going on.

Another mom expressed,

They send you a text message or an email to let you know what is going on, but I downloaded the event's page from their website onto my phone. It is easier for me that way. My daughter no longer needs to take flyers home, which is better because I used to have to look for them in her backpack because she would not give them to me.

The emphasis of communication, informing parents of occurrences and how their children are doing, is what parents communicated was most important about *what* P. DeLeon did to engage parents. Just as important though was the school's efforts to encourage two-way communication by making parents feel comfortable. The encouragement to ask questions and participate in dialogue was expressed as extremely valuable in engaging with the campus. One parent shared,

The principal makes us feel comfortable. Tells us not to be shy. She wants to hear our concerns and tells us to come whenever we want, whenever we have a problem. It makes me feel important that she listens to us and tries to change things if she can.

This same practice of making parents feel comfortable and valued also appears to be supported by teachers. Another parent communicated that,

Teachers give you their information. They give you their email and telephone number. They answer you at any time of the day. The parent or the student can call the teacher if they've forgotten something or if they are not understanding the homework questions. This makes it so much easier to work with my child at home.

Ultimately, communication was viewed by parents as the most important practice utilized by P. Deleon to engage parents. Having varied means of communicating allowed for better efficiency in sharing information and meeting parent preferences. Additionally, encouraging two-way conversations by being readily available and supporting inquiry and dialogue also added to parent engagement. Parents, at the end, felt valued, at-ease with faculty and staff, and sought communication to better serve their children.

Learning at Home. According to parents, P. Deleon High School supports learning at home by providing student/parent university trips and intervention meetings to address students not meeting academic expectations. In discussing university field trips, parents shared their enjoyment and valued opportunity to connect with their children. The latter was important because work and family responsibilities limited the time many could speak to their children about their post-high school goals. One father shared,

I had never been to a college until I started going with (P. Deleon). I work so much, I do not take time to speak to my daughter about what she wants to do with her life; what she is going to do after high school. When I go on these trips, that's all we talk about.

Parents also communicated P. Deleon's approach to supporting students not meeting expectation. This including attending intervention meetings, which as stated by a parent, "are not voluntary, so you feel pressured to attend." At these conferences, which are attended by the parent, teacher, student, assistant principal, and counselor, a behavior or academic plan is created, and parents are held accountable by signing and acknowledging active monitoring of the plan. Fortunately, as expressed by many, these meetings are proactive measures in helping students succeed, and are welcomed. As one parent stated, "We shouldn't have to wait until our child fails to meet with the teacher," and create a means of intervention.

Why Parents Engage. The Ecologies of Parental Engagement (2004) framework addresses two key aspects of parent engagement: *how* parents utilize familiarity and experience in maneuvering the education system to advocate for their child, and *why* they do so in the first place. *Why* a parent does so, if they desire, is based on personal or perhaps cultural perspectives and attitudes, and is important because parent engagement requires input and a partnership from both families and campuses to truly support one another. Based on findings at P. Deleon High School, parents and the school were in consensus that parents engage with schools to become better informed about campus initiatives and classroom expectations, as well as motivate and hold students more accountable in decision-making. Parents also added their opportunity to learn of resources and practices to better support their children as an additional reason. Likewise, both sides agree that disengagement is a result of students approaching graduation, however stress its importance in the secondary level.

Schools' Perspective Regarding Why Parents Engage. In examining the schools' perspective of *why* parents engage, as described in Barton et al.'s (2004) Ecologies of Parental Engagement framework, the analysis revealed student accountability and opportunities to be aware of the on-goings at school as the prevalent reasons. Contrary, students becoming older and given more independence was the primary reasons parents disengage. It was, however, noted that high school was the most crucial times for parents to be engaged.

From Principal Mora's view, parents at the secondary level are engaged in their child's education because it holds student more accountable and creates motivation to give more effort, which may lead to student success. By parents being aware of what is occurring on campus, they can support learning either physically, assisting students with tasks, or by monitoring and ensuring students fulfill their obligations. Mrs. Mora expresses these sentiments when asked, "How do you think parent engagement impacts a child's education?"

Well, being engaged in a child's education definitely holds them (the student) to the fire. There's a level of accountability there and expectations that if I know what's going on, my child will feel like he or she is being held accountable for the learning taking place. Whereas with a complacent parent or a parent who is not as involved, what leverage or what inclinations does that child have to answer to what is happening in the school day? So, the more engaged the parent is, the more inclined, especially at the secondary level, a child is to do well.

From the assistant principal's perspective, however, parents are engaged in their child's education because it allows them to be informed with what is going on in school

and with their child. It is by being informed that they can best support both. Mr. Rodriguez shared the following,

Parents are engaged because it helps them stay informed. If they are informed, they can be the best ally for the student. If the parent is left out in the dark about what is going on with their child, what is going on in school, the opportunities that are available at school, then they can't help their child or the school. If the parent is not informed of how to reach out, how to communicate with the teachers, how to get access to grades, then again, they can't be of assistance.

In discussing why parent engage in their child's education, it is also apparent, as well as indicated in the research that many families do not engage (Barton et al., 2004). Thus, the researcher aimed to understand, from the school's perspective, the secondary slump phenomenon and why parents disengaged as children grew older. From Mrs. Mora's perspective, part of the reason parents disengage from their children's education is that as students age, they become more independent, do more for themselves, and rely less on their parents. This natural course in a child's life, becoming self-dependent, unintentionally decreases a parent's motivation to engage. The fact that some parents on campus lack formal education, and the reality the degree of difficulty in work increases as students age also does not encourage engagement at the secondary level. Mrs. Mora shared that,

Parents feel like they have a purpose in elementary and primary grades. Mainly because the children are so... dependent upon an adult. Whereas, as they get older, to the secondary grades, especially if you're talking about our population of students, low income, minority students whose parents may not have that

academic background or education, they don't feel well equipped to help. In the elementary grades, it's like, "Well, I'm your parent. I feed you, I bathe you, I clothe you. You need me in these physical ways and I can be here," and it's not intimidating. But as they progress in the grades, the curriculum gets more difficult and it becomes a little bit more foreign. Especially for parents who didn't even make it to high school and dropped out at second/third grade. And many are from another country. So, it becomes more and more intimidating. Like, "Whatever the teacher says, right? Because the teacher knows best." So, it becomes challenging to empower a parent to say, "We still need you. Even if you don't have the educational background. Even if you have no idea what's happening instructionally in a classroom, there's still ways you can help support the learning with just being a presence." (Interview)

Mr. Rodriguez agrees parents became less engaged as children grew older, acquire more responsibilities, and became independent. He, however, notes that this is the most crucial time for parents to stay engaged in their child's education; that the decisions children make in these years impact their entire lives. Mr. Rodriguez shared,

But I think that it (being less engaged) has to do with feeling, "oh, you're older. You should be responsible for your education. If you need something, let me know." But, I think parents should think, "In high school, I have to be there just as much as I was before" because in reality, children need their parents most.

There's graduating, applying for college, scholarships, FAFSA, financial aid... From the school's perspective, parents engage with campuses because it allows opportunities to hold students more accountable, or "to the fire," in decision-making,

because parents are better informed of expectations. Unfortunately, as students age and become more independent, engagement diminishes, thus creating less support for students in making post-secondary decisions, as well as guidance in applying for schools, financial aid, and scholarships. Potential struggles by some parents in comprehending high school materials may also add to disengagement, though stressing its importance in these upper grades by campuses may encourage family participation.

Parents' Perspective Regarding Why Parents Engage. From the parent perspective, parents are engaged in their child's education for the same reasons shared by Principal Mora and Assistant Principal Rodriguez. They expressed how being engaged created pressure for their child to do better, which would pay off in the long term. They also shared being engaged with schools put them in better positions to support their child. Contrary, parents also shared similar reasons for eventual disengagement, which included students growing up and becoming more independent. They, too, also agree with the schools' perspective that high school is the most crucial time to be involved.

As was mentioned by both campus administrators, parents agreed engagement motivated children because they were aware of campus on-goings and expectations. One parent commented on parent engagement's ability to add pressure and accountability on their child's decision-making. She stated,

It (engagement) impacts the child because they feel pressure. They know that you are alert to what is going on. What activities are happening, what projects they have coming up. So, they have more pressure, make better decisions, and do better.

Another disclosed engagement's impact is supporting parent learning, which directly impacted student opportunities. As was mentioned in a few occasions during the focus group session, information learned assisted all parents. Another mother stated,

Also, if you're involved with the school, you become aware of certain things you wouldn't normally know. Information that will help them with their education like credits or scholarships. Even if you are undocumented, they have opportunities to study with scholarships.

In trying to comprehend why many parents eventually disengaged from their child's education, parents shared many others give their children more room and allow more decision-making as they get older. They share that sometimes children "push their parents away," and perhaps this also causes disengagement? However, they clearly state this should not allow parents to completely remove themselves from a child's education. Parents were adamant about high school being the most crucial time for their child. A few of those statements are listed below,

Parent 1: You naturally detach a little as your child gets older. But, that does not mean that you must distance yourself from the school's information. You do have to let them (students) work things out alone because they reached a certain age and make their own decisions, because things involving school is the responsibility of the parent. While they are in our house, we must be constantly checking up on them in whatever age.

Parent 2: The law says that we're responsible for them until they're 18, right? Us, as the parents have the responsibility to keep up with our children's schooling

always. That is how I was with my daughter and see how far she's gone. She has one more year until college. This happened because I keep checking up on her.

According to this focus group session, parents engage in their child's education because it helps motivate them, assists in decision-making, and ultimately impacts their success. Additionally, parents invest time in engagement because they seek learning opportunities to help support their children's future endeavors. Unfortunately, as students age, parents typically become less engaged, perhaps because they lack purpose, cannot be of assistance, or naturally provide room for their child to become independent. However, those that stay engaged acknowledge this is the most crucial time to "check in" on their children.

How Engagement is Supported and Discouraged. One key aspect of the Ecologies of Parental Engagement (2004) framework is *how* parents utilize familiarity and experience in maneuvering the education system to advocate for their child. Barton et. al (2004) suggests this component of parent engagement is a relational phenomenon facilitated by parents' experiences in and out of the school community. As a result, the researcher sought to identify those factors that facilitated, as well as discouraged engagement from the school's and parents' perspectives.

Findings at P. Deleon revealed providing a welcoming environment, demonstrating parental importance, and open communication that overcame language barriers were instrumental in encouraging engagement. Contrary, demanding parent work schedules, and negative first impressions and experiences with schools discouraged engagement. Parents added inherited independence as students aged also contributed to less parent participation.

Schools' Perspective Regarding Supportive and Discouraging Factors. To help facilitate and encourage parent engagement as described in Barton et al.'s (2004) Ecologies of Parental Engagement framework, P. Deleon senses creating a welcoming atmosphere and communicating with parents support their desires to engage. Alternatively, negative first impressions and experiences with schools discourage engagement. Parents being busy and, at times, having multiple work schedules also add to deterring engagement between parents and schools.

P. Deleon places emphasis on providing a welcoming environment and demonstrating they care about families to facilitate engagement. Mrs. Mora expresses, "There is no secret, we truly care for our parents." As a result, Mrs. Mora recognizes a parent's impact, communicates it often, and creates various opportunities for parents to learn about their child's school experiences. Now, lack of making connections with parents and negative first impressions are what Mrs. Mora senses create obstacles for engaging families. Below, Mrs. Mora shared advice for educational leaders looking to support and eliminate hindrances in engagement.

They come here because we offer things to them that spark an area of interest. It's... here's what you'll get as a result for coming into the building. You're going to have a glimpse into your child's everyday life. You're going to have a personal relationship with not just with an administrator, but your principal. I think the reason they choose to come to "P. Deleon" is because we built a reputation for ourselves that we do care. You're not just an ID number on our campus or a test score. You are an individual and we're going to meet your needs. Not just academically, but socially, emotionally, psychologically. And the parents feel that

too. I make it a point to shake hands with every parent. I offer my cellphone number if they have any questions. They don't just feel welcomed, they know that they're welcomed and wanted here.

To help ensure educational leaders set the tone for parent engagement, she shares,

That first initial impression is everything. So, having someone at your front desk that is welcoming is so, so, so important. If you have the wrong person up there, and maybe they don't have bad intentions, they just have a negative tone in their voice, that can set the tone for everything. So, the minute a parent walks into the building, they want to feel like they're not a burden, not a hassle. Everybody that enters this building is a VIP. That first impression is everything to us. Beyond that, you can groom and do whatever you need to. But that first impression is going to set the tone.

From Mr. Rodriguez's perspective, he senses that the major component that supports parent engagement on their campus is communication, which is shared below,

Parent engagement is best supported with communication. That is one of our biggest goals. As I said earlier, we do call outs, post on Living Tree, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, on the marquee, you name it. Because we communicate so much with parents, they feel comfortable with us. They trust us and know we want them involved.

On the other hand, he feels obstacles that stand in the way of parent engagement include personal, negative experiences in school, a lack of familiarity with the school system, as well as an inability to accommodate meeting schedules because of work demands. He states that parents who had a negative experience in school, whether

because of behavior or academics, are not trusting of the system and may not want to engage. He adds, also, he recognizes work schedules get in the way of engagement. Mr. Rodriguez states,

Our parents have to work hard to put food on the table. Many work numerous jobs and, as much as they would like to be here, just can't. They are not disengaged because they don't care. They have to meet the needs of the family.

Parents' Perspective Regarding Supportive and Discouraging Factors. From the parents' perspective, factors that encouraged engagement as described in the Ecologies of Parental Engagement framework (Barton et al.,2004) were communication, a comfortable setting, and feeling important. Those factors that discouraged engagement included an unwelcomed environment and, as expressed by Mr. Rodriguez, work demands. Parents shared P. Deleon did much to involve them. They acknowledged there was always assistance when needed, as well as someone who spoke Spanish or could translate for them. Lastly, parents stressed they felt important, as seen in one parent's comment below,

The principal makes us feel important. She always asks our opinion and includes us in trips like college visits. She just took the whole school, parents, students, and teachers, to the (local) Festival. I have never heard of a whole school going on a fieldtrip.

Conversely, when asked about factors that disengage parent engagement, parents acknowledge the demands of work and families, or unwelcoming environments impacted engagement, however for the majority shared it is the student's age that causes parents to no longer view engagement as necessary. Several share similar statements below,

Parent 1: It all comes back to the same thing, the age of the children. They reach a certain age, and us Hispanics say, “Oh, their older now. We, parents, don’t have to be constantly guiding them anymore.”

Parent 2: You know, once they (their child) turns 13 or 14, many Hispanic parents let them do what they want. They let them decide if they give us the papers from school or want us involved. As long as they are not in trouble, many parents stay out of their business.

Parent 3: Some parents think if their child is in high school, he or she is old enough to make their own decisions. They can decide for themselves and if they want them to go to the school, they will tell them.

Developing a Relationship that Supports Parent Engagement. The following aimed to share separate parent and school viewpoints regarding developing a relationship between schools and families addressed in this study’s alternative parent engagement framework. Interestingly though, all participants agreed and stressed one major component of relationship-building, communication. As a result, both are discussed together and shared below. Mrs. Mora first shares,

I believe it's about communication. (Parents) just want to know what is going on. They want to be kept in the loop. So, it involves keeping open lines of communication. When schools and parents have an open line of communication, even if it is not positive news, there is trust built and trust strengthens relationships.

Mr. Rodriguez also noted communication as the key component of relationship-building, however added to effectively establish a partnership with parents, “always make sure to keep their needs in mind.” He shared the following,

Communication is important to help build a relationship between parents and us. I would only add to always also make sure to try and aim to meet the needs of parents as well. Get to know them. Try and understand what they are going through, and what their problems are. Many times, it’s all about students and test scores. Remember parents help create success. Communicate and learn from them as well.

Parents unanimously and simply concurred with the principal and assistant principal that communication was the key to building a supportive relationship between parents and schools. They did not expand beyond that suggestion, except in sharing previous bad experiences. One parent disclosed, “There are schools where the principal or teacher won’t speak with the parents. We can’t even talk to anyone in the office. I am glad this is not the case here.”

Summary. In summary, P. DeLeon high school and parents offered much information on defining parent engagement, understanding the *what, how* and *why* of parent engagement, as well as ways to support a healthy relationship between the campus and parents. The school and parents felt parent engagement was an active effort to be involved in a child’s education. Perhaps a partnership between the two, it was an opportunity to be informed of school occurrences and student progress to allow for impactful parental support.

From both perspectives, P. Deleon did much that aligned with Epstein's (2013) types of involvement framework to engage families, however much attention was given to communication and its key to building relationships with parents. From the school's and parents' perspective, engagement held children more accountable in decision-making and efforts, while student's age and independence created less engagement by parents. Both, though, pointed to high school as the most crucial time for engagement. Lastly, creating a welcoming environment, understanding the importance of first impressions, and making parents feel important were crucial to supporting engagement, while demanding work schedules, and past negative experiences with schools discouraged engagement.

Case II: C. Martinez High School

Defining Parent Engagement. Defining parent engagement from the campus and parent perspective varied slightly at C. Martinez High School. While the school viewed parent engagement as a partnership or bridge between the campus and parents that was purposeful and clear about expectations, parents viewed it as being as involved as possible in their child's life to "keep an eye on them." Both, however, focused on the importance of parents engaging in meaningful opportunities that were of interest to their child and volunteering on campus to best support student achievement. The following sections aim to provide specifics of defining parent engagement from the school and parent point of view.

Schools' Perspective on Defining Engagement. From the campus perspective, parent engagement entails active participation in a child's education. Rather than passive involvement, parent engagement is a partnership or, as described, a bridge between the

school and parents. It is a commitment to work together with the goal of supporting student success. Although, parent engagement is a collaborative effort, campuses should be purposeful and clear about parent expectations. Parents want to be of assistance, but are not always sure how. Thus, it is essential campuses take the lead in building the partnership with parents and guide them in how to best serve both student and campus needs. Principal Brown shared,

There's a difference between parent involvement and engagement. A parent can be involved with their child, knowing what they are doing at home, making sure they get to school, etcetera. But as a school, if you're engaging parents, then you're getting them involved at another level. Making them a part of your school, a voice, an active participant. You're engaging them in ways that are meaningful and impactful. Parent engagement can't be helping in the office, answering phones, or filling. Allow them (parents) to be involved in activities that interest their child. Allow them to see meaning and value in what they're doing. It directly impacts their child.

Parent Liaison, Mrs. Reza, also views parent engagement as a partnership and communicates her obligation to be of service, and doing her best to bridge the school and parents. Her passion for her job, which she has done for over a decade, is clear in her message and how she engages families. Extremely energetic, and often losing her voice in meetings after hours of talking and singing to hundreds of parents, Mrs. Reza communicated,

Parent engagement is being partners with parents. We're partners in school and want our students to be successful. So, it is important as partners to make them

feel at home. I'm their (parents) friend. I'm not just someone that works here. I'm like their family. I know exactly what they are going through, so they talk to me. And as partners, we need to know their needs. Because, how are we going to help someone if we do not know their needs? Parent engagement is very important. If we don't engage with the parent, we're going to lose the parent. They'll never come to this school. The only reason they'll come to this school is whenever one of their kids is in trouble. We don't want a parent for that. We want to solve problems together and want our kids to do great things.

As observed in both these interviews, parent engagement, as a partnership or bridge, requires the need to openly communicate, encouraging dialogue, and aim to comprehend parent needs. Although, it is a mutual collaboration between the school and parents to support student achievement, it is led by the campus. When campuses share their desires and goals, are purposeful and clear about expectations, and seek meaningful ways to engage parents on campus, parents are more likely to become involved, support initiatives, and ultimately impact student success.

Parents' Perspective on Defining Engagement. For parents, parent engagement varied from a few that defined it as passive participation or attendance of events, to those that viewed it as being involved as possible in their children's education. It is the latter group of parents that connect parent engagement as an opportunity to "check in" on their children. With their presence, they believe children will make better decisions because, "other parents will let them know otherwise." Of the twelve parents interviewed, most were active volunteers. Many had been volunteering for many years, and continued to do

so after their children left the school. Following are a few sentiments regarding parents' definition of parent engagement.

Parents acknowledged being engaged resulted in greater awareness of what is occurring with their child. They shared as their children aged, they were less informed of their academics and social lives. As a result, they purposely engaged with campuses so as one mom stated, "not be left in the dark." One parent communicated,

For me, parent engagement is getting to know how my kids are doing. They won't tell me anything because they are young. When I wash my son's pants, I find his progress report in them, but he doesn't tell me he got it. You have to be engaged to know what they are doing.

Another parent communicates how volunteering helps her "keep an eye" on her child, thus becoming more aware of her son's peers. She discussed,

I also think parent engagement is knowing what your children are doing. That is why I am a volunteer. I have a son in 12th grade, a daughter in 11th grade, and one in 9th grade. So, it is easier to come here and see them as they walk by while I'm working in the school store. I can see who they walk with, who they are hanging out with. They know not to skip any classes because I am here. They know that if one of the other moms sees them, she will tell me if she saw my children doing wrong.

Lastly, one mom adds that volunteering allows insight into her child's life, which otherwise would be unknown. She commented on her obligation as a parent to be involved when expressing,

I believe parent engagement is being as involved as possible in the school. To connect oneself with the school and the teachers. To be aware of what is going on with your child. To participate and be a volunteer. They do not like that I am a volunteer. They say, “No, mommy,” but I respond with “no, that is my right.” I will not leave everything up to the school. That is my role and responsibility as a mother.

As observed, the majority of parents at C. Martinez viewed parent engagement as being as involved as possible in their child’s life. Many sought to volunteer on campus to maintain proximity to their child and as several stated, “keep an eye on them.” This “right” of the parent, maintain involvement, regardless whether their child approved was held obligatory by parents in ensuring their child, as another mom notes, “stays on track” for success.

The What of Parent Engagement. Findings relating to the *what* of parent engagement, or practices campuses utilize to engage parents are presented from both the school and parent perspective, and align with the Six Types of Involvement (Epstein, 2013). Emergent themes correlating to the parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community components of the framework reveal C. Martinez places emphasis on educating parents about high school expectations and pressures, post-secondary preparation, and personal growth. They emphasize overcoming language barriers by holding meeting in Spanish, and encourage parent participation through volunteering in the PTO. Parents express gratitude for “feeling at home” and being provided with avenues to address medical, financial, and

legal needs. The following portrays specifics relating to *what* C. Martinez does to engage families from both the campus and parent point of view.

Schools' Perspective Regarding the What of Parent Engagement. Findings indicate C. Martinez High School focus is strengthening parent understanding of high school expectations and academic/social pressures, post-secondary preparation, and personal growth. Likewise, P. Deleon places much emphasis on communication, offering a variety of meetings and utilizing varying platforms to share student academics, campus events, and district updates. Parents have opportunities to assist with numerous campus initiatives, be exposed to colleges and universities, and learn of immediate industry opportunities to best guide post-secondary decision making. P. Deleon also ensures parents are equipped with medical, mental health, and legal assistance, while they have the opportunity to participate in campus decision making through involvement with the Site Decision Making Committee and the Parent-Teacher Organization. Emergent themes correlating the components of the study's conceptual framework are discussed below.

Parenting. C. Martinez High School places emphasis on the parenting component of Epstein's Six Types of Involvement framework (2013). Their focus is strengthening parent understanding of high school expectations and academic/social pressures, post-secondary preparation, and personal growth. The extensive counseling team, made up of four counselors and a representative from an outside organization assist parent comprehension of mental or emotional issues that may arise in students because of classroom and peer pressures. These include anxiety, panic, frustration, and at times, sadness and depression. Mrs. Reza, the parent liaison, shared,

Parents kept telling me they were worried about their child. They seemed depressed and stressed out. They didn't know what to do. So, we decided to have our counselors help them better deal with these issues.

The counseling team also provides a session, High School 101, aimed to educate families on high school expectations, credits, and understanding the report card. According to Mrs. Reza, this series of classes was a result of parents requesting ways to support their children's academics. She stated many parents, especially those from foreign countries, did not comprehend Texas high school expectations and means of graduation, and less understood the steps for applying and entering college. She communicated,

I listen to my parents. I ask, "What do you need?" "What do you want to learn?" And, they tell me. I tell them, "Don't be embarrassed. Cause, remember, we're trying to help our kids. We are going to learn together." At one meeting, I asked, "How many of you understand what a GPA is?" Oh, very few parents raised their hands. So, I knew that would be a topic for our next meeting. At another meeting, I asked, "How many know what credits are?" Again, not too many know. So, we show them.

In addition to learning about high school expectations, parents are also equipped with learning the processes of applying for college, financial aid, and scholarships through participation in parent-only university trips. As shared by Mrs. Reza, the purpose of these trips is to allow parents an opportunity to attend informative sessions and be exposed to campus settings, but also to bond and learn from one another. She shared,

When parents go on these trips with their children, they only talk to them (their children). When they go with only parents, they talk to one another. They get to learn things from each other. They learn about goals other parents have for their children, which might influence them.

C. Martinez also communicated information concerning a multitude of other topics such as best supporting students in special education, understanding the impact of truancy, environmental threats such as gangs, and the dangers of common drugs, though they stress an opportunity for personal growth. Parents were given the chance to take English and computer classes, as well as attend college and career training sessions. Furthermore, families are provided health awareness classes to learn about and make informed nutritional decisions to avoid the risk of prevalent illnesses. Mrs. Reza added,

It is important for us to offer nutritional classes because many of our families have health problems with diabetes and high blood pressure. Hispanics like to eat all kinds of foods and don't read the (nutrition) labels. We want to help our families make healthier decisions with food.

C. Martinez does much to educate families on understanding high school expectations, student health impacts attributed to academic and social pressures, and avenues to support student post-secondary aspirations. Additionally, C. Martinez helps parents understand the dangers students face with neighborhood gang influence and drug pressures, however their other focus is personal growth. They allow parents opportunities to grow both cognitively with building language, technology, and career skills, but also physically by being equipped to make healthier nutritional choices.

Communicating. Communication of student projects and academic progress, as well as school initiatives at C. Martinez focuses on overcoming language barriers. As Principal Brown shared, “The vast majority of our parents speak Spanish. So, we ensure everything we communicate is translated.” As a result, all messages shared through the district all-call system, flyers, and school website are translated to Spanish. Likewise, administrative, counselor, and teacher meetings require a translator, which is typically another staff member, but could also be a parent volunteer depending on the nature of the conversation. However, meetings such as the monthly Coffee with the Principal, which are attended by several hundred parents, are conducted primarily in Spanish. Doing so, according to Mrs. Reza, helps parents feel more at home and slows down the pace of meetings. She explained,

We used to translate everything from English to Spanish. We were always rushing, because we always have a lot of presenters. One day someone asked if we could just do it in Spanish since everyone spoke Spanish and we’ve done it like that ever since. I always start by asking the million-dollar question, “Does everyone here understand Spanish?” And if not, we get an English translator just for you. We don’t want parents to stay more than two hours and this has helped.

By conducted these meetings in Spanish, parents can cover an extensive list of topics including report cards, mandated assessments, upcoming celebrations, fieldtrips, as well as ongoing projects, such as those in the plumbing and construction club. C. Martinez takes pride in helping their community. At one Coffee with the Principal meetings, students from the plumbing club shared, in Spanish, updates of a recent project, which included helping a nearby resident with a renovation. The student stated, “We

wanted to help. The dad didn't have a leg and job, and the family's house needed help. It didn't cost the family anything. It would have been a \$810 job."

Ultimately, C. Martinez aspires to help families "feel at home," as Mrs. Reza describes, by using Spanish as a key language of communication. By "purposely placing Spanish speaking personnel across the building," like Mr. Brown communicated, and utilizing an enormous pool of Spanish speaking parent volunteers, C. Martinez ensure language barrier do not impede communication with parents. Principal Brown lastly communicated,

English is my first language. I know Spanish, but am not always comfortable speaking it. I ensure, though, to always have a translator. A language barrier is not going to be the reason I cannot communicate with parents how their child is doing, how our school is doing, how I care for all our families.

Volunteering. A focal point in *what* C. Martinez does to engage families is create volunteering opportunities for build parent leadership through participation in the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). C. Martinez High School has a very impactful and active PTO. Made up of several hundred members, the PTO drives much of the fundraising for the campus as well as establishes the parent-welcome atmosphere easily seen when visiting. As mentioned on their flyer, the PTO welcomes parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends. They are responsible for running the school store that sells school supplies and merchandise, as well as drinks and snacks during lunch three times a week from 9-2. Additionally, the PTO runs the parent room, which is set up as a conference room for teacher meetings, but also has computers for parent use. As the hub for parents,

the parent room is where parents first go in need of speaking to a teacher, finding family resources, or signing up for events.

The PTO, which is free to join, helps cook meals for school events, sponsors uniforms for needing students, and pays many of the senior fees for the graduating class. Members also serve as chaperones on field trips, college visits, conferences, and school dances. Lastly, they monitor halls and serve as Principal Brown stated, “parental presence that influence student decision-making.” Mrs. Reza shared a little more about the PTO,

Interestingly, the PTO president does not have a student that attends the high school. They are a long-time supporter. She (the president) sends the message, “I need your help with the store or to make food for events, like the 1st Fridays which are the Coffee with the Principal,” and people come and help. The PTO just came together to make spaghetti for 200 football players, coaches, and staff. The school does not buy the items to cook. The PTO has enough funds. Parents sponsor their kitchens, and time in cooking and serving. The PTO also helps with senior fees, which can be up to \$600 per students. We also buy our office workers and any students that need help uniforms. PTO membership is free. We have plenty of money, we ask for help. We don’t need donations. We need time.

It is through participation with the PTO that parents give to the campus, students, and themselves. As Mrs. Reza stated,

Parents love to be a part of the PTO. It gives them a purpose. They feel important. They also get a chance to be social with others.

It is the PTO that helps create the parent-friendly atmosphere easily felt on campus. One that is welcoming, giving, and as the principal senses supports the familial culture of the campus.

Learning at Home. C. Martinez High School supports learning at home by ensuring parents are able to best support student post-secondary goals and decision-making. C. Martinez primarily helps families make post-secondary decisions by providing parent informational sessions regarding college entrance requirements, application process, financial aid, and scholarship opportunities. These College Access and Success series, which are provided by the counseling team, aspire to educate families in not only the steps needed to initiate college, but also become aware of industry or military opportunities. As a counselor mentioned at one of the parent meetings,

We want all our students to be successful. That could mean going to college for some, or having a high paying industry job for others. There's electrician and carpentry school that pays you as you learn. There's also options to go the military or become a police officer. It's all about being successful, and one way is not the only way.

Career and Education Day, which is part of the campus' College Week, supports learning at home and post-secondary decisions by allowing families to learn about nearby universities, as well as occupational opportunities. Reiterated by Mrs. Reza, who believes students require options after high school, she stated,

Many of our students will not go to college after high school. They choose to work to help their families, so it's important to bring organizations that can help

students get a good job. The local construction and electrician's union have great opportunities that teach our students the job and pay them.

To further support college and university opportunities for students, C. Martinez organizes both student and parent, as well as previously mentioned, parent-only visits to nearby campuses. Although trips for both parents and students allow for bonding between the two, trips for only parents allow for parents to learn from one another. Mrs. Reza shared,

Many of parents never thought about college for their children. They want them to finish high school and then work. When they go on trips with only parents, they hear other parents talking about wanting their child to be a teacher or lawyer.

They understand they need to go to college to get that kind of job. They get influenced by them and start thinking differently.

Ultimately, C. Martinez supports learning at home by leveraging conversations with families concerning post-secondary decision-making and planning by creating informed parents. Post-secondary opportunities are not limited to attending college and universities, but rather also considering industrial and blue-collared, well-paying occupations. The focus at C. Martinez is creating options for all its students, because as was stated by a counselor at a parent meeting, "Not all students are cut from the same cloth."

Decision Making. The primary means parents are involved in decision making at C. Martinez is through participation with the Site Decision Making Committee (SDMC) and with the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO). The SDMC allows parents to serve on a committee with the principal, teachers, non-teaching staff, community members, and

students to hear and discuss topics including academics, safety, and proposed initiatives. As discussed, the PTO is primarily a parent lead organization that aids the school in multiple ways, including running the school store, parent room, cooking for events, sponsoring senior fees and student uniforms, and serving as chaperones for fieldtrips and dances.

Collaboration with Community. In aligning with the collaboration with community component of Epstein's Six Types of Involvement framework (2013), C. Martinez aims to provide community resources based on family needs. These include physical, mental, and dental health, employment and housing assistance, and counseling services. Recently, there has been an increase in need to assist families with immigration assistance and information pertaining to visa, work permits, and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) rights for students. As a result, C. Martinez has brought in, on multiple occasions, the Mexican consulate, as well as similar agencies to assist with these issues.

The majority of these services are shared at the Coffee with the Principal, however C. Martinez has recently began having Community Garage Sales to assist in sharing these resources. Mrs. Reza communicated,

We started having community garage sales to help families make money by selling things they don't use anymore. The school charges ten dollars for a table. The last one, we made seven-eight hundred dollars, but the real purpose for the garage sale is not to make money. The real reason for the garage sale is to share information with parents. We bring in all the neighborhood clinics, dental offices, immigration offices, and other organizations you see at Coffee with the Principal.

They set up booths and share information on how they can help our parents.

Parents think they are coming to a garage sell, which they are, but they are really coming to a health and information fair.

Overall, C. Martinez places heavy emphasis ensuring families are knowledgeable of community resources. These assisting organizations are a staple at every Coffee with the Principal. With tables lined up at the library entrance, representatives provide information and free goods to parents as they enter. Mrs. Reza communicated when families are healthy and have their needs met, their children are more likely to come to school and learn. As a result, the campus aims to make collaboration with the community a priority.

Summary. In summary, C. Martinez utilizes multiple ways to support parent engagement. These include building parent knowledge of high school expectations and avenues for post-secondary goals, as well as fostering learning at home with informed decision-making and planning. Additionally, C. Martinez stresses overcoming language barriers by translating all conversations and using Spanish as the primary language in parent meetings. Likewise, an emphasis is placed on encouraging parent engagement through participation with the PTO, which run the parent room and campus store, fund fieldtrips and campus needs, as well as serve as chaperones on many occasions. Lastly, C. Martinez focuses on ensuring availability of community services that meet family needs. Table 2, located in Appendix H, summarizes C. Martinez's approaches for engaging parents. Aligned with the Six Types of Involvement Framework (Epstein, 2013), the researcher aspires it could serve as a resource for other educational leaders looking for parent engagement ideas.

Parents' Perspective Regarding the What of Parent Engagement. What C.

C. Martinez High School does to engage families, from the parent perspective, is place an emphasis on practices aligned with the parenting, communicating, volunteering, and collaboration with the community components of the Six Types of Involvement Framework (Epstein, 2013). These practices include educating parents on high school expectations, supporting post-secondary goals, and personal growth. In addition, C. Martinez aims to overcome language barriers in communication, provide a “home” amongst the PTO, and find community resources to meet family needs. Though practices aligned with decision-making and learning at home may be an ongoing aspect of engaging parents at C. Martinez, they were not discussed during this focus group session.

Parenting. According to parents, C. Martinez High School places emphasis on the parenting component of Epstein’s Six Types of Involvement framework (2013). Their focus is strengthening parent understanding of high school expectations and personal growth. In our discussion, parents shared prior unfamiliarity with high requirements and the openness of the school to tailor their meetings to meet their requests. One parent shared that,

At first, I did not know how to read the report card. It looked complicated. I knew a 70 was close to failing. This I knew from when my child was in elementary, but the high school report cards are more complicated. I did not even know he had to have certain credits to graduate. I thought they just graduated in four years.

Similarly, a mother expanded on this topic,

They listen to what you want to learn. So, if we want to talk about grades, we talk about grades. If you need information on how to obtain a scholarship, they give it

to you. If a person has trouble filling out paperwork, you just come with (Mrs. Reza) and she will help you fill them out or finds someone to help you There is so much help about things my child needs in each meeting. That's why it is very important for parents to go (to meetings) or they miss all that information.

Sometimes the kid wants to graduate, but can't because they are missing credits or something, and at the end of the year is when the parent is finding out about it.

They could have learned about that if they came to the meetings.

Parents also described their ability to grow personally through a series of learning opportunities. These included developing language and technology skills. In addition, parents were fond of learning first aid, which one parent stated was of value, "because (she) had several small children at home." Ultimately, C. Martinez's focus on helping parents learn high school expectations, being open to parent requests, and building personal skills are *what* parents communicated were effective parenting practices for engaging families.

Volunteering. A focal point, as communicated by parents as well, in *what* C. Martinez does to engage families is create volunteering opportunities that build parent leadership through participation in the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). Every parent addressed their involvement with the PTO. Several stated their participation for over a decade, even when their children were no longer students at C. Martinez. Parents voiced the many areas the PTO helped the campus with, including running the school store, paying senior dues and buying necessities for graduation, sponsoring field trips, and assisting in the parent room. Ultimately, though, parent participation was fostered by volunteers, "feeling at home." They shared the connection and supportive relationship

they had with other members and the parent liaison, feeling, “like a family.” It was this comfort that encouraged volunteer’s support, and drove the PTO to the prominent organization on campus.

Communicating. The focus of communication at C. Martinez is overcoming language barriers. Parents communicated C. Martinez’s strategy of communicating school programs, initiatives, and academics through Coffee with the Principal and teacher meetings. Likewise, they added communications through an all-call system, and notification of grades and attendance through the district’s monitoring, digital platform. Though, parents most favored the campus’ emphasis of communication in Spanish, stating it was like again, “being at home.” One mom shared,

They (C. Martinez) have English class, the computer class, and (first aid) class.

They let you work in the school store. You come to Coffee with the Principal, and can be a part of the PTO. But, I think that one of the most important things they do here is speak Spanish to us (communication). They tell us not to feel shy about coming. We are told to come by with any question and speak with either (Mrs. Reza) or the principal and they will be help in any way possible. Because we can speak Spanish, they make it comfortable for us. Like being at home.

Another parent adds an additional point about the school’s efforts to overcome language barriers. She stated that,

Here, it doesn’t matter if the teacher doesn’t speak Spanish. When we sign up for teacher conferences, they know if the teacher speaks Spanish. If they don’t, they get a translator for our meeting. Here, they help you resolve any problem you may have.

C. Martinez's focus on ensuring all communication is translated to Spanish was highly spoken about in *what* the campus does to engage parents, in both focus group sessions with parents. Parents communicated proudly their ability to speak in their native language, and the school's response of accommodating translators, if needed. Ultimately, this may have been one of the greatest factors in encouraging participation from hundreds of parents at both meetings and with the PTO.

Collaboration with the Community. In aligning with the collaboration with community component of Epstein's Six Types of Involvement framework (2013), C. Martinez provides community resources based on family needs, including health and legal assistance. Parents shared their appreciation for community resources that addressed family health needs. With a medical clinic at a middle school campus, located less than a mile away, parents had the opportunity to see a rotating doctor, and receive vaccinations and screenings for both their children, and themselves. One mom shared,

We have a health clinic at (nearby middle school). We can see a doctors or nurse, get flu shots and even an eye screening. And it is not just for the students, parents too. They give us all free shots and information to other places, if they cannot help us there.

Additionally, parents communicated the campus' initiative to connect them with nearby legal aid, specifically those that dealt with immigrant rights and services. Though, they did not go much into detail, parents shared their appreciation to get assistance with organizations, such as the Mexican Consulate, because as one mom stated, "In these days, you have to be prepared and know your rights." As could be seen from most of the meeting agendas, C. Martinez understood this need and ensured to provide many

opportunities for parents to learn from community resources, which supported and hopefully alleviating many legal concerns.

Why Parents Engage. The Ecologies of Parental Engagement (2004) framework addresses two key aspects of parent engagement; how parents utilize familiarity and experience in maneuvering the education system to advocate for their child, and why they do so in the first place. Why a parent does so, if they desire, is based on personal or perhaps cultural perspectives and attitudes, and is important because parent engagement requires input and a partnership from both families and campuses to truly support one another. Based on findings at C. Martinez High School, parents and the school sense engagement support better decision-making by students, builds student self-esteem, fosters happiness amongst parents and students, and allows parents access to resources and knowledge that all ultimately impact student success. The following communicates specifics related to both perspectives of *why* families engage.

Schools' Perspective Regarding Why Parents Engage. From the schools' perspective, parents engage with campuses because it supports student's decision-making, brings students pleasure, which builds student self-esteem, and allows parents access to resources and tools that foster academic achievement and post-secondary planning. From Principal Brown's point of view, parents engage in their child's education because it supports responsible decision-making. He stated students, in general, make wiser choices when they know others, "have an eye on them." This practice is observed in his own household, as indicated,

Well, I think, you know, there's something to be said for a student knowing their parent is involved in things that happen at the school. For instance, with my own

child, I know that if he knew I was going to be at the school, somehow, his clothing habits change that particular day. For instance, he would try to sneak out of the house wearing these torn up jeans. He knows I cannot stand them. And so, he would always kind of dressed it up if he knew I was going to be around. I think all types of decisions are impacted when students know there's someone watching.

Principal Brown continued that parents also engaged because it helps build a child's self-esteem. He stated that children want to be cared for and feel important. Although they grow older and desire more independence, they still seek affection. However, may not always show it. He shared this thought,

I think that teenagers, who will probably never want to admit it, find satisfaction in seeing their parents engaged. I believe it builds their confidence and creates other connections with their parents. It is kind of nice to know that people really care about you.

Mrs. Reza shared similar sentiments, however added parents engage to gain resources and tools that aid student success. She stated when schools tend to the needs of parents, they are more able to fill gaps in knowledge, which ultimately benefit students. She also stated when parents understand the expectations of their child, what areas they are held accountable for, and how to support post-secondary initiatives, they are better positioned to offer support. Mrs. Reza shared during the interview,

Parent engagement is very important. I always tell my parents, "when you come to the meeting, you're going to be the first one to receive the tools that you need to help your kids." As you've seen in our meetings, our whole thing is education.

I'm not going to have meetings because the district requires them. I want to provide resources and tools for parents, so they can help their children. I let them know we're going to learn together. We bring in people to talk about GPA, attendance, credits, college, and trainings for parents. We bring the right people to educate parents, so parents can then help their children. That's why it is important, and that's why they (parents) come.

Ultimately, *why* parents engage with schools, from the campus perspective, is to influence student decision-making, build student confidence, and become more knowledgeable in supporting student academic success. For those reasons, C. Martinez encourages and supports parent engagement. However, as stated by Barton (2004), true engagement requires a partnership and understanding of both sides. The following, aims to determine *why* parents engage, though from the parent point of view.

Parents' Perspective Regarding Why Parents Engage. From the parents' perspective, active engagement brings students and parents joy, supports motivation, and allows for parents to learn of resources to better support their child, while lack of engagement reduces student efforts and impacts overall success. Several parents agreed with Mr. Brown, stating parents engage with campuses because it brings their children joy, which in turn motivates them to do better in class. They stated, also, that although their teenage children may not verbally share their liking in seeing them involved, they do make it known when they are not present. Engagement or for many of these parents, volunteering on campus, appears to also bring them personal pleasure as well. As mentioned earlier, several parents continue to engage with the school although their children no longer attend. Several similar statements follow,

Parent 1: It's important to engage because they (their children) feel proud about you being there. Other kids wish that their parents were there, but many can't.

Parent 2: That is true. My son always asks, "Are you going to go help PTO?" He tells me that I am more famous than him.

Parent 3: I think that it impacts the way they feel. It makes them happy and they put more effort in their school work.

Parent 4: Sometimes they say, "No, don't go." But, at the same time, when you show up they get happy about it. It's as if helps motivate them.

Parents also acknowledged how engagement allows them to best serve their children. By being engaged, parents have gotten to know their children's teachers, learned about post-secondary opportunities, and have pushed their children's goals further. One mom discussed how engagement benefitted her child when ill,

I think it is good to be involved in the school because it lets you get to know the teachers. I had a problem with one of my children. My son got sick, and his grades started suffering. Because I know the teachers well, they helped me help my son, and taught me how to help him at home.

Another parent shared her reason for engagement,

That is why I come here. I am learning things that I never knew. Things that are out there so that my child can go to college.

Additionally, a parent discussed how engagement has impacted future goals for their child,

At first, I just wanted my children to graduate high school. I didn't know anything about college. I had not visited colleges and knew nothing about applying and

financial aid. Now, I pushed one of my children to get their master's degree. I want my other child to get his doctorate degree.

On the other end, parents shared how lack of engagement reduces efforts, impacts decision-making, and for one parent, perhaps played a part in her children not graduating high school. They stated when parents are not aware of what is occurring with their children, they are less likely to monitor their school expectations. Likewise, parents expressed how engagement supports communication at home because, "you have school things to talk about." One person communicates,

I see children, whose parents are not involved, fall behind. It's as if they do not strive to do as well. They feel, "Well, it doesn't matter to my mom. Even if I get a 70, she's fine. If I get here late, well, so she wouldn't know."

Another participant acknowledged the impact of being ill-informed,

If you (parents) do not show up to meetings, you do not know what is going on at school or with your child, and well, your child will not tell you. So, how do you talk about school at home if you don't know what's happening?

Lastly, a parent disclosed a personal account, which she hoped would encourage other parents to maintain engagement with their child's education. She stated the following,

I used to work so much, I would never come to any events or at times not even send my kids to school. Never mind going to any meetings. Once I would get home, I would be so tired. I never knew what was happening at school or with my kids. And unfortunately, only one out of first three children graduated. The other two ending up in the wrong crowd, out on the streets. I say this so other parents won't let this happen to them. Put your children and their education first. My last

two children, I am with them throughout all their school experiences. I learned the hard way, but both are going to graduate.

Overall, parents shared similar reasons with the campus for *why* parents engage with schools. Parents sensed engagement motivates student performance by bringing happiness to children. This pleasure, though, is shared amongst parents. Additionally, engagement allows parents to better support their child's academics. Goals for children become more ambitious as parents learn more. Though, parents did not specifically share, like the campus, engagement as means of "keeping an eye" on children, they did acknowledge the lack of engagements impact on decision-making and ultimate success.

How Engagement is Supported and Discouraged. A key aspect of the Ecologies of Parental Engagement (2004) framework is *how* parents utilize familiarity and experience in maneuvering the education system to advocate for their child. Barton et. al (2004) states this component of parent engagement is a relational phenomenon facilitated by parents' experiences in and out of the school community. As a result, the author sought to identify factors that facilitated, as well as discouraged engagement from the school's and parents' perspectives.

Findings at C. Martinez revealed similarities between perspectives including, parents feeling welcomed and important, able to be involved, and having a liaison bridge parents with the school as key factors encouraging engagement. Parents, however stressed, engagement, "begins with the principal." The campus, on the other hand, shared being accessible, showing care, and providing "good customer service" were instrumental influences. Both perspectives viewed language barriers as a key impediment, while the campus added intimidation and unfamiliarity with the school system deterred

engagement. Contrary, parents noted student aging and added independence were key factors that suppressed engagement.

Schools' Perspective Regarding Supportive and Discouraging Practices. From the schools' perspective, parent engagement is best supported by creating opportunities for students to be involved, being accessible, showing care, and providing "good customer service." Just as important is having a staff member, such as a parent liaison, to connect parents with the campus. Engagement is discouraged, though, with language barriers and perhaps, intimidation with the school system. The latter brought about by lack of exposure to school settings and their expectations. In discussing how engagement is best supported, Principal Brown sensed when students are involved in extra-curricular activities, parents are also more involved. He felt parents invest time in what is important to their children, and thus aims to provide as many opportunities for involvement as possible. Currently, C. Martinez has over 35 clubs and sports. Mr. Brown stated, "We try and find something for everyone." He continued,

It's easier to get parents involved when their child is involved in activities.

There's the football parent. There's the baseball parent. There's the volleyball parent or band parent. All involved, giving of their time to help and support their child.

Mr. Brown also felt accessibility and showing parents, you care for their children and their needs supports parent engagement. He makes himself available to parents, or provides access to those that can best meet their needs. Additionally, he aims to spend as much time as possible with families to gather trust. He stated,

Trust doesn't come overnight. You have to spend time to build trust. Sometimes parents don't think we care about them or know their obstacles. I commit myself to being at events and talking with our families. I want them to know I make every decision for their child and will find ways to help their needs.

On the opposite end, Principal Brown sensed language barriers and intimidation of the school system due to parents' lower levels of formal education can, at times, discourage parent engagement. As a result, he aims to have readily available translators, as well as establishes a welcoming environment, one that is guiding and non-judgmental. Likewise, he has made changes to his dress attire to appear more approachable. He shared,

Schools can be intimidating because they may represent a level of education that some of our parents have not yet experienced. So, we try not to come across as academic snobs to parents. This is something I take personal and exercise in my own family, because I'm the only one in my family who's gone to college. I was taught to be humbled from an early age. Taught that just because I've done something doesn't make me better than anyone else. I also think language barriers discourage engagement. I don't always feel comfortable with my Spanish, but I always have someone available to help me if needed. Everywhere you walk in this building, you're going to find someone who speaks Spanish. One other thing, many years ago, as an elementary principal, I would wear at least a tie to work every day, if not a suit. One day a staff member came to me while I was upfront at morning duty and said, "Why don't you wear blue jeans and a school shirt on Fridays. See how different your experience might be." So, I tried it out and the

weirdest thing was I had more conversations with people on Fridays than any other day. I realize I look a little uptight, but, apparently, I can look real uptight if I am super dressed up. So, I started making sure I appeared a little more accessible in the way I dress so parents feel comfortable in approaching me.

Mrs. Reza confirmed with much of Mr. Brown's thoughts when sharing ways that support and discourage parent engagement. She shared that "good customer service" is the foundation to establishing enduring parent engagement, sharing, "It's like in a restaurant. Do you ever go back to a restaurant when the service is bad?" Thus, she recommended, "Smile, leave your problems at the door, and remember, first impressions are everything." Additionally, she noted that making parents feel comfortable, being accessible, and able to speak their language also supports parent engagement

Lastly, Mrs. Reza felt one of the biggest encouragers of parent engagement is having a parent liaison or coordinator campus; someone whose job is specifically working with parents. She communicated,

I think a parent liaison in the school is very important in engaging parents. Someone they (parents) know, someone to go to if they have a problem, who might know the answers to their questions, and will guide them. There's a lot of parents, especially in our Hispanic community who don't want to share their problem, even if it's affecting their child. We hold in a lot. So, they need someone they feel comfortable with. Someone that they can identify with and be the bridge.

From the campus perspective, engagement is best supported by creating opportunities for students to be involved, being accessible to parents, demonstrating you care, and providing "good customer service." Another important factor is having a staff

member, such as a parent liaison, to connect or “bridge” parents with the campus. Contrary, the campus felt engagement is discouraged with language barriers and intimidation with the school system due to unfamiliarity, or lack of experiences. The latter reasons are those C. Martinez stressed overcoming to facilitate successful parent engagement with the campus.

Parents’ Perspective Regarding Supportive and Discouraging Practices.

Parents regarded the principal as the strongest factor for encouraging parent engagement, followed by having the “right” person to bridge parents and the school. Contrary, language barriers, and students aging and becoming independent suppressed engagement. From the parent perspective, other factors that encourage engagement include feeling welcomed and important on campus, as well as able to contribute to the school. The majority, though, began with stating the biggest factors in engagement, “has a lot to do with the principal” and the “right” parent liaison. One parent shared,

It all starts with the principal. Schools focus much on academic things, which is good, but they don’t see the importance in parent participation. In my child’s elementary school, there was a principal who welcomed parent participation, then, the principal changed. That principal did not want parents. So, they didn’t allow us in.

They continued with stating, “When the principal supports parent engagement, policies and rules also support parent engagement.” Parents added after principal support came another necessity that encouraged parent engagement, a parent liaison who could bridge parents with the campus. Another parent shared,

The principal is the most important person that brings parents in. They are the one that looks over the whole school. And they are able to bring in people like (Mrs. Reza), who makes such a difference, because we feel comfortable and can relate to her. She has had difficult situations, but she has kept up with her responsibilities. I don't know if you remember, but when her mother passed away, that was at night, and the next day we had the senior's luncheon. She did not come, but she did help cook for everyone. We helped her by serving all of them.

Many parents continued with similar sentiments. Such as, "We are very blessed to have (Ms. Reza). She is a woman filled with love and cares for us, especially our children." They added what separated their parent liaison from others was that she had, "character and motivation," was personable, "not afraid to cry," and sought-after resources and topics for meetings that were relevant and needed. A few of these needs shared, include assistance with technology, especially the district platform that allowed parents to monitor grades and attendance, opportunities to learn English and improve their own education, and information regarding college for their children.

When asked about factors that discourage engagement, parents shared the inability of staff to communicate in Spanish, or not knowing who to address with problems, as a few. Interestingly though, many indicated the primary factor that discouraged engagement was students aging and parents no longer feeling needed. They communicated that perhaps, culturally, it is acceptable by many parents to relinquish control and encourage independence by removing themselves from their children's education. Though, each acknowledge that high school is the most crucial time for parent involvement. A few of those similar statements are shared below.

Parent 1: As Hispanics, once a child grows up, we tend to think of them as capable of making their own decisions and disengage with schools. But, no. This is when we should be more aware and involved. But, that is how we were raised

Parent 2: I agree. Lots of parent don't get involved because they think their child doesn't need them anymore or their child pushes them away. But we (parents) have to be more involved now. They (children) are more influenced at school. They get influenced to wear better shoes, to eat certain things, to go out. There's too many gangs and drugs out there.

Ultimately, parents at C. Martinez viewed the principal as the primary factor for engaging parents, followed by having the "right" parent liaison for parents to connect with, and utilize as a bridge with the school. Parents did also acknowledge the need to feel welcomed, important, and serve a purpose on campus. Contrary, language barriers were communicated as major factor discouraging parent engagement, though the largest influence appeared to be student aging and acquiring additional independence. Given the crucial time in a child's live, parents emphasized the necessity for engagement.

Developing a Relationship that Supports Parent Engagement. Developing a relationship that supports parent engagement, as proposed in this study's alternative framework, which aimed to bridge the parent-centric and school-centric components of parent engagement, is important in sustaining a partnership that advocates for student success. Findings in this study revealed C. Martinez and parents heavily promote the necessity of a parent liaison or coordinator to support and develop healthy relationship between the two. C. Martinez also feels having a passion to engage parents, while parents

stress on-going communication and making information relevant also serve to establishing a relationship. The following view specifics pertaining to both perspectives.

School's Perspective Regarding Developing a Relationship. From the school's perspective, possessing the "right" parent liaison or coordinator and having a passion to engage parents are the primary means of developing a supportive relationship between parents and campuses. When questioned about how campuses should approach relationship building with parents, Principal Brown answered simply, "Hire someone like (Mrs. Reza)." Although he said this smiling, he was not joking about her importance in building a relationship with parents. Mr. Brown also communicated the significance of being selective of the person chosen to take this role. He placed Mrs. Reza on a pedestal when he shared,

She is the best person for the job. She is a sweetheart, a human being willing to help anyone, anytime. The thing that I marvel at every single time we have Coffee with the Principal is watching parents come in. Because, she greets them like they're coming to her home. Hugs and kisses them. She has warm words for them every time. They get it. They know. They really do. They come because she makes them feel good about being here. She makes them feel important. And I think that old saying is true, "People will forget what you said, but they'll never forget how you made them feel." She makes people feel good. Like they've really done something great for showing up. My advice would be, you've got to find someone that's going to be like her to be the bridge to the community.

To Mrs. Reza, building a relationship with parents require a passion to do so, and a desire to engage more parents. She simply stated,

Give it your all and make it your passion. This is why I am here. There's never enough parent engagement for me. We have a hundred plus parents at every meeting but, this is a big school, so we need more. One day I will fill up the auditorium, why not?

Together with a parent liaison, who is driven to engage parents, C. Martinez has done extremely well at building a parent partnership. The fact that Mrs. Reza has maintained this position for over a decade has enhanced the stability and support of this relationship. Additionally, having the "right" liaison, who is caring, welcoming, and encouraging appears to sustain engagement, even when parents' children no longer attend the campus. Ultimately, by maintaining a supportive relationship between C. Martinez and parents, students benefit with advocates invested in promoting their success.

Parents' Perspective Regarding Developing a Relationship. Developing a relationship between the campus and parents, from the parent perspective, required having a parent liaison, on-going communication, and making information relevant. Parents, for the majority, expressed a parent liaison or coordinator, like Mrs. Reza, was a key to building relationships with parents. They discussed several of her traits that aided in establishing their comfort and encouraged engagement. These included her ability to speak Spanish, make them feel welcomed, was open and available to their needs, and genuinely caring.

Several parents also pointed to the school's ability to communicate as being pivotal in building a relationship. One parents expressed, "Here at (C. Martinez), they always give us information. We always know what's going on." Lastly, parents, shared

how making information and meeting topics relevant to their needs as important in establishing a beneficial relationship with the school. One parent summarizes,

We will always be informed about things we care about at the Coffee with the Principal. We don't make a lot of money, so it's important for us to learn about free services like where my children can get their shots. I did not even know about how to graduate or (high school) credits before I came to the meetings. I also wanted to learn about college. They have someone in charge of giving information on how to obtain a scholarship. Whatever we ask for, they give us. There is so much help and information in each meeting.

As was mentioned earlier, parents were grateful to have a voice and be heard. They felt important and valued when topics and sessions were created to meet their needs and interests. The purposeful attention to address parent needs has added to the long-standing relationship between parents and the campus. In conjunction with possessing a parent liaison, maintaining two-way communication, and providing relevant knowledge C. Martinez has initiated and maintained a high level of parent engagement for over the last decade.

Summary. C. Martinez and parents offered much information on defining parent engagement, understanding the *what*, *how* and *why* of parent engagement, as well as ways to sustain a supportive relationship between the campus and parents. The school and parents felt parent engagement was active participation in a child's education. A partnership or bridge between the two, it was an opportunity to be informed of school occurrences and student progress, as well as a means to "check in" with their children.

From both parents and staff perspectives, C. Martinez did much that aligned with Epstein's (2013) types of involvement framework to engage families; however, emphasis was placed on the volunteering and communication components. The school and parents' perspectives showed engagement held children more accountable in decision-making, as well as brought comfort to both parents and students. Students' age and independence, though, fostered less engagement by parents. Being accessible, showing you cared, and providing good customer service were also crucial in supporting engagement, while again, language barriers and perhaps, intimidation with the school system discouraged engagement. Lastly, a parent liaison or a means to connect parents and the school, a passion to engage parents, and providing resources and topics at meetings relevant to family needs were described by participants as key to sustaining healthy relationships.

Evaluating Both Cases

In evaluating similarities and differences between both campuses, findings indicated P. Deleon and C. Martinez High School's definition of parent engagement varied slightly, though both had a similar goal, student success. Both P. Deleon and its parents understood the term as active efforts to become aware of academics and campus on-goings. Parents, however, placed more emphasis on its importance during the secondary years than did campus administrators. These years were important because parents wanted to help their child make postsecondary decisions, including choosing and applying to a college or university and/or making career choices, as well as encouraging their child to avoid the "wrong crowds" and "stay on track." Campus administrators at C. Martinez viewed parent engagement as a partnership or bridge between the campus and parents that emphasized being purposeful and clear about expectations, while their

parents viewed engagement as a means of “checking in” on their child. Regardless of the slight variations and emphasis, all participants viewed parent engagement as a way to support student academic achievement.

In exploring the *what* of parent engagement, findings revealed many similarities between both campuses in terms of practices related to the parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaboration with community components of parent engagement (Epstein, 2013). Differences across sites were site-specific focuses and unique to practices of engagement. Overall, the two campuses primarily focused on practices relating to the parenting component of Epstein’s framework (2013) by educating families on high school expectations and the impacts on student health, college and career readiness, and personal growth. Examples of engagement around parent included opportunities to learn ways to support student mental health impacts brought about by academic and peer pressures, teaching parents the expectations of high schools in relation to credits and grade point averages (GPA), as well as college and university requirements, application processes, and financial aid and scholarship opportunities. Additionally, both schools offered parents opportunities for personal growth through English, General Education Diploma (GED), and career-skills training. While P. Deleon High School focused on exposing parents to student learning and expectation by conducting instructional walks, or occasions for parents to visit classes, C. Martinez High School sponsored parent-only university visits to allow parents time to bond and learn from one another.

Campuses also had similar methods of utilizing practices that corresponded to the communicating, volunteering, and learning at home components of the Six Types of

Involvement framework (Epstein, 2013). For example, each provided Coffee with the Principal meetings and communicated a wealth of information aimed at updating parents with student progress, school initiatives, and potential resources to aid student and parent needs. Likewise, sites had similar practices of college and university fieldtrips and College and Career Day, as well opportunities to volunteer time and resources at schools and events.

P. Deleon High School differed in its emphasis on communication and utilization of multiple social media platforms. The campus utilized platforms including LivingTree, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat, as well as multiple other means to “blast” families with communication. P. Deleon also differed in the variety and targets of meetings, including Donuts with Dad, Muffins with Mom, and Discussions with the Dean. Industry fieldtrips and ongoing intervention meetings were also unique to P. Deleon. C. Martinez High School, though, placed much emphasis on overcoming language barriers by conducting all meetings in Spanish, and focused on building parent leadership through an impactful Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). Made up of several hundred parents, who routinely attended school meetings, the PTO cooked meals for events, sponsored senior dues and student uniforms, as well as ran the school store and parent room.

Similar opportunities and resources were observed at sites regarding the decision-making and collaboration component of the framework. Decision-making at both campuses primarily revolved around participation in the PTO or Site Decision Making Committee (SDMC), which is a committee composed of the principal, teachers, non-teaching staff, community members, and students that discuss topics including,

academics, safety, and proposed initiatives. In investigating collaboration with community (Epstein, 2013), resources at both campuses aimed to meet family needs and included medical, counseling, employment, and housing assistance, as well as, recently, legal assistance to address concerns of immigration, visas, work permits, and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) rights for students.

In examining *why* parents engage in their child's education at both sites, P. Deleon and its parents believed parents engage to stay informed about school initiatives and classroom expectations, which impacts student decision-making. C. Martinez concurs with this point of view, again stressing the result of "keeping an eye" on students. Again, the importance of "keeping an eye" on their child was to help support educational initiatives, but equally as important was keeping them safe and away from the "wrong crowd." Parents at both campuses felt engagement occurred because it allowed parents opportunities to learn from the school ways to best support their child in high school and preparation for beyond. The majority of individuals interviewed at both campuses sensed student aging and inherited independence was the primary reason *why* parents disengage, though again, they emphasized high school as the most crucial time in a child's education to be involved. C. Martinez's parents, in contrast, communicated the negative impacts on student motivation and overall success when parents disengage.

Finally, in exploring *how* families engage in a child's education, factors that supported engagement at both sites included providing a welcoming environment, maintaining open communication, overcoming language barriers and providing parents a voice. Parents at C. Martinez emphasized the largest factor encouraging engagement was the principal, though having a parent liaison or coordinator was nearly as important.

Principals at both sites discussed being accessible, and actively listening and addressing parent needs as essential. Both campuses also speculated, again, that student aging and independence were the leading causes of parent disengagement. Although the early independence of students may be cultural, as shared by parents at both sites, it was not a reason to disengage. Unfamiliarity in navigating the educational system was also discussed by each. Both campuses lastly added that demanding parent work schedules and negative first impressions further diminished engagement.

In investigating ways to develop a relationship that supports parent engagement, findings revealed that both parents and P. Deleon High School felt communication was the key. Parents at C. Martinez also expressed communication as important in developing a supportive relationship between a campus and parents, though shared that the “right” parent liaison, someone who is warm, caring, and non-judgmental, is just as significant. Campus administrators at C. Martinez also agreed that having the personnel to connect the school with families was essential, however emphasized having a passion to engage parents was the first step in developing a fruitful, sustaining relationship. Table 3 below summarizes and compares the parent engagement findings for each campus.

Chapter V

Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to 1) fill gaps in the literature pertaining to parent engagement and the lack thereof, known as the “secondary slump,” at the secondary level, 2) understand the practices that “high parent engagement” campuses utilize to engage parents, 3) understand parents’ beliefs towards parent engagement and the factors that facilitate or discourage their engagement, and 4) examine how the relationship between parents and campuses ultimately support parent engagement.

Data were collected from two different types of high school campuses, one School of Choice and one comprehensive high school, located in a large urban school district by fieldwork or site visits, focus group and one-on-one interviews, and a variety of documents utilized during parent-centered events. Etic and emic analysis revealed emergent themes pertaining to defining parent engagement, understanding the *what*, *how* and *why* of parent engagement, as well as ways to encourage supportive relationships between campuses and parents.

The following chapter aims to provide a summary of findings as they relate to the multiple components of parent engagement. These include defining parent engagement, understanding high yielding, parent engagement practices, comprehending why parents engage, and factors that support and discourage engagement. Additionally, findings that encourage a supportive relationship between parents and schools will be discussed. Following, implications for research, policy and practice for school and district leaders will be addressed before concluding this chapter.

Summary of Findings

Findings revealed many similarities in how campuses define parent engagement, *what* schools do to engage families, *how* and *why* families engage, as well as ways to encourage a supportive relationship with school and parents. Although differences between the two campuses were observed, they were rather minor and dealt with respective emphasis or importance of engagement components, site-specific focuses, and unique engagement practices. The following briefly summarizes each of the key findings found in this comparative case study.

Findings surrounding defining parent engagement found it defined as active parent efforts to be informed with campus occurrences, and student academic expectations and progress, as a means of supporting student success. That said, a minority or participants viewed it as passive attendance at meetings. Parent engagement, according to C. Martinez, was viewed as a partnership or bridge between the campus and parents that allowed opportunity to “check in” on students and influence decision-making. While P. Deleon High School viewed collaboration with parents as an opportunity that benefits both students and the school, parents at the campus emphasized the importance of engagement at the secondary level. Desiring engagement mandatory, parents communicated its necessity to assist students with academic and social pressures, as well as to support preparation and decisions regarding post-secondary goals.

Results related to the *what* of parent engagement showed campuses placed emphasis on educating families on academic expectations by learning about credits and grade point averages, preparations for post-secondary decisions by being exposed to college and university requirements, application processes, and financial aid and

scholarship opportunities, and personal growth with English, general education diploma (GED), and career-skills training. Each campus also provided opportunities to learn ways to support student mental health impacts brought about by academic and peer pressures.

Additional results surrounding *what* “high parental engagement” campuses do to engage families showed P. Deleon focused on communication through multiple formats, exposing parents to student learning and expectations by conducting instructional rounds, and proactive academic collaborations with teachers, students, and parents. In contrary, C. Martinez placed much emphasis on overcoming language barriers by conducting all meetings in Spanish, and focused on building parent leadership through an impactful Parent Teacher Organization. Resources provided by both campuses aimed to meet family needs and included medical, counseling, employment, and housing assistance, as well as recently, legal assistance to address concerns of immigration, visas, work permits, and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) rights for students.

In examining the *why* of engagement, findings revealed parent engagement was encouraged by the ability to motivate and create accountability for students, in addition to being exposed to opportunities otherwise missed. Parents and administrators at P. Martinez also suggested parent engagement built self-esteem and brought joy to both parents and students. Both campuses, however, stressed being engaged in student learning allowed parents the opportunity to offer support in future endeavors, as well as “check-in” or “keep an eye on them (students)” in a crucial and influential time in their lives. On the other hand, students becoming older and given more independence were the primary reasons parents disengage. It was the consensus at both campuses that high school was the most crucial times for parents to be engaged.

In evaluating *how* engagement is supported and discouraged, several factors emerged as essential for parent engagement. These included providing a welcoming environment, being personable and demonstrating care, as well as being accessible to parents. Other factors that emerged at C. Martinez involved having consistent, effective means of communication and a staff member, such as a parent liaison or coordinator to serve as the bridge between parents and the school. Factors, though, that arose at both campuses as discouraging parent engagement included language barriers between the parents and the campus, demanding and, at times, multiple work schedules by parents, as well as possibly, negative first impressions or personal experiences in school.

Lastly, outcomes seen in assessing ways to establish a healthy relationship between schools and parents revealed ongoing, open, and inclusive communication was the key. Parents and administrators at C. Martinez also added addressing student and parent needs by actively engaging and listening to these campus stakeholders, as well as being selective in finding the ideal person to serve as the bridge between parents and school as essential to building a relationship. Ideally, this person would be caring, personable, trusting, and passionate about engaging parents. Each of these findings implication for research, and policy and practice for educational leaders are discussed below.

Implications for Research

The results of this study have implications for research surrounding parent engagement. Specific to the Hispanic population at the secondary level, this study's findings shed light on parent engagement at a school level about which there was little prior research. This study also provided insight not only into *what* "high parent

engagement” campuses do to engage families, but also parents’ perspectives and beliefs towards engagement, factors that supported and discouraged engagement, and keys to building a relationship between campuses and parents that support and foster student achievement. The following aims to review each of the key findings in this study and its implications for research.

Finding 1: Defining Parent Engagement. A key finding in this study was about how parents and campuses defined parent engagement, and in general what emerged from the study was consistent with prior research. For example, although the term varied slightly between campuses and parents, both sought to achieve the same goal, student success. Each perspective viewed parent engagement as a means of ensuring parents were as involved as possible in their child’s academics, conscious of school happenings and classroom expectations. This finding supported existing research by McKenna and Millen (2013) and Barton and colleagues (2004), who stated that the ultimate purpose of parent engagement was supporting student academic achievement.

Another example was that, despite the focus on student success, there were differences. Prior research points to this lack of consensus about what defines parent engagement (Carpenter et al., 2016, Wilder, 2014), noting that this sometimes causes confusion about what it means to engage and perhaps inhibits parent engagement from the onset. Differences were observed both between campuses and between parents and campus administration. One crucial difference was that campus staff viewed the term more as a partnership or collaboration with parents, while parents viewed the term as primarily a personal means of “checking in” on their child, keeping them on the “right track” by influencing their decision-making, and away from the “wrong crowds.” A

minority of parent participants in this study did, however, view parent engagement as passive attendance of school meetings.

More research is needed into what parent engagement entails because there is no consensus on the definition. For instance, what parents and schools expect from one another and themselves warrants attention. Additionally, understanding what constitutes as passive versus active engagement, and what types of engagement have the most benefit could also be important in understanding parent engagement. As shown by Fan and Chen's (2001) meta-analysis, parent-child communication, home supervision, educational aspirations, and school contact and participation contribute to student achievement, but does one activity weigh more heavily than the other? By being cognizant of how both campuses and parents define parent engagement as well as understanding their beliefs and expectations, educational leaders are better prepared in developing a more inclusive parent engagement plan.

Finding 2: The *What* of Parent Engagement. Findings in this study yielded a plethora of ideas for ways to engage parents at primarily Hispanic, secondary campuses. These findings correlated with the components of Epstein's (2013) Six Types of Involvement framework, and provided evidence for the school-centric component of this study's alternative framework. Findings demonstrated an emphasis on educating families on academic expectations, preparation for postsecondary decisions, and personal growth for parents. Campuses also provided opportunities to learn ways to support student mental health impacts brought about by academic and peer pressures.

Additional results surrounding *what* "high parent engagement" campuses do to engage families were site-specific focuses and unique engagement practices. For

example, P. Deleon focused on communication through multiple formats, opportunities for parents to visit classrooms through instructional rounds, and proactive academic collaborations. C. Martinez, on the other hand, placed emphasis on overcoming language barriers and building parent leadership through an impactful PTO. Resources provided by both campuses met family needs and included medical, counseling, employment, and housing assistance, as well as recently, legal assistance.

These findings supported existing research by Auerbach (2007) and Warren, Hong, Rubin, and Uy (2009) who reported the positive impact of parent empowerment and leadership on parent engagement, campus culture, and student achievement. Findings also supported Agronick, Clark, O'Donnell, and Stueve's (2009) report that advocated for open communication, parent education, and meaningful volunteering opportunities in engaging parents. Findings such as holding meetings in Spanish, interestingly, disrupt the dominant structures and language norms described in the Critical Race Theory (Landson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Findings also questioned the addition of another type of involvement, learning in the community, as practices such as parent/student college, university, and industry fieldtrips were difficult and questionably assigned in the Six Types of Involvement framework (Epstein, 2013).

Further exploration over what "high parent engagement" campuses do to engage families could benefit educational leaders serving similar type campuses or districts. Also, understanding how other settings, such as predominately African-American, Asian, or Arab campuses attract parents would benefit those respective educational leaders. Through the author's experience, learning methods to engage families with similar demographics primarily comes from being attentive to practices neighboring campuses

utilize. It would, however, benefit all campus educational leaders to have an excess of ideas from various locations that targeted their respective demographics easily available in the literature.

Finding 3: *Why Families Engage.* Key findings in this study revealed parents engage with schools to become better informed about campus initiatives and classroom expectations, as well as motivate and hold students more accountable in decision-making by “keeping an eye on them.” Parents at P. Deleon High School added their opportunity to learn of resources and practices to better support their children as an additional reason. C. Martinez’s staff and parents expressed parents engage because it brought pleasure to them and their child, and built student self-esteem. Both campuses agreed disengagement was a result of student aging and incurred independence, however stressed parent engagement’s importance at the secondary level. Finding also indicated parents at P. Deleon desired engagement mandatory, while those at C. Martinez sensed that lack of engagement reduced student efforts and impacted overall success.

These findings supported existing research by Barton et al.’s (2004) who stress parent engagement as not linear and unilateral, but rather flows in both directions between the campus and parents. Thus, it is important to understand parents’ belief and attitudes towards engagement to establish an effective, inclusive parent engagement plan. This approach results in viewing parents as both agents and authors of parental engagement rather than solely receivers. Furthermore, these findings potentially help provide an understanding of reasons why parents disengage as students move to the secondary years of education. Comprehending reasons for the “secondary slump” of engagement, as shown by Dauber and Epstein (1993), Catsambis and Garland (1997),

and Marshall and Jackman (2015), again, allows educational leaders the opportunity to plan ways to overcome these obstacles.

Findings also supported data that communicated that Hispanic families want what is best for their children and possess values that place their children as priority (Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013), and that parents desire to be a part of their child's education (Hill & Torres, 2010). As mentioned earlier, these values support the importance of *una buena educación*, or a good education, that is important to Hispanic families (Quiñones & Kiyama, 2014). Along with *familismo* and *respeto*, an *educación* that includes academics, moral, and ethical character is a key principal among Hispanic families (Carpenter, et. al, 2016).

Interestingly, findings did not support the possibility that parents do not engage with schools because, as Smith, et. al (2008) shared, many Hispanic families are reluctant to question authority or advocate for their child's rights. The reasons, as described by Whitaker and Hoover-Dempsey (2013), are that Hispanic families have much respect for educators; They hold teachers at the esteem of doctors and priests, and thus may feel it is not their role to interfere, and actually, may view it as disrespectful. Although data attained in this study provided much insight for why parents engage, further research over the topic from the Hispanic perspective, as well as other demographics, would benefit practitioners aspiring to create parent engagement plans specific to their population, as well as support existing data.

Finding 4: How Engagement is Supported and Discouraged. Findings in this study revealed multiple factors that supported and discouraged engagement. Supportive factors included providing a welcoming environment, being personable and

demonstrating care, as well as being accessible to parents. Other supportive factors that emerged involved having consistent, effective means of communication and a staff member, such as a parent liaison or coordinator to serves as the bridge between parents and the school. Factors, that discouraged parent engagement included language barriers, demanding and, at times, multiple work schedules by parents, as well as possibly, negative first impressions or personal experiences in school.

These findings supported research by Schmid (2001) and Kraft and colleagues (2015) that indicated working long hours, having multiple jobs, and a lack of transportation can create obstacles for parent engagement (Kraft et al., 2015). Additionally, findings favored data indicating the importance of a welcoming environment in supporting parent engagement (Hoover-Dempsey, 2005). Likewise, results in this study also supported research that showed low levels of receptivity by campuses, lack of effective communication, and language barriers attributed by limited English language proficiency presented additional impediments to engagement (Lopez, 2001; Gibson, 2002; Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995; Worthy, 2006).

Although much was learned in terms of factors that supported and discouraged engagement, a problem lied in that information learned in this study arose from participants who were engaged in their child's education. It may also be important to hear from parents who are not engaged in their children's education to further substantiate finding or perhaps disclose additional/contradictory results. The issue, as imagined arises in finding participants, especially those who will admit they are not engaged. However, if possible, practitioners could be more fully equipped in planning to overcome obstacles that impede engagement.

Finding 5: Developing a Relationship that Supports Parent Engagement.

Findings centered on investigating ways to develop a relationship that supports parent engagement revealed on-going, efficient means of communication, possessing the “right” parent liaison, and a passion to engage parents as essential components. Findings supported research by Geller, Alcantara, Boucher, Catone, Lopez, and Tung (2015) that communicate the importance of a cultural broker, or individual that help families, “navigate the language, customs, and norms of the school and school system while simultaneously affirming parents’ own culture and rights” (p. 23). Findings also supported the importance of building a relationship, as communicated by Warren and colleagues (2009). Though, they did not include the need to establish trust and respect as communicated by Geller and colleagues (2015).

These findings were important because parent engagement is a complex phenomenon that includes and is impacted by a number of school-centric and parent-centric components. By bridging and understanding all sides of parent engagement, as intended in this study’s alternative framework, insight into establishing and sustaining a relationship to support student achievement may create a more solid foundation from which to initiate parent engagement strategies. As a result, further investigation into examining parent engagement holistically is essential, because little research focuses on building relationships between parents and schools at the secondary level, specific to the Hispanic population.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The results of this study have implications for policy and practice surrounding parent engagement. Specific to the Hispanic population at the secondary level, research

learned in this comparative case study serves to provide insight into *what* strategies campuses utilized to engage parents, with an understanding of *how* and *why* parents engage, as well as highlight factors that support relationship-building between both parents and schools.

Overall, findings advocate for consistent, comprehensive principal training and preparation in engaging families. Utilizing the study's holistic, alternative model of parent engagement, findings call for establishing a consensus on defining parent engagement, educating campus leaders with high-yielding, cultural-specific parent engagement practices, and keys to providing a parent-friendly environment. Likewise, findings express the need to understand parent perspectives and beliefs regarding engagement, and ways of establishing a meaningful relationship. Given one quarter of seasoned principals leave the profession yearly and new principals leave within the first three years of service emphasizes the need of creating a culture of engagement that is sustainable (TASB, 2015). The following aims to review each of the key findings in this study and its other implications to policy and practice.

Finding 1: Defining Parent Engagement. Although much was learned in defining parent engagement in this study, there still appears to be no consensus or universal meaning for the term. While the majority of participants on both sides viewed parent engagement as active parent efforts to be involved in student academics and campus happening, few expressed their interpretation of passively attending parent meetings. Parents, for the most part, stressed its importance for “checking in” on their child. However, sites emphasized a required partnership with parents to impact student achievement and support campuses.

Implications, as a result, for school and district leaders entail each must be explicit in defining parent engagement, not assuming others share a similar definition, as no universal definition exists. Likewise, leaders should communicate their goals, expectations, and means of supporting parent engagement. Such as, if a leader desires to increase parent engagement, they should be clear about whether they are referring to increasing parent attendance at school functions, parent-teacher meetings, or general presence on campus. In addition, educational leaders should map and communicate how they plan to support these initiatives.

Principal Brown, from C. Martinez High School offered advice for other school leaders looking to improve parent engagement practices. He shared,

When considering ways to engage parent, it is important from the principal's perspective to have clear expectations for parents. "What is the focus, intent, and purpose of your engagement? Is there a clear way the school wants to be supported and if so, are you specific in communicating?"

I think that it's frustrating for parents who want to help and support the school or their child, but there's no clear-cut plan for doing so. They hear, "We need your assistance in helping the school, or please help your child at home." But, how do you do that? Is there a plan for how they do that?

From the author's perspective, this is valuable information, as personal experience has shown school leaders often ask parents for support. Many school leaders, including the researcher, express parents' importance and desires to attain more involvement. Though, many times reasons for engagement or ways to engage are not communicated, and perhaps, parents are left unsure on how to assist. As a result, it is imperative both campus

and district leaders establish their parental engagement goals and means of achieving them, before communicating.

Finding 2: The What of Parent Engagement. In evaluating what campuses do to engage parents, a number of novel and reaffirming ideas were revealed. Having meetings conducted in Spanish and translated in English, having parent-only and entire school fieldtrips, and providing opportunities for parents to visit, evaluate, and discuss classes are a few of the practices the researcher had not previously seen in high schools. Utilizing multiple platforms for communication and having an emphasis on building a supportive PTO were practices the researcher was aware of, but perhaps had not placed much importance on.

From the author's perspective, all practices corresponding to the components of parent engagement learned in this study serve as potential ideas for use by instructional leaders. Though, the researcher feels educational leaders should choose the components and practices that best meet their respective needs. Possibly, reflecting on school goals or the school improvement plan could aid in deciding which practices are most appropriate. Consider asking, "Is the initiative feasible and does it meet campus, student, or parent needs?" As a leader of a campus that speaks over 30 languages, the researcher sees value in communicating in various languages, however it may be not be possible to do so in all. Understanding a leader's desires, while evaluating their resources may also assist in making these decisions.

From the viewpoint of Principal Mora and Assistant Principal Rodriguez, educational leaders may be best served in thinking out of box, reflecting on personal

needs, and luring parents in with a concrete objective to drive and instill practices for engaging parents. She explains below,

The things that “P. Deleon” does to engage families are out of the box. I’ve been at other high schools and engaging parents is always the same. When you think outside the box, a lot of the times it’s met with umm...apprehension. There’s these thoughts regarding parents of, “Oh, no. We can’t let them get too close.” It’s like, what does that mean exactly? Don’t you want the parents to be (involved)? Also, consider, “What do you expect from your child’s school in terms of parent engagement and aim to fill in those needs on campus” Before my (child) started school, I didn’t have an idea of what would work for a parent. There has to be some kind of incentive or lure to get them there (to your campus) first, and then you can hook them.

She states this mind-frame is what drove her to commit to routine instructional visits by parents and community members. Additionally, it brought the idea of taking the entire school, including all students and parents, on a fieldtrip to a local festival.

P. Deleon’s Assistant Principal Rodriguez added to this suggestion for leaders by agreeing with Principal Mora’s advice to first “lure” parents to campus, and then “hook” them in as partners. He added this goal calls for establishing and communicating the purpose and objective of your intent to engage them. This was communicated previously by Principal Brown, who stated being specific about what parent engagement entails and have a plan that leads to success. Assistant principal Rodriguez shared,

The first thing you need to do if you want parents engaged at school is let them know the objective. If your objective is to fund raise, let them know. “We need

your help to raise money for X reason.” If your objective is to educate parents, let them know. What are you trying to reach? Why am I bringing you into the building? What is your purpose?

Finding 3: Why Families Engage. From the practitioner’s point of view, understanding *why* parents engage is important because, as previously mention, planning only *what* campuses do to engage families leads to ill-informed strategies that may not target campuses crucial stakeholder’s goals and desires. As seen in this study, parents engage with campuses to create accountability for students, learn of opportunities to assist them, as well as to “check-in” and “keep an eye on them.” However, according to the researcher, the most valuable information is understanding *why* parents do not engage, because the intent, as an educational leader, is increasing engagement to support student achievement.

According to this study, parents disengaged as students became older and inherited more independence. In addition to increased independence, there exists a possibility that culture may play a role in parent disengagement. As shared earlier, one parent communicated,

As Hispanics, once a child grows up, we tend to think of them as capable of making their own decisions and disengage with schools. But, no. This is when we should be more aware and involved. But, that is how we were raised.

This, clearly, is not a characteristic of all Hispanic parents, as those spoken with in this study were extremely engaged. It is just a sentiment many participants, in this study, shared as a typical practice in the culture, as well as one the researcher, who is also Hispanic, could relate to and identify with.

What is important in knowing this information is addressing how, as an educational leader, to respond to this practice. From the author's view, leaders need to be forthcoming to parents about their importance for schools and their child's education. It should be stressed that the secondary years are just as important as the primary. Students are making life-impacting decisions, are more influential, and sensitive to social and academic pressures. As a result, they require ongoing support from parents. It is, thus, the campuses responsibility to provide avenues for parent to engage, because although parents may not to walk their child to class anymore, their assistance is needed to help support student success.

Finding 4: How Engagement is Supported and Discouraged. As an educational leader, the author viewed these findings as instrumental in establishing a parent-friendly culture on campus. Findings indicated that providing a welcoming environment, being personable and demonstrating care, as well as being accessible to parents were important in supporting engagement. Additionally, having consistent, effective means of communication and a staff member, such as a parent liaison or coordinator to serve as the bridge between parents and the school also encouraged parent engagement. Factors, though, that arose at both campuses as discouraging parent engagement included language barriers, demanding and, at times, multiple work schedules by parents, as well as possibly, negative first impressions or personal experiences with schools.

As a result, time should be taken by campus leaders to evaluate each of those factors indicated above as a means of creating a parent-friendly campus. Asking yourself whether the campus is prepared to overcome language barriers and the demands of work

schedules by parents, as well as questioning if the school is designed to create positive first impressions and make parents feel comfortable to overcome personal negative experiences with schools are essential. Just as important, though, to the author is providing an opportunity for parents to evaluate campus efforts to support engagement. After all, parents are the stakeholders whose engagement is desired. Thus, they should have input into the current conditions of the campus, to better plan for improvement.

Finding 5: Developing a Relationship that Supports Parent Engagement. As an educational leader, the author senses that establishing a relationship between parents and the school is the most crucial component of any parent engagement initiative. As previously mentioned, parent engagement is a complex phenomenon that includes not only practices utilized by campuses to engage families (school-centric), but also an understanding of *why* and *how* parents are able to engage (parent-centric). However, to best understand the parent-centric component of parent engagement, parents must be trusting of schools. This trust, from the author's view, comes from establishing a relationship that encourages communication and active participation, as indicated in the findings of this study. It is this component that the researcher aims and suggests focusing most on when establishing or revisiting their parent engagement plan. Likewise, it is this aspect of parent engagement that arises when utilizing this study's alternative parent engagement model, and is recommended for campus leader parent engagement training.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the following comparative case study aimed to provide a better understanding of parent engagement at the secondary level, specific to the Hispanic population. In doing so, the author aspired to bridge the school-centric and parent-centric

components of parent engagement to establish a more solid foundation from which educational leaders could initiate parent engagement strategies. Findings of the study indicated parent engagement was viewed as a partnership or bridge between parents and schools that allowed for active participation, an opportunity to be informed of school occurrences and student progress, as well as, a means to “check-in” on students.

Findings also revealed that “high parent engagement” sites focused primarily on educating families on high school expectations and the impacts on student health, college and career readiness, and personal growth. Resources aimed to meet family needs and included medical, counseling, employment, and housing assistance, as well as recently, legal assistance to address concerns of immigration, visas, work permits, and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) rights for students. Parent engagement, additionally, appeared motivated by the opportunity to hold students accountable for decision-making and school efforts, while student aging and inherited independence deterred engagement.

Providing a welcoming environment, being accessible and personable, communicating effectively, and having a staff member, such as a parent liaison or coordinator to bridge parents and the school served as factors to support engagement. On the other hand, language barriers, demanding work schedules and possibly, negative first impressions or personal experiences in school discouraged engagement. Lastly, ongoing communication, addressing student and parent needs, as well as being selective in finding the ideal person to work with parents may be keys to establishing a supportive relationship between parents and the school.

Given the limitations of this study, similar research would be benefitted with additional interviews of campus personnel such as teachers, and focus group sessions with additional parents. More could also be learned with increased campus visits and participation in parent events. Given the prevalent use of technology these days, perhaps a review of the campus' social media communication could also provide insight into parent engagement practices on campuses. Ultimately, the goal, as an educational leader, is to provide students the best opportunity for success. With research indicating parent engagement's benefit, the objective is overcoming the documented "secondary slump" of engagement. This study aspired to do so by comprehending the parent-centric and school-centric components of parent engagement to develop a collaborative effort in advocating for student achievement.

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DIVISION OF RESEARCH
Institutional Review Boards

APPROVAL OF SUBMISSION

September 11, 2017

Luis Landa

Dear Luis Landa:

On September 11, 2017, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	AN EXAMINATION OF PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN PRIMARILY HISPANIC HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUSES IN A LARGE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT
Investigator:	Luis Landa
IRB ID:	STUDY00000467
Funding/ Proposed Funding:	Name: Unfunded
Award ID:	
Award Title:	
IND, IDE, or HDE:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permission from Sam Houston, Category: Letters of Cooperation / Permission; • Permission from Eastwood, Category: Letters of Cooperation / Permission; • Staff Member Verbal Recruitment Script.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • HRP-502a_Luis Landa_Spanish.pdf, Category: Letters of Cooperation / Permission; • Focus Group Interview Protocol.pdf, Category: Study tools (ex: surveys, interview/focus group questions, data collection forms, etc.); • Focus Group Recruitment Flyer_English and Spanish.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Translation Assurance_Signed.pdf, Category: Translation Assurance; • HRP-503_Landa Protocol.pdf, Category: IRB Protocol;

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher Verbal Recruitment Script.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • HRP-502a_Luis Landa_Spanish.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • One on One Interview Protocol_Spanish.pdf, Category: Study tools (ex: surveys, interview/focus group questions, data collection forms, etc.); • One on One Interview Protocol.pdf, Category: Study tools (ex: surveys, interview/focus group questions, data collection forms, etc.); • Focus Group Interview Protocol_Spanish.pdf, Category: Study tools (ex: surveys, interview/focus group questions, data collection forms, etc.); • HRP-502a_Luis Landa.pdf, Category: Letters of Cooperation / Permission; • Confidentiality Agreement_Translator.pdf, Category: Other; • Confidentiality Agreement.pdf, Category: Other; • HRP-502a_Luis Landa.pdf, Category: Consent Form;
Review Category:	Expedited
Committee Name:	Not Applicable
IRB Coordinator:	Danielle Griffin

The IRB approved the study from September 11, 2017 to September 10, 2018, inclusive.

To ensure continuous approval for studies with a review category of “Committee Review” in the above table, you must submit a continuing review with required explanations by the deadline for the August 2018 meeting. These deadlines may be found on the compliance website (<http://www.uh.edu/research/compliance/>). You can submit a continuing review by navigating to the active study and clicking “Create Modification/CR.”

For expedited and exempt studies, a continuing review should be submitted no later than 30 days prior to study closure.

If continuing review approval is not granted on or before September 10, 2018, approval of this study expires and all research (including but not limited to recruitment, consent, study procedures, and analysis of identifiable data) must stop. If the study expires and you believe the welfare of the subjects to be at risk if research procedures are discontinued, please contact the IRB office immediately.

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Unless a waiver has been granted by the IRB, use the stamped consent form approved by the IRB to document consent. The approved version may be downloaded from the documents tab. To document consent, use the consent documents that were approved and stamped by the IRB. Go to the Documents tab to download them.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within the IRB system.

Sincerely,

Office of Research Policies, Compliance and Committees (ORPCC)
University of Houston, Division of Research
713 743 9204
cphs@central.uh.edu
<http://www.uh.edu/research/compliance/irb-cphs/>

Appendix A

District Parent Engagement Survey 2013-2014

Parents answered “Yes” or “No” to the following questions:

- Overall, I am satisfied that my school actively engages families in their child’s education.
- My school regularly communicates with families about how they can help their children learn.
- My school communicates effectively with families regarding students’ behavior.
- School staff and families think of each other as partners in educating children.
- Obtaining information from families about student learning needs is a priority at my school.
- My school encourages feedback from families and the community to me.
- I get the help I need to communicate with families.

Appendix B

District Parent Engagement Survey 2014-2015

Based on your experience, do you agree with each of the following statements about Family and Community Engagement at your child's school?

- The school gives opportunities for me to give input on improving parent involvement and parent engagement.
- My child's school gives opportunities for and encourages me to participate in parent/teacher conferences, school activities, and meetings.
- The school has given me a copy of the parent involvement policies and the parent/school compact.
- My child's school has explained academic expectations to me.
- My child's school has explained the different assessments used to determine student academic achievement to me.
- My child's school has explained the curriculum to me.
- My child's school give me the training and materials to help me to help my child.

Appendix C

Site Visit Protocol

Date:

Time:

Campus Name:

Purpose of Visit:

Campus Environment (include noise level, lighting, décor, odor, accessibility throughout the environment)

Physical Environment:

Atmosphere:

Parent Engagement Environment (include noise level, lighting, décor, odor, accessibility throughout the environment)

Physical Environment:

Atmosphere:

Topics Discussed:

Interactions between participants/Emotional Tone:

Participants

Number:

General Age:

Sex:

Appendix D

Focus Group Interview Protocol

Focus Group Interview Protocol Project: An Examination of Parent Engagement in Primarily Hispanic High School Campuses in a Large Urban School District.

Time of the interview:

Date:

Place:

Number of individuals interviewed:

Language:

The following study aims to) fill a gap in the literature pertaining to parent engagement and lack thereof, known as the “secondary slump,” at the secondary level, 2) understand practices “high parent engagement” campuses utilize to engage parents, 3) understand parents’ beliefs towards parent engagement and the factors that facilitate or discourage their engagement, and 4) address how the relationship between parents and campuses support parent engagement.

- How do you define parent engagement?
- How do you believe parent engagement impacts your child’s education?
- What factors have facilitated or discouraged parent engagement throughout your child’s education?
- Why do you believe that parent engagement tends to decrease as students move from the elementary school to middle and high school?
- In what ways does your child’s school aim to engage parents?
- What do you believe is important in building a relationship between you and the school?

- How can parent engagement, in your opinion, be strengthened on your child's campus?

Appendix E
Recruitment Flyer

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR A RESEARCH STUDY ON PARENT ENGAGEMENT

We are looking for 4-6 volunteers to take part in a focus group to learn more about parent engagement. As a participant in this focus group, you would be asked to: describe the ways this campus engages parents. You will also be asked to share your beliefs regarding parent engagement and the obstacles you believe impact a parent's ability to engage with campuses. Your time commitment will be approximately 1 hour. In appreciation of your time, you will receive a \$20 Target gift card. Light refreshments will also be provided.

The Focus Group will meet on October 13, 2017.
A Spanish Focus Group will meet at 10 a.m./p.m.
An English Focus Group will meet at 11 a.m./p.m.

If you are interested, please inquire here or
call at ###-###-####

Thank you!

**This study has been reviewed and approved by the
Institutional Review Board, University of Houston,
and the Houston Independent School District**

SE NECESITAN VOLUNTARIOS PARA UN ESTUDIO DE INVESTIGACIÓN SOBRE LA PARTICIPACIÓN DE LOS PADRES EN LA ESCUELA DE SUS HIJOS

Estamos buscando 4 a 6 voluntarios para participar en un grupo piloto para aprender más sobre la participación de los padres en la educación de sus hijos. Como participante de este grupo, se le pedirá que describa las formas en las que ésta escuela promueve el involucramiento de los padres en las actividades escolares de sus hijos. También se le pedirá que comparta sus creencias con respecto a los obstáculos que usted cree impactan en el compromiso que tienen los padres en participar en las actividades escolares de la escuela de sus hijos. El tiempo estimado de su participación en éste estudio será aproximadamente de 1 hora. Como agradecimiento a su participación, usted recibirá una tarjeta de regalo de Target de \$20. También se ofrecerá un refrigerio.

El grupo piloto se reunirá el October 13, 2017.
El grupo de habla en español se reunirá a las 10 a.m./p.m.
El grupo de habla en inglés se reunirá a las 11 a.m./p.m.

**Este estudio ha sido revisado y aprobado por
la Junta de revisión institucional, Universidad de Houston y
Houston Independent School District**

Appendix F
Interview Protocol

Focus Group Interview Protocol Project: An Examination of Parent Engagement in Primarily Hispanic High School Campuses in a Large Urban School District.

Time of the interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewee:

The following study aims to) fill a gap in the literature pertaining to parent engagement and lack thereof, known as the “secondary slump,” at the secondary level, 2) understand practices “high parent engagement” campuses utilize to engage parents, 3) understand parents’ beliefs towards parent engagement and the factors that facilitate or discourage their engagement, and 4) address how the relationship between parents and campuses support parent engagement.

- How do you define parent engagement?
- How do you believe parent engagement impacts a child’s education?
- What factors do you believe facilitate or discourage parent engagement throughout a child’s education?
- Why do you believe parent engagement tends to decrease as students move from the elementary school to middle and high school?
- In what ways does your school aim to engage parents?
- What do you believe is important in building a relationship between you and parents?
- How can parent engagement, in your opinion, be strengthened on your campus?

Appendix G

The *What* of Parent Engagement

P. Deleon High School

Table G1

The What of Parent Engagement: P. Deleon

Types of Involvement Described by Epstein (2013)	Purpose as Described by Epstein (2013)	Strategies Utilized by P. Deleon High School	Purpose/Examples of Strategy
Parenting	Help all families establish home environments to support children as students	Counselor's Corner	Addressing student social/emotional needs
		Adult Education Opportunities	GED, College/ Career Training
		Post-Secondary Communication	PSAT, SAT, ACT, scholarship opportunities
		College Readiness	Admissions, financial aid assistance, test preparation
		Instructional Rounds	Opportunities for parents to visit classrooms
Communicating	Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication about school programs and children's progress	Progress Reports and Report Cards	Communicating student academic performance
		Utilization of Social Media	Living Tree, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat
		Coffee with the Principal, Donuts with Dad, Discussion with the Dean	Routine meetings that communicate academics, events, and student expectations

Types of Involvement Outlined by Epstein (2013)	Purpose as Described By Epstein (2013)	Suggestions Utilized by P. Deleon High School	Purpose/Examples of Strategy
Communicating	Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication about school programs and children's progress	Routine Calendar Updates	Holidays, upcoming grade specific meetings, Red Ribbon Week, soccer game schedule, family picture opportunities, whole school fieldtrips
		Celebrations	National Honor's Society Inductions, Scholarship Thermometer, Senior Rankings
		Student Presentations	Capstone or Senior Projects
		Parent Survey	Opportunity to gather parent feedback and suggestions for improvement
Volunteering	Recruit and organize parent help and support	Donations	Assist with decorating, setting up and selling of items at events, donating supplies for fundraisers, and monetary support
		Fall and Spring Festival	Assistance with booths, ticket sales, food distribution

Types of Involvement Described by Epstein (2013)	Purpose as Described by Epstein (2013)	Strategies Utilized by P. Deleon High School	Purpose/Examples of Strategy
Volunteering	Recruit and organize parent help and support	Dance chaperones and other duty assistance	Foam/Glow, Valentines, Rodeo, and Halloween Dance
		Assistance with Testing	PSAT and state assessment hall monitors
Learning at home	Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning	Senior Capstone Projects	Senior project guidelines and expectations
		College and Career Ready Day/College Fair	Chance to meet college and career representatives and learn about opportunities and/or expectations
		College and University Fieldtrips	Intended for both parent and students; Sam Houston State University, University of Houston, Texas A&M University
		Industry Fieldtrips	Allow parents and students to learn about immediate occupational opportunities
		Intervention Meetings	Parent, teacher, counselor, and student academic intervention

Types of Involvement Described by Epstein (2013)	Purpose as Described by Epstein (2013)	Strategies Utilized by P. Deleon High School	Purpose/Examples of Strategy
Decision-making	Include families as participants in school decision and develop parent leaders and representatives	Parent-Teacher Organization	Primarily parent led organization
		Site Decision Making Committee	Made up of varying campus stakeholders
Collaboration with community	Coordinate resources and services from the community for families, students, and the provide services to the community	“P. Deleon” Alumni Association	Opportunity to learn of organization services provided
		Community Blood Drive	Provide General Information and required assistance
		Community Parade	Provide General Information and required assistance
		New Building Groundbreaking and Construction Updates	Opportunity to provide feedback and connect with community members
		Connection with Neighborhood Centers	Information regarding community events, classes and programs offered including sewing, after school programs, ESL classes, computer classes, tax workshops

Types of Involvement Described by Epstein (2013)	Purpose as Described by Epstein (2013)	Strategies Utilized by P. Deleon High School	Purpose/Examples of Strategy
Collaboration with community	Coordinate resources and services from the community for families, students, and the provide services to the community	Legal Assistance	DACA, Immigrant Rights, Civil Matter Assistance
		Health Needs	Mental health organizations, hospitals, Medicaid/CHIP assistance, pet health services, substance abuse assistance

Note. All practices indicated in this table are practices employed by P. Deleon and ideas for engaging parents.

Appendix H

The *What* of Parent Engagement

C. Martinez High School

Table H1

The What of Parent Engagement: C. Martinez

Types of Involvement Described by Epstein (2013)	Purpose as Described by Epstein (2013)	Strategies Utilized by C. Martinez High School	Purpose/Examples of Strategy
Parenting	Help all families establish home environments to support children as students	Counseling Team	Opportunity to hear ways to support student learning and mental health
		Naviance Training	College and career software training
		Parent College Tours	Opportunity for parents to visit nearby colleges and universities to gain exposure and learn expectations and application procedures
		Adult Education Opportunities	G.E.D, ESL, and computer training
		Post-Secondary Support	PSAT, SAT, and ACT assistance
		Special Education	Understanding the laws and resources available for special education students
		Open House	Opportunity to meet teachers and learn expectations

Types of Involvement Described by Epstein (2013)	Purpose as Described by Epstein (2013)	Strategies Utilized by C. Martinez High School	Purpose/Examples of Strategy
Parenting	Help all families establish home environments to support children as students	High School 101	Understanding credits, GPA, and reading report cards
		College Readiness	College/career advice, financial aid assistance, test preparation
		Gang, Drug, and Suicide Prevention Education	Exposure to local agencies that provide free assistance
		Truancy Education	Hear from local law enforcement and the consequences of chronic absenteeism
		Health Awareness	Learn about prevalent illnesses including cancer, diabetes, and high blood pressure
		Summer School and Bridge	Information regarding Summer School and students entering high school
		CERT Training	Community emergency response training prepares parents for community specific disaster preparedness

Types of Involvement Described by Epstein (2013)	Purpose as Described by Epstein (2013)	Strategies Utilized by C. Martinez High School	Purpose/Examples of Strategy
Communicating	Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication about school programs and children's progress	Progress and Report Cards	Communicating student academics
		Coffee with the Principal	Monthly meetings that communicate academics, events, and student expectations
		Routine Calendar Updates	Academics, tutorials, state assessments, holidays
		Celebrations	Scholarship Awards, Senior Rankings, Cinco De Mayo and Mother's Day Celebration
		Student Presentations	Plumbing and Construction Projects
Volunteering	Recruit and organize parent help and support	Construction Meetings	Review and provide updates of construction plans
		Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)	Opportunities to support school initiatives by cooking, serving as chaperones for dances and trips, monitoring the hall, and organizing fundraising events

Types of Involvement Described by Epstein (2013)	Purpose as Described by Epstein (2013)	Strategies Utilized by C. Martinez High School	Purpose/Examples of Strategy
Volunteering	Recruit and organize parent help and support	School Store	Assist in daily sales of school supplies and merchandise, as well as snacks and drinks during lunch
		Parent Room	Welcome and assist parents with signing up for PTO, computer use, and setting up teacher conferences
Learning at home	Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning	College Access and Success	Informative sessions including topics of financial aid, scholarships, and application process
		Career and Education Day	Opportunity to visit both college/university and career training representatives
		University Fieldtrips	Intended for both parent and students; Sam Houston State University, Rice University, University of Houston, and Texas A&M

Types of Involvement Described by Epstein (2013)	Purpose as Described by Epstein (2013)	Strategies Utilized by C. Martinez High School	Purpose/Examples of Strategy
Decision-making	Include families as participants in school decision and develop parent leaders and representatives	Parent-Teacher Organization	Primarily parent led organization
		Site Decision Making Committee	Made up of varying campus stakeholders
Collaboration with community	Coordinate resources and services from the community for families, students, and the provide services to the community	Alumni Association	Meeting information and opportunities to participate
		Feeder School Clinic	Nearby health services
		Connection with Neighborhood Centers	Communication of community events/classes
		Community Garage Sale	Allows families to sale goods, as well as combines a health fair to educate families on health services
		Legal Assistance	Mexican Consulate, immigration application assistance, DACA and amnesty information
		Family Needs	Housing, medical, dental, employment, counseling, and domestic violence assistance

Note. All practices indicated in this table are practices employed by C. Martinez and ideas for engaging parents.

Appendix I

The Comparison of Parent Engagement

Table II

A Comparison of Parent Engagement

Parent Engagement Component	P. Deleon High School	C. Martinez High School
Defining Parent Engagement	<p>Parent engagement from both the school's and parents' perspective focused on parents' active efforts to be informed and conscious of campus and classroom occurrences. While the school focused on parent engagement's ability to support learning and campus initiatives, parents concentrated on its importance in a crucial time in their child's lives.</p>	<p>Parent engagement, from the campus perspective, is a partnership or bridge between the school that is committed to supporting student success. Administration note it should be purposeful and clear about parent expectations. From the parent perspective, parent engagement is active participation in a child's education as a means of "checking in" on them, which ultimately impacts decision-making and academic success.</p>
The <i>What</i> of Parent Engagement (School-Centric)	<p>P. Deleon provides a variety of formats to communicate and help parents learn academic expectations, methods to support mental health, and post-secondary goals. Parents are also given opportunities for personal growth, as well as avenues to help address medical, financial, and legal needs. Parents favor the emphasis on communication, insight into learning through instructional rounds, as well as the proactive approach to involving parents in student academic support.</p>	<p>C. Martinez emphasizes strengthening parent understanding of high school expectations and academic/social pressures, post-secondary preparation, and personal growth. They ensure parents are equipped with medical, mental health, and legal assistance. A focal point in <i>what</i> C. Martinez does to engage families is create numerous volunteering opportunities. Parents highly favor the campus' focus on overcoming language barriers in all forms of communication.</p>

Parent Engagement Component	P. Deleon High School	C. Martinez High School
<p>The <i>Why</i> of Parent Engagement (Parent-Centric)</p>	<p>Both perspectives agree parents engage with schools to become better informed about campus initiatives and classroom expectations, as well as motivate and hold students more accountable in decision-making. Parents add their opportunity to learn of resources and practices to better support their children as an additional reason. Likewise, both sides agree that disengagement is a result of students aging and incurred independence, however stress parent engagement's importance in the secondary level.</p>	<p>From the campus perspective, parents engage in their child's education because it supports student decision-making by allowing parents to, again, "keep an eye on them." Both perspectives agree parents engage because it brings pleasure, builds student self-esteem, and allows parents access to resources and tools that foster academic achievement and post-secondary planning. Parents communicate a lack of engagement reduces student efforts and impacts overall success.</p>
<p>The <i>How</i> of Parent Engagement (Parent-Centric)</p>	<p>Findings at P. Deleon revealed providing a welcoming environment, demonstrating parental importance, and open communication that overcame language barriers were instrumental in encouraging engagement. Contrary, demanding parent work schedules, and negative first impressions and experiences with schools discouraged engagement. Parents added inherited independence as students aged also contributed to less parent participation</p>	<p>Factors that supported engagement from both perspectives included parents feeling welcomed and important, able to be involved, and having a liaison, who could bridge parents with the school. Parents, however, stressed engagement, "begins with the principal." Both perspectives viewed language barriers as a key impediment, while the campus added intimidation and unfamiliarity with the school system deterred engagement. Contrary, parents noted student aging and added independence were key factors that suppressed engagement.</p>

Parent Engagement Component	P. Deleon High School	C. Martinez High School
Developing a Relationship That Supports Parent Engagement	All participants agreed and stressed one major component of relationship-building, communication.	Both perspectives communicated the necessity of a parent liaison or coordinator to connect parents with the school as a primary means of building a relationship. The campus added having a passion to engage parents, while parents stressed on-going communication and making information relevant also serve to establishing a supportive relationship.

Note. Summaries of parent engagement components aim to serve as a quick reference for educational leaders creating holistic engagement plans for their campus or district.