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By

James M. Hutchins

May, 2012

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN AN APPALACHIAN RURAL COMMUNITY

A Dissertation Presented to the  
Faculty of the College of Education  
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

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### Abstract

During this era of high-stakes achievement testing, schools have looked for help to increase student achievement. One resource that schools have begun to take advantage of in order to boost student success is parental involvement. While research shows that cognitive growth is controlled by what happens in school, schools have had little or no control over what happens to students during the time spent at home and in their community. In fact, students only spend about 8.85% of their lifetime inside the school (Edwards & Edwards, 2007).

The purpose of this case study was to qualitatively research the involvement of parents in rural middle schools in Appalachia. Students in Appalachia have seen little change in cultural and economic conditions over the past several decades (Chenoweth & Galliher, 2004). Because of this, completing high school is in itself considered a feat, and some students do not give a college education a second thought. The limited amount of studies of students living in Appalachia (Chenoweth & Galliher) reflects the somewhat isolated environment that has existed here.

The context for this study was a low-income, rural Appalachian school district with nearly 60% on free and reduced-price lunch. The median income for these communities was \$22,153, and 17.45% of the households had only one parent. The participants in this study were representative of the population, as 57% of the sample was low-income and held jobs that were indicative of the communities in which they lived.

Seven participants were purposively selected to be interviewed using a researcher-developed interview protocol. Questions were asked about the mother's employment, parents' educational levels, and time spent in parental involvement activities. Data from the seven face-to-face parent interviews were analyzed to provide a rich description of the perspectives, feelings, and ideas of the participants about their involvement in their child's education. From the study, several themes emerged. As the children grew older, their parents became less involved, fathers were considerably less involved or even absent, the lack of time in their work schedules, and the exhaustion the parents felt from work were barriers to becoming involved.

With so little research being conducted in this area of the country, more research into the barriers to parental involvement and ways for schools to overcome these barriers is recommended.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Throughout this era of high-stakes achievement testing, schools have looked for help to increase student achievement. One resource that schools have started to take advantage of in order to raise student test scores is parental involvement. The problem with researching and implementing parental involvement has been the absence of a guiding theoretical framework. Over the last twenty years, however, this has changed, with several frameworks being developed and serving as frameworks for research into parental involvement (Fan & Chen, 2001).

For example, according to Epstein (1995), there are six types of school, family, and community involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. Another framework, by Williams and Chavkin (1989), introduced seven elements of a parental involvement program, including written policies that address parental involvement, sufficient resources to maintain parental involvement programs, ongoing training for staff and parents, approaches to fostering partnerships between schools and families, two-way interactions allowing for regular and frequent communication, networking with other programs that facilitate external collaboration, and procedures that allow for continuous evaluation. Fan and Chen operationalized parental involvement into an additional framework that consisted of five elements: parental aspirations for their children's academic achievement and conveying these aspirations to their children, parents' communication with children about school, parents' participation in school activities,

parents' communication with teachers about their children, and parental rules imposed at home that are considered to be education-related. A fourth, developed by Weiss and Lopez (2009), introduces an expanded definition of family involvement consisting of three principles:

- First, family involvement is a shared responsibility in which schools and other community agencies and organizations are committed to reaching out to engage families in meaningful ways and in which families are committed to actively supporting their children's learning and development.
- Second, it is continuous across a child's life and entails enduring commitment but changing parent roles as children mature into young adulthood.
- Third, effective family engagement cuts across and reinforces learning in the multiple settings where children learn—at home, in prekindergarten programs, in school, in after school programs, in faith-based institutions, and in the community.

### *Legislative History of Parental Involvement*

Even with the overwhelming amount of research that has found that parental involvement positively affects student behavior, discipline, and achievement, parental involvement did not appear in federal legislation until 1997, when Congress amended the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). That is not to say that parents were not involved in education prior to that, however. Parents have been involved in education to varying degrees since education began in this country, yet there is surprisingly little written work found on this subject prior to the Industrial Revolution.

The National Defense Education Act of 1958 was a direct response to the perceived superiority of the Soviet Union, resulting from its successful launch of Sputnik. It was the first federal education program to break through the barrier of federal education support and provided funding for math and science programs. It also provided fellowships for graduate students and loans to college students.

Even though parental involvement is not mentioned in federal law until 1997, it has been an important component of the federal program Head Start, which began in 1964. Then President Lyndon Johnson and R. Sargent Shriver, his antipoverty chief, put together a committee of academics and activists to plan an intensive program for preschool-aged children to help them overcome deprivation caused by poverty (Kagan, 2002). The program began with an eight-week summer program that provided classes, medical and dental care, and mental health services. In its first summer, it served more than 500,000 children. As a result, its budget was increased each of the next two years. According to Kagan, there were two differing camps as to how to incorporate parental involvement into Head Start. Academics tended to view the program as a means to make poor and minorities better parents, while civil rights activists saw it as a means of politically empowering poor parents. To increase parental involvement, Head Start regulations required hiring aides without regard to academic qualifications and giving preference to parents, and mandated the formation of parent advisory boards. At the local level, Head Start was also able to implement parent education programs.

The next major educational reform was the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, which provided increased federal funding to K-12 education. There has been legislation that has changed the involvement of parents in public schools during

the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and some of these acts required more efforts on behalf of the schools to involve parents while others did not even mention parent participation at all. The first three major educational reforms that were enacted by Congress during the twentieth century, however, did not mention parental involvement.

The Civil Rights Movement, which helped to spur Head Start, also gave the impetus for the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. During this time, parents became actively involved in advocating for the education of children with special needs. Using themes from the equal rights movement, including equality, they successfully lobbied Congress to pass legislation providing education for children requiring special education services.

In 1997, Congress passed amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), increasing the role that parents play in education. Parents now have the opportunity to participate in meetings that pertain to the identification, evaluation, and placement of their child and to be informed of the members of any group (IDEA, Section 300.345 (b)) that makes decisions about the placement of their child (Daniel, 2000). As before, students qualifying for special education services must have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) on file, but the role of parents has been augmented in the construction of the IEP (US Department of Education, 2007). Congress believes that students' educational rights can best be protected through a forum where parents and teachers can agree on what is appropriate for the child's education. Parents also have the right to be involved in the evaluation process of the child (IDEA, Section 300.152), and to offer information to school personnel about their child during the evaluation (IDEA, Section 300.535 (a)(1)).

Parental involvement, to this point, was only mandated for special education students and not for children in regular education. It was not until the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, also known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), that parents were given a more active role in their child's education, regardless of student ability. This act, signed by President George W. Bush on January 8, 2002, changed the focus of parental involvement in public education in America. NCLB introduced annual yearly progress (AYP) (NCLB, Section 1111, (b) (2) (F)), the measure of how well a school is improving the achievement of students disaggregated by several factors.

#### *Parental Involvement and School Accountability*

With the passage of NCLB, school accountability was now measured through the performance of students on annual high-stakes achievement tests. AYP has become the indicator as to whether a school is on track to meeting the needs of all of its students (Hall & Wiener, 2004). If a school has failed to meet AYP for two consecutive or more years, it is labeled as 'needs improving.' When this has happened, NCLB regulations state that a Title I school, a school in which poor children makes up at least 40% of enrollment (United States Department of Education, 2009), must inform parents. The district has then had to offer to transfer children to another school within the district (NCLB, Section 1116 (b) (1) (E)) that is meeting AYP (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). If a school has been identified as 'needs improving' and has continued to fail to meet AYP, then NCLB has more provisions for taking corrective action. After six consecutive years, the school will have had to face restructuring (Hall & Wiener).

Schools which have received funding from the Title I Program must include several aspects of parental involvement in their planning. According to Section 1118(a)(2) of Title I (US Department of Education, 2005), a school that receives money from Title I must jointly develop and distribute to parents of participating children a written parent involvement policy. The policy shall be incorporated into the local educational agency's plan developed under section 1112, establish the agency's expectations for parent involvement and describe how the agency will involve parents in the development of the plan, provide coordination and technical assistance to participating school in planning and implementing effective parental involvement activities, conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy, and revise, if necessary, the parental involvement policies.

Parental involvement cannot solely be incumbent upon the parents to become involved, though. Schools must take more responsibility for implementing programs to increase parental involvement both at school and in the home. As a result, administrators, teachers, and other staff have been implementing programs to increase student achievement. Involving parents, especially in augmenting their students' educational programs, promises to increase student achievement scores.

### *The Impact of Other Variables*

While research shows that cognitive growth is controlled by what happens in school, schools have little or no control over what happens to students during the time spent at home and in their community. In fact, students only spend about 8.85% of their



lifetime inside the school (Edwards & Edwards, 2007). In 1966, the controversial Coleman Report, entitled the *Equality of Education Opportunity* (Coleman, et al., 1966), suggested that schools in comparison to parents had little or no effect on student achievement. The report posited that parents and minors play the major role in shaping the development of young people. Other research has shown that student achievement is affected by other variables, including family poverty level, average education level of adults, family median income, and students' socioeconomic status (Baker, McGee, Mitchell, & Stiff, 2000).

Education researchers have relied on the percentage of students involved in the free and reduced-price lunch program since its inception in 1946 to collectively measure the poverty in a school. Yet most scholars feel that this measure is not as accurate as they would like (Viadero, 2006). Many students drop out of the program as they get older, regardless of eligibility, because of a perceived social stigma attached to receiving its benefits. Many schools in high poverty areas qualify for all students to be served by the program. According to Susan Acker, a spokeswoman for the United States Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service, the school meals program data is the best information available, but was not specifically designed to provide a statewide or district-wide measure of poverty (Viadero).

Kurki, Boyle, and Aladjem (2005) have begun working with four new models of measuring school poverty using a neighborhood effects framework. The Dissimilarity Index (Massey, Gross, & Eggars, 1990) measures concentrated poverty by calculating the proportion of poor families that would have to move to achieve an equal distribution of poor families in the school neighborhood. The Isolation Index (Massey & Danton, 1993)

is the second measure, and measures the extent to which poor families are likely to be in contact with only other poor families. Kurki, Boyle, and Aladjem created two more poverty measures based on census data: the poverty level of the school neighborhood and the percentage of single-parent households with children in the school neighborhood. Both the Dissimilarity and Isolation Indices are measures of poverty concentration, while the census-based poverty measures are more akin to the free and reduced-priced lunch measure—the level of poverty in the neighborhood. Kurki, Boyle, and Aladjem contend that these alternative calculations are not meant to be substitutes for the federal lunch program statistics, but rather to control for another dimension of poverty.

#### *Need for This Study*

Students in Appalachia have seen little change in cultural and economic conditions over the past several decades (Chenoweth & Galliher, 2004). Because of this, completing high school is in itself considered a feat, and some students do not give a college education a second thought. The limited amount of studies of students living in Appalachia reflects the somewhat isolated environment that has existed here (Chenoweth & Galliher, 2004). This study provided a glimpse into the parental involvement of the parents of students in various socioeconomic and ethnic environments in Appalachia as affected by poverty, ethnicity, and home environmental factors.

#### *Research Method*

This study utilized qualitative research methods to explore the involvement of parents in rural middle schools in Appalachia.

### *Research Question*

This study sought to explore how parents in a low-income, rural school district in Appalachia were involved in student academic learning.

### *Definition of Terms*

*Home Environmental Factors.* Home environmental factors include the size, composition, and organization of the family, including family size, birth order, birth interval, employment status of each parent, presence of other adults in the home, adopted and natural children, and single-parent, reorganized, and traditional households (Olson, 1985). For this study, family income, maternal employment, and parental education level were used as home environmental factors.

*Parental Involvement.* Epstein (1995) defined parental involvement as having six characteristics: parenting, communicating, volunteering in the school, learning at home, shared decision-making, and collaborating with the community. Recently, Weiss and Lopez have introduced an expanded definition of family involvement consisting of three principles:

- First, family involvement is a shared responsibility in which schools and other community agencies and organizations are committed to reaching out to engage families in meaningful ways and in which families are committed to actively supporting their children's learning and development.
- Second, it is continuous across a child's life and entails enduring commitment but changing parent roles as children mature into young adulthood.

- Third, effective family engagement cuts across and reinforces learning in the multiple settings where children learn—at home, in prekindergarten programs, in school, in after school programs, in faith-based institutions, and in the community.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Scores of studies have analyzed individual and family-level variables on student achievement (Stewart, 2008). For this study, the effects of parental involvement, home environmental variables, and socioeconomic status, especially level of poverty, will be investigated. This literature review is divided into three sections: Parental Involvement and Achievement, Socioeconomic Status and Achievement, and Parental Involvement, Socioeconomic Status, and Achievement.

#### *Parental Involvement and Achievement*

In a study conducted by Ozonoff and Cathcart (1998), 22 children with autism were assigned to control and experimental groups consisting of 11 students each. The parents of the 11 children in the experimental group were instructed as to how to teach language, imitation, and pre-academic skills. Children in the experimental group performed significantly better on five out of eight tests. In both of the groups, the parental involvement positively influenced the extent to which the students would achieve.

A study by Arnold, Zeljo, Doctoroff, and Ortiz (2008) investigated 163 preschool students, their parents, and 19 lead preschool teachers in 7 child care centers in a New England urban area. Five of the centers catered to a population with a median income of \$25,000, and two served higher SES families with median incomes of \$57,000. 62% of the families invited chose to participate at all seven of the centers, with 74.8% of the participants attending the five centers that had the lower SES families. Further, only two

of the centers, one higher and one lower SES, had policies that encouraged parental participation. All of the centers had occasional, but infrequent, parent meetings. 32% of the students were Puerto Rican, 29% African American, 32% Caucasian, and 7% other, such as multiracial. 49.1% of the respondents were single parents, while the other 50.9% were in two-parent households. Of the 19 teachers, seven were Puerto Rican, four were African American and nine were Caucasian.

The study found that preschool parental involvement was related to children's pre-literacy development, and parental involvement predicted achievement in spite of SES. The study also found that single parents were less involved in their children's schools, perhaps due to several other factors such as childcare issues and work scheduling (Lamb-Parker et al., 2001). Other studies, such as Quioco and Daoud's (2005) study of Latino parents, have found that negative perceptions of parents, teachers, and administrators can have a detrimental effect on parental involvement.

A data set from the National Educational Longitudinal Survey (NELS) was analyzed to determine if parental effort has an effect on student achievement (Houtenville & Smith Conway, 2008). Five variables from the tenth grade student survey reflected parental effort, including discussing activities or events of particular interest to the child, discussing things the child studied in class, discussing the selection of courses or programs at school, attending school meetings, and volunteering at the child's school. Two approaches were used to represent school resources: per-pupil expenditures on instructional salaries and a set of five school characteristics, including the student-teacher ratio, the lowest salary received by a teacher, the percentage of teachers with advanced degrees, the percentage of students no on free or reduced-priced lunches, and the

percentage of non-minority students in the student body. Student achievement was measured by standardized math and reading test scores.

The first three parental effort variables (discussing activities, discussing things the child studied, and discussing the selection of courses) were all positively related to student achievement. The attending school meetings variable had a positive, statistically significant relationship with student achievement. The study found that parental effort is consistently associated with higher levels of academic achievement. The magnitude of the effect was found to be on the order of an additional four to six years of parental education or more than \$1,000 in per-pupil spending.

In a study by Sirvani (2007), the mathematics achievement of 52 freshmen high school students was investigated to see if parental involvement effected student achievement. Four regular Algebra I classes taught by the same teacher were divided into a two-class control group and a two-class experimental group, for a total of four classes. The teacher used the same textbook, homework assignments, and assessments for the duration of the study in all four classes. The students in the experimental group received a homework monitoring sheet that reported the students' homework and test grades. These sheets required a parent signature.

MANOVA tests were used to determine if the difference in scores on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) was statistically significant. For the homework assignments, the results were statistically significant, where  $F(1,50) = 3.29, p = .003$ , revealing that the students in the experimental group scored significantly higher than the control group. For the achievement tests, the MANOVA results were statistically

significant, where  $F(1,50) = 3.45$ ,  $p = .004$ , indicating that the treatment significantly improved the achievement test scores of the students in the experimental group. For the gender variable, no statistical significance was found between the scores of males and females on both the homework and test variables.

In a study by Hong and Ho (2005), the influence of parental involvement on students' academic achievement was researched to determine if there are any limitations on the current research with the inclusion of multidimensional, longitudinal, meditational, and ethnic factors. Data were drawn from the base year (1998), the first (1990), and the second year (1992) follow-up surveys of the National Educational Longitudinal Survey (NELS: 1998). These data include a variety of demographic, academic, social, psychological, and familial variables, including items related to parental involvement. For each student, three types of questionnaires were administered, one each for the student, parent, and teacher. The base year sample was 24,599 eighth graders from 1,052 schools, of which 6.4% were Asian Americans, 9.8% were African Americans, 12.5% were Hispanic, 62.0% were Caucasians, 2.0% were other, and 7.3% were unknown. This study used a randomly selected sample of 1,500 students from each ethnic group in each of the three waves of NELS:1998, for a total of 6,000 students.

Ethnic differences were found with respect to the direct effects of parental involvement on student achievement. For Caucasians, the parental factors of communication and parental aspiration had the greatest immediate and long-term effect on student achievement. For Asian Americans, parental participation was the most effective in the immediate and in the long-term. Parent education aspiration was also effective in the short-term for student achievement, but was not long-lasting. Parental



communication, on the other hand, was not effective immediately but was in the long-term. For African Americans, parental education aspiration was effective in the immediate term and parental supervision had only long-lasting effects. For Hispanics, parental communication was the only effective parental involvement factor and was only effective in the short-term.

Additionally, the study found the indirect effects of a mediator variable, student educational aspiration, were consistent across all four ethnic groups, both initially and over the long-term. Two dimensions of parental involvement, communication and parental educational aspiration, were the most effective in improving student educational aspiration. The results suggest that improving students' aspiration was the key to improving student achievement. Parental participation and supervision were found to have significant indirect effects on through student educational aspiration for African American students. More specifically, parental participation had a significant, positive effect, but parental supervision had a significant, negative effect. This suggests that attending school meetings and events and communicating with teachers and counselors can have positive effects on student aspirations, but monitoring student homework, time watching television, and time spent with friends actually had negative effects on student educational aspirations. Furthermore, the results of this study show the differing influences of parental involvement and practices on student achievement, the effects that mediating variables have on each ethnic group may be helpful in determining which strategies will work better for each ethnic group in increasing student achievement through parental involvement.

### *Socioeconomic Status and Achievement*

A meta-analysis by Sirin (2005) was completed to assess the relationship between SES and achievement in literature between 1990 and 2000. In order to be included in this analysis, each study had to meet five criteria. These criteria included applying a measure of SES and academic achievement, reporting enough quantitative data in sufficient statistical detail to calculate correlations between SES and achievement, including students from kindergarten to grade 12, being published between 1990 and 2000, and including in its sample United States students. Several computer and manual searches using the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), PsychINFO, and Sociological Abstracts databases were completed to pool studies to represent the vast amount of existing studies. From 2,047 studies, the aforementioned inclusion criteria were employed to cull the amount of studies down to 58 studies that met all five criteria.

The analysis of these studies found that parents' socioeconomic status had a strong impact on student achievement. SES lays the foundation for student achievement by providing resources at home. SES also determines the school environment in which a child is, the quality of instruction, and the quality of the parent-teacher relationship (Watkins, 1997). Furthermore, the study found that the relationship between SES and achievement was also contingent upon several factors, such as the type of SES measure and student characteristics, including grade, minority status, and school location.

A study by Nonoyama-Tarumi (2008) analyzed data from the Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) 2000, which collected information about 15-year-olds in 43 participating countries. The data came from a two-hour paper and pencil

test that assessed student performance in reading, mathematics, and scientific literacy. More specifically, the tests assessed how students were able to use their knowledge and skills to solve real-life problems. Students also completed questionnaires that asked for demographic information, family composition, home environment, reading habits, and everyday activities. School administrators also completed questionnaires about the demographics of the school, school environment, staffing, human and material school resources, and educational decision-making practices of the school. In total, 196,000 students from 40 countries were included in the sample, drawn by a two-step process. Schools were sampled in each country, proportionate to size, and then 35 students were sampled from each school.

Nonoyama-Tarumi used a new, more comprehensive SES measure using theories of cultural capital and wealth. The basis of this new measure is the premise that cultural resources are correlated with parental education and occupation. Using this new SES measure, the data showed an even greater effect on student achievement. Cultural resources were shown to predict student achievement even more than parental education and occupation. Also, the results from this study show that students of low socioeconomic status lack an educational environment outside of the school. Finally, the study found that due to the lack of resources of low-income families, parental involvement policies and strategies may backfire on the schools as these tend to exacerbate the differences between families of different social backgrounds. This could lead to a dominance of parents with resources over those who do not have them.

In a report prepared by Johnson, Peck, and Wise (2007), data from schools in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C were analyzed to

determine which subgroups were missing AYP, as necessitated by NCLB. In Delaware, Caucasian students comprised 54% of the student population and 71% of the schools there reported for this subgroup. Of these schools, 0.7% of these schools missed AYP and 0.7% of these schools missed AYP solely because of this group. African American students comprise almost 33% of students in this state, and 75% of schools reported for this group. Of these schools, 6% did not make AYP, and 0.7% did not make AYP because of this group. Hispanic students account for 10% of students, and 19% of the state's schools enrolled enough students to report their achievement. No schools reporting for this subgroup missed AYP. Delaware schools only enroll 3% of Asian students and 0.4% of Native American students. Only 3% of the schools reported AYP for this group, and none of them missed it. No report was given for Native American/Native Alaskan subgroup. Economically disadvantaged students comprised 37% of the student population, with 81% of the schools reporting for this subgroup. Four percent of the schools in this state missed AYP due solely to this subgroup.

In Maryland, Caucasian students comprise the largest subgroup, 48%. Therefore, 81% of the schools reported AYP. Only 3% of these students missed their goals, but no schools missed AYP. For the African American students, which comprise 38% of the students in this state, 10% missed their goals for mathematics and 14% missed them for reading. Further, 1% of the schools in Maryland missed AYP solely because of this group. Hispanic students comprise 8% of the student population, and 60% of the schools reported for this subgroup. No schools failed to make AYP for this subgroup in mathematics, and only .1% missed it for reading. Asian students comprise 5% of Maryland students, and .04% are Native American. 51% of the schools reported for

Asian students and 5% did so for Native American students. No schools in Maryland missed AYP for either of these subgroups. For economically disadvantaged students, 0.1% percent in mathematics and 0.4% percent in reading caused schools to miss AYP.

In New Jersey, Caucasian students are 57% of the student population, and 75% of the schools report for this subgroup. Of these schools, 3% missed AYP solely because of this subgroup. For African Americans, which comprise 18% of the students, 6% of the schools missed AYP solely because of this subgroup. Hispanic students, 18% of the state's student population, were reported by 40% of the schools. Of those schools, 3% failed to make AYP for the 2005-2006 school year. Asian students are 8% of the students, and Native Americans are .2% of the population. Of the schools that reported these two subgroups, 1% missed AYP solely because of the Asian subgroup and .2% missed it because of the Native American students alone. With 27% of the students in New Jersey designated as economically disadvantaged, 5% of the schools reporting this subgroup failed to make AYP.

Caucasian students comprise 75% of the population in Pennsylvania and 79% of the schools report this subgroup. Of those schools reporting, none of them missed AYP because of these students. African Americans account for 16% of the students here, and 19% of the schools had populations large enough to report their achievement. For this subgroup, 0.6% of the schools did not make AYP in mathematics and 0.7% did not make it in reading. Hispanic students comprise 6% of the total school population, and only 6% of the schools had enough students to report this subgroup. In mathematics, 1% of the schools did not make AYP due to this subgroup, while 0.7% of the schools missed it due to reading scores. Asian students are 2% of the population, while 0.1% of the students

enrolled are Native American. Neither of these two student subgroups caused any schools to miss AYP. Of the students in Pennsylvania, 28% are economically disadvantaged and 1% of the schools missed AYP in mathematics and 2% missed AYP because of reading scores.

Finally, in Washington, D.C., African American students are the largest subgroup, with 84% of the students enrolled belonging to it. Of the schools in this area, 86% reported this as a subgroup and 3% of the schools failed to make AYP due solely to African American students. Hispanics are the second largest subgroup, making up 9% of the students. No schools missed AYP solely because of this subgroup. Caucasian students comprise 5% of the student population, and 5% of the schools have enough of this subgroup to report. This subgroup did not solely cause any schools to miss AYP, as well. Only 1% of the schools enroll Asian students and 0.5% enrolls Native American students. Neither of these subgroups solely caused a school to miss AYP. In D.C., 66% of its students are disadvantage, and 2% of the schools reporting this subgroup failed to make AYP.

The analysis found that when schools failed to meet AYP solely due to an ethnic subgroup, the members of the subgroup were also members of the economically disadvantaged subgroup. Poverty doesn't just affect one group; it cuts across race, disability, and English proficiency. Student with disabilities were the first cause of schools to miss AYP, but the second cause were students identified as economically disadvantaged. Washington, D.C., had twice as many economically disadvantaged students as the others in this analysis, and schools in New Jersey reporting these students missed AYP twice as much as schools in other states.

A secondary data analysis using data from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) of 2000 was completed that compared the strength and direction of the relationships between social structural and cultural factors that influenced academic achievement at transition points between Chinese American and Caucasian students (Pearce, 2006). The purpose was to identify the cultural and social factors that allow Chinese American students to achieve higher than other ethnic groups and what makes the students continue to achieve during the transition points: elementary to middle school, middle school to high school, high school to college, and the transition from college to the workforce.

The analysis found that Chinese American students earned higher degrees than Caucasians. Students who were part of a traditional family attained advanced degrees more often than those from nontraditional families, and Chinese American students reported belonging to traditional families more than Caucasians. Chinese American parents were less involved than Caucasian parents, though. Social structure had a significant impact on the achievement of Caucasian and Chinese Americans. Chinese American students are able to continue to achieve during transitional periods because of more strict rules, as opposed to Caucasian students.

In the 2006 version of the triennial Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), sponsored by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the performance of students of 15 years of age in reading literacy, mathematics literacy, and science literacy was measured in 57 jurisdictions across the world (Baldin, et al., 2007). The PISA is a two-hour paper-and-pencil test taken by students that measures the application of knowledge in reading, mathematics, and science to problems

with a real-life context. The U.S. sample included students from both public and private schools, and it was weighted to ensure representativeness of the nation. In all, 5,611 students representing 166 schools participated in the assessment. The response was 69%, and 91% after being weighted with the use of replacement schools.

For the U.S. students, African-American and Hispanic students scored lower, on average, than Caucasian, Asian, and mixed-race students (Baldin, et al., 2007). The effect size for the differences in achievement between Caucasian and African-American students was 1.23, while the effect size between Caucasian and Hispanic students was .88. Further, Hispanic students scored higher than African-American students, while Caucasian students scored higher than their Asian peers. The researchers also commented that this pattern of performance was similar to the pattern of the previous two assessments, one completed in 2000 and the other in 2003. African-American, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native students scored below the OECD average, while Caucasian and Asian students scored above the OECD average.

A meta-analysis of 68 published and unpublished studies was completed by Goldberg, Prause, and Lucas-Thompson (2008), spanning forty years in research of the relationship between maternal employment and student achievement. Several criteria were employed to select studies for the analysis. The first criterion was that the studies had to test the relationship between maternal employment and student cognitive or academic achievement. Second, each study was had to have been published between 1960 and 2005, as there was little to no research on the relationship between maternal employment and student achievement prior to 1960. Some studies were excluded if they did not operationalize maternal employment or student achievement. Studies also had to



identify a clear reference group for maternal employment, as well. Furthermore, studies that were not primarily designed to examine maternal employment characteristics were included if they independent tests of maternal employment status was included.

The 68 studies, when analyzed, yielded 770 effect sizes. The median sample size was 500, with a range of 30 to 100,000, for a total of 178,323 children. Of these studies, 44 presented information on the effect of maternal employment on one outcome, while 24 studies presented effects on more than one outcome. For student achievement, 34 studies provided effect sizes for formal achievement tests, 17 provided effect sizes for children's grades, 33 provided information on formal tests of intellectual functioning, and 9 included effect sizes for teacher ratings. Seven of the included studies were published in the 1960s, 11 in the 1970s, 11 in the 1980s, 23 in the 1990s, and 16 between 2000 and 2005.

The results of the study found that the SES moderator for the relationship between employment of the mother and student achievement was significant ( $k = 57$  samples,  $Q_b = 6.44$ ,  $p = .040$ ). The race/ethnicity moderator was also significant ( $k = 59$  samples,  $Q_b = 10.99$ ,  $p = .027$ ). Family structure was a significant moderator, as well ( $k = 52$  samples,  $Q_b = 6.87$ ,  $p = .032$ ). No significance was found with the other moderators, including gender of the first author, year of publication, child's gender, child's age/grade, and timing of maternal employment. When separate achievement outcomes were examined, one of the moderators, that for longitudinal studies, was significant studies ( $k = 9$ ,  $r = .041$ ,  $p = .034$ ).

When significant, the effect sizes studied in the relationship between maternal employment and student achievement were very small, and analyses of the moderating variables showed that the direction of significant effects tended to be positive. There were, however, a few exceptions in SES, child's age, and race/ethnicity. When all achievement tests scores were combined, there was a trend towards a small, positive association between maternal employment and student achievement. As for the extent of maternal employment, when achievement was compared between the students of mothers with part- and full-time employment, the study found that children of mothers in part-time employment had higher achievement than children with full-time employed mothers.

#### *Parental Involvement, Socioeconomic Status, and Achievement*

A study was completed (Lee & Bowen, 2006) to determine if ethnic identity, socioeconomic status (SES), and parental involvement in school and at home indicated student achievement. Using data from the spring 2004 administration of the Elementary School Success Profile, a study funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, parents of a sample of 415 children from a representative sample of 497 third through fifth grade students in a community bordering a major southeastern metropolitan area were analyzed in five categories of involvement and those analytical scores were correlated to achievement scores of the students. The results were analyzed across ethnic groups, as well.

The study found that levels of parental involvement varied significantly across ethnic groups. European American parents reported more frequent involvement at school

and less time trying to manage their children's time at home than did African American and Hispanic parents. Students not living in poverty who had parents with higher education attainment achieved higher academically than other students. Parents whose children received free or reduced priced meals spent less time involved at school and in parent-child education discussions at home, and lower expectations for their children academically. Parents with higher education levels were more involved at school, had more parent-child education discussions at home, and higher education expectations for their students. Students not living in poverty, of European American identity, and with parents with higher educational attainment have higher achievement scores. The achievement gap was partially explained by differences in the levels of parental involvement and the interaction of parental involvement and other demographic backgrounds.

A study by Okpala, Okpala, and Smith (2001) investigated how parental involvement, socioeconomic status of parents, and instructional supplies expenditures were related to mathematics achievement by fourth grade students in a low income county in North Carolina. Using Pearson's product-moment correlation, the study found that socioeconomic status of the parents was correlated negatively to mathematics achievement. There were no other significant correlations with the other variables in the study, including the number of volunteer hours and instructional supplies expenditures.

In another study (Lee, Daniels, Puig, Newgent, & Nam, 2008), data from 2,450 low-SES participants in the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS:88) were examined to test a conceptual model of low-SES students' educational attainment eight years post-high school. Specifically, the study examined demographic variables,

including race and gender, psychological variables, including locus of control, self concept, and student academic expectation, and behavioral variables, including math score, reading score, student homework behaviors, student class work behaviors, and student problem behaviors. Three sets of data were included in the study: the base year student questionnaire, the first follow-up questionnaire administered when students were in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, and the fourth follow-up questionnaire that was administered when the students were eight years post-high school.

The study found that gender played a small but significant role in educational attainment, as girls tended to attain higher degrees than boys, but boys scored higher on mathematics achievement tests than did girls. Female students were more prepared for class, and this preparedness influenced educational attainment in later years. The results of the study also found that race did not exert any direct effect on attainment, but did have an indirect effect on the math score, reading score, and student problem behavior variable. Race also significantly related to the problem behavior variable as Caucasian and Asian students had higher scores on math and reading tests and had fewer problem behaviors than Hispanics, African Americans, and American Indians. Education attainment was greater for students with higher math and reading scores and fewer problem behaviors, so it was Caucasian and Asian students who were attaining more.

Finally, in a study by Desimone (1999), data from the NELS: 1988 were used to examine the relationship between 12 types of parental involvement and mathematics and reading achievement scores. Those types of parental involvement included authoritative parenting practices, high expectations and aspirations, parent-teacher communications, participation in school events or activities, parental assistance at home, participation in

and discussion about learning activities, participation in school-level governing or decision-making roles, and strong parent social networks or social capital. The types of parental involvement were operationalized across the six domains of Epstein's six characteristics of school, family, and community partnerships mentioned previously. The hypothesis of the study was that the relationships between parental involvement and student achievement would differ according to students' race and family income level.

The data used for this study were the parent and student surveys from the restricted-use panel data of the NELS: 1988. The sample included 24,599 teenagers who were in the eighth grade. Parent surveys are available for only about 21,000 of the students. The results of the study indicated that middle- and high-income models were not significantly different, but the middle- and low-income models were. Parent-school involvement was more predictive of grades than test scores for children of all ethnic and income groups, with parental involvement variables accounting for almost twice as much of the variation in grades than in test scores. Specific variables measuring parent-school connections were twice as predictive of grades. Further, the students' perceptions of involvement had a greater impact on achievement than did parent perceptions across all ethnicities and income levels. The students' perceptions of parent-child discussions and of household rules were much better predictors of achievement. Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) involvement was a stronger predictor for Caucasian and African-American students than for any other minority or for low-income students.

### *Summary*

The research shows that there are many differing definitions of parental involvement in education. However, regardless of how parental involvement is defined, it has a strong, positive relationship with student achievement. Socioeconomic status is also a strong predictor of student achievement, having a positive relationship with achievement. Yet, when relationships between parental involvement and achievement are researched with regard to ethnicity, parental involvement has been found to mitigate the differences in achievement between students of lower SES and higher SES. By including parental involvement strategies in their programs, schools have experienced increased student achievement.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

One of the factors influencing student achievement in rural Appalachia is that cultural and economic conditions have remained unchanged for the past several decades. As a result, finishing high school has itself become a feat. Since there are so few studies of students living in Appalachia, the purpose of this study was to provide a glimpse of the parental involvement in this region of the country. This study was conducted using face-to-face parent interviews that used a semi-structured interview model. According to Kvale (1996), this type of interview combines a highly-structured interview with the ability to allow the subject to speak freely and the interviewer to ask follow-up questions

#### *Research Design*

This study employed a qualitative research method to explore parental involvement in a low income, rural school district in Appalachia.

#### *Setting/Research Context*

*School District.* The sample school system used in this study was a rural, majority poor, majority white school district in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The purposeful sample was selected because the district was willing to participate in this study. A school district in the mid-Atlantic region of the country was chosen for this research study due to its convenient location for the researcher. Permission from the Associate Superintendent of the school district was then sought to conduct a study investigating the parental involvement in the district. After permission was obtained, the

researcher then applied to the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects to conduct interviews of parents of students in the school district. Over 50% of the whites in this rural school district received free and reduced-priced lunch. The population for this district was 6,474 students. Of those students, 92.32% were Caucasian, 6.77% were African American, and less than 1% were of another ethnicity. The percentage of students who qualified for free and reduced-price lunches was 56.12%. The school system was comprised of 21 schools, of which 11 were elementary schools, 3 were middle schools, and 6 were high schools. The district's vocational needs were served by a local institute of technology. Due to the low number of students in the district, several of the schools are in a combined grade configuration. For example, one of the schools in the southern portion of the county was comprised of students in grades 5 through 12. Other schools in the county were in grade configurations of 6 through 12 and grades 7 through 12. As a result, there were only 2 true middle schools, composed of students in only grades 6 through 8, and 1 school with students in grades 5 through 8. Rural school configurations are driven by the level of school enrollments, unlike cities that have large numbers of students from which to draw.

Over the last five years, enrollment in the district has decreased from 6,998 students to 6,824. From 1990 to 2000, the population of students ages 5 to 9 decreased 11%, while the number of students aged 10 to 14 years decreased 28%. Students aged 15 to 19 years of age decreased 19% (Fayette County Schools, 2009). These decreases in student population are indicative of a larger phenomenon throughout the region. The local economy is still dependent on coal mining, but over the last 50 years, those jobs have dwindled significantly. As a result, many of the mining jobs and industries



associated with supporting coal mining have disappeared. Many of the workers have moved out of the area looking for work, but those who have stayed have found it difficult to find work as lucrative.

*Median Incomes and Percentages of Single-Parent Households.* City A, located in the southern portion of the school district, had a median income of \$18,375, and 23.9% of its households contained one parent. For City B, located in the center of the school district, the median income was \$24,792 and 13.8% of its households were single-parent. City C, located in the north-central part of the district, had a median income is \$25,028, and had 14.7% of its households with one parent. City D, located in the northern part of the county, has a median income of \$20,417, and 17.4% of its households are single-parent. The average median income for these four cities in the school district was \$22,153, and the communities had an average of 17.45% of households with just one parent. Table 3.1 lists the percentages of ethnicities, percentage of students on free and reduced-price lunch, and populations by district and four selected schools.

Table 3.1

*Ethnicity Percent, Percent on Free and Reduced-Price Lunch and School and Population by School and District*

	Ethnicity			Free & Reduced- Price Lunch	Population
	C	AA	O*		
District	92.11	6.01	1.88	59.78	6,759

City A	89.67	9.02	1.31	50.33	610
City B	79.59	19.83	.58	75.96	343
City C	97.77	2.23	0	65.19	179
City D	92.22	7.36	.42	58.86	707

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*Note.*\* C=Caucasian, AA=African American, O=Other

Table 3.2 has listed the 2000 Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines for the 48 contiguous states, Alaska, and Hawai'i (Department of Health and Human Services, 2010).

Table 3.2

*2000 HHS Poverty Guidelines*

Size of Family Unit	48 Contiguous States	Alaska	Hawai'i
1	8,350	10,430	9,590
2	11,250	14,060	12,930
3	14,150	17,690	16,270
4	17,050	21,320	19,610
5	19,950	24,950	22,950
6	22,850	28,580	26,290
7	25,750	32,210	29,630
8	28,650	35,840	32,970
Each additional person	2,900	3,630	3,340

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As noted in the table, the poverty line for a family of four was \$17,050, and the median income for the four communities in this survey was \$22,153, a difference of only \$5,103. Further, the median income for one of the communities, City A, was \$18,375, which is only a difference of \$1,325, or 7.21%. The majority of the residents of these four communities in this study lived at or near the poverty line.

*Student Achievement.* For the 2009-2010 school year, 44.87% of the middle schools in the state were below the standard for meeting Annual Yearly Progress. In the school district, 4,476 of the 6,759 students were tested using the WESTEST as only students in grades 3 through 11 take the test. Of those students, 63.8% of the middle school students were below Mastery in mathematics, and 68.1% were below Mastery in the Reading assessment. Table 3.3 lists the number of students tested using the state-wide assessment at four selected schools within the district. Tables 3.4 and 3.5 list the counts of students enrolled in the district by race and includes low-income students, and the percentages of those students passing the state-wide assessment in Reading and Mathematics.

Table 3.3

*Number of Students Tested in Grades 5-8*

	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade
School A	65 <sup>a</sup>	66	82	88
School B	35	37	42	47

School C	44	39	46	49
School D	168	191	188	164
Total	312	333	358	348

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<sup>a</sup>As reported by the elementary school that feeds into School A

Table 3.4

*Counts and Percentages of Those Students Passing the 2010 WESTEST—Reading by Race*

	<u>Whites</u>		<u>African American</u>		<u>Hispanics</u>		<u>Low Income</u>	
	Count	Percent Passing	Count	Percent Passing	Count	Percent Passing	Count	Percent Passing
District	4074	38.39%	268	32.84%	27	51.85%	2641	31.24%
School A	269	31.92%	36	33.33%	1	100.00%	172	29.94%
School B	147	20.31%	28	19.23%	1	100.00%	135	18.18%
School C	176	33.53%	5	50.00	0	n/a	120	26.54%
School D	653	33.17%	52	19.14%	4	25.00%	431	26.48%

Table 3.5

*Counts and Percentages of Students Passing the 2010 WESTEST—Mathematics*

	<u>Whites</u>		<u>African Americans</u>		<u>Hispanics</u>		<u>Low Income</u>	
	Count	Percent Passing	Count	Percent Passing	Count	Percent Passing	Count	Percent Passing

District	4072	32.00%	268	23.88%	27	51.85%	2638	25.02%
School A	269	31.92%	6	33.33%	1	100.00 %	172	29.94%
School B	146	18.11%	28	7.69%	1	100.00 %	134	12.50%
School C	176	30.48%	5	75.00%	1	n/a	120	30.08%
School D	652	38.92%	53	22.91%	1	50.00%	431	32.42%

The passing patterns of student test rates for rural districts reflect the unique patterns of geographic isolation and poverty. Tables 3.4 and 3.5 reflect the characteristics of student achievement in rural school districts. In Reading, less than 40% of the every subgroup passed the achievement test except Hispanics, and this trend continued at each of the sample schools included in the table. For low-income students, the data were even worse, as only 31.24%, or less than one-third of all students in this subgroup passed the test. In Mathematics, which was much worse than Reading, 32% or fewer students in each subgroup passed this part of the assessment, except Hispanics; however, Hispanics were not considered because the number of students with scores was too low for reporting. In order to avoid identifying students those numbers were reported as one on the campus level. Of the county school districts in the state, this school district ranks 53 out of 55 in terms of student achievement. The lack of student achievement in this school district, being rural and having median incomes at or near the poverty line, is indicative of the effects of stagnant economies and unchanging cultures in rural communities.

### *Participants*

Seven parents of students in the school system were interviewed face-to-face using the interview protocol included in Appendix A as a guiding structure. Purposive sampling was used in this study in order to select the participants that represented the demographics of the district and those who volunteered to participate in the study. The parents sampled for this part of the study were residents in the school district. Of the parents interviewed, 5 had children in elementary school, 1 had children enrolled in elementary and high schools, 2 had children enrolled in elementary and middle schools, and 1 had children enrolled in a high school only. In order to maintain student confidentiality with respect to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99), no student-identifiable data were used in this study.

In order to reduce the researcher's bias, member checks were completed after the interviews in order to give the participants a chance to comment on the interpretation of the data (Merriam, 2002). The names of the parents interviewed were kept in the researcher's notes. These data were analyzed using qualitative research methods, including themes arising from the interview data and triangulation of data using achievement data, parent interviews, and school district documents.

### *Instrumentation*

In qualitative research the researchers acts as the human instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to maintain objectivity in the data gathering process, the researcher used triangulation of data sources, peer debriefing, and maintained an audit trail of the researcher's notes, logs, tapes, data analyses, and documents (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data for this study were collected from the seven face-to-face interviews that were conducted using an interview protocol developed from a protocol developed by Olson (1985) in an earlier study that researched the impact of home environmental variables, such as mother's employment and socioeconomic status, to predict score on a self-concept measure and student achievement in mathematics and reading. Olson's interview protocol contained 145 questions. The researcher culled questions from the original protocol using Epstein's (1995) six characteristics of family and community involvement in order to make the protocol usable within the framework of this study. In order to ensure validity of the new interview protocol, three focus groups were conducted: one each with parents, administrators, and central office personnel. During the focus groups, the protocol was reviewed and participants were asked about the appropriateness of the questions, if any questions needed to be removed, and if any questions should be added within the framework of the study.

The first three questions asked about the mother's employment, the educational level of the participant, and how much time the child spent reading to him or herself. The next 9 questions asked about how much time the parents spent in parental involvement activities, including reading to the child, working on homework, volunteering in school, attending parent-teacher conferences, attending Parent-Teacher Organization meetings, volunteering in school, serving on school committees, and chaperoning field trips. The interview protocol is included in Appendix A.

### *Data Collection Procedures*

Seven parents of school-aged children who were enrolled in the school district during the 2009-2010 school-year were contacted by telephone and asked to participate in this study. The script used for the telephone calls is included in Appendix B. Of those 7, all 7 parents agreed to participate. The participants were told that the interview would take no more than 30 minutes and asked where they would have liked to have been interviewed. The interview appointments were set and the interviews were conducted. The participants were asked the questions included on the Interview Protocol included in Appendix A to guide the discussions, and the researcher took notes of the responses during the interview. Clarifying questions were asked to extract as much information and provide rich descriptions of their demographic and parental involvement information. When the interviews were concluded, the researcher then reviewed the answers given with the participants in order to ensure the accuracy of the answers. The interviewer conducted peer reviews with a district administrator to re-ensure that the interviewer's accuracy of the answers.

### *Data Analysis*

The responses from the seven parents interviewed for the study were then analyzed to determine if the participants' answers to the interview resulted in shared beliefs and perceptions, and recurring themes. The responses for each question and follow-up questions were reviewed to determine if any respondents answered the questions similarly. In addition to the interviews, archival student achievement data and demographic data from the 2000 United States Census and school district were used to triangulate the data to further support the findings.



The responses to the questions centered around three common answers: (a) as the child grew older, the parents became less involved, (b) fathers were less involved than the mothers or were absent, and (c) a lack of time and exhaustion from working prevented parents from becoming involved. Impacting these emergent themes were the location of the schools in rural settings and the stagnant state of the economy

#### *Limitations of the Study*

The study's generalizability was restricted to the students in the schools in the district identified as it did not use a state or nationally representative sample nor employ true, random sampling. Also, in qualitative research, participants may tell a researcher what he or she wants to hear instead of truthfully replying, thereby skewing the results in an attempt to soften a negative image that they may feel they have portrayed. However, several qualitative research methods were used to increase the validity of the data, including peer reviews, data from other documents, and triangulation (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) .

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

#### *Study Sample*

The sample for this study was purposively sampled in order to obtain data that were useful and relevant to students in Appalachia. Seven parents of students who were enrolled in the school district for the 2009-2010 school year were contacted by telephone. In that phone call, the purpose of the study and the interview protocol were shared with the potential participants. They were then asked if they would participate in the study and where they would have liked to be interviewed. All seven parents agreed to be interviewed in the principal's office at one of the elementary schools in the district.

The parents interviewed were all mothers, and had children in grades that ranged from first grade to high school. When asked about their educational level, 3 had master's degrees, 1 had a bachelor's degree, 2 had completed a vocational education program, and 1 had graduated from high school with no post-secondary education. The second question asked about the mother's occupation. For this question, 3 respondents answered that they were teachers, 1 worked in retail selling clothes, 1 was an assistant principal in a secondary school, and 2 were housewives. For the parents who had completed the vocational education program, one had received a certificate in drafting and the other had completed a food management program. The parent who had completed the food management program had also started a cosmetology program, but was unable to finish it due to financial constraints.

Table 4.1 lists the educational level and occupation of the respondents.

Table 4.1

*Educational Level and Occupation of the Respondents*

Parent	Educational Level	Occupation
1	Bachelor's	Teacher
2	Vocational	Housewife
3	Master's	Teacher
4	High School	Retail Sales
5	Vocational	Housewife
6	Master's	Assistant Principal
7	Master's	Teacher

This study sought to explore the involvement of parents in a rural school district in Appalachia. Data were gathered to answer the following research question: How are parents in a low-income, rural school district in Appalachia involved in student academic learning?

*Emergent Themes*

After the data were analyzed, the following themes emerged from the interviews: (a) as a child grew older, the parents became less involved, (b) fathers were absent or involved much less than the mother, and (c) a lack of time and exhaustion prevented parents from being more involved.

*As the child became older, the parents became less involved.* In order to gather data about how much time parents spent in parent involvement activities, respondents were asked questions about how much time they spent reading to their child, working on homework, how many times per year they attended parent-teacher conferences, the number of times they attended Parent-Teacher Organization meetings, the number of school committees on which the parents served, and how many times the parents chaperoned field trips.

Responses to the questions that asked how many minutes the child read to the parents indicated that the older the child, the less he or she read to the parents. Specifically, parents of children in the elementary grades read more to their children than those in middle or high school. Parent 1, the mother of a first grader, said

My child reads to me 15 minutes per night, which equals 90 minutes per week. He reads six days a week—even on Saturdays. It's his assignment. He has to read from his school reading book—he has one that he's assigned, and then he reads a book to me that he enjoys. He likes any type of book, but especially enjoys dinosaur books.

Likewise, Parent 2, the parent of a fourth grader, responded that

I read to [my children] each night before they go to bed and at other times. 300-360 minutes per week. We read stories—by Judy Blume right now—I've read it to her. I have to be careful about the level—some of Judy Blume's stuff is more mature. One year I read Charlotte's Web to them. I love reading and I think that's why they do, too. We love the way that books smell and feel, old and new ones.

However, Parents 3 and 4 read considerably less to their children and both parents had children in the middle school grades. Parent 3 responded that she read “[m]aybe half an hour a week,” and Parent 4 replied that “I don't read to him. He doesn't need to. He

reads to himself.” Parent 6, who had two daughters in high school, said, “My girls are older...they don’t let me read to them.”

When asked about working on homework with the child, the results were similar: parents with children in elementary schools were more involved than those with middle and high school students. Parent 1, whose child is in the first grade, replied

I spend 30 minutes a day, six days a week working with him on homework. He has to read 3 or 4 paragraphs, a mini-story. He has to work on his spelling words. Science and Social Studies are alternated each week. He has to do some memorization-some kind. Right now he’s working on memorizing a part of a poem each day. He practices. He is also working on memorizing math fact families.

Parent 2, also a parent of an elementary student said

I work with her for 2 to 3 hours a night. It’s gotten better, lately. Probably 10-15 hours a week. It was more last week. We are trying to get her to do her work on her own. Then she can come to me and ask for help with a problem. Spelling words and math is what she usually works on for homework. Reading isn’t so bad.

Parent 5, whose daughter is in the fourth grade, also explained

We usually work on homework about five hours a week—an hour a day. She goes to tutoring two days a week, so that’s cut down on it a little. She usually works on math and spelling—it’s the only work that she brings home. I think it’s too much. Some days, especially when we have a bunch of tests in one week, it’s too much. It gets frustrating. There’s not enough time in the day. If she has tutoring, she gets home at 5:30 or so. She has a routine that she does when she gets home. Bedtime is at 9. She has to eat supper, take a bath, stuff like that when she comes home. She needs a break. I enjoy helping her with her homework and I think she needs to have it. This new math takes a lot longer.

Middle grade and high school parents, though, were involved much less. Parent 3, who has a middle school student, said, “I work with her no more than a half hour. She’s in the sixth grade so she’s more independent. I usually proofread her writing stuff. When we are studying for her test, I call out her test questions.” As for the parent with students in high school, she replied

The girls are in high school, so they don't ask for my help. I guess they don't need my help. I see them working on homework. It's only me. If they do have a question and I don't know, they'll ask each other or text one of their friends.

The participants were then asked how many parent-teacher conferences they attended during the school year. Every respondent answered that they attended every conference offered except Parent 6, who had high school-aged students; she only goes "if one of the girls is having a problem." Parent 3, who has a daughter in middle school, said that she doesn't "think they are offered enough." Of the respondents, 5 out of the 7 felt that parent-teacher conferences were very important and provided much needed communication between the home and the school. Parent 1 said, "I think they're very effective because I can keep up with how he's doing in school." Parent 3 replied that she goes "twice a year, which is how often the school has them. I don't think they're offered enough. Some teachers don't post grades often and so I go mostly for informational purposes." Parent 4 said she goes "[e]very time the school has them. They're very important to me to know what's going on." Parent 5 felt that they were effective because "they let the parent know if the child is doing good or bad." Parent 7 used parent-teacher conferences to find out what she needed to do at home to help the teacher.

When asked how many Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings they attended, once again participation declined as the students grew older. Parents 2, 4, and 5, who are parents of elementary children, attended them regularly. Parent 2 said

I go to all of them, so far there will be about 20 of them. I don't think it's enough. Parents need to be involved in everything, be a part of their extra-curricular activities. Participation is getting better. Several people have called—started out sorta' shaky, but there's always new faces. People see that the PTO is working, that it's something that is going to be around for some time. We could increase

participation if parent knew how much of a benefit to the students' achievement it is.

Parent 3 said

I go every time. I want to show the children I am behind them and that I'm involved with my kids. I want my children to know I've got their back. I support the school and support the kids. I think that the PTO is doing good so far. The teachers know that they have support from the PTO and it's going to what it can to help the school. It will help the teachers get the school where it needs to be.

When asked this question, Parent 4 replied

I've been to several meetings here recently. When you have a committee, no one in that group wants to hear any outside ideas. I feel that the PTO in the school is more receptive to my ideas. The parents are trying to help the kids, not make their résumé look good. If parents came to a PTO meeting, it was usually to see their kid get some kind of recognition; a party or some kind of award, extra recess, something like that. If parents see a reward or something benefitting the child, then they come.

Parents of the middle and high school students, however, did not attend PTO meetings as much as their elementary counterparts. Parent 3 replied, "I go to maybe 1 or 2 PTO meetings," and Parent 6 answered, "I am not able to go to PTO meetings with my schedule. I don't even know if they have a PTO at the school where the girls go."

The next question in the interview asked how many times per year the parent volunteers in the school. Parents 2, 4, and 5, parents of elementary students, replied that they volunteered in the school much more than the parents of children in the other grades. Parent 2 answered, "Volunteering is a big part of my life. I am probably at school at least three days per week. I also do things out in the community." Parent 4 said

It's hard to say how much I volunteer in the school. I do when there's something going on, like an event or a special activity. Sometimes when it's a special time of the year, like Christmas. If the teacher needs me, I try to get to the school to help.

Parent 5 responded

I am at the school a lot helping with parties, copying, cutting things out, running errands for teachers. If the teacher needs something, like Kleenexes or hand sanitizer, things she needs but can't go get them. I help decorate and cut out letters for bulletin boards.

Once again, the parents of the middle and high school students volunteered less or not at all. Parent 3 replied, "I volunteer maybe a couple of times per year. I send in things that they need and supervise field trips. Sometimes I organize things for the students, like tutoring," and Parent 5 answered

I do not have the time to go to the school and volunteer. My work hours don't allow me to go to the school during the day and help out. If things were different, I would like to think that I could spend more time at the school helping out. However, I have noticed that a secondary school doesn't need or want much help. I would concentrate on more of an elementary school.

*Fathers were absent or involved much less.* As the data were analyzed, it became evident that the fathers of the students were much less involved in the students' education or absent from the home. Parent 1, when asked how much time her child's other parent read to her son, replied, "His father doesn't read to him—not existent—he's in jail right now. He also lives out of state, so he wouldn't have as much of a chance to read to him anyway." Parent 2 replied

Their dad works as a miner, so he only gets to read maybe an hour a week. Most of the time it's 0 minutes. He's tired. He lets the kids read to him once in a while. He doesn't like to read. He has just always left it up to me. He was a good student—he retained everything. He didn't have to study and read so much.

Parent 3 responded that her and her husband read about the same amount to their daughter, about 30 minutes per week. Parent 5 said



Her dad doesn't read to her at all. He doesn't have the time. He just really doesn't like reading. He does have her read to him—something special, like her part in the Christmas Play or something she's interested in and wants him to hear. He will let her read to me. Since he works a lot, like 7 days a week, he's tired when he comes home. He leaves it up to me since I stay home.

Parent 6 was a widow, so there was no father in the house who read to her daughters.

When asked how much time the child's other parent spent working on homework, the answers were similar to the first question. Parent 1 said, "His other parent is in jail—doesn't get a chance to work with at all. It's up to me to work with him." Parent 2 replied that her daughter would go to her father for help if she (the mother) did not understand the problem. She also stated

Two hours a week, maybe, he works with her. He is more of a resource. He steps in when I don't understand what she's doing. Sometimes when I get frustrated. The thing about it is that when he helps her, he does it the way he knows how; not exactly the way she's being taught at school.

Parent 4 responded that her husband helps her son 2 to 3 hours per week when she is not there, particularly when she is working. Parent 5 replied

Her daddy doesn't get to help her; he's usually not home. When he does, he gets frustrated because it's different than what he's used to. Takes so long. He doesn't think that kids should bring work home; thinks they should do it at school.

*Lack of time and exhaustion.* The parents interviewed stated that a lack of time and exhaustion hindered them helping their children with their schoolwork and their participation in parental involvement activities. When asked about reading to their children, Parent 2 replied that she reads to her child but her husband does not. She stated that he works so much and only read to her once a week and that he's tired. Parent 5, when speaking of the time her husband spent with their daughter reading, said, "Since he works a lot, like 7 days a week, he's tired when he comes home."

When asked about attending parent-teacher conferences, Parent 2 said that her husband does not always make it because he works so much. She also said that if she was working, “it wouldn’t be enough.” When asked to elaborate, she said that she has the time to attend parent-teacher conferences because she does not work. However, if she had a full-time job, she would not have enough time to attend them as she does now. Parent 4 responded, “If I don’t go, then my husband or mother-in-law will go.” When asked why she would be unable to attend, she replied that her work schedule at times prevents her from attending the conferences herself. Parent 5 responded, “I go to all of them and to the extra events unless I’m working.” Parent 6 replied, “My schedule is so busy that if they’re doing okay, I don’t see a need to go to the school. I ask them how they’re doing and check their grades.”

Next, the participants were asked about attending Parent-Teacher Organization meetings. Parent 2, a housewife herself, acknowledged that parents are busy with work.

Parent 3 responded

I go to maybe 1 or 2 PTO meetings. I think they’re fairly effective; I’m just too tired to become as involved. If exhaustion wasn’t a factor, I would like to help more to make the school a success. Parent involvement does help schools: it makes the teachers more responsive. I would know how my child spends the day. I could help fix problems.

Parent 6 replied

I am not able to go to PTO meetings with my schedule. I don’t even really know if they have a PTO at the school where the girls go. I certainly haven’t heard anything about it. If they do, then they’re communicating it with me as a parent very well.

Parent 7, whose answer was very similar, stated

I and my husband don’t participate in the PTO. Our schedules just won’t allow it. If the kids’ teachers say they need something, we try to donate money or food or snacks, something like that, as much as possible. We have gone and read

to the younger brother's class a couple of times before. We would be afraid of embarrassing the older one if we tried that now! As far as belonging to or participating in PTO, we just can't right now.

Answers to the next question, which asked about volunteering in school, echoed the answers to attending parent-teacher conferences. Parent 1 responded, "I don't get to volunteer in the school because of my schedule. The only volunteers they ask for is during lunch." Parent 3 said that she volunteers maybe a couple of times per year. She also sends in things that the school needs. Parent 6 replied

I do not have the time to go to the school and volunteer. My work hours don't allow me to go to the school during the day and help out. If things were different, I would like to think that I could spend more time at the school helping out.

Likewise, Parent 7 responded similarly to the other parents, saying

We don't volunteer in the school as much as we would like. We try to do things to help out and provide supplies or money as needed. If we're asked, we certainly try to do things or get stuff for the class.

Serving on school committees was also difficult for the parents. Parent 3 does not serve on any committees, saying "I just don't have the time. If I did have the time, I would be glad to serve on them, especially the Local School Improvement council and the Parent Advisory Committee." Parent 6 said she did not serve on any school committees "because I have work, things outside—family. I don't want to be tied down and have to leave because of family or other obligations." Parent 7 also said

We don't serve on school committees because we don't have the time. I work far enough away to make getting there on time for a meeting impossible. If my husband went to the meeting, we wouldn't have anyone to watch the kids. It's kinda' impossible for us to serve at this point in our lives. As our kids get older, we may be able to serve on the LSIC or something like that.

Finally, when asked about chaperoning field trips, the participants responded that they do not because of their work schedules. Parent 1 said that she “would chaperone if my schedule would allow. I would probably have to take a day off from work in order to go.” Parent 3 also has had to take days off from work in order to chaperone her daughter’s field trips. Parent 5 does not usually chaperone field trips because of the uncertainty of her job. Her job as a temporary substitute cook puts her at the mercy of the telephone. She said she has to take her jobs “day-by-day.” Parent 6 said that her work hours do not allow her to go with her daughters on field trips, and Parent 7 replied that

Being a school administrator doesn’t give me the flexibility to take off from work to go on a trip. Working twenty miles away from my son’s school also makes it hard to leave during the middle of the day when so much is going on and go on a field trip.”

### *Summary*

Three themes emerged from the analysis of the data from the parent interviews: (a) as the students moved from the elementary into the secondary schools, the parents became involved less, (b) fathers were less involved or altogether absent, and (c) parents did not have the time to commit to parent involvement activities due to long hours and inflexible work hours or were just too exhausted to become involved. Chapter 5 has summarized this research, discussed the findings, and suggested future research into the parental involvement of students in this region of the country.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

#### *Summary*

The purpose of this study was to research the parental involvement in Appalachia due to the limited number of studies that have been completed in this region of the country. Graduating from high school for many students in this area has become a feat in itself. For many of those who do graduate, college is never given a second thought, as many go to work in the coal mines that continue to populate this area. However, over the last 50 years, the number of coal mines has declined and with it the number of coal mining jobs available due to technology (West Virginia Coal Association, 2010).

Since students spend less than 9% of their time in schools, student achievement is impacted by a number of variables outside of the school environment. Research has found that parental involvement has a positive impact on achievement from pre-kindergarten programs through college and with regular and special education students. The research shows that achievement is also affected by family poverty level, average education level of the parents, median income, and socioeconomic status. The somewhat isolated environment of the people living in Appalachia has also had an impact on the local culture and economy.

This study used qualitative research methods to explore how parents in a low-income, rural school district in the mid-Atlantic region were involved in student academic learning. A sample of 7 parents was selected that represented the people of this area and who could provide rich information about parental involvement activities. After

the interviews were completed, the data were analyzed and three themes emerged: (a) as the child grew older, the parents became less involved, (b) fathers were less involved than the mothers or were absent, and (c) a lack of time and exhaustion from work prevented parents from becoming involved.

### *Conclusions*

Identifying the themes that emerged after the data were analyzed highlighted the barriers to parental involvement that parents in these rural, low-income communities in Appalachia face. As the children moved from elementary into secondary schools, parental involvement decreased across several characteristics of parental involvement programs: working with the child in the home with reading, working on homework, volunteering in the school, and being involved in the school through serving on committees, being involved with PTO, and chaperoning field trips. Sun (1994) also found that parental involvement decreases as students move from elementary to secondary school, and data from this study was supported in the research.

Several parents noted that they needed assistance in understanding how the teachers were teaching the curriculum, especially in mathematics. To them, it seemed that the math was being taught differently than when they were in school. Parents of the children in secondary schools reported that their students did not need their help and had become self-sufficient. The parents monitored their child's progress, but did not take an active role in helping with homework or reading to the child.

Notably less involved and even absent in some cases were the fathers. Whether due to incarceration or long, exhausting work hours, fathers were not as involved in home

or school activities. Fathers not present in the home may not be involved due to a lack of parent training, as rural communities often lack social programs to support fathers becoming involved (Sano, Richards, & Zvonkovic, 2008). This lack of community resources due to geographic location is a concern for schools wishing to increase parent involvement in the home and school environments. For those fathers who were present in the home, they faced the same dilemma in knowing how to work with their children on their assignments. The new math curriculum being used was also their concern.

Since these parents work, they often worked long hours or lacked the flexibility to take off from work to become involved. Many times, the parents were just too exhausted to spend more of their day at home or in the school in parental involvement activities. Van Velsor and Orozco (2007) explained the emergence of these themes in that parents with low incomes face both demographic and psychological obstacles to becoming involved. Demographic issues, such as inflexible work schedules, exhaustion, lack of transportation, and a lack of resources impede parents' ability to become involved. Despite the best efforts of schools to involve parents, these barriers to involvement are very difficult to overcome.

The school district would need to design its parental involvement program around these obstacles. Meeting with parents at various times and offering multiple sessions of parent trainings to accommodate inflexible work schedules is necessary to reach as many parents as possible. Teaching parents how to work with their students using the current curricula would be an important step in increasing parental involvement in the home. Parents of middle and high school students need to be convinced to continue working with their children as they grow older and stay involved in the in-school activities, not

just monitoring grades every grading period. PTO and other school committee meetings would need to be scheduled at differing times in order to accommodate work schedules, and more and varied opportunities for parents to be involved in the schools must be developed. Perhaps most important would be ensuring that communication between the school and the home is varied and abundant so that parents know when these activities are being offered and how important they are to increasing student achievement.

Finally, as we found parents do not respond to written communication and most parents do not have computers in the home to respond to emails. The researcher sent three survey mailings to all the parents in the district at different times of the year. The three mailings to over 300 households produced 14 responses. In order to conduct a quantitative study, 100 responses were required. It was concluded that a qualitative study would produce findings to be used to conduct a more comprehensive quantitative study. It is recommended that at least once a year the school district conduct a school-by-school door knocking campaign with all parents registered in a school. This will ensure that all parents are contacted once a year and the individual schools can gather first-hand information about their clients. Secondly it is recommended that one week before school semester starts that every school sponsor a family day in school. This would provide an opportunity for all family members to come to the schools to look, to find out what the school day is like, to find out what the curriculum is like, and to ask questions.

#### *Suggestions for Future Research*

In moving forward with this research, suggestions include studying the effects of technology in communication and delivering parent trainings in rural areas. As



technology changes, new ways of communicating with parents emerge. One of the recommendations from the National Summit on the Role of Education in Economic Development in Rural America was the need to increase broadband capacity in rural areas (Education Commission of the States, 2011). Doing so would encourage the use of distance learning for students in rural areas who do not have access to the educational opportunities and resources that their urban counterparts do.

Another suggestion for future research is to study the impacts on student achievement as a result of the development and implementation of a parental involvement program which increases the number of parent trainings to accommodate parent work schedules. After planning the training sessions and offering them during multiple times, time should be given for the parents to use the skills they have learned. Then, an assessment of student learning would need to be completed to determine if student achievement has been impacted by making parental involvement more readily available for parents in these rural areas.

CHAPTER SIX  
PROBLEMS/UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

Qualitative dissertations allow for a chapter six to discuss problems or other issues encountered in writing the dissertation. Chapter six of this dissertation was used to discuss answering the dissertation question in this study, *How are parents in a low-income, rural school district in Appalachia involved in student academic learning?* This study sought to explore how parents in a low-income, rural school district in Appalachia were involved in student academic learning. The context for this study was a rural Appalachian school district with the following district demographics: 6,759 students, of which 92 percent were white, 6 percent were African American, 1.8 percent were other, and 59.78 percent were on free and reduced-price lunch. The median income for this county was \$22,153, with 17.45 percent of the households having one parent and almost 60 percent on free and reduced-price lunch. As noted in the poverty guidelines, the poverty line for a family of four was \$17,050, and the median income for the four communities in this survey was \$22,153, a difference of only \$5,103. The data showed that the majority of this community was poor or near poor. This was reinforced by the data on free-and-reduced lunch data that showed almost 60 percent of the district students received federal school lunch assistance. Table 6.1 lists the median income and percentages of single-parent homes and students on free and reduced-price lunch by area.

Table 6.1

*Median Income and Percentages of Single-Parent Homes and Students on Free and Reduced-Price Lunch by Area*

Area	Median Income	One Parent	Students on Free- and Reduced-Lunch
City A	\$18,375	23.9%	50.33
City B	\$29,792	13.8%	75.96
City C	\$25,028	14.7%	65.19
City D	\$20,417	17.4%	58.86
County	\$22,153	17.45%	59.78

### *Was the Sample Representative?*

The question for chapter six is, *Did the sample of parents/mothers interviewed reflect the population of the district?* The sample that was interviewed were mothers of students enrolled in the school district. Of the 7 families represented in the study, 4 families were low-income. Of the 7 mothers who participated in this study, 1 was employed in retail sales, 1 was a substitute cook, 2 were housewives, and 3 were professionals. For the families, 2 of the fathers worked as coal miners, 2 were employed in a professional capacity, 1 was unemployed, 1 was incarcerated, and 1 was deceased. Given the median income of the four sample cities and the county, the socioeconomic statuses of the families certainly represented the economic conditions of the population of this area of the country. The jobs these people reported as having were also typical of the gamut of employment available in this region for both men and women.

Given the evidence of the sampled families' socioeconomic statuses and employment conditions, the sample was clearly indicative of the population from which

the sample of participants was drawn. More than 50 percent of the sample was living at or near the poverty line in poorer economic conditions. Therefore, the demographic data of the sample aligns with the data for the population, thereby supporting the researcher's contention that the sample was representative of the population in this study.

### *The Next Step*

As with most qualitative studies with small samples, the purpose of this study was to explore how parents in a low-income, rural school district in Appalachia are involved in student academic learning. While much has been learned in our exploration of parental involvement in rural Appalachia, many questions remain. The data gathered in this study provide the information need to complete a large-scale quantitative study. It is recommended that the data from this study be used by the county to develop a survey that would be dispersed and completed by each of the cities with a large scale sample that would produce the statistical returns for a quantitative study.

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## Appendices

Appendix A  
Interview Protocol

## Appendix A

## Parent Interview

## Interview Questions

1. What is the parent's (s') educational level?  
†
2. What is the major occupation of the mother?
3. On average, what is the best estimate of the number of minutes during the week that your child spends reading to himself/herself?  
†
4. On average, what is the best estimate of the number of minutes during the week that you spend reading to your child?  
†
5. On average, what is the best estimate of the amount of minutes during the week that the child's other parent spends reading to your child?  
†
6. Approximately how many minutes do you spend working with your child on homework during the week?  
†
7. Approximately how much time does the child's other parent spend working with your child on homework during the week?  
†
8. Approximately how many times per year do you attend parent-teacher conferences?  
†
9. Approximately how many times per year do you attend Parent-Teacher Organization meetings?
10. Approximately how many times per year do you volunteer in the school?  
†
11. Approximately how many times per year do you serve on school committees?  
†

12. Approximately how many times per year do you chaperone field trips?

†



Appendix B  
Telephone Script

Appendix B  
Telephone Script

“Hello, my name is Mike Hutchins and I am conducting research through the University of Houston into the Parental Involvement in this area of Appalachia. In this study, I have purposely chosen seven participants in this school district to answer questions related to parent education, mother’s employment, and time spent in parental involvement activities during the school year. The interviews should take no longer than 30 minutes and I would be happy to meet with you wherever you would like. Would you be willing to participate?”

If yes, then: “Thank you for your willingness to participate. Where would you like to meet and when would you be available?” Answer, then: “Thank you again for agreeing to participate. I will see you then.”

If no, then: “Okay, then. Thank you for time. Have a nice day.”

Appendix C  
Informed Consent

## Appendix C

### Informed Consent

#### UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

##### **PROJECT TITLE:**

The Effects of Parent Involvement and Home, Community, and Poverty Environmental Factors on Student Achievement

You are being invited to participate in a research project conducted by James Hutchins from the Curriculum and Instruction Department at the University of Houston. This project is part of a dissertation and is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Augustina Reyes, Professor.

##### NON-PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any question.

##### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of parents' educational level, mother's employment, aggregate time spend in parental involvement activities, and two indices of socioeconomic status on student achievement.

##### PROCEDURES

A total of 120 subjects at 4 locations will be asked to participate in this project. You will be one of approximately 30 subjects asked to participate at this location.

You will be asked to complete a 12-item survey that asks questions about parents' educational level, mother's employment, and time spent in parental involvement activities. The total time to complete the survey is 15 minutes.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your participation in this project. Each subject's name will be paired with a code number by the principal investigator. This code number will appear on all written materials. The list pairing the subject's name to the assigned code number will be kept separate from all research materials and will be available only to the principal investigator. Confidentiality will be maintained within legal limits.

## RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to you as a result of participating in this study.

## BENEFITS

While you will not directly benefit from participation, your participation may help investigators better understand the effects that parents' education level, mother's employment, and time spent in parental involvement activities have on student achievement.

## ALTERNATIVES

Participation in this project is voluntary and the only alternative to this project is non-participation.

## PUBLICATION STATEMENT

The results of this study may be published in professional and/or scientific journals. It may also be used for educational purposes or for professional presentations. However, no individual subject will be identified.

---

## SUBJECT RIGHTS

1. I understand that informed consent is required of all persons participating in this project.

2. All procedures have been explained to me and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
3. Any risks and/or discomforts have been explained to me.
4. Any benefits have been explained to me.
5. I understand that, if I have any questions, I may contact James Hutchins at (304) 877-2891. I may also contact Dr. Augustina Reyes, faculty sponsor, at (713) 743-5206.
6. I have been told that I may refuse to participate or to stop my participation in this project at any time before or during the project. I may also refuse to answer any question.
7. ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING MY RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT MAY BE ADDRESSED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (713-743-9204). ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS THAT ARE CARRIED OUT BY INVESTIGATORS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON ARE GOVERNED BY REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.
8. All information that is obtained in connection with this project and that can be identified with me will remain confidential as far as possible within legal limits. Information gained from this study that can be identified with me may be released to no one other than the principal investigator and his faculty sponsor. The results may be published in scientific journals, professional publications, or educational presentations without identifying me by name.

I HAVE READ (OR HAVE HAD READ TO ME) THE CONTENTS OF THIS CONSENT FORM AND HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED TO ASK QUESTIONS. I HAVE RECEIVED ANSWERS TO MY QUESTIONS. I GIVE MY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY. I HAVE RECEIVED (OR WILL RECEIVE) A COPY OF THIS FORM FOR MY RECORDS AND FUTURE REFERENCE.

Study Subject (print name): \_\_\_\_\_

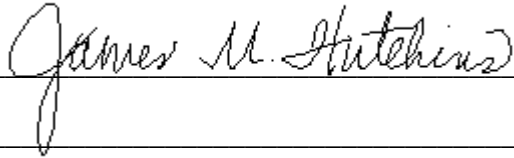
Signature of Study Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

-----  
 I HAVE READ THIS FORM TO THE SUBJECT AND/OR THE SUBJECT HAS READ THIS FORM. AN EXPLANATION OF THE RESEARCH WAS GIVEN AND QUESTIONS FROM THE SUBJECT WERE SOLICITED AND ANSWERED TO THE

SUBJECT'S SATISFACTION. IN MY JUDGMENT, THE SUBJECT HAS DEMONSTRATED COMPREHENSION OF THE INFORMATION.

Principal Investigator (print name and title): James Hutchins

Signature of Principal Investigator: 

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix D

Approval Letter from the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects



## Appendix D

## Approval Letter from CPHS



**U N I V E R S I T Y of H O U S T O N**

COMMITTEES FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

December 6, 2010

Mr. James M. Hutchins  
c/o Dr. Augustina Reyes  
Educational Leadership & Cultural Studies

Dear Mr. Hutchins:

The University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (1) reviewed your research proposal entitled "The Effects of Parental Involvement and Home, Community, and Poverty Environmental Factors on Student Achievement" on November 19, 2010, according to institutional guidelines.

At that time, your project was granted approval contingent upon your agreement to modify your proposal protocol as stipulated by the Committee. The changes you have made adequately respond to those contingencies made by the Committee, and your project has been approved. However reapplication will be required:

1. Annually
2. Prior to any change in the approved protocol
3. Upon development of the unexpected problems or unusual complications

Thus, if you will be still collecting data under this project on **November 1, 2011** you must reapply to this Committee for approval before this date if you wish to prevent an interruption of your data collection procedures.

If you have any questions, please contact Alicia Vargas at (713) 743-9215.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Scott B. Stevenson, Chair  
Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (1)

PLEASE NOTE: (1) All subjects must receive a copy of the informed consent document. If you are using a consent document that requires subject signatures, remember that signed copies must be retained for a minimum of 3 years, or 5 years for externally supported projects. Signed consents from student projects will be retained by the faculty sponsor. Faculty are responsible for retaining signed consents for their own projects; however, if the faculty leaves the university, access must be possible for UH in the event of an agency audit. (2) Research investigators will promptly report to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects and others.

Protocol Number: 11126-01

Full Review  X

Expedited Review \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix E

Approval Letter from CPHS to Continue Data Collection

Appendix E

Approval Letter from CPHS to Continue Data Collection

# UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

## DIVISION OF RESEARCH

December 16, 2011

Mr. James Hutchins  
c/o Dr. Augustina Reyes  
Educational Leadership & Cultural Studies

Dear Mr. James Hutchins,

The University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (1) reviewed your research proposal entitled "The Effects of Parental Involvement and Home, Community, and Poverty Environmental Factors on Student Achievement" on October 21, 2011, according to institutional guidelines.

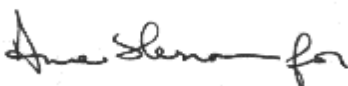
At that time, your project was granted approval contingent upon your agreement to modify your proposal protocol as stipulated by the Committee. The changes you have made adequately respond to those contingencies made by the Committee, and your project has been approved. However reapplication will be required:

1. Annually
2. Prior to any change in the approved protocol
3. Upon development of the unexpected problems or unusual complications

Thus, if you will be still collecting data under this project on **October 21, 2012** you must reapply to this Committee for approval before this date if you wish to prevent an interruption of your data collection procedures.

If you have any questions, please contact Alicia Vargas at (713) 743-9215.

Sincerely yours,



Dr. Scott B. Stevenson, Chair  
Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (1)

PLEASE NOTE: (1) All subjects must receive a copy of the informed consent document. If you are using a consent document that requires subject signatures, remember that signed copies must be retained for a minimum of 3 years, or 5 years for externally supported projects. Signed consents from student projects will be retained by the faculty sponsor. Faculty is responsible for retaining signed consents for their own projects; however, if the faculty leaves the university, access must be possible for UH in the event of an agency audit. (2) Research investigators will promptly report to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects and others.

Protocol Number: 11126-01

Full Review:

Expedited Review:

316 E. Cullen Building Houston, TX 77204-2015 (713) 743-9204 Fax: (713) 743-9577  
COMMITTEES FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

## Curriculum Vitae

## CURRICULUM VITAE

James M. Hutchins

### EDUCATION

Ed.D. Educational Leadership and Cultural Studies. University of Houston, Houston, TX. 2012.

M.S. Education Leadership. University of Houston—Clear Lake, Houston, TX. 2005.

B.M.Ed. Music Education. University of North Alabama, Florence, AL. 1999.

### CERTIFICATIONS

West Virginia Professional Administrative Certificate endorsed for Principal, Pre-K –Adult.

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Principal, Fayette County Schools, WV, 2009-Present.

Assistant Principal, Fayette County Schools, WV, 2009.

Music Teacher, Anchorage School District, AK, 2008-2009.

Music Teacher, Magnolia ISD, TX, 2005-2008.

Music Teacher, LaMarque ISD, TX, 2003-2005.

Band Director, Limestone County Schools, AL, 2001-2005.

Band Director, Franklin County Schools, AL, 2000-2001.

Band Director, Marion County Schools, AL, 1999-2000.

**PRESENTATIONS**

Hutchins, James (2008). Perceptions of Parental Involvement. Presented at the Southwest Educational Research Association Convention, New Orleans, LA.