**District of Columbia State Board of Education**

**DCSBOE**

Parental and Home Engagement

Committee Report

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17. **Introduction**

Among education experts, there is widespread agreement that a lack of effective family engagement poses a substantial threat to student achievement in K-12 schools across the nation. Decades of research have shown that increased parental involvement results in higher student achievement in a wide range of areas including college readiness, higher self-esteem, higher test scores, and overall child well-being. Many schools consistently struggle to adequately engage all families in their children’s education program, while many families simultaneously lack the knowledge and resources to support their children’s morale, attitudes, and academic achievement. In the District of Columbia, there are numerous potential barriers to effective family engagement, including its diverse set of stakeholders with different backgrounds, resources, and needs. As families play an integral role in the development of their children, barriers to parental involvement significantly hinder overall student success in the District of Columbia.

This annotated bibliography is meant as a primer for learning about the different facets of parent and home engagement. A set of recommendations based on this literature has also been laid out for consumption.

1. **Annotated Bibliography**
2. **EDUCATING AND EMPOWERING**

Research shows that students perform best when his or her family is most engaged in their learning, therefore there is a need for schools to empower families with knowledge and skills to become more purposeful and successful in their involvement. Moreover, schools have a responsibility to educate and empower parents as leaders to become knowledgeable advocates and partners with the schools.

**Bempechat, J. (1992). The role of parental involvement in children's academic achievement. *The School Community Journal*, *2*(2), 31-41.**

This article contained scholarly information on several different theories encompassing student success and parental involvement. Most of the research revolved around two different concepts: cognitive socialization and academic socialization. Cognitive socialization are practices done at home that either foster or inhibit cognitive function. This can include tutoring children at home from an early age, but also included the level of control in a home. Excessive parental control can limit a child’s self-esteem and ultimately affect their level of cognitive development. Additionally, middle to higher class parents will expose their children to higher order thinking sooner and with more depth than working class parents. Academic socialization is how parents foster school success in their children. This article cited Epstein’s six interrelated aspects of home behavior that positively affect school performance:

1. Task Structure – this provides intellectual activities for children at home.
2. Authority Structure – this describes the level of decision making the child is allowed in the home. Epstein reports that authoritative is the style of parenting that allows creativity and autonomy while fostering well-being.
3. Reward Structure – this describes how the parent recognizes advances in learning.
4. Grouping Structure – this describes how the parents influence interactions with family members and peers. The school can help foster positive peer interactions for academic success.
5. Evaluation Structure – this describes how clear standards should be communicated to the child warmly. Children should have academic standards at home.
6. Time Structure – this describes how parents must schedule children’s time so that it effectively supports both school and non-school activities.

**Epstein, J. (1986). Parents' reactions to teacher practices of parent involvement. *The Elementary School Journal*, *86*(5), 277-294.**

This article studied parents’ reactions to school and teacher efforts to involve parents in school activities. Epstein studied an elementary school in Maryland and found that parents believe their child’s schools are well run, provide an overall good education, but do not educate parents enough on how to support their children outside of school. Epstein’s study found that a parent’s level of education directly correlates with how they could help their child at home. Additionally, she found that schools must follow up with parents to address other needs that might arise and that over 85% of parents will help their children at home if the schools ask them to do so. Epstein recommended that schools set up workshops in reading, math, and writing to teach parents how they can help their child at home.

**Joining Hands: A Parental Involvement Program Urban Education March 1998 33: 123-135,**

This research article examines the cycle of a decline in low-income parent involvement and individual school’s response to engage them less, rather than more. The study targeted low-income parents of pre-school children in an attempt to enhance their participation in their child’s education. The researcher interviewed parents and teachers to compile data and found the teachers reported frustration that the parents did not instill a greater level of respect in their children for school. Teachers also reported that students should be taught how to handle frustration and anger. There was a wide gap between parents’ and teachers’ attitudes and perceptions of one another. After analyzing the collected data, the researcher created four training modules for parents: reading readiness, additional reading strategies and math readiness, visual discrimination and visual memory reading skills, and the last was homework and social skills. The program was voluntary but was marketed in GED classes and through child-care programs. It also included teacher in-services where several forms of parental involvement were presented along with materials that promoted effective, two-way communication. Overall, the program was well received by the parents, but many teachers said they would like more information on how to curb bad student behavior rather than involve parents.

**Muskogee Public Schools Parental Involvement Report Card. (2008). Project Appleseed.**

This is a survey that schools can give to parents so that they can self-assess their own parenting job. It asks the parents questions such as “Do you monitor your child’s homework?” and “Do you regularly read the school newspaper?” At the end of the survey, parents tally their points to assess the work they are doing as a parent. Parents then rate themselves “Excellent”, “Good”, or “Needs Improvement.”

**Strauss, V., & Kohn, A. (2013, February 6). Is parent involvement in school really useful? Washington Post, The Answer Sheet. Retrieved from http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/02/06/is-parent-involvement-in-school-really-useful/**

This commentary questioned the value of promoting parental involvement. Parental involvement is usually looked at as either being inadequate or excessive. It is also frequently examined as a socioeconomic status issue with poor parents not doing enough and wealthy ones doing too much. Poor and less educated parents can struggle with parental involvement because of limited time, trouble speaking English, and difficulty feeling comfortable involved in the school community. Parental involvement is too often looked at based on how educators think parents should be involved and not what parents or students think. The author believes that there needs to be a movement to focus more on what kind of parental involvement is occurring instead of how much. Another issue that has arisen is that many parents are advocating for their own children and not all students. The author says that also parents need to focus on what the child is doing in school, not how well the child is doing but schools send the message that grades are significant so it’s understandable that that is what parents do. She discusses how parents need to question teachers and educators instead of just helping them promote the status quo. The author overall says that the issue of parental involvement is a lot more complicated than it is portrayed.

**Parent involvement=student success [Pamphlet]. (n.d.). America's career resource network.**

This pamphlet was funded by the Department of Education and was to further the parental involvement policies that came from No Child Left Behind (NCLB). It focused on how parents can help their child be successful in school and in life. The pamphlet shared that parental involvement can lead to better grades and test scores, better behavior, better graduation rates, better attendance, are more likely to complete homework, less likely to be in special education, and more likely to continue education post-high school. Suggestions for how parents can get involved include attending school events like open houses, reading the school newsletter, joining the PTA, volunteering at school, and with many other methods. The pamphlet also encouraged parents to set good examples, support their child’s future, praise and celebrate their child, and make time to discuss school with their child. It also suggested that parents have family meals and activities, ensure their child goes to school well-rested and eat breakfast, and encourage students to read and write.

**Pennsylvania Department of Education. (n.d.). Parent involvement= student success [Brochure]. Harrisburg, PA: Author.**

The Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Career and Technical Education distributed this brochure. It discussed how involved parents can help their child have a successful future. The brochure stated that parent support is more important to a child’s success in school than their IQ, economic status, or school setting. The benefits of parental involvement are higher grades and test scores, better behavior and more positive attitudes, higher graduation rates, better attendance at school, more homework completed, fewer placements in special education, and greater enrollment in postsecondary education. It also stated the importance of having a home environment that is positive and encouraging about school and learning as well as the need for communication between the parent and child about school is imperative to parental support. The brochure states that parents who ask how a student’s day went, praise and encourage their child, and school needs to be a priority for the family. It also says that Parents should get to know the teachers and visit the school frequently.

**Rhee, M., Ulery, S., & Hood, K. (2007). DCPS local educational agency parent involvement policy. Washington, DC.**

This was the report for the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) LEA Parent Involvement Policy for Title I Programs. Based on the mandates from ESEA this report was written to help encourage and facilitate full and meaningful parent participation. It created a framework for implementing parent involvement programs and activities that promote student achievement. It is important for parents to know that they play an important role in a child’s learning and encourage them to be actively involved in their children’s education at school. The report suggested that DCPS needed to deliver supports to schools and parents in many different forms like workshops, information sessions, written materials, and classes. Three parent resource centers were instituted for programming and resources to help parents navigate the school system, help with communication, and become advocates for better education. Also DCPS is needed to provide training to teachers and school staff to create and use good parent involvement strategies. The report stated that annual evaluations of the program will require parent participation. The plan mandated an annual meeting with parents about the school’s parent involvement policy. It also discussed having a written school-parent contract to show the shared responsibility of student academic achievement. The packet included a sample parent involvement policy, a sample school-parent contract, and an action plan form for the parent involvement grant programs.

**Henderson, A. T., Mapp, K. L., Johnson, V. R., & Davies, D. (2006). *How well does your school support parents as advocates? In Beyond the bake sale- the essential guide to family-school partnerships*. New York, NY: New press. 182-186.**

This survey examined how well school supports parents as advocates. The survey had multiple choice questions and open-ended questions. Each multiple choice question asked how easily a parent could do something (for example, use the school website). The answers ranged from “already doing this” to “this will be hard.”

* Categories of multiple choice questions:
	+ Explaining the school to families 🡪 how parents get information
	+ Conferring with teachers 🡪 parent/teacher communication
	+ Supporting advocacy 🡪 teaching parents how to advocate for their children and make decisions
	+ Transition programs 🡪welcoming new families to the area/new school (like middle to high school)
	+ Planning for the future 🡪 parent information for elementary, 6th, and 9th grades on what classes a child should take and how school can prepare them for future
* Open-ended questions:
	+ In which areas are you doing well?
	+ Which areas need more work?
	+ How are parents involved in your school to promote constructive advocacy?
	+ What are your concerns?
	+ Steps you could take right now to develop a program to support parents as advocates
	+ Steps you could take over the long term

**Attendance in the early grades (Attendance Works, Comp.) [Brochure]. (2013).**

This brochure discussed the importance of school attendance in pre-k, kindergarten, and first grade. The brochure stated that with young children, it is the parents’ responsibility for getting their child to school and how schools and communities can help with individual attendance issues. Good attendance is very important for academic success and therefore, improved attendance correlates with improved academic success. It suggests that schools should do four things: communicate with and educate families about the importance of attendance, provide reliable transportation and backup in case students miss the bus, address health needs and collaborate with medical professionals, and track attendance data to see which families may need targeted intervention.

**Attendance Works. (2011). Help your child succeed in school: Build the habit of good attendance early [Leaflet]. Reach out and read.**

This pamphlet for parents discussed the importance of good attendance. It explained the importance of forming habits of going to school every day on time, for every child, because it will help him or her in high school, college, and at work. Additionally, the pamphlet gave parents suggestions to help with good attendance such as setting a regular bed time and morning routine and making sure your child has the required shots.

**Corbett, D., & Wilson, B. (2008). *Knowledge is empowering: Commonwealth institute for parent leadership fellows' involvement and influence after training*. Chicago, IL: Spencer Foundation.**

This study examined the long-term effects of the Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership (CIPL) parental involvement training on its participants (called fellows). The training was focused on the Kentucky education system. Fellows learned how to read test data, understand education jargon, examine educational regulations and procedures, and understand various curriculum, instruction, and assessment issues. This training also asked fellows to think of the good of all children and not just their own. The study overall showed that this training program was very successful in getting parents more involved and keeping them involved for the long term. Parent felt empowered to act with their new knowledge and confidence. According to the results of the study, the fellows became more actively involved in education and more influential in decision making. Fellows shifted from school-based involvement to regional and state involvement, becoming not only involved parents but also influential political forces.

**Horowitz, A., & Bronte-Tinkew, J. (2007). *Research-to-Results: Building, engaging, and supporting family and parental involvement in out-of-school time programs* (Publication No. 2007-16). Washington, DC: Child Trends.**

This report focused on the importance of parent involvement in out-of-school programs. The research says that family involvement can help a child’s academic performance as well as their relationships with their parents. When parents are involved in these programs, they reported increased attention to their children’s schooling. The authors found that family involvement can lead to better programs and increased student engagement. The report found that some parents may not attend events or get involved in programs because of work schedules, access, and/or they may not feel comfortable attending. It suggests that programs should pick easily accessible locations for events, have events at night or on the weekends, and offer incentives like food or child care. The authors state that organizations should provide family members a list of multiple ways they can participate as well as creating additional programs to engage families such as phone calls and home visits. All staff should be trained on how to meaningfully engage families build relationships and trust with families. A case study discussed in the report is the Concerned Black Men National, who support the social, emotional, academic, and psychological development of African American youth through out-of-school time programs. They view parents as the “first teachers” and recognize the importance of their involvement. The CBM was in communication with families frequently to build relationships and learn about issues they may be facing.

1. **OUTREACH AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING**

It is the schools’ responsibility to foster relationships that encourage success both in and out of school. While research shows that two-way communication is most beneficial in increasing student achievement, too many schools rely on one-way communication from school to parents. Administrators and teachers must be knowledgeable on best practices to begin conversations with parents. States and individual schools have used pamphlets, committees, and data systems to effectively reach parents and begin building relationships that will lead to stronger parental engagement.

**Davies, D. (2002*). The 10th school revisited: Are school/family/community partnerships on the reform agenda now?* Phi Delta Kappan, 83 (6), 388-392.**

Davies, who wrote an article in 1996 decrying schools’ efforts of parental involvement, reassessed whether schools have improved their efforts at reaching out to parents, in this 2002 article. He found that although there is much more discussion, rhetoric, and widespread agreement about the importance of family involvement, there have not been large changes in schools’ practice. He then proposed seven recommendations: (1) Teachers and principals must have input in the development of parental involvement programs, rather than these programs being dictated from central office or state or federal agencies. Teacher education programs need to better prepare teachers to engage parents, and teachers and principals also need incentives to undertake the required work to improve parent involvement. (2) Schools should utilize the democratic process, paying attention to diverse stakeholders of different race, religion and educational status. Schools and districts need to better engage parents in the policymaking process, especially in already established advisory committees and school councils, which are often merely token bodies. (3) Schools must reach out to parents by making the school more welcoming and active through good summer and after-school activities, social activities that encourage relationship-building between parents and teachers, programs that link families to health and social services, and clean and well-decorated classrooms. (4) A revival of grassroots activism of parents’ lobbying would be very beneficial, although Davies acknowledges that this would be stronger if initiated by parents, rather by the schools or government agencies. (5) Parent choice can empower parents in their child’s education. Charter schools, magnet and alternative public schools, schools-within-schools, cross-district transfers, and early access to postsecondary education all offer parents a voice in their child’s education. However, in order to ensure equity, it is important to adequately inform a family about their choices (especially minority and low-income families) so they know their options, and school choice does not contribute to segregation by race or class. (6) Schools should offer support to parents who need assistance with child rearing in order to increase their responsibility for their student’s welfare. (7) School reform should be linked to community development, recognizing that the community and school are a symbiotic relationship and have the best results when working together. Schools and communities should jointly make decisions such as location of parks and playgrounds, rules about the location of bars and adult entertainment stores, how to allocate public safety and health resources, designing transportation routes, etc. Schools can also provide services to the community, by offering access to technology, libraries, and athletics facilities, students performing community services, etc. Finally, Davies recommended recruiting and training parents to visit other families’ homes to offer information about the school and how to become more involved. He also recommended that schools reach out to parents where they already are (supermarkets, churches, beauty shops, etc) rather than waiting for them to come to school

**Walberg, H.J. (1984). *Families as partners in educational productivity*. Phi Delta Kappan, 65, 397-400.**

This article stated that parents have a large amount of control over most of their children’s time as compared to schools do not have students for as much time. This time spent at home has a strong influence over school productivity. Cooperative partnerships between the home and the school can dramatically raise educational productivity. Parents directly or indirectly affect all of the chief determinants of various types of learning. Improving home conditions and the relations between homes and schools should have a significant effect on learning. The more children in a family directly correlate to lower average IQ of children. In society, parents are investing less in their children financially and psychologically because children are no longer the only means of support for retired people. There needs to be three-way partnerships between teachers, parents, and students where all three groups are supportive of each other. The academic conditions of the home are a better predictor of learning than socio-economic status is. Parents should do things like discuss everyday events with their child, encourage and discuss leisure reading, monitor television watching, teach their children to accomplish long term goals over immediate gratification, and praise children about their academic and personal growth. Schools should create programs for improving home learning environments, make a school and staff team to work on parent involvement, and survey parents on their thoughts. Parents should also provide a quiet and well-lit place for children to do homework. Parents and teachers need to cooperate on issues of schoolwork, discipline, and attendance. Programs that focus on parent/teacher cooperation and specific achievement goals produce the greatest learning outcomes.

**California Department of Education. (2011). Family Engagement Framework: A Tool For**

 **California School Districts.**

The report was developed by the California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Comprehensive Center at WestEd (CHCC). The report’s purpose was to develop and expand school and family partnerships to support improved student learning outcomes. It also serves as a guidance tool for education stakeholders (schools, districts, families, community) as they plan for effective family engagement programs to support student achievement. The targeted audience is for local schools, districts, families, and community partners. The report combines research, practices, and program requirements. The report discussed district principles (adopted from the Family Area Network (FAN) Board Model Standards for Family Involvement) within five action areas. *Building capacity* addresses involvement, staffing, professional development, plus teaching and learning. *Demonstrated Leadership* addresses governance and administration. *A resource (fiscal and other) addresses* funding. *Monitor Progress* addresses standards, assessments, and accountability. *Access and Equity* addresses opportunity and equal educational access. The district principles are supported by federal and state activities. The activities are accompanied by rubrics which describe basic, progressive and innovative implementation. The report also provided tools for communicating with families.

**Henderson, A. (2006). *How well is your school sharing power and practicing democracy? Beyond the bake sale-the essential guide to family-school partnerships*? 214-218.**

This is a checklist for schools to evaluate themselves on how well they are engaging with families. The checklist functions similarly to standards in the areas of: Consulting families about decisions; building a strong broad-based parent organization; developing social and political connections; drawing on community resources; and collaborating with community organizers. Schools can either say that they are “already doing this,” “could do this easily,” “this will take time,” “this will take time.”

**Kansas Parent Information Resource Center. (2008). Toolkit for Kansas Schools: Involving Parents in No Child Left Behind – Creating Family, School, Community Partnerships**

This parental involvement toolkit for schools in Kansas included recommendations on how to better communicate and engage with families. Examples included family-teacher conferences including the student, family literacy nights, family workshops planning for college, school newsletters, encouraging a robust PTA, interactive homework that involves families, regular calls from teachers (not just when there are problems), and parent discussion groups for parents to support each other and discuss various issues. The toolkit also discussed key elements to building positive relationships with parents: Respect, Competence, Integrity, and Personal Regard. Kansas has also developed standards for teachers and schools in regards to communication, community and parent engagement, surveys for parents, and a list of “100 Ways to Make Your School Family Friendly.”

**Skiba, R., & Strassel A. (n.d.). *Creating a positive climate parent involvement* (Issue brief). Bloomington, IN: Safe and Responsive Schools.**

This report briefly covered the benefits of parental involvement in schools. Many of the benefits it mentioned are the same as other research summaries including student academic success, higher attendance rates, and lower suspension rates. It included three recommendations for parents to do at home to improve their child’s performance in school, including home-school contracts to manage aggressive and disruptive behavior, teaching parents how to instill good time management and basic reading skills with their children, and increased communication. This short brief provided information on how to create effective parent involvement programs that address a variety of needs including behavior management, volunteering, and curriculum development. Additionally, it mentioned focusing on strengths that families bring to the school rather than family dysfunction and deficits. Schools should focus on the shared interests of student success and build strong relationships from that point. Finally, real programs across the country that increase parental involvement were cited and described which can be researched further for their impact on student success.

***Parent engagement: Strategies for involving parents in school health* (Rep.). (2012). Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.**

The research showed that parent engagement in the schools improves student behavior, leads to higher academic achievement, and encourages improved social skills. The report defines parent engagement in schools as schools and parents working together to support and improve the learning, development, and health of children and adolescents. The primary reason that parents become involved in their child’s education is because they believe they can improve their child’s educational outcome. This report focused on a process for school cooperation with parents that included making a positive connection with the parent, providing activities to frequently engage with parents and guardians, and sustaining that relationship by addressing challenges as they arise. This article was written by the Center for Disease Control and therefore its focus is on engaging parents in health education and promoting healthy living in the household and at school. Schools can use a variety of methods to connect with parents including banners, posters, flyers, text messages, emails, calls home, parent-teacher conferences, events, and regular parent seminars, and should do-so multiple times a school year. The authors also suggested hiring a parent liaison to coordinate efforts. Parents should be encouraged to participate with the PTA and PTO. They recommend that schools partner with community healthcare organizations that provide dental care, immunizations, health screenings, etc. This document also contained six barriers to parental involvement and a plethora of ways to overcome those barriers.

**Pate, P. E., & Andrews, P. G. (2006). Research summary: Parent involvement. Retrieved [June, 24, 2013] from** [**http://www.nmsa.org/ResearchSummaries/ParentInvolvement/tabid/274/Defailt.aspx**](http://www.nmsa.org/ResearchSummaries/ParentInvolvement/tabid/274/Defailt.aspx)

This research summary detailed the benefits of parental involvement on a child’s academic success as well as giving specific strategies for assessing and improving parental involvement in the schools. The article mentioned using interactive homework assignments, like Teachers Involving Parents in Schools (TIPS), which was developed by John Hopkins University. In addition, TIPS offers guidelines and recommendations for parents to collaborate with their child. This homework program has resulted in higher marks for students on report cards. This summary also offered concrete suggestions on how to boost parental involvement in the schools including starting with a needs assessment for parents to identify areas that need improvement in order to engage parents. It also recommended creating professional development for parents that aims to teach parents how to effectively engage in their child’s education. It could be structured as one-time evening classes or mini-courses offered at times that parents can attend. Finally, the authors recommended either appointing or hiring a school-parent liaison to engage parents, and that schools should develop a repertoire of strategies to engage parents and keep a resource inventory.

**U.S. Department of Education. (2007). Engaging parents in education: Lessons from five parental information and resource centers. Washington, DC.**

This report was published by the US Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement. It discussed the lessons that can be taken from the work of five outstanding parent information and resource centers (PIRCs). More specifically, the NCLB parent involvement requirements and how PIRCs could assist in compliance. PIRCs should provide leadership, technical assistance, and support in the implementation of parent involvement policies and the strengthening of relationships between schools and families. PIRCs need to first understand their audience to complete these goals which will also help them make education-related information available and understandable. Advice was given on how to set up a PIRC which should be as localized as possible to tailor services to the community they are serving. They should partner with community-based organizations to reach more parents. PIRCs should also bring different stakeholders together to discuss current issues in the school and other education problems. PIRCs can also help move parents from information to action. A survey is a good idea to assess the local needs. Parent liaisons can also be helpful to gather information and provide for more outreach. PIRCs can also train parents to be leaders and train parents and educators to work together. Overall the major advice from this report for PIRCs is to do four things: assess the needs of your constituents, be creative in efforts to engage all parents, prepare parents and educators for partnerships, and build greater organizational capacity.

**Redding, S., Murphy, M., & Sheley, P., Eds.U.S. Department of Education. (2011). Handbook on family and community engagement. Lincoln, IL: Academic Development Institute.**

This was a compilation of various reports on parent and community engagement. With this collection of reports, the authors of the handbook developed a list of recommendations. The recommendations are based on shared leadership, goals and roles, communication, education, connection, and continuous improvement. The recommendations are divided into sections on state education agencies, local education agencies, and schools. Recommendations for state education agencies include appointing a leader to coordinate efforts throughout the state, asking state level personnel to support implementation of family engagement practices, putting parents on school councils, ensuring funds are allocated to every school, helping family-friendly schools, helping with technical assistance, providing family education, mandating teacher education about how to work with parents, and creating a data system. Local education agencies should also have a lead coordinate for the local agency, support parent leaders in district and schools, have parent focus groups, have paid positions to promote family engagement, focus on low-income populations who stand to benefit the most from family engagement in literacy, and provide parenting classes and workshops. Schools should also have a leader for parent involvement, have a community council with parents, school policy and expectations for family engagement, have a school definition of parent involvement, give out a questionnaire to discover information about the families in the school, promote two-way communication, and professional development for teachers.

**Weiss, H. B., Lopez, E., & Stark, D. R. (2011, January). Breaking new ground: Data systems transform family engagement in education. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project.**

This article examined the use of data systems in promoting parental involvement. Data systems can give parents individualized and current information on their child. It can also foster more meaningful conversations between teachers and parents, because there is a clear set of data to discuss. To be helpful, the data must be easily accessible and understandable for families. It must provide information regularly and promptly. It should also track a child from early childhood to high school graduation. If possible, the same data system should be used by all the schools, district, and the state for smooth communication. The data system should be available in many languages. This data can make parents better advocates for their children as they will better understand where their child is academically. This is especially useful when a child changes schools or teachers. The authors suggest that the data would provide up-to-date information on a child that teachers could refer to when they receive new students. There would be a necessity for training parents on terminology, standards, assessments, and how the data system itself works. The authors state that data systems come out better when parents’ perspectives are incorporated into design and implementation and that there should be locations where parents can visit to use the computers to look up the data. The data system can also be used to show things like where the average child should be in every grade, college-readiness benchmarks, and resources for supporting learning at home.

**Vaden-Kiernan, N. (1996). *Parents' reports of school practices to involve families* (Rep.). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.**

This was a study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics about parental involvement and school practices. The study examined how parents rated school practices that promote parental involvement. They discovered that the amount of parental involvement was directly correlated with the number of school practices done well. On average though, parents said that only three of seven practices were done very well. These practices included letting parents know in between report cards how their child was doing, presenting parent volunteer opportunities, or providing information on how parents can assist students with homework. The study broke down the parents into various subgroups to see what school practices different parents rated as being done very well. The average number of school practices reported to have been done “very well” was greater for parents in small, private, urban schools. It was also greater when the parents were less educated, Hispanic or African-American, and the child was in a lower grade level. Possibilities for these results might be that schools are reaching out to less educated, minority families or that those families have lower expectations.

**School-Parent contract: Action guide for parent and community leaders. Public Education Network.**

This is a sample contract between parents and teachers. It would state what families and schools can do to improve academic achievement and what each party’s responsibilities are in that process. The author says that contracts can increase effective communication between home and school. In this example, each party (the parent, student, and teacher) must all state what they promise to do and sign the contract.

**Gomez, N. (2003). San Diego County Office of Education. Effectively engaging the community in schools.**

This was a PowerPoint presentation from the San Diego County Office of Education about how to effectively engage parents and the community in schools. It stated that interactions should be based on three principles: authentic interest, trust, and respect. The presentation said that schools should promote parent involvement by having things like a bilingual staff, childcare at events, and parent leadership trainings. Parents should focus on taking care of their child’s physical, emotional, and psychological needs as well as looking into data and knowing their rights. The community can help make a coalition between parents, educators, students, and other members of the community to promote academic achievement. Parent training can help improve graduation rates so schools should offer that as well to help with parent engagement.

**Roehlkepartain, E. C., Mannes, M., Scales, P., Lewis, S., & Bolstrom, B. (2004). *Building strong families: A study of the African American and Latino/Latina parents in the United States.* Chicago, IL: YMCA of the USA and Search Institute.**

This was a report about a study on African American and Latino/Latina parents in the United States. Data was gathered through a phone survey of about 650 parents from each both sub-groups. The authors state that many parents in America feel as though they are parenting with little to no support from the community and even though parents try to be involved in school, but yet struggle with how to help with homework. Parents are more likely to take actions to help their child within control of their family and are less likely to take actions that have to do with the community. Many parents try to help their child enjoy learning as well as ensure that their child participates in recreational, educational, arts, or sports activities. The study showed that parents put a lot of commitment and effort into parenting and society needs to support parents better. One way could be through schools with a caring school climate, workshops for parents, bilingual resources, and child care.

**Divine, Q. A. (2012). *How schools can help "underserved" students succeed*. Parent Involvement Matters.**

This study discussed how parent involvement in education may help students. The author discussed how parental involvement can be difficult for low-income families and less educated parents can pass on negative views of education to their children. Another issue is it is difficult for low-income parents to provide the best for their children even if they would like to. The author suggested that schools need to become more “customer-friendly” with parents and the community to develop positive and meaningful relationships. It would be advantageous to include parents, teachers, staff, and the community in decisions about planning, budgeting, and curriculum. Some ideas to get at-risk families involved that were mentioned in the study include:

* Cultural diversity days
* Ask parents to serve as tutors to teach a new language
* Parents of disabled students could do a presentation on the disability
* “Daddy Saturdays”

**Guemsey, L. (2012). Technology in early education. *The Progress of Education Reform*, *13*(4).**

This article focused on using technology in early education and how technology can help schools and families. Technology can be used to connect educators to families as well as share information. It can provide access to beneficial learning content like online books or educational interactive media. The author stated that children having “screen time” can be advantageous if technology is used properly, but parents have to be careful that they are not too distracted by the TV, phone, or computer when spending time with their children. The author also stated that educators must be aware that lower-income families might not have certain technology, even internet, and that educators should team up with libraries to provide a place where families can get internet, access to a computer, as well as videos and other digital media resources. Librarians could also become a resource for parents to learn about how to find educational media for their children to look at while on the computer and learn other things about technology. Libraries, teachers, and parents could become a very beneficial three-way relationship. Finally, the author suggested that it is helpful to send out accessibility surveys to find out how much technology families in schools’ areas have. This survey could show a district or school how to best reach parents.

**Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. (2002). A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.**

This report synthesized the research that has been done on parental involvement. The authors’ research showed that families have a major influence on their children’s achievement in school and through life. The report showed that students with involved parents, no matter their income or background, are more likely to earn higher grades and test scores, enroll in high-level programs, be promoted, pass their classes, earn credits, attend school regularly, have good social skills, graduate, and go on to postsecondary education. All types of families are engaged in their children’s schooling but white, middle-class families tend to be more involved in school. Successful parent involvement programs focus on building trusting and collaborative relationships among teachers and families. They also recognize, respect, and address families’ needs as well as class and cultural differences. Lastly, they embrace a philosophy of partnership where power and responsibility are shared. When parents talk to their kids about school, expect them to do well, help them plan for college, and make sure that out-of-school activities are constructive, children do better in school. Parent involvement can also lead to parents holding schools accountable. Schools should recognize that all parents are involved and want their children to do well and design programs that will support families through K-12, train school staff to work with families, link effort to engage families to student learning, and build families’ social connections. Schools should also focus on building trusting and respectful relationships as well as includes families in all strategies to help reduce the achievement gap. Schools should use more culturally sensitive and empowering definitions of parental involvement. To help families support their children, schools should provide information about what is going on at school, how to help with homework, how to plan for a future career or higher education, and services that the community can provide to foster better academic achievement. Schools should adopt a family-school partnership policy to show their commitment to parent involvement.

**Wherry, J. H. (2010). *This parent involvement: nine truths you must know now* (Rep.). Fairfax Station, VA: The Parent Institute.**

This special report prepared by The Parent Institute highlighted the importance of parental involvement in their child’s education as well as best practices (“nine truths”) for schools to engage parents. One best practice is the idea that parental involvement is for the sake of increasing student performance in school and not for volunteer staff or fundraising. The research shows that parent involvement in a student’s educational process makes a significant positive difference. Communication with parents must be two-way and not only consist of schools feeding information, but also accepting information from parents. Parents must be treated as partners in their child’s educational process and not like clients, and the parent must trust the school and staff in order for a partnership to occur. The report has an extensive list of factors that serve as barriers to parental engagement and ways for schools to overcome those barriers. This list of barriers can serve as an important tool for further researching policy options and devising policy solutions for the DC school system and strategies for individual schools to create parental involvement plans. The report also suggested that schools and parents take the same survey to identify disconnects in communication and to trouble shoot problem areas. This article will be helpful to our research as we identify causes and barriers to parental involvement, as well as creating a policy plan that supports the greater mission of strengthening parent/guardian involvement while accommodating the needs of individual schools and wards.

1. **DIVERSITY (SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS [SES], EDUCATION, RACE, ETHNICITY, STRUCTURE)**

Families, especially in the District of Columbia, are very different in regards to socioeconomic status, level of education, race, ethnicity, and family structure. These differences affect how families perceive school’s efforts to engage and their response to school in general. Schools and states have been able to unite families with one common goal of helping students succeed by using a variety of different methods as shown below.

**Parcel, T. L., & Dufur, M. J. (2001). Capital at home and at school: Effects on student achievement. Social Forces, 79(3), 881-911. Retrieved from EBSCO database.**

This article examined the effects of family and school capital on math and reading scores as well as the effects of family and school capital within the categories of social, human, and financial considerations in the school. Family social capital is the bond between parents and their children, family human capital is the parental level of schooling, and family financial capital is the family financial resources. School social capital is the relationship between parents and schools, school human capital is how educated the teachers are, and school financial capital is the school’s financial resources. The study was based on the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth by the Center of Human Resource Research, conducted in 1979, where over 12,000 youth (between the ages of 14 and 21) were surveyed. This study did not come to a conclusion about the relationship between achievement and financial resources. The authors discovered that more children in a family leads to lower academic achievement because of resource dilution and the quantity of time each child can be given attention. The authors found that an intact and stable family gives children an educational advantage and that family social capital is important for math achievement. They also found that increases in math achievement result from having a good home environment as well as living with a mother who is married. Higher maternal working hours decrease math achievement and that a mother with a higher education level also improves math scores. A good school environment can compensate for achievement decreases that, research shows, might result from having a mother who works more. Parent involvement in school activities improves math and reading achievement. Gains in reading result from having a mother who is married as well as having a mother who knows where her children are almost all of the time. More siblings and higher maternal working hours have a negative effect on reading achievement. School communication with parents can significantly increase reading recognition. Parental human capital is an important determinant of improvements in reading and math achievement. Overall, the study concluded that both home and school capital are influential and can lead to many different positive outcomes. The authors believe that schools need to focus on how they can work with the home to promote student achievement.

**Crouter, A. C., MacDermid, S. M., McHale, S. M., & Perry-Jenkins, M. (1990). Parental monitoring and perceptions of children's school performance and conduct in dual- and single-earner families. *Developmental Psychology, 26*(4), 649-657.**

This study found through interviews of parents of 7th and 10th grade boys that parents’ awareness of their children’s activities had a greater correlation to student success than any other factor they explored, such as consistency of discipline, effective problem solving, or parental reinforcement of positive behavior. The authors found that boys from families where parental monitoring was low (i.e. parents were not as aware of their students’ activities, grades, etc.) performed worse (both academically and behaviorally) than if both parents worked full time. The authors also found that parental involvement does not appear to have the same impact on girls, for example even girls who received a low level of parental monitoring not performing as poorly (relative to other factors such as socioeconomic status, etc.). There was no impact on student performance or conduct that resulted simply from both parents working full-time; dual-earning families only had a negative impact on their boys when the amount of parental monitoring was low.

**Dauber, S., & Epstein, J. (1993). *Parents’ attitudes and practices of involvement in inner-city elementary and middle schools*. In N. F. Chavkin (Ed.), Families and schools in a pluralistic society (53-71). Albany: State University of New York Press.**

This study examined how economically disadvantaged families with students in elementary and middle schools say they are involved, and how they want to be involved in their students’ education. The study surveyed over 2,000 parents in Title I Baltimore City schools about their own level of involvement, on their thoughts about schools’ practices to involve parents, and on parents’ attitudes about their child’s school. The study found that elementary school parents were much more involved than middle school parents in the school, at home on homework, on reading activities at home and overall on all types of involvement. Within middle schools, 6th and 7th grade parents were significantly more likely to be involved in their children’s’ education at home, while 8th grade parents are more involved in the school building. This may be because 6th and 7th grade parents are still new and have not yet become a part of the school volunteer community. 8th grade parents may not help with homework as much because the students may feel more knowledgeable and may also desire more independence. The study also found that there is a positive correlation between parents’ education level and their level of involvement in all types of parental involvement. Parents with fewer children are more involved with their children at home, but family size does not affect involvement at school. Alternately, parents who work are less likely to participate at the school building, but are not less likely to be involved at home. Marital status had no impact on parental involvement. The study found that parents are more likely to be involved in their child’s education if their student was doing well academically. Teachers who involved parents in reading achieved greater reading gains than teachers who did not involve parents. The single greatest and most consistent predictor of parent involvement (both at home and at school) is specific school programs and teacher practices that encourage and guide parent involvement. When parents believe the school is doing little to involve them, they self-report doing little at home and school. When parents believe the school is actively working to engage them, they are much more involved both at home and at school. The study also looked at how parents helped their children on homework. While parents reported that middle school students spent more time per night doing homework, they reported helping their students with homework more at the elementary level. At both elementary and middle school levels, parents said they could help more with homework (up to 50 additional minutes) if they were given more guidance from the teacher on how to help. Additionally, parents reported having more time to help with homework during the weekend, the time when teachers were least likely to assign homework. The study found that students did not like talking about school with their parents at home – only 40% of elementary parents reported talking with their children at home, about school. At the elementary level, parents of students rated “poor” or “fair” receive the most assistance time from their parents on homework. In middle school, parents of students rated “poor” or “top students” receive the least amount of help time, with average students receiving the most help from parents. For “poor” students in middle school, they received the least help from parents, spend the least time on homework, and receive the least effort from teachers to engage their parents. Teacher practice explained 28% of the variance in time parents spend helping his or her child on homework. The study also found that parents’ attitudes about the quality of their child’s education was directly correlated with their reporting of the school’s practices to involve parents, much more so than their reporting of their own involvement. The study supports Epstein’s earlier research that says the strongest immediate impact of teachers’ parental involvement practices are on parents’ attitude and behaviors.

**Eagle, E. (1989). *Socioeconomic status, family structure, and parental involvement: The correlates of achievement.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco.**

This study looked at several different variables including family income, parent’s work status, family structure, parents’ educational attainment, and parental involvement at the high school level. The study found that parental involvement in high school had a much larger impact than socioeconomic status, even independent of SES factors. Parents’ income and educational status did play a positive impact on student achievement independent of parent involvement, but the impact of parent involvement was larger. Additionally, there was no statistical impact to living in two-parent households versus single-parent households or parent-and-guardian households. Although there is a small correlation between family structure and student success, this can be largely explained by SES factors.

**Archer-Banks, D. & Behar-Horenstein, L. (2008*). African American parental involvement in their children’s middle school experiences.* The Journal of Negro Education. 77(2) 143-156.**

This study used a focus group of nine African American parents to explore their views on parental involvement. Before the study, the authors discussed relevant literature, which has found that school personnel tend to view African American parents as being uneducated and interact with them in a negative manner. Research has shown that African American parents do tend to be less engaged than their white counterparts, causing many educators to believe African American parents do not care about their children’s education. When African American parents do attempt to become involved, teachers often reject their attempts, widening the divide further. The results of the focus group revealed there were various ways parents considered as school involvement, including: being supportive by attending events like sports games and concerts, actively helping with homework, attending PTA meetings, or running for school board. The focus group participants also explained that time and financial barriers were significant in limiting their involvement – especially low income and single parents. Parents expressed that teachers often held low expectations for them as parents as well as for their students; they believed that African American parents had to work especially hard to show teachers that they cared and to make teachers care about their African American student. Parents also expressed that they felt their students were treated poorly, labeled as misbehavers, or held to low academic expectations because of their race. Parents also said they appreciated principals and teachers who created programs to actively reach out to and build relationships with minority students. They felt that African American parents should attempt to improve their involvement in order to improve learning outcomes for their students.

**Wenfan, Yan. (1999). Successful African American students: The role of parental**

**involvement. *The Journal of Negro Education,* 68(1), 5-22.**

This study looked at the impact of social capital on students. It defined social capital through four factors: parent-teen interactions, parent-school interactions, interactions with other parents, and family norms. The study, which used the National Education Longitudinal Study (1988-2000), found that all measures of social capital had a positive correlation with family income. Of all the variables tested for their correlation with family income, academic expectations was the strongest, followed by parental participation in PTA or similar activities, parent-teenager discussions about school experiences and future plans, and parent-teacher participation in cultural activities. Similar patterns occurred in relationship to parents’ education levels. Single-parent status had a negative correlation with all variables of social capital except school contact and home discussion; however the correlation was very low. The study also found that parents of “successful” African-American students were more likely to discuss school experiences and future plans with their teens than the parents of poor African American students and the parents of successful white students. This pattern also holds similar for parent-school contact and parent-teen experiences at cultural events. The analysis found that there was no significant difference between white and black parents of successful students who had strong relationships with their children’s friends’ parents.

**Lareau, A. (1987). Social class differences in family-school relationships: The importance of cultural capital. Sociology of Education, 60, 73-85.**

This article presented a qualitative study of family-school relationships in white working-class and middle class communities. The results indicated that schools have standardized views of the proper role of parents in schooling. The paper mentioned how social class provides parents with unequal resources to comply with teachers’ requests for parental participation. Characteristics of family, such as social networks, also intervene and mediate family-school relationships. The social and cultural elements of family life that facilitate compliance with teachers’ request can be viewed as a form of cultural capital. The study suggests that the concept of cultural capital can be used to understand social class differences in children’s school experiences.

**Nord, C. & West, J. (2001). *Fathers' and mothers' involvement in their children's schools by family type and resident status.* Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.**

This study was based on the National Household Education Survey which has participants from all over the country and grades 1-12. Previous research has found that students who live apart from one or both of their biological parents tend to do less well in school than students who live with both of their biological parents. The study found that parent involvement of stepparents in school is generally lower than biological parents and that biological mothers are more likely to be highly involved in schools when they are in a family with both biological parents. Biological fathers are more likely to be involved in families that have stepmothers rather than two biological parent families. Students living in father-only families are the most likely to have highly involved fathers. Fathers’ involvement in schools is associated with a higher likelihood of the student getting mostly “A” grades and a lower likelihood of the student repeating a grade. Biological mothers’ involvement is also associated with a student getting mostly “A” grades. The study also found that when a biological or a stepmother is involved, children are less likely to be suspended or expelled. Non-resident mothers are more likely to be involved in children’s schools than non-resident fathers, but if a non-resident father is involved, the effects on a child’s academic achievement are greater. If stepparents are involved in a child’s school, it produces better outcomes for the student. The study also found that the association between school involvement of stepparents and student outcomes is the same as that of biological parents in traditional families. Single mothers and fathers are involved in their children’s schools and their involvement is associated with better school outcomes for their children.

**Overstreet, S., Devine, J., Bevans, K., & Efreom, Y. (2005). *Predicting parental involvement in children's schooling within an economically disadvantaged African American sample*. Psychology in the Schools, *42*(1), 101-111. doi: 10.1002/pits.20028**

This study examined the factors that encourage parental involvement in school for economically disadvantaged African Americans in urban areas. A sample of 159 African American families was surveyed about their lifestyle choices, and their involvement with their child’s education. The study found that parents who had high educational aspirations for themselves were more involved in their child’s education. Parents who were consistently employed were more involved in their student’s high school education as opposed to parents who were not consistently employed. This study can serve as a resource for identifying factors that would statistically make a family more likely to be involved in their child’s education

**Minority Community Outreach. (2010). *Minority Parent and Community Engagement: Best Practices and Policy Recommendations for Closing the Gaps in Student Achievement*. [Report].**

This report was developed by the National Education Association (NEA) and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF). The purpose of the report was to convey successful strategies that strengthen parent engagement for closing the achievement gap. The report targeted policy makers, districts and schools to review and/or adopt the strategies and policy recommendations to improve local, state, and national parental engagement activities through legislation. It mentioned how research has found that within low-income families and racial and ethnic minorities, learning is not perceived as a shared responsibility among school officials, communities, and families, resulting in less involvement from parents in their child’s school. The report shared the organization’s best practices for engaging minority parents. The ethnicities mentioned are African-Americans, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian and Pacific Islanders, and Hispanic/Latinos. The report discussed the common barriers hindering parent engagement and successful strategies to overcome them. Some common barriers include the lack of relationship building, trust, and cultural competency between school officials and parents. Policy recommendations are provided to improve ethnic minority parent and community engagement.

**McDermott, P. (2000). *Why Urban Parents resist involvement in their children's elementary education*. The Qualitative Report, *5*(3 & 4).**

This qualitative study explored why urban parents resist engaging in their child’s education. The literature review covered existing studies that have concluded that students do best when language styles match at home and at school. Parents often report feeling different from school staff and feeling a sense of racism. Overwhelmingly, students do better when teachers are sensitive to cultural differences and embrace those differences in the classroom. The students studied were pre-dominantly African American and Puerto Rican students who were bussed to majority white, affluent schools. In order to understand teachers’ barriers and parents’ frustrations with parental involvement, the researchers created two different focus groups: teachers and parents. In the study, the teacher focus group stated that low-income parents did not make the effort to come in and speak to them because of work schedules. They also said they tried to include cultural activities in their classrooms. The parents said they often felt their children were talked down to and that bad behavior or academic performance was not communicated until it was too late. The parents reported physical touch and high levels of praise as being signs that a teacher truly cares about their child. The author also made recommendations for more positive interactions in urban school districts. Teacher preparation programs should teach effective parent communication as well as the importance for teachers to engage parents in the process. White, middle class educators should be sensitive to low-income families of color and be respectful of cultural differences. He also recommended that students “loop” in lower grades, which means they would stay with one teacher for two years helping to facilitate better communication and trust.

**National Center for Education Statistics and National Household Education Survey. (2001).**

 **Father’s and Mother’s Involvement in Their Children’s Schools by Family Type and**

 **Status. [Statistical Analysis Report].**

This report was developed by the Office of Education and Improvement at the US Department of Education and is based on the 1996 National Household education Survey. The purpose of the report was to share research and findings on parental involvement by distinguishing between biological parents and stepparents. The report mentioned how literature on parental involvement has neglected to include parents who do not reside with their children. The research examined how the involvement of biological mothers and fathers differed depending upon whether they are traditional or non-traditional families, as well as included other dynamics of family structure. The report discussed how usually children living in nontraditional families (single-parent, stepparent, or nonparent guardian families) do less well in school than those who live with both their own parents. This population of students is increasing so it is important to learn more about them and what can be done to help. Overall the study found that parental involvement is associated with favorable school outcomes for students living in all types of families. It is important for all types of fathers to be involved but nonresident mothers’ school involvement only shows a weak association with one of the student outcomes. The author believes that parents in traditional and nontraditional families need to recognize the benefits that can come from their involvement in their children’s schools.

**Moore, K. A., Kinghorn, A., & Bandy, T. (2011). *Parental relationship quality and child outcomes across subgroups.* Child Trends Research Brief, (13).**

In a study on the relationship between parents’ happiness and child outcomes involving 64,000 children aged 6-17, it was found that happier parents led to increased parental involvement in school and therefore, better child outcomes. Parents’ relationship quality was consistently and positively associated with child behavior problems (externalizing), child social competence, child social engagement, child internalizing (depression), parent-child communication, and parental feelings of aggravation. There has been previous research on this topic but this study showed that this association applied across many subgroups such as different racial groups, family income, age of child, sex of child, immigrants, and parent education level. The only group that the association did not apply to was internalizing behavior (being depressed, withdrawing from others, etc) and immigrant status. Children with happier parents are more likely to be socially competent and involved in school. Parent-child communication is also better with happier parents. Children tend to exhibit more positive behaviors if they come from educationally advantaged homes. This study found though that within each parent education level, children have fewer behavior problems if their parents have happier relationships. Some limitations to this study were that it did not include single-parent families, causality cannot be determined, it was based off of self-reported happiness, and the survey was only completed by one adult of each household.

**King, S., & Goodwin, A. (2002). Culturally responsive parental involvement [Pamphlet]. American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.**

This was a pamphlet on parent involvement and its need to be culturally responsive. School norms are usually responsive to middle-class, able-bodied, U.S. born, and standard-English-speaking parents. The pamphlet discusses how many times, educators have culturally biased beliefs towards their students and families and schools are becoming more diverse and more students speak languages other than English. It says that parents want to be involved in their child’s education and it is the school’s responsibility to welcome parents into the educational process. The authors say that the faculty must disregard negative assumptions and make a strong commitment to working with parents. The pamphlet states that the parents involved need to represent the school population in terms of race, class, SES, geography, family structure, religion, and culture. The authors also say that parents need to be informed about what is going on in schools to be involved. Parents and schools should collaborate to find strategies to work together. They say that a good way to look at parent involvement is to think of the quote “It takes a whole village to raise a child”. Common misconceptions about parent involvement are: that parents who do not visit do not care about his or her child’s education; good parental involvement looks a certain way; all parents respond to the same strategies; parents who are struggling financially cannot support the school; and all parents have the same goals for their children. Common parent misconceptions are: that they cannot help if they did not do well in school; teachers do not understand them; teachers do not have high enough expectations for their children; and they work full-time so they cannot be active in their child’s education. Educators and families need to come together to acknowledge and discuss these assumptions and stereotypes. The authors of the pamphlet stated that to improve culturally responsive parent involvement schools should: make a mission statement and set goals; survey parents about their concerns/perspectives/ideas; series of parent-teacher activities based on survey results; assign a family liaison; develop a school cultural resources binder; and create a family center/room.

**Arias, M. B., & Morillo-Campbell, M. (2008). *Promoting ELL parental involvement: Challenges in contested times.* Arizona State University.**

This report described how to promote parent involvement in English language Learner (ELL) students and families. ELL parents have many barriers to being involved like the inability to understand English, unfamiliarity with the school system, parental educational level, disjuncture between school culture and home culture, lack of previous exposure to U.S. schools, and logistical issues. Parent involvement is important for improved student achievement, better school attendance, and reduced dropout rate. This is even more important for ELL students because there is an achievement gap between ELL students and English proficient students. The report stated that schools need to support the implementation of traditional parent involvement programs that are culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate, fund the implementation of non-traditional parent involvement programs that involve the school/parent community, support the professional preparation of teachers who can identify sources of knowledge in the community, and support community-based education programs that inform parents. The report also mentioned that ELL families may also face some issues, including schools having a negative climate and limiting themselves to traditional approaches. The report concluded that schools need to create a welcoming environment and improve communication, find ways to involve families, and promote learning at home. The authors believe that parent education is a great way to improve parent literacy as well as to help parents know how to encourage and aid their children in school. Overall, the author’s state that schools should also support families, promote communication, and help with parental advocacy and empowerment.

**Abouchaar, A. & Desforges, C. (2003). *The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment: A literature review*. Queen's Printer. 433.**

This literature review was conducted on the impact of parental involvement, parental support, and family education on pupil achievements and adjustment. The extent and form of parent involvement that occurs is strongly influenced by family SES, maternal level of education, material deprivation, maternal psycho-social health, single parent status, and to some extent, family ethnicity. Involvement diminishes as a child grows older and the level of involvement is strongly influenced by the child taking an active role. Authors of the review also stated that parent involvement is also strongly and positively influenced by the child’s level of attainment. For parents, the level of involvement is also related to social class, poverty, health, and the parent perception of their role and capabilities. The review also stated that at-home parenting had the biggest impact on child achievement outcomes. A better home learning environment is associated with increased levels of cooperation and conformity, peer sociability and confidence, lower anti-social behavior and higher cognitive development scores and this factor outweighs the influence of SES or the mother’s qualifications. The authors also stated that the research shows it is important for parents to have high levels of expectations for their child, consistently encourage their child, and to enhance learning opportunities in the home. Parent-child discussion is a significant factor as well. For younger children it is important for parents to give them the context to learn school-related skills and develop qualities of motivation and self-worth, while for older children, the focus is more on parent motivation. Barriers for parent involvement include parent’s perceptions of teachers, time, money, attribution of responsibility, time limits, and opportunities from the school and child. The authors state that researching the effects of parent involvement is very complex; overall the authors concluded that what parents do with their children at home is much more influential than any other factor open to educational influence.

1. **APPLICATION OF FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS AND POLICIES**

Legislation regarding families and engagement can have a significant effect on the quality of parental involvement in schools. Mandated ESEA and Title 1 regulations of communication between schools and parents has shaped parental involvement and has been used as a tool to improve schools and student achievement at all levels.

**Shaffer, N. (2009). Parental Involvement Requirements: Compliance and Meaningful Implementation. District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education. Presentation.**

This presentation discussed ESEA’s definition of parental involvement as “the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities.” Districts with a Title I allocation over $500,000 must set aside at least 1% of their funds for parental involvement (with at least 95% of that going directly to the schools). Each school must have a written parental involvement policy, made in partnership with parents, and must include a school parent-compact, and provisions for an annual meeting(s) at convenient and flexible time(s). Schools must also document compliance by saving all agendas, materials that were handed out, sign-in sheets, and receipts for all mailings sent to parents.

**School Parent Improvement Policy. 2009-2010. Kansas State Board of Education. Form.**

This form allows schools to list activities that they will carry out in order to fulfill the six National Standards for Family-School Partnerships. These include: Welcoming all families into the school community, communicating effectively, supporting student success, speaking up for every child, sharing power, collaborating with community.

**Belway, S., Duran, M., & Spielberg, L. State Laws on Family Engagement in Education: National PTA Reference Guide.**

This report provided local Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members with easy access to their states’ policies regarding parent engagement. The report argued that one of the greatest problems is compliance with the law, and encourages parents to hold LEAs and schools to actually following the policies set forth in their various states. Forty states (including DC) have formal parental engagement policies outside of what is mandated by ESEA. The authors stated that one of the most important steps a state can take is to develop a statutory definition and standards for effective family engagement. Additionally, the report suggests laws providing for parents with public school students to receive leave time in order to attend school functions, meetings, etc. The report then goes through several different examples of laws various states have enacted, including laws to improve communication, advisory councils and other forms of parent leadership in decision-making, accountability measures, and sanctions for failure to involve parents/guardians. The report then lists all parental involvement statutes by state, including DC. DC statutes include that a plan for parental involvement must be included in the Superintendent’s long-term plan, that petition to establish public charters must include a descriptions of how parents have been involved in the creation of the petition and a plan for how parents will continue to be involved with the school. Additionally, the mayor is authorized to create policies that encourage attendance at parent-teacher conferences. 16 states, including DC, protect employees from termination for taking leave to attend school functions such as teacher conferences for their children (employees are guaranteed 24 hours for this purpose during every 12-month period). One innovative state law is in South Carolina, where employers are given tax credits as an incentive to grant employees release time without loss of pay. California allows 40 hours per year for parents to be involved in their child’s education, and explicitly protects them from termination for this reason. Many states allow mandatory leave time only if the activities cannot be scheduled outside of work hours.

**Ferguson, C. (2010). A Toolkit for Title I Parental Involvement. Austin, TX: National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools.**

This Toolkit discussed federal mandates for family involvement, primarily in the area of communication. Each district and school must develop a family communication and engagement plan (called a School-Parent Compact) in consultation with parents. A checklist is included of all the requirements, such as regular notification about academic progress, notification about teacher qualifications, and reports on school-level achievement. The toolkit also mandates that school districts account for language barriers, disabilities, and differences in access to technology when communicating with parents.

***Parental involvement: Title 1, part a: non-regulatory guidance* (Publication). (2004). Washington, DC: Department of Education.**

This guidebook was developed to provide guidance to SEAs and LEAs about how to understand and implement the Title 1 parental involvement statute. It included the definition of parental involvement as defined by No Child Left Behind: parents playing an integral role in assisting their child’s learning, parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child’s education at school, and the parents being full partners in their child’s education, and other activities as described by ESEA Section 1118. Moreover, it contains specific requirements for schools based on their Adequate Yearly Progress classification. Charts on parental notice are included towards the end of the document.

***Fact sheet #11 parent involvement* (Issue brief). (n.d.). Washington, DC: Education Trust.**

This fact sheet was created as an informational sheet about parent’s rights under No Child Left Behind. Much of the information presented is one-way communication and lays out the information that schools are mandated to provide parents with. This includes disclosures about school performance, teacher credentials, and district plans for increasing teacher credentials. The brief also gave suggestions for parents to become more involved with their child’s school and its decision-making progress. These include: joining parent groups, visiting high performing schools in their district to compare its practices to their child’s school, learning about sample tests and standards and practicing them at home, monitoring children’s homework, attending conferences, talking to the teachers, studying report cards, and attending school board meetings.

**Kansas State Board of Education. (2009). American recovery and reinvestment act: Parent involvement title 1, part A.**

This was a form used by the Kansas State Board of Education in 2009. It related to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and Title 1 schools’ parental involvement activities. It required that districts that receive $500,000 or more in Title 1 funding set aside 1% of those funds for parent involvement. Out of that 1%, 95% must be distributed to the Title 1 schools while the remaining 5% can be spent at the district level. This form helps to show how much money is being set aside for parent involvement and how it will be used. Each district must show what kind of parental involvement the money will be spent on (like home visits, family nights, etc.) and how much money each school will be receiving to promote parent involvement.

***Moving beyond parental involvement to parental engagement* (Publication). (2004). Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education.**

This report created and compiled by the Michigan Department of Education has a wealth of information and resources. It includes information on why to create parental involvement plans including higher grades, higher test scores, reduced violence, better school attendance, less suspensions, increased motivation, and decrease in use of alcohol and drugs. The Michigan School Board of Education encourages schools in their district to create family involvement plans for each school, and then provides resources for school and district leaders to create meaningful plans. This document contains a sample senate bill, the Title 1 parental involvement guidelines, and the national standards for parental involvement as outlined by the National PTA. This document also contains sample district and school evaluations for parental involvement plans as well as implementation reviews to decide if a new plan is working as well as it possibly could. Finally, this report contains sample school parental involvement plans for elementary and secondary schools that include urban and rural areas.

1. **EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIC PROGRAMS**

These examples of programs demonstrate different ways that states, districts, and communities have addressed the need for systematic improvements in parental involvement.

**Parent Involvement Policy. Harlem Children’s Zone Promise Academy Charter School.** [**https://sites.google.com/a/hczpromise.org/public/for-parents/parent-involvement-policy**](https://sites.google.com/a/hczpromise.org/public/for-parents/parent-involvement-policy)

The Harlem Children’s Zone (HCZ) believes that parents play four key roles in their children’s learning: (1) Teachers – helping children at home, (2) Supporters – contributing their skills to the school, (3) Advocates – helping children receive fair treatment, (4) Decision makers – participate in joint problem solving with the school. They emphasize that parents are full partners with the school, and define parental involvement as “the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities.” HCZ employees a Parent Coordinator to manage parent involvement activities and support the needs of parents. Each year, there is a review and assessment of the current parental involvement policy, including surveys. Parents are involved in this review project. There are three major parts of the parent involvement plan: (1) Education – workshops, conferences, and classes on topics such as homework support, test preparation support, preparation for volunteer work, literacy training, technology training, and interaction with staff members; (2) Volunteer Opportunities – in the classrooms, field trips, special events, fundraising; and (3) Individualized Family and Individual Support.

**Miller, J. A. (1998). Doing whatever it takes. Education Week, 17(17), 48-50.**

This was an article about E.J. Scott Elementary School in Houston, Texas, which is considered a very successful high-poverty school by Texas school reformers and researchers. The author believes that strong parental involvement is considered an essential part of turning around a high-poverty school. They push the importance of making parents feel comfortable in the school. The school also encouraged parents to accept ownership of the school. The school had parent volunteers in-school classrooms and other settings. They also have a parent center where they offer classes for parents as well as help parents with other issues like registering to vote or giving out clothes. Parent involvement is important for supporting students’ academic and social needs.

**Anderson, M. C., Hartley, S., Jones, S. C., Rindone, J. R., & Witt, J. (2009). *Parent resource guide: For district and school leaders effective methodologies to for parent involvement to improve student performance* (Publication). San Diego, CA: San Diego County Board of Education.**

This document is simply a listing of the resources that San Diego uses for parental involvement both in the school and in the district. It includes descriptions of courses offered to parents for parenting, skill development for homework help, college readiness, etc. It also includes a section of programs that have been successful at schools in other districts, including family literacy and college readiness. San Diego offers their courses in both English and Spanish to make them accessible to most of their families. This document can be used to find and serve as a starting point to research different policy options.

**Lewis-Potter, A., & Florida Department of Education. (2006). Fact sheet: Different levels of parent involvement [Brochure]. DLOPI.**

This was an overview of a program started by the Florida Department of Education and the Parent Services Coordinator from Gadsden Country, Florida. Different Levels of Parent Involvement (DLOPI) is a parent program with five modules designed to encourage parents to become involved in their child’s education. This provides teachers with a simple computerized format for determining levels of parent involvement. They offer training through workshops for parents and educators about the five levels and how to develop and strengthen parent involvement in education. The five levels are:

1. Responsibilities and Attendance
2. Communication and Support
3. Literacy and Tutorial Assistance
4. Volunteer and Mentoring
5. Leadership and Partnership

**Mapp, K. L. (2003). *Having their say: Parents describe why and how they are engaged in their children's learning.* The School Community Journal, 13, 35-64.**

Parents, educators, and staff at O’Hearn elementary school in Boston were interviewed about the state of parental involvement and engagement programs in the school. The article discussed that there has been much frustration in trying to create programs that will increase family engagement in schools and many times schools complain of low parental involvement especially in communities with low-income and minority families. The O’Hearn school was selected because 90% of the parents, including low-income and minority, are involved with in-school and out-of-school academic activities.

O’Hearn developed and implemented a family involvement program, a school site council, a family outreach team, a home visitation program, a family center, and a school newsletter as part of this program. They also made a point to create an open and accepting climate for all levels of family participation.

The author identified five themes gathered from the study:

1. In spite of the fact that many people believe low-income parents do not care about their children’s education, parents wanted their children to do well in school, and they had a genuine and deep-seated desire to help their children succeed academically
2. Parents understood clearly that their involvement helped their children’s educational development.
3. Parents were involved in their children’s education both at home and at school. Many were involved in ways not recognized by school staff with a narrow vision of what constitutes legitimate participation. The author recognized that there is a connection between at-home and at-school involvement, sharing that parents connected to the school community are better able to help their children with school at home.
4. Social factors emanating from the parents’ own experiences and history influenced their participation.
5. School factors, specifically those that were relational in nature, had a major impact on parents’ involvement. Schools need to welcome parents, honor their participation, and connect with parents by focusing on the children and their learning; there is a known formula for creating a good climate called the “joining process”

The study concluded that schools and communities need to dispel the myth that parents do not care about their children’s education, school communities need to recognize all types of family involvement in education instead of only validating things like coming to events or having a parent-teacher conference, and that schools need to understand their role in cultivating family engagement.

1. **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PROGRAMS**

The Office of the State Superintendent and the District of Columbia Public schools have published several documents that include grant information, the current state of parental involvement, and recommended policies for individual LEAs. Many of the programs and recommendations align with the general research found on the benefits of parental engagement.

**District of Columbia Public Schools Office of Family & Public Engagement. (2011). [Power Point Presentation]. Family & Public Engagement: Where we’re going.**

This presentation was developed by DCPS stakeholders. The purpose of the presentation is to convey the importance of parental engagement and why it matters. It also served to show the relationship between school and family, research that supports the link between improved outcomes for children and parent involvement, and what the Office of Family & Public Engagement (OFPE) has done in the past, and will do in the future, to empower parents in becoming more engaged in their child’s school life. The targeted audiences were education stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, school administration, and district level administration). The presentation discussed why parental engagement is relevant based on research and what from the schools directly impact families. It focused on the three areas of family and community engagement: student, student’s school, and all schools. The presentation mentioned which organizations have the most relevant information for families. OFPE has done a considerable amount of work to improve the three aforementioned areas. This presentation made recommendations on what OFPE can do on all levels (student, school, district) to improve parental engagement in the District of Columbia.

**Pinckney-Hackett, J. The State of Parental Involvement in the District of Columbia. State Board of Education.**

This report used the DCPS progress report 2007-2008 and other DC government policies and laws to examine parental involvement in the District. One of the major goals from the DCPS progress report was to improve parent and community engagement. They hoped to strengthen the role and visibility of parents as well as better connect the Chancellor to individual schools. Three parent resource centers were opened with one each in Wards 1, 7, and 8. The author discussed how DCPS needs to address the major barriers to parental involvement which are economic, social, educational, language, and cultural issues. In 2003, the State Board passed a policy requiring all principals to help create parent-school associations and ensure that parents on are schools’ governance councils but currently half the schools do not have parent-school associations. Forty-two schools did have parent coordinators though. In 2005, Superintendent Janey created an office focused on parent outreach, called The Office of Parent and Community Partnerships, in his Declaration of Education. The author also discusses the importance of Title 1 funding and how parents must be involved in the decision making of how to use the money. For FY09, OSSE had its parental involvement budget cut which means one position will not be able to be funded. The report also lists fourteen activities that schools can use to improve parent involvement like training for parents and having meetings at various times so all parents may be able to attend. Overall the author concluded that the State Board needs to make sure all schools know that they must engage families and the communities. Also OSSE needs to offer its support to these schools. She ends with recommendations like having a State Advisory Council, parent resource centers in every school, etc.

***Parent learning opportunities grant*. (2008). Washington, DC: Office of the State Superintendent of Education.**

This document outlined the procedures and requirements for schools to receive the “Parent Learning Opportunities Grant.” This grant was created to promote parental involvement in all DCPS schools and awards recipients up to $10,000 for the creation of parent learning opportunities, training, activities, and service programs. The grant application cited research from *School, Family and Partnership; Your Handbook for Action* (Epstein, Sanders, Simon, Salinas, Jansorn &Voorhis, McDonough & Nunez, 2002) which says that parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community are all important factors in improving academic outcomes for students. This document also contained the evaluation criteria for each grant application according to the six aforementioned standards.

**DCPS Office of Family and Public Engagement. (2011). Local school advisory team guidelines: School year 2011-2012. Washington, DC.**

This report contained the new guidelines put out by DCPS on how Local School Advisory Teams (LSATs) should function. Every DC public school must have one and the team includes parents, teachers, non-instructional school staff, a community member, and sometimes students. LSATs should advise the principal on parental involvement, promote high expectations and high achievement for all students, and incorporate priorities, goals, allocation of resources, curriculum options, family engagement, and more. An LSAT must include four parents who have children currently enrolled in the school who were elected by other parents and one parent group leader. The governance committee for the LSAT system must also include four parents. The Office of Family and Public Engagement will provide orientation and professional development for LSATs as well as aid with other resources and communication.

**Rhee, M., Ulery, S., & Hood, K. (2007). DCPS local educational agency parent involvement policy. Washington, DC. \**see description in Educating & Empowering***

**Levine, D. (2009). *Tellin' stories, finding common ground* (Rep.). Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.**

This article details a project at Bruce Monroe Educational Campus in Washington, DC designed to form bonds between parents and educators. Parents were given sentence starters as prompts to begin conversations with one another and form connections. Four major lessons were gleaned from the experience including:

1. Parents can help construct and sustain a welcoming and democratic environment vital to the success of a school.
2. In a multicultural school system, meaningful progress depends on building cross-cultural bridges of empathy and unity.
3. Disenfranchised parents can gain the skills and build the relationships necessary to wrest precious victories from resistant school system bureaucracies.
4. In partnership with teachers and administrators, parents can become directly involved in improving classroom achievement.

Lack of parental involvement prior to the Tellin’ Stories project was blamed on parent’s negative school experiences, lack of confidence in his or her ability to help, and negative interactions with staff. Several parents reported feeling biased towards DCPS because of negative experiences with older children. Latino families report language barriers as being their main hindrance to involvement. Tellin’ Stories set up workshops and activities at Bruce Monroe to encourage more parents to partake in school activities. Additionally, teachers were led by parents on community walks and viewed different stores in the neighborhood. The workshops encouraged Latino parents to interact with African American parents and vice-versa. The parents created a quilt together that represented their different cultural backgrounds. After the quilt was completed, the parents collaborated to advocate for renovations and structural upgrades for Bruce Monroe. The parent group, facilitated by two teachers, analyzed standardized test data and observed classrooms in the building. They prepared reports of different classrooms for the administrators.

**Wilson, A. (2008). Parental involvement at two Southeast Washington, DC Schools: Parents’ perceptions and recommendations (Publication). Center for Inspired Teaching.**

This study was conducted via telephone interviews to determine levels of parental involvement in two failing DCPS schools in Southeast Washington, DC. Parents at both schools reported that they would like more parent events at the school, a parent resource room, newsletters, and progress reports. Parents also reported that they would like more meaningful meetings with teachers and specific strategies of how they can get involved in their child’s education. Parents at both schools indicated a strong desire for more cultural activities. Both schools need to improve their social capital and create networks of parents for greater advocacy. Additionally, most parents view themselves as their child’s advocate, and therefore, communication must be two-way and effective, and networks should be fostered. The program Tellin’ Stories was used at Orr Elementary School to improve parent involvement.

**Office of the State Superintendent of Education. (2008). FY 2008 First Day-Back to School Parental Involvement Activities Grant. Washington, DC.**

This was a report OSSE provided on how to apply for the First-Day Back to School Parental Activities Grant. OSSE wanted to help schools and community organizations promote and strengthen parental involvement in neighborhoods by holding first day of school events. The purpose of the grant was to encourage parental involvement to increase student achievement, involve parents not usually involved in schools, and to bring communities together to celebrate education and parental involvement. Targeted schools and organizations served students in grades 3-12 who attended public schools in D.C. The funding should help with programming that makes schools feel welcoming and provide a place for teachers and parents to build relationships. This event should also inform parents about how to help their children succeed in school. Programming should address at least three types of parental involvement out of these six: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community. Applicants must designate personnel to be in charge of this parental involvement mission. They are also required to write a report explaining what they have learned about promoting good school-to-home relationships throughout the school year.

1. **IMPORTANCE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

The research shows that parental involvement is one of the most important factors affecting student achievement. It can improve a student’s academic success as well as promote good behavior, attendance, future career success, social behavior, etc. When families have a role in a school, it tends to improve programs, school climate, help teachers and provide a well-connected parent and school network.

**Machen, S., Wilson, J. & Notar, C. (2005). Parental involvement in the classroom. *Journal of Instructional Psychology,* 32(1), 13-16.**

The article discussed that improving parental involvement with public schools can improve schools. Parental involvement is highly important for pushing the public school systems to higher standards. Also, research reports that engaging parents in an active role in the school curriculum can open alternative opportunities for children to succeed in academics. This article presented information that addresses the amount of contact that parents have with school and the amount of time they volunteer in the classrooms. The authors suggest that in order to develop effective parent-involvement programs, which range from greater support for the school programs for improved student achievement, researchers must investigate how to help school leaders identify practices and policies that encourage parent trust and involvement in the process of schooling.

**Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.**

This bookwas about the impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement and confirmed that the research continues to grow and build an ever-strengthening case. When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning,children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more. In the book, the authors reported that many studies found that students with involved parents, no mattertheir income or background, were more likely to earn higher grades and test scores, enroll in higher-level programs, be promoted, pass their classes, earn credits, attend school regularly, have better social skills, show improved behavior, adapt well to school, and graduate and to go onto postsecondary education. Several studies, reported in the book, found that families of all income and education levels, and from all ethnic and cultural groups, are engaged in supporting their children’s learning at home. White, middle-class families, however, tend to be more involved at school.

**Hoover-Dempsey, K., & Sandler, H. M. (1995). *Parental involvement in education: Why does it make a difference?* Teachers College Record, 97(2), 310-331.**

This study finds three major factors that influence parents to become involved in their children’s schooling. First is the parents’ personal construction of the parental role (ie what they believe to be the job of a parent), which is largely shaped by their own parents and the involvement of their friends/peers who are also parents. Second is parents’ sense of efficacy (ie how successful/impactful their involvement can be). Parents’ sense of efficacy is largely shaped by four factors: their own experience of success in the related area (ie a parent who was successful in school will believe they are more likely to effectively help their child with schoolwork), vicarious experiences of successful involvement (ie knowing other parents who have had successful involvement experiences and outcomes), verbal persuasion (being told/convinced that their involvement is important), and emotional concern for their children’s educational success. Finally, parents are more likely to be involved if they are given specific opportunities and demands for their involvement. The author also explains that one of the reasons that parent involvement is most important is because children tend to model their parents; if parents place importance on school involvement; their kids are also likely to believe school is important.

**Keith, T. Z., Keith, P. B., Quirk, K. J., Sperduto, J., Santillo, S., & Killings, S. (1998). *Longitudinal effects of parent involvement on high school grades: Similarities and differences across gender and ethnic groups.* Journal of School Psychology, 36(3), 335-363.**

This longitudinal study examined the influence of parental involvement on tenth graders' learning. Researchers studied similarities and differences in Grade Point Averages (GPA) across gender and ethnic groups. Researchers adopted T. Z. Keith's, et al. (1993) definition of parental involvement that focused on parental aspirations and parent communication about school and school activities. Findings suggested that parental involvement has the same effect on GPA across genders and ethnic groups with the exception of Native Americans. However, due to the small sample size of the Native American students, the researchers reported that the results are not reliable and recommend further research in this area. The study used data from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) and included the addition of tenth-graders' GPAs as an additional measure of learning. Latent variable structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to determine the extent of the influence of general parental involvement on tenth grade GPAs. The researchers suggested that parent involvement begun in earlier years continues to be important in high school; thus, programs to increase home-school collaboration and parental involvement are important, even to high school students and their parents. Researchers cautioned that any conclusions drawn from these results must be tempered by the narrow definition of parent involvement. Also, GPA's are qualitative measures of school success, which may not generalize to other populations.

**McNeal JR., R. B. (1999). *Parental involvement as social capital: Differential effectiveness on science achievement, truancy, and dropping out.* Social Forces, 78(1), 117-144. Retrieved from EBSCO database.**

This is an article used by the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS) in 1988. NELS began following eighth graders and contacted them every two years until the students graduated. It discussed how education is a key factor for predicting social mobility, and that a child’s attainment is highly correlated with the education level of their parents. This study looked at parent involvement as a form of social capital because parents connect their children to a network and provide resources. There have been problems with past parent involvement research because of inconsistent definitions, overlooking race/ethnicity/class, and a nearly exclusive focus on academic achievement as the dependent variable. Because of the different social relations and capital among minorities and poor students, the same forms of social capital are less effective for those groups. This study examined parent involvement in four ways: parent-child discussion, Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTO), monitoring, and direct parent involvement in the educational process. The only dimension of parent involvement that consistently improves achievement and reduces problematic behavior is parent-child discussion. PTO involvement and monitoring helped truancy and dropout rates but not achievement. When the students are divided by race, parent-child discussion significantly reduces the likelihood of truancy and dropping out only in white students. PTO involvement was only beneficial for whites and blacks. Parent-child discussion helps achievement, truancy, and dropout rate in non-single headed households but in single-headed households this only helps achievement. Parent involvement is the most effective for higher-SES students. Overall the study suggests that parent involvement needs to be put into context because of the different social capital minorities and SES students have. Also parent-child discussion should be developed and focused on in parent involvement.

**Bunn, S. (2001). *Making the most of the middle grades; a thematic survey of middle level educational research*. Salem, OR: Oregon Department of Education. 7-81**

This publication created by the Oregon Department of Education is a compilation of research and best practices surrounding middle school professional development and parent involvement. It included a summary of research at the beginning which is similar to an annotated bibliography and provides possible additional resources. It provided several different creative ways to involve parents in school activities including welcoming committees comprised of teachers, principals, and other parents who make home visits to new families, and family contracts that outline the best practices for families to support their child’s education. Additionally, it explicitly stated the correlation between a lack of parental involvement and students dropping out. Students who drop out report that their parents do not support them at home and academics are only re-enforced with punitive measures for poor grades. This report has many examples and strategies for involving different types of parents including: single parents, non-English speaking parents, working parents, and fathers as well as including structures for promoting parent engagement including: workshops, literacy nights, communication, cultural activities, and in-school and out-of-school activities. This guide is over 75 pages long, but could be an excellent template for what the DC State Board should provide as a resource for schools and agencies in DC. It is densely packed with good research and excellent examples.

**Herman, J. & Jennie P. (1980). *Some effects of parent Involvement in schools*. Los Angeles: Center for the Study of Evaluation, Graduate School of Education, UCLA.**

This 1980 study discussed the impact of parental involvement on both student achievement and parental satisfaction with a school, most prominently finding that familiarity breeds satisfaction. It found that greater communication from the school leads directly to greater parental participation and ownership as well as parent-teacher relationships, which in turn leads to higher student achievement and parental satisfaction. Parents feel more invested in the school and part of the school community when they are encouraged to participate in school activities, have opportunities to volunteer, and attend events such as back-to-school nights and parent meetings. While the study found that parents of a higher socioeconomic status were more likely to be involved and aware of school activities, it also found that there is not a correlation between socioeconomic status and parents’ satisfaction with their school as long as the parents are involved in the school.

**Patrikaou, E. (2008). *The power of parent involvement: Evidence, ideas, and tools for student success*. Lincoln, Illinois: Center on Innovation & Improvement, DePaul University.**

This study found that students whose parents stayed informed and held high expectations for their students were much more likely to perform better (both academically and behaviorally) in middle and high school. Students whose parent were more involved had higher grades, completed more credits, were more likely to plan for and attend college, and also less likely to repeat grades and end up in the criminal justice system. The study warned that parents and schools often misinterpret adolescent and teenagers’ desire for autonomy as a signal that parents should be less involved in their education; research supports the opposite. The study discussed three major factors that prevent parents from becoming involved: time and life demands (particularly for low-income, single parent households, and households with multiple school-age children), lack of knowledge (particularly from less educated parents who may not understand what their children are learning), and the school environment (in which negative interactions with parents can occur). The study also found that while the vast majority of teachers believed that parent involvement was important, only about a third believed it was their responsibility to involve parents, and almost no teacher-preparation programs included training on how to effectively engage parents, leading large numbers of teachers to say that parental involvement was outside there area of expertise. The paper suggested that schools adopt a “seven-P’s philosophy” on parent involvement: 1.) Partnership as a Priority, Planned Effort, Proactive and Persistent Communication, Positive, Personalized, Practical Suggestions, and Program Monitoring.

**Lenhart, A. (2011*). Teens, Kindness and Cruelty on Social Network Sites: How American teens navigate the new world of ‘digital citizenship*.’ Washington, DC: Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project.**

This study found that the vast majority of parents provide advice to their children on what is appropriate and inappropriate in online, phone, and social media usage, and that for the majority of students, parents’ advice was cited by teenagers as the single greatest source of advice.

**Family Engagement as Parent Involvement 2.0: Understanding the Difference in Terms & Concepts.**

This handout discussed the difference between parent involvement and family engagement. “Parent involvement” refers to the one-way participation in the programs that schools already have in place (i.e., attendance at parent-teacher conferences, etc.). Parent involvement is something that tends to be done for the parents, often by a staff member whose job explicitly includes parent involvement and communication. “Family engagement” refers to an ongoing, goal-directed relationship between all staff (including teachers) and families. Family engagement can be much more meaningful in improving student academic achievement. Additionally, family is a much more inclusive term, and includes all those who may play a parenting role in a child’s life.

**Carter, S. (2002). *The impact of parent/family involvement on student outcomes: An annotated bibliography of research from the past decade*. Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education.**

This report discusses how parental/family involvement impacts student success at all levels, from early childhood all the way through 12th grade, even though most parental involvement programs nationwide end after elementary school. This is especially true as children reach adolescence and are in need of greater guidance. The author found that parental support at home is most effective (more so than support at in-school or extra-curricular activities), but it should not be assumed that parents know how to best support their children at home. Likewise, teachers and other school personnel need training to promote effective family involvement, as many are unclear about how to do this. Most programs attempt to change parents’ behavior to conform to the needs of the school/teachers, rather than the other way around, which the author believes may be more effective. Additionally the research show that parental involvement leads to wide differences basic school skills as early as pre-K, especially among boys, and also can reduce the likelihood of a child being placed in special education programs. Overall, parental-engagement at home is especially difficult in single-parent homes, where help with homework is much less likely.

**U.S. Department of Education. (2005). *Parent involvement in schools*. Child Trends Data Bank.**

This was a report written by the Child Trend Data Bank with information from the U.S. Department of Education. Parent involvement was defined as parents reporting participation at least once during the school year, regardless of whether they attended a general school meeting, attended a scheduled meeting with their child’s teacher, attended a school event, or volunteered in the school or served on a school committee. All of these categories increased in involvement between 1999 and 2003 by an average of four percent. Also when parents are involved they usually monitor school and classroom activities and can coordinate their efforts with the teachers. Teachers tend to pay more attention to students with involved parents and students tend to perform better if both their mother and father are involved, even if the father does not live in the same household. Parents are more likely to be involved if they are white, educated, live above the poverty line, and speak English. Parents also tend to be more involved in the younger grades. No Child Left Behind is referenced in the report for requiring that parents must be informed on how they can be involved.

**Tableman, B. (2004). *Best practice briefs: Parent involvement in schools*. East Lansing, MI: University Outreach and Engagement, Board of Trustees of Michigan State University. (30-r)**

This brief discussed the importance of parent involvement and the different levels of parent involvement in schools. Parent involvement was a requirement in NCLB for schools receiving Title I funds. Schools that work well with families outperform similar schools and have better teacher morale and teacher ratings. According to the brief, the most accurate predictor of a student’s achievement in school is what the family is able to do for the student. When parents are involved, students have higher grades and test scores, have better attendance, complete homework more often, exhibit positive attitudes, and are less likely to use alcohol, be violent, and have antisocial behavior. The author states that significant gains can be made at all grade levels and ages with parent involvement. When parents work with teachers, there are higher expectations for the student and parents. This relationship also helps bridge the cultural gaps between the home and the school. The brief shows that collaborating with families is an essential part of school reform but it does not replace high-quality education programs or comprehensive school improvement. The author concludes that the better the partnership between parents and educators is, the higher the student achievement.

***Parent, family, community involvement in education* (Rep.). (2008). Washington, DC: National Education Association.**

This policy brief compiled by the NEA cited numerous studies that link family and community partnerships to educational success in all students regardless of their socioeconomic status or race. It included the National PTA’s six standards for parental involvement, but cites Joyce Epstein of Johns Hopkins University for the framework. Furthermore, this policy brief included several resources for successful, existing parental involvement programs that can be further researched including the Chicago Parent Centers, Parent Institute for Quality Education, and the National Network of Educational Partnerships. This brief also recommended that any parent, family, or community involvement policy focus on reform within the community as well as in schools to improve school quality. Only focusing on in-school reform will lead to failure.

**Michigan Department of Education. *Why parent engagement is important*. Pamphlet.**

This pamphlet summarized research on the impact of parent involvement on student achievement. Regardless, of socio-economic status, racial/ethnic background, or parents’ education level, parent involvement leads to higher grades, test scores, graduation rates, and higher expectations from teachers. Parental involvement also reduces dropout rates, the likelihood for alcohol and drug use, violence, and antisocial behavior. The single most accurate predictor of student success, according to the pamphlet, is not social status, but rather the student’s family’s ability to create a home environment that encourages learning, communicate high expectations, and become involved in their children’s education.

1. **CHALLENGES FOR PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

The research shows that meaningful parental involvement takes effort and does not happen instantaneously. Factors such as socioeconomic level, education attainment level, and race affect family reaction to engagement as well as a school’s approach for fostering meaningful parent involvement.

**Trotman, M. (2001). *Involving the African American parent: Recommendations to increase the level of parental involvement with African American families.* The Journal of Negro Education, 70(4), 275-285. Retrieved from JSTOR database.**

This article discussed how to improve parent involvement in African American families. The author focused on its importance for reducing the achievement gap, which makes it even more critical that parent involvement is increased in African American families. The author believes that these children are failing because of high rates of poverty, lack of adequate resources, poor communication between home and school, and low rates of parent involvement. The author discusses how parents are the first teachers in a child’s life and they want their children to achieve academically but some parents may just lack the knowledge and resources to assist their child with academic success. The author’s research shows that parents have different definitions of involvement, skills, and levels of comfort and educators need to take all of these things into account. Educators should also realize that both the child and the school benefit from parental participation. According to the article, some current problems with parent involvement are that it is time consuming and too often contact between schools and parents is focused on inappropriate behavior. Children with involved parents can significantly increase their academic achievement and cognitive development. As parent involvement increases, the number of student suspensions decreases. The author found that parents need to feel empowered and capable of making a difference in their child’s life and also that urban, poor parents often feel alienated from the school and feel excluded in their child’s educational process. The article said that many times parents’ limited time because of busy schedules, younger children at home and both parents work. The author brought up that many parents feel that teaching is a teacher’s job and they feel that their educational level inhibits them from participating. According to the author, other barriers exist, including teachers’ attitudes and the school having a hostile school environment. Recommendations included things like urging parents to become active, case histories of families to determine what may hinder their involvement, provide parents with more authority, ask parents about their interest in school, do not judge or criticize parents, etc.

**Pinckney-Hackett, Jackie. The State of Parental Involvement in the District of Columbia. \* *see description in District of Columbia Programs***

***Parent involvement strategies PSEA promising practices to close student achievement gaps* (Rep.). (2007). Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvannia State Education Association.**

This short, concise report developed by the PSEA highlights the benefits, challenges, and best practices for parental involvement. It first stated that the most accurate predictor of a child’s success in school is the level of their parent’s involvement in their education, including communicating high, achievable expectations and encouraging learning. Significant barriers exist for effective parental involvement including lack of time, confidence, and knowledge. Many parents report they do not know how to become involved and these barriers are especially prominent in low-income and ethnic families. Moreover, family involvement decreases significantly after elementary school creating a negative effect for high school students. This report cited the National PTA’s standards for parental involvement as best practices for empowering parents and increasing involvement. Additionally, three barriers to parental involvement are: setting time aside for involvement programs that is not competing with instructional time or preparation, setting money aside rather than scraps from other programs, and having a plan to overcome time, language, and confidence.

1. **CHALLENGES IN THE RESEARCH OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

There has been a lot of research on parent involvement in the last couple of decades but many limitations have come up. Problems like an agreed upon definition, finding direct correlations and being able to isolate factors have led to questions about the precise influence of parent involvement.

**ERIC Development Team. (1998). The challenges of parental involvement research.**

***Eric/Cue Digest,* 134.**

This article detailed the limitations of parental involvement research before 1998. The limitations included a lack of experimental design, including flawed methodology, inconsistent definitions of parental involvement, and non-objective measures. This article detailed the need for parental involvement research including patterns of where and how effective parental involvement occurs. This study will be helpful when discussing limitations in parental involvement research.

**Nye, C., Turner, H., & Schwartz, J. (n.d.). *Approaches to parent involvement for improving the academic performance of elementary school children*. Orlando, FL: UCF Center for Autism and Related Disabilities.**

The authors defined parental involvement as a parent who is engaged in their child’s academic education, and then they review significant research done in either journals or grey literature on family involvement. It sought to make meaning of the different studies and their reliability. It discussed in detail the statistical measures for each study and discussed the limitations of previous studies, outliers, and discrepancies. This document is a good resource for identifying the limitations in parental involvement research as well as the limitations that may occur. Additionally, the article included the areas of performance that can be affected by parental involvement, specifically reading, but also math on a smaller scale.

**Jordan, C., Orozco, E., & Averett, A. (2002). *Emerging issues in school, family, and community connections.* Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.**

This was a research report by the National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools. It stated that there are four main issues with the field of family and community connections with schools. They included defining family and community connections with schools, measuring the outcomes of family and community connections with schools, advancing the research base on the subject, and critical areas that research needs to focus on. The report discussed the many definitions currently used for family involvement and the need to move from school-centered definitions to ones describing a shared mission and responsibility. The definitions also need to shift from focusing on programs and ensuring they are culturally-appropriate. Another issue the report discussed is how to measure the outcomes of family connections with schools. The authors suggested that this can occur by examining outcomes for students and/or outcomes for schools. Outcome measurement also needs to be broadened to include areas outside of academic achievement like social functioning and access to resources. Research also needs to address the problem that different types of involvement can lead to different outcomes and many indirect factors that could affect outcomes like parenting style and student demographics exist. Researchers need to find a way to measure both the process and the outcomes of school and families connections. The research on these connections lacks a linkage between theory and research. The process and impact of parent and community connections with schools is very complex; therefore it is difficult to isolate the effects of a single factor. The authors suggested that new research needs to study many different schools and populations as well as form partnerships between practitioners and researchers. Some critical areas for future research consisted of looking at families with culturally diverse backgrounds, homework help, and preparing educators and school staff to make connections between schools and families.

1. **Environmental Scan and Case Studies (future section)**
2. **Survey and Data Analysis (future section)**
3. **Policy Recommendations**

Based upon the literature, the following items become possible policy actions that can be taken by the State Board of Education.

1. Each individual school should create and subscribe to an individualized mission statement regarding their approach to fostering and maintaining parental involvement in their school.
2. The State Board shall require that instruction on effective two-way parent communication and engagement be a required as part of teacher preparation and certification programs for highly qualified teachers.
3. The State Board shall strongly recommend that LEAs provide professional development that encourages effective parental involvement and engagement. This includes but is not limited to effectively communicating, collaborating with parents on plans to improve student behavior and achievement, and setting high expectation for diverse groups of parents, and dispelling myths about parent attitudes:
4. The State Board shall strongly recommend that LEAs offer workshops for parents on topics that foster academic support at-home including effective parenting techniques, how to monitor technology and social media usage, and how to discuss school topics at home.
5. The State Board shall strongly recommend that LEAs and/or individual schools offer workshops for parents that teach basic skills in reading, math, and writing as well as how to support their children in those areas.
6. The State Board shall strongly recommend that each school offer workshops to support parents in planning for their students to attend college.
7. The State Board shall strongly recommend that LEAs offer classes for parents that are non-native English speakers, preferably taught by teachers in the student’s school in order to foster community and improve communication.
8. The State Board shall require that LEAs develop surveys to use at every school that will gauge family’s perspectives, concerns, and compliments on the school’s current parental involvement strategies.  After compiling the data, strengths and weaknesses of current programs can be assessed, as well as preferred communication type for individual families to be used in the future.
9. The State Board shall strongly recommend each school to establish a program for parent involvement in schools that is aimed specifically at fathers and other adult male role models.
10. The State Board shall strongly recommend that each school develop programs and social activities that aim to increase parents’ mental health, well-being and happiness, preferably while building relationships between parents and teachers.
11. The State Board shall strongly recommend that each LEA establish programs that are specifically aimed at parents of students in middle school, which research shows as the age with the greatest drop-off in parental involvement.
12. The State Board shall strongly recommend that any school with significant numbers of non-English speaking parents shall create family involvement programs specifically for family members who do not speak English, in order to increase their comfort level with the school.
13. The State Board shall strongly recommend that schools establish programs specifically targeted at parents of students who struggle academically, who research finds are the least likely to be involved.
14. The State Board shall strongly recommend encourage that each school establishes programs that link families to health and social services, such as school-based health centers.
15. The State Board shall strongly recommend that each school create a full-time family liaison position.
16. The State Board shall strongly recommend that each school have a family center/room, or Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC) that will allow parents/guardians to have a welcoming and comforting space within each school building.
17. The State Board shall strongly recommend that each school create school-parent contracts, which must be designed with input from parents/guardians.
18. The State Board or OSSE shall create a district-wide informational brochure to distribute to families about the importance of school attendance and its impact on student achievement.
19. The State Board shall strongly recommend LEAs to include school leaders, teachers, and parents in the development and evaluation of their schools’ parental involvement programs.
20. The State Board or OSSE shall create a parental involvement checklist for schools to evaluate themselves on how well they are engaging families, based on best practices for parental involvement.
21. State Board shall strongly recommend a minimum requirement of one family-teacher conference including the student per school year.
22. The State Board shall strongly recommend effective PTAs at every school, and shall strongly encourage LEAs to develop policies to promote effective PTAs.
23. The State Board shall strongly recommend schools and LEAs to work with local library for media and computer accessibility for families.
24. The State Board shall strongly recommend LEAs and schools to set aside designated time (that does not take away from instructional or preparation time for teachers and other school-level staff) to work on parent involvement programs.
25. The State Board shall encourage the DC City Council to consider a policy in which employers are given tax credits for allowing employees time off from work in order to attend school events such as parent teacher conferences.
26. The State Board shall strengthen the mechanisms by which parents can be involved in school decision-making, by serving in roles on advisory committees and school councils.
27. The State Board shall strongly recommend LEAs create programs for recruiting and training parents from each school to do home visits to parents of other parents at their school, in order to improve community, communication, and the engagement of parents who have not already developed strong relationships with the school.
28. **Draft Timeline of Committee Activities**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Activity** | **Action** |
| **August 30, 2013** | **Meeting, Parent & Home Engagement Committee** | **Review Annotated Bibliography and Policy Recommendations** |
| **September 7, 2013** | **OSSE Parent Summit** |  |
| **Sept-Nov 2013** | **Initiate Environmental Scan & Case Studies** | **Environmental Scan & Case Studies – completed by December 2, 2013 (inc. tailored recommendations)** |
| **Fall 2013** | **Form Advisory Group** |  |
| **Late Sept-Nov 2013** | **Develop and Disseminate Survey** | **Survey Analysis – completed by December 2, 2013 (inc. tailored recommendations)** |
| **December 11, 2013** | **Hold Roundtable with Experts, Parents, and Stakeholders** |  |
| **Nov 2013- Jan 2014** | **Formulate Policy Proposal** | **Proposal completed by January 22, 2013** |
| **January 2014** | **Introduce Policy Proposal** | **Proposal introduced before February 5, 2013** |
| **January 2014** | **Transmit Policy to OSSE** |  |
| **February 5, 2014** | **Hold Working Session on Policy Proposal** | **Finalize policy proposal** |
| **February 19, 2014** | **Formulate Rules on Policy Proposal** | **Get feedback and finalize rules** |
| **March 5, 2014** | **Publish Proposed Rulemaking** |  |
| **March 19, 2014** | **Hold Public Meeting/Hearing on Policy Proposal** |  |
| **April 16, 2014** | **Approve Final Rulemaking** |  |

1. **Appendix**