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School Psychologists' Perspectives on Parent Involvement Activities

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SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS' PERSPECTIVES ON
PARENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wonderful husband, Santos, for standing by me when the going got tough. ¡Te amo mucho!

And to my parents, Smitty and Vera, and my sister Cristina, for believing that I could do anything I set my mind to and providing me with unconditional love and support that got me to where I am today. ¡Gracias por su apoyo!

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School Psychologists' Perspectives on Parent Involvement Activities

Michelle M. Darter-Lagos

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research study was to analyze school psychologists' perspectives on 27 parent involvement and empowerment activities focused upon improving students' school success. A sample of 36 school psychologists from high and low minority schools in a large urban school district rated the degree to which they believed the activities should be offered to parents and the extent to which they were feasible to implement over the next five years. The activities rated highest for offer and feasibility by psychologists at both high and low minority schools were related to information dissemination and one-to-one meetings. The activities rated lowest for offer and feasibility by psychologists at both high and low minority schools were related to systems change and time-intensive programming. Psychologists' mean ratings for offer were generally higher than their mean ratings for feasibility of implementation. However, the mean ratings for offer and feasibility at high minority schools tended not to be different from those ratings at low minority schools. Time was rated as the biggest barrier to implementation at both high and low minority schools, with current work responsibilities a close second. It is suggested that moving away from the traditional role of assessment and placement and towards prevention and intervention might reduce, if not eliminate, the time and current work responsibilities barriers and allow more school psychologists to implement home-school collaboration.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For many years, a rather large discrepancy has existed between the academic achievement levels of European American students versus minority students in the United States (Edwards, 1990; Osborne, 1997; President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans [PACEEHA], 1996; Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992; U.S. Department of Education [U.S. DOE], 2001). Much of the research vaguely refers to a general academic or educational achievement without specifying how it has been measured (Christenson, Rounds, & Gorney, 1992; Edwards; Stevenson & Baker, 1987). However, when the research is specific, it defines achievement, more often, in terms of achievement test scores, grade point averages (GPAs), and high school completion rates, usually using European American achievement levels as the norm (Casas, Furlong, Solberg, & Carranza, 1990; Muller, 1993; Osborne; PACEEHA; Steinberg et al.).

Specifically, the U.S. Department of Education (2001) reported that the average reading score of 17-year-old black students ($M = 264$) was comparable to that of 13-year-old white students ($M = 267$) based on the 1999 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Similar patterns of performance were found in mathematics, with both black and Hispanic 17-year-old students having average math scores ($M_s = 283$ and 293 , respectively) comparable to that of 13-year-old white students ($M = 283$; U.S. DOE). U.S. Department of Education reports of science performance revealed even bigger gaps, with 17-year-old black students performing below and 17-year-old Hispanic students performing just above 13-year-old white students ($M_s = 254, 276, \text{ and } 266$, respectively). In addition, there was a difference in drop-out rates of 16- to 24-year-olds by race/ethnicity, with whites dropping-out at a rate of 7.3%, blacks at a rate of 12.6%, Hispanics at a rate of 28.6% (U.S. DOE). Regardless of the size of the gap, the fact of

the matter remains that differences continue to exist in the academic performance between minority and European American students and one must question as to why the differences continue to exist.

Much of the literature that examined lower levels of minority achievement did so in relation to a variety of variables, including (a) cultural disconnect between home and school, (b) socioeconomic status, (c) racism or prejudice, (d) family structure, (e) lower expectations of performance by parents, teachers and self, and (f) lower levels of ability (deficit model). Two related variables that were often examined as having a strong relationship with achievement were parent empowerment and involvement. Though these two variables have been studied separately in the literature, most studies did not distinguish between the two and defined the variable of involvement as including the variable of empowerment. To reduce verbosity, the single term of involvement was used, though both variables are defined separately at the end of this chapter for this particular study. Broadly defined, parent involvement has been analyzed in relation to student achievement as both a factor of cause and effect, which implies that it could play a role in reversing this historical trend of low minority achievement.

Parent involvement was presented throughout the literature as important in children's educational outcomes (Berger, 1991; Christenson, Hurley, Sheridan, & Fenstermacher, 1997; Christenson et al., 1992; Comer & Haynes, 1991; Gordon, 1979; Griffith, 1996; Muller, 1993; National Association of School Psychologists [NASP], 1999; Reynolds, 1992; Rioux & Berla, 1993; Stevenson & Baker, 1987). Specifically, it has been found that both in-home and in-school involvement are important to improving academic achievement (Christenson et al., 1992; Gordon; Muller; Reynolds; Rioux & Berla). More specifically, family process variables (e.g., what the family does to support learning) have been found to predict up to 60% of the variance in achievement between students (Christenson, 1995). These variables refer to in-home involvement (e.g., the curriculum of the home) and range from a simple parent-child conversation to the discipline orientation of the parents. Christenson presented the following family process variables as those having the strongest association with student performance: (a) parental educational expectations, (b) providing learning materials, (c) providing learning opportunities outside of school, and (d) talking about school with students. Kagan (1984)

concluded from an extensive literature review that the combination of school and home parent involvement seemed to be the most effective in improving student achievement. Other mediating variables between parent involvement, both at home and at school, and student achievement include (a) clarification of teachers', parents', and students' roles and responsibilities; (b) improved student behavior; (c) increased student self-esteem; and (d) reduced absenteeism (Christenson; Comer & Haynes).

Though there is far less research with minority families and the issue of parent involvement, the research that does exist also shows that there is a positive relationship between minority parent involvement and children's achievement. Comer and Haynes (1991) studied the parent involvement issue among minority populations and reported great gains in minority student academic achievement as a result of parent involvement both in the home and the school. In fact, they found that low-income minority student achievement not only improved, but reached levels that are typical for middle-class Anglo students (as cited in Christenson et al., 1997). Nonetheless, minority parent involvement continues to be lower than that of non-minority parents (Christenson et al., 1992; Comer & Haynes; Edwards, 1990; Muller & Kerbow, 1993; PACEEHA, 1996; Reynolds, 1992; U.S. DOE, 2001), while minority student achievement continues to be lower than non-minority student achievement across the board (Edwards; Osborne, 1997; Steinberg et al., 1992; U.S. DOE). Since it has been argued that a lack of parental involvement may be related to a student's lower achievement level (Christenson, et al., 1992; Comer & Haynes; PACEEHA; Steinberg et al.), involving minority parents may be related to possible improvements in minority student achievement (Christenson et al., 1997; Christenson et al., 1992; NASP, 1999; Rioux & Berla, 1993). The question then becomes one of how to go about reaching minority parents in order to increase their levels of involvement in such a way as to positively impact their children's achievement.

Research into this question has revealed numerous barriers to parent involvement in general and, more specifically, for minority parents (Christenson et al., 1997; Edwards, 1990; NASP, 1999; Rioux & Berla, 1993; PACEEHA, 1996; Swap, 1987). However, research has also revealed how schools, teachers, and parents can overcome these barriers to engender a more effective home-school relationship and improve minority student achievement (Christenson, 1995; Christenson et al., 1997; Comer & Haynes, 1991;

Edwards; Menacker, Hurwitz, & Weldon, 1988). Understanding these issues is important to learning how to reach a diverse population in such a way as to positively impact education and families.

A historical barrier to parent involvement, and really to improvement of student achievement, is the deficit model outlook, which perceives minority low achievement as a problem coming from within the child (Rioux & Berla, 1993). Unfortunately, when society views the problem in this way, neither educators nor parents believe that parent empowerment and involvement will truly impact achievement levels because parents do not have the tools to “fix” the problem (Rioux & Berla). However, in the past few years, educators and parents have begun to reject this deficit model in favor of the belief that children are greatly impacted by their environments and life situations, creating justification for strong parent empowerment and involvement programs in order to counteract the negative effects of a disadvantaged childhood (Rioux & Berla). As more and more researchers produce evidence of environmental influences on student performance, the easier it will be to convince educators, parents, and society, in general, to discard this condemning deficit model outlook. Overcoming this deficit model is the first step towards a successful minority parent involvement program (Rioux & Berla).

Edwards (1990) discussed how minority parents’ lack of knowledge or skills may be one of the most important barriers to involvement. Many minority parents lack the knowledge or skills about how to assist their children, about the learning processes in general, about how the schools and school system function, and about their rights within the educational system – all of which result in a lack of empowerment. When parents are not empowered, they are much less likely to get involved because they do not know how or they lack the confidence to do so. Parent training may be effective in reducing or eliminating this barrier.

Another historical barrier to parent involvement is the traditionally limited nature of typical parent-school contacts (Raffaele & Knoff, 1999; Swap, 1987). The traditional or typical parent-school contacts include the parent-teacher meeting and parent-teacher association meetings, which tend to limit the chances for meaningful interaction and effective problem-solving (Raffaele & Knoff; Swap). The schools’ narrow conception of parent involvement roles is a huge barrier to producing a parent-school relationship for

improving minority student achievement (Raffaele & Knoff). Schools can eliminate this barrier by creating alternative formats to these traditional roles or expanding these roles to include, among others, opportunities for making joint decisions with educators about student- or school-related matters, opportunities to volunteer in the classroom and at the school, and opportunities to participate in workshops with school personnel (Swap).

A school's lack of strategies to involve minority parents is another important barrier (Edwards, 1990). When schools implement parent involvement programs and minority participation remains low, schools generally lack "strategies and structures appropriate to the involvement of these parents who have often been excluded from the schools" (Rioux & Berla, 1993, p. 363). Many times, the lack of strategies or structure is a result of educators' lack of knowledge or training on how to involve parents, especially minority parents, as partners in the education of the children (Edwards). These barriers can be overcome if schools provide their personnel education on cultural issues as they pertain to parent involvement, assess their current strategies and structures and make cultural modifications, and engage in parent outreach in a culturally sensitive and friendly manner (Edwards).

Related to the last two barriers described, schools' misperceptions of parent involvement and its barriers and schools' behaviors with regard to these are a barrier in and of itself (Leitch & Tangri, 1988). Christenson and her associates (1997) wrote that "[e]ducators' limited conception of the roles families can have in schools has been noted as a major barrier to implementation" (p. 124). In one study, almost 50% of teachers ascribed home-school collaboration barriers to parents and their attitudes toward the school (Leitch & Tangri). This negative attitude by teachers is a barrier because it limits them from making efforts to involve parents. Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski, and Apostoleris (1997) described that "[t]he strength of the connections between families and schools may also be a function of characteristics of the school institution and its representatives" (p. 539). This barrier can be overcome if schools conduct trainings with teachers to change these attitudes and behaviors. Schools can also make an effort to not rely solely on teachers for implementing parent involvement activities. Other school representatives may already have the training to get parents involved, such as guidance counselors, social workers, and psychologists.

However, these other school representatives may also have misperceptions or negative attitudes about parent involvement that will need to be addressed. Therefore, understanding their attitudes toward parent involvement is important as well. As powerful and skillful school representatives, school psychologists have the potential to be leaders in their schools' parent involvement activities and, therefore, understanding their perspectives on these activities is vital. Christenson et al. (1997) offered one means of understanding school psychologists' perspectives in their study entitled "Parents' and School Psychologists' Perspectives on Parent Involvement Activities". This study asked school psychologists to rate 33 empowerment and involvement activities as to whether they thought they were feasible to implement and asked parents to rate these same activities on whether they thought these should be offered and if they would use them if offered. The results were very revealing in that the psychologists thought that a majority of these 33 empowerment and involvement activities were less than feasible to implement over a five-year period though the parents wanted them offered and said they would use them (Christenson et al., 1997).

Unfortunately, the researchers did not report psychologists' ratings as to why they did not think the activities were feasible, making it difficult to know what were the barriers to implementation and how to overcome them. In addition, the psychologists were not asked to rate whether the schools should even offer the activities, which would have revealed which parent involvement activities they perceived to be important. Finally, the schools' demographics were not taken into consideration when analyzing psychologists' responses, making it difficult to know if perceptions were different at schools with a high number of minority students versus schools with a low number of minority students. Considering these variables is important for several reasons. First, it is critical to know exactly what kinds of involvement activities school psychologists think are important and feasible so as to facilitate the implementation of these activities and improve levels of parental involvement. Second, understanding why psychologists perceive some activities to be less feasible is key to overcoming barriers to implementation. Third, if there is a discrepancy between use and feasibility in general and between high versus low minority schools, it may help in explaining why schools are not doing more to increase empowerment and involvement of minority parents.

This study partially replicated the Christenson et al. (1997) study using a sample of school psychologists from a large urban school district in Florida. A feasibility survey was handed out to the school psychologists at their monthly district meeting. Then a reminder notice was posted by their mailboxes, with extra surveys available for pick up. Finally, an email was sent to all the school psychologists with the cover letter and survey attached. The survey from the original study was slightly modified to improve readability and include a broader range of demographic variables. In addition to comparing the offer and feasibility ratings across school psychologists, the results from high minority schools were compared to those of low minority schools. The latter comparison added importance to this study since minority parent involvement issues are in need of much attention in the research literature.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study investigated the following research questions and hypotheses:

1. How do school psychologists' perspectives on offer compare to their perspectives on feasibility of the same activities across school type?

Hypothesis 1. There will be a high correlation between rank ordering of activities by school psychologists when comparing offer versus feasibility.

Hypothesis 2. There will be a significant difference between the ratings of offer and the ratings of feasibility by school psychologists.

2. How do high minority schools' psychologists' perspectives compare to those of low minority schools on the offer and feasibility of these activities?

Hypothesis 3. There will be a significant difference between ratings of activities by school psychologists from high versus low minority schools.

Hypothesis 4. There will be a significant difference between school psychologists from high versus low minority schools on their ratings as to why involvement activities were not feasible to implement.

3. How do high minority schools' psychologists' perspectives compare to those of low minority schools on the current involvement activities being offered?

Hypothesis 5. There will be a significant difference between the number of parent involvement activities listed by school psychologists from high versus low minority schools.

Importance of Study

The current study is important because it partially extends the specific research Christenson et al. (1997) conducted on school psychologists' perspectives of parental involvement by determining if perspectives differ among psychologists from high minority versus low minority schools. Understanding any differences that exist is especially important when trying to implement involvement programs that are effective with minority parents.

Another reason the current study is important is that it contributes to the parent involvement literature by clarifying and examining the barriers to implementing involvement activities, services, or programs from the school representatives' perspective. For schools that have the goal of increasing effective minority parent involvement, this study provides a better understanding of the potential barriers to such programs and offers a starting point from which these schools can begin to tear down these barriers.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study surveyed the school psychologist as a staff representative of the school in which he or she works. However, since school psychologists usually are not as involved in the day-to-day functioning of the school as teachers or principals are, their perspectives on the feasibility of implementation of the parent empowerment and involvement activities may not be as valid nor generalizable to the school as a whole. Nonetheless, school psychologists have the skills and training to be playing a much larger role in the implementation of these activities and, therefore, it is important to understand their perspectives regarding these issues.

Another limitation was the use of an urban school district in this study. Since urban school districts are unique and special environments, the perspectives of the school psychologists cannot be generalized to school psychologists in other school environments, such as rural or suburban school districts. In addition, caution must be used when generalizing to other urban school districts not included in the study since some differences will exist among the urban population studied and those not studied.

Definition of Terms

Feasibility. As in the Christenson et al. (1997) study, feasibility was defined in this study as the degree to which the involvement activities were practical or realistic to implement in schools over the next five years.

High Minority School. As defined for this study, a high minority school had an enrollment of 50% or more of minority students.

Low Minority School. As defined for this study, a low minority school had an enrollment of less than 50% of minority students.

Minorities. In the United States, the term “minorities” is usually defined as including people of African, Asian, Latin American and Native American heritage. In the research, however, the term has more often, though not always, been limited to those of African and Latin American descent (Comer & Haynes, 1991; Osborne, 1997; Reynolds, 1992; Steinberg et al., 1992) and, therefore, was defined as such in this study.

Offer. Similar to the Christenson et al. (1997) study, offer was defined in this study as the degree to which school psychologists thought schools should make available these involvement activities.

Parent empowerment. As defined for this study, parent empowerment was enabling the parent to participate in advocacy or decision-making at the school through parent education (e.g., how schools function, what are their rights, and “how to” workshops), through the creation of school governance committees where parents are integral members, and through any other activity that engenders participation at the policy or decision-making level, such as an Advisory Board or the School Board (Christenson et al., 1992; Della-Dora, 1979; Kerbow & Bernhardt, 1993; Rioux & Berla, 1993).

Parent involvement. In this study, parent involvement was defined as parents partaking in the educational process at home and at school through numerous activities, events, or programs (Christenson et al., 1992; Kerbow & Bernhardt, 1993; Rioux & Berla, 1993). Specifically, these were geared towards direct interaction with the student or the student’s teacher in educational activities, including, among others, tutoring, parent-teacher conferences to discuss progress or problems, parents as volunteers in the classroom or at the school in general, attending regularly scheduled school functions, and

conversing with the child on a regular basis about school planning, progress, and activities (Christenson et al., 1997; Christenson et al., 1992; Kerbow & Bernhardt; Rioux & Berla).

School psychologist. For this study, a school psychologist was defined as anyone employed by a school district as a psychologist, regardless of school level served or site-based versus itinerant status.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Much research has been conducted on parent involvement (again, defined as including empowerment to reduce verbosity) over the past several decades. The research has included studies on the impact of parent involvement on students from various ethnic and racial backgrounds (Griffith, 1996; Keith, Reimers, Fehrmann, Pottebaum, & Aubey, 1986; Muller, 1993; Reynolds, 1992; Stevenson & Baker, 1987), differences in levels of involvement among different populations (Menacker et al., 1988; Muller & Kerbow, 1993; Wood & Baker, 1999), the barriers different populations encounter and how to overcome them (Becker-Klein, 1999; Epstein, 1986; Gettinger & Waters Guetschow, 1998; Klimes-Dougan, Lopez, Nelson, & Adelman, 1992; Leitch & Tangri, 1988), and school psychologists' role in the issue of parent involvement (Christenson, 1995; Epstein, 1992).

This review of the literature will communicate the research findings in the broadly defined area of parent involvement, both in general and specific to minorities in particular. Discussion of the studies is organized into the following sections based on the topics that were examined: (a) importance of parent involvement, (b) importance of minority parent involvement, (c) differences in parent involvement among ethnic and racial groups, (d) overcoming barriers to minority parent involvement, (e) the school psychologist's role in parent involvement, and (f) examining school psychologists' perceptions of involvement.

Importance of Parent Involvement

Keith, Reimers, Fehrmann, Pottebaum, and Aubey (1986) studied the effects of parent involvement, homework, and television time on the achievement of high school students. Their sample included 28,051 seniors taken from the first wave of the National Center for Education Statistics' 1980 High School and Beyond (HSB) longitudinal study.

The HSB study collected student information on a number of variables, including ethnicity, family background, gender, ability, parental involvement, homework, TV time, and achievement (using achievement test scores). Seniors' responses to survey questions regarding parent involvement, homework time, and TV time were used, along with outcomes on the other variables, to develop a path analysis that determined the direct and indirect effects of these variables on achievement. The results revealed that homework time (path = .141) had the second strongest direct effect on achievement, the first strongest being intellectual ability (path = .597). Although the direct effect of parent involvement on achievement was negligible (path = -.005), it did have a stronger indirect effect since parent involvement had the second strongest path to homework (.158). The researchers, therefore, suggested that "parents may increase the amount of time their children spend on homework and, indirectly, their achievement by becoming more involved in their education and social lives" (p. 376).

The relationship between parental involvement and educational outcomes also was examined by Stevenson and Baker (1987). They hypothesized that parents who participate more in school activities have children who do better in school than children whose parents participate less. The sample, drawn from 620 households taking part in the omnibus TIME USE Longitudinal Panel Study, consisted of 179 children (58% female, 42% male, aged 5 to 17 years) and their teachers. Using a cross-sectional analysis of teachers' ratings on parent involvement and student performance (based on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5), results showed that parental involvement was a significant predictor of school performance ($R = .41$). It was such a significant variable that when it was added to the regression equation, it caused the significant effect of mother's education ($R = .13$; more than 50% of sample had high school or less) on student performance to drop to near zero ($R = .05$). The researchers concluded that parent involvement does affect school performance and, in fact, "parental involvement mediates almost all the influence of mother's education on the child's school performance" (p. 1356).

Muller (1993) studied the association between the types of parental involvement and both achievement test scores and grades to discern if there was a pattern using data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88). This randomized

national sample contained 24,599 eighth graders (3,009 African Americans, 1,527 Asian Americans, 3,171 Hispanics, 299 Native Americans, and 16,317 Whites), and their parents, teachers, and principals. To measure parent involvement and student self-reported grades (among many other variables), students, parents, teachers, and principals completed surveys, which varied according to their roles in the system (e.g., student questionnaire, parent survey, etc.). As a second measure of academic performance, the researcher used reading and mathematics achievement test scores compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) through student interviews during which achievement tests were administered. Data analyses showed that parent involvement in the home and community (e.g., after school supervision, talking with the child about current school activities, etc.) was positively and strongly associated with students' achievement test scores, whereas involvement in the school (e.g., PTO participation, volunteering at the school, etc.) was positively and strongly associated with students' grades. Thus, the multiple dimensions of parent involvement are all important in relation to students' academic performance.

Griffith (1996) investigated the relationship of both parental empowerment and parental involvement to student academic performance. The sample included 11,317 parents (15.3% African American, 7.3% Asian American, 9.9% Hispanic, 43.9% White, and 23.6% Other) of students who attended 42 elementary schools (with an average of 33.2% of children enrolled in the free-or-reduced-lunch program across the schools) in a large suburban school district. Parents completed a 41-item (Likert-type) questionnaire to measure their empowerment and involvement. Student scores on the state's criterion-referenced test (CRT), a standardized measure of achievement, were used to assess student academic performance. Since the unit of analysis was the school in this study, the researcher aggregated the data. He found that student CRT scores were significantly correlated with the levels of parental empowerment ($r = .41$) and involvement ($r = .67$) in that schools with higher levels of parental empowerment and involvement had higher CRT scores, even after controlling for teacher, socioeconomic, and ethnicity variables. These findings supported the assertion that parental empowerment and involvement are important elements in students' academic performance.

In a creative practice-based research study, Williams and Ferguson (1999) were successful in actively involving parents in a Kindergarten classroom. They used multiple methods of data collection (i.e., archives and documents, interviews, observations, and reflections), and then qualitatively analyzed this data through categorization to give meaning to all the information. They grouped the data by themes and wrote summaries for each theme as the results of the study, using quotes from the families to elaborate or support the themes and summaries. These action researchers found that as classroom volunteers, these parents worked directly with the students, resulting in a lower adult to student ratio and more individualized attention through tutoring and other activities. Additionally, through parent-teacher interactions, parents were better informed of student progress and difficulties and of the specific curricula and instructional techniques the teacher was using. Therefore, these parents became directly involved in problem-solving and in curriculum development that best suited their children. By the end of the year, family involvement assisted the students in acquiring greater skills in mathematics, reading, writing, and the arts. The researchers concluded that efforts to better involve parents were successful and that this involvement made a difference in the lives of their children.

In sum, the results of these studies support a strong association between parent involvement and student achievement, and the strong possibility of direct or indirect effects of the former on the latter. However, most of these studies did not distinguish between minority and non-minority populations in their analyses, which make it difficult to determine whether differences exist in how minority parents' involvement relate to minority students' achievement. Nonetheless, there are a limited number of studies that do make this distinction and reveal similar outcomes.

Importance of Minority Parent Empowerment and Involvement

The effects of in-home parent tutoring on children's academic performance at home and at school was investigated by Thurston and Dasta (1990) in two related studies (with a preliminary study – Study 1 – on parent tutoring training not discussed here). Using a single subject reversal research design with one black parent and two white parents of urban elementary school children in Study 2, they trained these parents on how to tutor their children in math facts and then measured differences in performance using

tutoring session daily scores and weekly pre/post scores at home, Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) pre/post scores and criterion-referenced math test (designed for the study) scores at school, as well as math facts test (given by the teachers every morning) grades. The results showed that baseline (before tutoring began) performance was low across measures for all children. The first tutoring phase showed high levels of performance across measures and children. The reversal phase had similar levels of low performance as compared to the baseline phase, and the second tutoring phase had similar levels of high performance as compared to the first tutoring phase. This study demonstrated that simple parent tutoring procedures were effective in increasing acquisition of basic math skills that were generalizable to the classroom setting.

In Study 3, Thurston and Dasta (1990) used a single subject reversal research design with one black parent of a fourth grade child to investigate the effects of in-home spelling tutoring on the child's spelling performance at home and at school. They trained the parent on how to tutor her child in spelling and then measured differences in performance using tutoring session weekly pre/post scores at home, as well as WRAT pre/post scores administered at school and weekly classroom spelling test grades. The results revealed a very low baseline and reversal phase performance across measures and very high performance during both tutoring phases across measures. Again, this study demonstrated the effectiveness of parent involvement through tutoring on the academic performance of a child.

Reynolds (1992) examined the correspondence among multiple raters of parent involvement and their effects on academic achievement. Drawing from the data collected on 1,300 children (95% African American, 5% Hispanic) in the Longitudinal Study of Children at Risk, he used a subsample of 481 second grade students (selected based on parent completion of parent survey in 1988—Year 3 of the study) and their parents and teachers. Demographic, achievement, and parent involvement data were collected through 1986 computer records, standardized achievement test scores (Iowa Tests of Basic Skills) from Years 2 and 3 of the study, and child, parent, and teacher surveys completed in Years 2 and 3 of the study. The author reported that teacher ratings of parent involvement had moderately high correlations ($r = .30-.40$) with minority student achievement. Further analyses using standardized regression also revealed that child,

parent, and teacher reports were all significant predictors of Year 2 and Year 3 student achievement. Specifically, home involvement as measured by child report had significant positive influences on achievement, whereas school involvement as measured by parent and teacher report had significant positive influences on achievement. It was concluded that this study supports the positive impact of minority parent involvement on minority academic achievement.

Simich-Dudgeon (1993) studied the impact of the Trinity-Arlington project, a parent involvement program focused on training limited English proficient (LEP) parents in home tutoring strategies, on high school student educational outcomes. The sample included over 350 LEP students (from Spanish, Vietnamese, Khmer, and Lao language groups) at two high schools and their parents and teachers. All the parents (80% spoke little or no English) were trained in the teacher-developed Vocationally Oriented Bilingual Curriculum (VOBC), which was comprised of 19 home-learning lessons that require parents to discuss with their students topics that increase understanding of “the planning, procedures, and recourses needed to plan for future careers or vocational choices” (p. 197), such as Career Choices and the Role of the School Counselor. Pre/post data were collected using the Ivie Self-Concept test (VOBC content test for students and parents developed for the program), the SOLOM English oral language proficiency subtests, and a test of English proficiency that was locally developed and normed. It was reported that students made significant gains, as revealed by scores on the SOLOM, in English comprehension skills, fluency, grammar knowledge, pronunciation, and vocabulary after implementation of the parent tutoring program. Significant gains were also made on the Paragraph-writing subtest of the locally-normed English proficiency test. In addition, it was found that the nature and frequency of parent contacts with schools increased along with their knowledge of the school system. Overall, the Trinity-Arlington parent training program provided evidence of the benefits of LEP parent involvement in the education of LEP children.

The effect of parent involvement at home on kindergarten students’ academic performance was investigated by Lopez and Cole (1999). The sample consisted of five Puerto Rican children (4 females, 1 male), who were selected for the study because they knew at least 5 but less than 26 letters of the alphabet, and their parents (only one was not

English proficient), who were trained to use the folding-in technique as an intervention. Using a multiple-baseline design across participants, the number of known letters (NKL) and the letter-naming rate (LNR) were measured during baseline, intervention, and follow-up phases to evaluate the effectiveness of the parent-implemented intervention at home. The results indicated a dramatic increasing trend for all five students in NKL from baseline to intervention, with high levels of NKL being maintained in the follow-up phase (e.g., most could identify at least 50 upper- and lower- case letters). Though the results were not so dramatic for LNR, there was a rate increase from baseline to intervention (from 3 to 15 letters per minute up to 17 to 37 letters per minute), with similar rates being maintained in follow-up. These parents' involvement in their children's learning at home, therefore, directly impacted the children's academic performance.

These studies provide evidence of a strong association between minority parent involvement and minority student achievement, similar to that of the general population. However, it appears that differences exist in the levels of involvement between minority and European American parents, regardless of the documentation that exists showing the importance of minority parent involvement. The next section of this review of the literature will describe what is known currently about these differences.

Differences in Parent Empowerment and Involvement Among Ethnic and Racial Groups

Menacker, Hurwitz, and Weldon (1988) examined home-school relations of inner-city schools as part of a larger study of discipline that took place in Chicago inner-city schools serving low-income African-American students. They surveyed all middle school teachers at the inner-city schools being studied, as well as the sixth and eighth grade African-American students, on their perceptions relevant to issues of home-school cooperation. The results of the teacher survey revealed that only 47% of the faculty supported strong parental involvement in school affairs and policy, with 30% against parents having anything to say about school issues. Sixty one percent of the students surveyed reported that their parents did not get involved in school activities. Nonetheless, 86% of the students informed that their parents did help with homework. It was concluded that most teachers at these inner-city schools were resistant to having low-income, minority parents involved in school affairs but that most parents did want to help

their children and did so at home since the school environment was not conducive to involvement at school.

Muller and Kerbow (1993) studied the differences in involvement, including form and level, among a variety of ethnic groups, and the relationship of these differences to student academic performance using data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88). As mentioned earlier, this randomized national sample consisted of 24,599 eighth graders (3,009 African Americans, 1,527 Asian Americans, 3,171 Hispanics, 299 Native Americans, and 16,317 Whites), and their parents, teachers, and principals. The data had been collected using student, parent, teacher, and principal surveys. The results of the student surveys revealed that white parents discussed current school experiences with their children at a higher rate than did any of the minority parents ($M_s = 1.48$ for whites, 1.38 for African Americans, 1.37 for Asian Americans, and 1.31 for Hispanics with values ranging from 0 = Never to 2 = 3 or more times). A strong positive relationship between grades and rates of talking was also found when student grades were controlled in the analyses. However, after controlling student grades, the differences in rates of talking between white and minority parents were found to be even larger than in the initial analysis. They also found that white parents tend to check their children's homework more frequently than African American and Hispanic parents. This study provides evidence that clear differences exist in parent involvement at home between the minority and European American parents.

Griffith (1996) also examined whether differences existed in the levels of parent empowerment and involvement among minority and non-minority populations. Using an ethnically/racially and socioeconomically diverse sample of 11,317 parents across 42 schools (with the school as the unit of analysis), he found lower levels of parental empowerment and involvement (and CRT scores) at schools with higher percentages of African American and Hispanic students and students from low-income families. He recommended that future research needs to take a closer look as to why these differences are occurring and how to remedy them.

Wood and Baker (1999) investigated behaviors, beliefs, and preferences regarding school-based parent education events or programs among culturally diverse, low-income parents. The sample consisted of 395 parents from two elementary schools located in a

small southeastern city in the United States. This sample was 58% African-American, 33% Caucasian, and 3% Hispanic (with other ethnic groups each making up 1% or less of the remaining 6% of respondents). The educational attainment of these parents was generally low, with 23% having less than a high school education, 58% having a high school education, and 37% having some post-high school education. Parents anonymously completed a 49-item parenting preferences questionnaire developed for this study, which was disseminated and returned via their children to their respective schools. A 4-point Likert-type response format was used to measure parent behaviors and beliefs. Using a series of three-way ANOVAs, results showed significant race effects in interest in attending and reported attendance, with African-American parents ($M = 2.66$) conveying more interest in attending parent education events than Caucasian parents ($M = 2.20$) but the Caucasian parents ($M = 3.00$) reporting attendance at these events more often than the African-American parents ($M = 2.34$). The results also revealed a similar pattern of low attendance among parents with low education or of low-income. The researchers concluded that there was a clear differentiation in their findings between parental interest and actual participation, which is in line with recent research indicating that low-income, minority parents want to be involved with their children's education but economic or pragmatic factors hinder their participation in the schools.

In summary, these studies show that differences do exist between the levels of involvement of minority parents versus European American parents. Consistently, minority parents showed lower levels of involvement than European American parents regardless of their interest in participating in their children's education or their educational aspirations for their children. These differences pose a serious problem since, as reviewed previously, it was found that parent involvement is associated with better educational outcomes. Thus, it is critical to determine what barriers exist to parent involvement among minority parents and how to overcome them in order to affect changes in the educational outcomes of minority students.

Overcoming Barriers to Minority Parent Empowerment and Involvement

Epstein (1986) investigated parents' perspectives of teacher practices in involving the parents of their students. The sample consisted of the parents (36% black, 62% white, 2% other) of 1,269 third and fourth grade students in 82 classrooms in Maryland. Parents

completed and returned by mail a parent involvement questionnaire that asked about parents' awareness of teachers' efforts, evaluation of teachers, and knowledge about the school program. She found that 58% of the parents responded that they rarely or never get requests from the teacher to participate in at-home learning activities. More than 80% reported that they could spend more time involved with their children at home if shown how to do particular learning activities, yet less than 30% of the parents said that teachers furnished them with ideas on how to help in reading and math at home. Related to home-school communication, approximately 60% of the parents said they never spoke on the phone to the teacher, over 35% reported no parent-teacher conference, and about 16% received no notes from the teacher. Yet, it was when teachers frequently asked parents to help that parents believed they should help ($b = .603$). Finally, when teachers communicated with and involved the parents more often, parents reported an increased understanding of the curriculum and instructional programming. She concluded that teachers' practices of parent involvement have a large impact on parents' behaviors of involvement.

Teachers' and parents' perceptions of home-school collaboration were examined by Leitch and Tangri (1988) at two Washington, D.C. junior high schools serving a black, low-income population. The researchers interviewed 29 veteran teachers (1 Asian and 28 black) and 60 black families (3 custodial parents, 6 grandmothers, and 51 mothers). Using one questionnaire with structured and open-ended questions for both groups, the teachers were interviewed at school and families at their homes. Questions focused on perceptions of barriers, roles, initiation of contacts, and results and satisfaction of contacts. The researchers found that parents perceived themselves to be a major barrier to home-school collaboration in addition to the belief that they were looked down upon by teachers for not being as successful as them. More than a third of the parent participants responded that they had never been asked to do something when questioned as to what their children's schools had asked them to do. Almost 50% of teachers also blamed barriers to involvement on parents, specifically citing parents and their attitudes toward the school as the most frequent barrier. As a result, teachers stated that they, generally, did not ask parents for help. Similar to Epstein, these researchers concluded

that the “tendency to blame parents for their child’s problems suggests that teachers themselves may be responsible for some of the parents’ attitudinal barriers” (p. 73).

Klimes-Dougan, Lopez, Nelson, and Adelman (1992) conducted two related studies in this area. The first study examined barriers to parent involvement, and the second study examined the effects of an intervention to overcome these barriers. In Study 1, the sample consisted of 83 parents (68 mothers, 11 fathers, and 4 guardians) of kindergarten students at nine schools in Los Angeles. Parents were classified as non-Latino (N = 32) or Latino (N = 51), with 30 of the Latino parents identified as primarily Spanish proficient. Data was collected through phone interviews with the parents, in English or Spanish, using a parent involvement questionnaire designed for this study. These researchers found that 61% of the total sample had experienced some difficulty attending school activities and programs, with 93% experiencing one or more of seven barriers listed on the questionnaire. Specifically, mothers’ most frequently reported barriers included “bad time of day” (39%), “conflicts with work schedule” (46%), and “difficulty finding a baby sitter” (47%). Fathers’ most frequently reported barriers included “bad time of day” (48%) and “conflicts with work schedule” (73%). In comparison to the non-Latino parents, Latino parents reported significantly less knowledge of activities at school and significantly more barriers to involvement. Within the Latino parent sample, those without English proficiency reported the same significant differences as compared to those with English proficiency. In terms of quantity of involvement, 23% of the variance was accounted for by parents’ knowledge about activities and 14% by non-English proficiency. In terms of frequency of involvement, non-English proficiency accounted for 12% of the variance and ethnicity for 5%. Since barriers were found to exist, the researchers decided to investigate a specific intervention for one of these barriers.

In Study 2, Klimes-Dougan and associates (1992) investigated whether a brief intervention of personalized invitations would increase attendance at an upcoming school event. A pilot study was conducted at one school first, with 58 families (40% Latino) from one kindergarten and one first grade classroom serving as the treatment group, and 61 families (43% Latino) from the other kindergarten and first grade classrooms serving as the control group. An expanded study was conducted the next year at nine schools,

with 240 families (67% Latino) from one kindergarten class at each school serving as the treatment group, and 226 families (ethnicity data not available) from another kindergarten class at each school serving as the control group. In both studies, the treatment and control groups were sent a school flyer announcing the event three to four weeks before and, again, several days before the event. The treatment group also received three other types of invitations, including (a) a personal letter after the flyer was distributed, (b) a brief phone call from the school, and (c) a brightly colored invitation sent home via the children (with an RSVP attached for the expanded study). The intervention resulted in significant differences in attendance between the treatment and control groups. In the pilot study, 2% of the control group and 43% of the treatment group attended the event, whereas 3% of the control group and 19% of the treatment group attended in the expanded study. An interesting outcome was that 23% of Latino parents but only 12% of non-Latino parents attended the school event in the expanded study, and Spanish-speaking parents (32%) attended more than English proficient parents (17%). Thus, the intervention was effective at increasing the number of parents who attended the school event, particularly the Latino parents.

Perceptions of barriers to and opportunities for parental involvement also have been examined by Gettinger and Waters Guetschow (1998). Their sample consisted of 142 teachers and 558 parents (93% white) of students in kindergarten through 12th grade at six schools. Data was collected using two parallel forms of a survey, one for parents and one for teachers, that asked them to rate the barrier items as 1 = almost never true to 4 = almost always true. The researchers found that both parents and teachers rated the same four barriers to involvement the highest: (a) inflexible work schedules, (b) time constraints, (c) parents not sure how to contribute, and (d) teacher never asked. In addition, teachers, but not parents, rated two more barriers highly: (a) child care difficulties, and (b) parents lack knowledge or skills to help in classroom. In the open-ended questions at the end of the survey, a majority of responses identified ongoing communication between parents and teachers as important and offered specific recommendations, such as providing information about at-home learning activities or opportunities to participate in the classroom, newsletters, and recorded telephone messages. In addition, both groups specified that efforts to reduce barriers would permit

more parents to get involved. The researchers concluded that parents and teachers could clearly identify barriers to involvement but could also offer methods to minimize these barriers.

Becker-Klein (1999) studied the influence of family and school variables as possible barriers to parent involvement at home and in school. Her sample included 151 parents (82% African-American, 1% European-American, 15% Latino, and 2% other or missing) of 2nd grade students who were formerly in Head Start. The Family Involvement in Children's Learning survey was used to measure family involvement and the School Climate Survey was used to measure parents' perceptions of the school's atmosphere. An analysis of the correlational results indicated that parents reported more participation in their children's education when they perceived a more favorable climate at the school and reported better home-school communication. The regression results revealed that only school-level variables (e.g., home-school communication) significantly predicted parent involvement at home. However, both family- and school-level variables significantly predicted parent involvement at school, though the school-level variables were more highly predictive than family-level variables. This is important to note since the school variables are ones over which school personnel have direct control and, therefore, can remedy if they are creating barriers to parent involvement.

In summary, these studies provide evidence of the existence of barriers to parent empowerment and involvement as well as evidence of methods and practices for overcoming these barriers. Understanding teachers' and parents' perceptions is essential to overcoming barriers in order to assist minority students in improving their educational outcomes. Many of these studies found that minority parents can make a difference in their children's achievement if they are empowered to do so through knowledge and involvement. School psychologists can play a pivotal role in helping to make this happen.

The School Psychologist's Role in Parent Empowerment and Involvement

Epstein (1992) discussed how school psychologists are in the position to provide the strongest leadership in family and school partnerships because of their education and training. Specifically, some of the roles and skills that already exist in the school psychologist's repertoire include synthesizer and disseminator of information,

demonstrator of successful approaches or practices, communicator with school staff and parents, facilitator or trainer of school staff and parents, coordinator of action plans and goals, and evaluator of services and programs. All of these roles and skills can be used to accomplish the work of creating home-school partnerships. For example, because school psychologists have knowledge of child and adolescent development and how this development fits into the family life cycles (e.g., synthesizer), they can help teachers and administrators at all grade levels to develop and implement appropriate and effective family involvement programs (e.g., disseminator, demonstrator, facilitator, and evaluator).

Another example Epstein (1992) offered was that because school psychologists often work with difficult to reach families (e.g., evaluator and communicator), they are more likely “to be aware of and accepting of family differences, and can identify and use the strengths in all families to help children solve their problems” (p. 501). Finally, because school psychologists tend to be more experienced in using a systems approach with families and educators (e.g., communicator and facilitator), they can assist educators and families in understanding that developing a comprehensive and effective parent involvement program will take hard work, trust, shared responsibilities, and a large of investment of time over the long haul (e.g., demonstrator, coordinator, and evaluator). Therefore, school psychologists have the skills and training necessary to be leaders in the development of home-school partnerships.

Christenson (1995) discussed the lessons learned through the research on home-school collaboration and how school psychologists play into those five lessons. The first lesson was that significant parent involvement in schooling is positively related with children’s academic success through family process variables known as the curriculum of the home. The second lesson was that home-school collaborative strategies or programs have not been implemented persistently even with adequate content and process knowledge that exists on home-school collaboration, including data on the effectiveness of a variety of programs, characteristics of effective programs, and guidelines for developing collaboration. The third lesson was that inviting parent participation is not enough, educators really need to reach out to families by sharing the language of schooling with all parents and linking with social and health service agencies to better

serve disadvantaged families. The fourth lesson was that positive communication is quite powerful and is much more effective in creating partnerships with parents. And the fifth lesson was that there is a lack of experimental studies in this area because it is difficult to measure the shared impact of home and school on child development and performance.

As a result of these five lessons, Christenson (1995) stated that “School psychologists need to make a concerted effort to establish a shared responsibility between home and school for children’s learning and development” (p. 130). Therefore, she recommended three specific roles, at least to begin with, that the school psychologist can take on in making this concerted effort:

1. Furnishing information to parents and educators on the relationship between academic and behavioral performance and family influences and on how parents can facilitate their children’s achievement;

2. Addressing the differential resources (such as energy, knowledge, skill, and time) readily available to families for assisting their children; and

3. Affording consultation and support to families and educators as they work to facilitate student’s academic and behavioral performance.

Thus, school psychologists can play a vital role in promoting home-school collaboration and impacting students’ educational outcomes as a result.

In sum, school psychologists not only have a role to play in parent involvement, but they have the skills, knowledge, and experience to play a leadership role in developing parent involvement as well as home-school partnerships. These two authors have delineated the specific roles and responsibilities that school psychologists can adopt to create change in the arena of parent involvement. However, just as previously described research revealed that teachers’ perceptions have an impact on parent involvement, school psychologists’ perceptions, as another school representative, would likely have a similar impact and, therefore, need to be examined as a potential barrier to minority parent involvement.

Examining Psychologists’ Perceptions of Involvement

The research reviewed in this chapter has highlighted the importance of increasing minority parent involvement in their children’s education. Several researchers have investigated barriers to improving parent involvement and how to overcome them.

Understanding the perceptions of school representatives, such as school psychologists, is key to creating an atmosphere conducive to minority parent involvement. This next section describes the results of a study that surveyed school psychologists and parents' own perceptions of particular involvement activities.

Christenson et al. (1997) examined the possible differences in perspectives of parents and school psychologists with regard to parent involvement activities. They asked parents to rate 33 empowerment and involvement activities as to whether they thought the school should offer them and whether they would use the activities if offered. These ratings were then compared to the school psychologists' ratings of the implementation feasibility of these activities. The results were very revealing in that the rank order of the activities was almost the same between the parents' list and the school psychologists' list; however, a Spearman rho correlation showed a discrepancy between offer/use ratings and feasibility ratings (Christenson et al., 1997). This meant that the school psychologists did not think a majority of these 33 empowerment and involvement activities were feasible to implement over a five-year period even though a large number of the parents said they would use them if they were offered by the schools (Christenson et al., 1997). Might this negative perception of feasibility by school psychologists be a major barrier to minority parent involvement?

To study this question, consideration of a school psychologist offer variable, of the why behind their perceptions, and of a demographic variable is important for several reasons. First, it is critical to know exactly what kinds of involvement activities school psychologists think are important and feasible so as to facilitate the implementation of these activities and improve levels of parental involvement. Second, understanding why psychologists perceive some activities to be less feasible is key to overcoming barriers to implementation. Third, if there is a discrepancy between use and feasibility in general and between high versus low minority schools, it may help in explaining why schools are not doing more to increase empowerment and involvement of minority parents.

This study partially replicated the Christenson et al. (1997) study using a sample of school psychologists from a large urban school district in Florida. A feasibility survey was handed out to the school psychologists at their monthly district meeting. Then a reminder notice was posted by their mailboxes, with extra surveys available for pick up.

Finally, an email was sent to all the school psychologists with the cover letter and survey attached. The survey from the original study was slightly modified to improve readability and include a broader range of demographic variables. The results from high minority schools were compared to those of low minority schools. This focus added importance to this study since minority parent involvement issues are in need of much attention in the research literature.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Participants

Thirty-eight school psychologists returned surveys. Regrettably, one of the surveys was returned incomplete, and another was returned by a psychologist not based in the schools. Therefore, the final sample included 36 school psychologists from a large urban school district in Florida (see Table 1 for demographics). Multiple attempts were made to secure full participation from the available pool of 130 district school psychologists. A response rate of at least 50% was the goal of this study. Unfortunately, after completing three rounds of data collection with the school district's psychologists, the response rate was 29% for Round 1 (N = 29), 50% for Round 2 (N = 5), and 2% for Round 3 (N = 2), with a 27% response rate for the three rounds combined (N = 36).

Table 1. Survey Sample Demographics

| Groups | Number | Percent |
|----------------------|--------|---------|
| School Psychologists | 36 | 100% |
| Females | 31 | 86.1 |
| Males | 5 | 13.9 |
| European-American | 32 | 88.9 |
| Latino | 3 | 8.3 |
| Other | 1 | 2.8 |

Note: Though there are 11 African American and 1 Asian American school psychologists in this school district, none of them responded to the survey and, therefore, are not included in this table.

Measures

An adapted version of the NASP Family Services Feasibility Survey (Christenson et al., 1997) was developed for the current study (i.e., the Family Services Feasibility Survey). Permission for use and adaptation was granted by Dr. Sandra Christenson of the

University of Minnesota. In order to develop the questions in their original form, the Family Sub-Committee of the Children's Services Committee of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) conducted a pilot study in 1991. Members of the NASP Delegate Assembly interviewed 95 parents about barriers to parent involvement in schooling, desired services from schools, general information concerning parent involvement, how schools could facilitate increased parent involvement, information needed from schools, and ways parents and teachers positively affect students' performance. The results of these interviews were summarized, reviewed by school psychology practitioners and professors, and presented at an annual conference for additional comments and feedback. Based on the pilot study results and feedback, the NASP Parent Interview was developed. The Family Sub-Committee then developed the NASP Family Services Feasibility Survey to complement the parent interview form. No other pilot studies were done with either instrument to determine their psychometric properties since, according to the developers, they were used only in an exploratory study. However, Christenson and associates did find reliability estimates with the exploratory study samples (.90 alpha coefficient for school psychologist items) and did conduct factor analyses with the 33 empowerment and involvement items. Nonetheless, the factor analyses results were not published as part of the study and have been lost according to Sandra Christenson (personal communication, February 2000). The researchers suggested that further investigations into the psychometric qualities were needed if these tools were to be used further (Christenson et al., 1997). Unfortunately, the sample size of the current study was not large enough to conduct a factor analysis of the modified items.

In this study, the school psychologists' perspectives addressed two key variables: (a) whether schools should offer the activity/service, and (b) whether it would be feasible to implement the activity/service over the next five years. These two variables were measured on the Family Services Feasibility Survey (see Appendix A), which included a description of 27 parent empowerment and involvement activities. School psychologists were asked to rate the degree to which they believe each activity should be offered by their school based on a 4-point scale with 4 = Definitely Yes (Schools should do this), 3 = Maybe (It may be a good idea for many parents), 2 = Probably Not (It probably would

not help enough parents), and 1 = No/Should Not (This should not be offered by schools). They also rated the degree to which it would be feasible to implement each of these activities at their school by any of the staff members, including themselves, during the next five years. This rating is based on a 4-point scale with 4 = Very Feasible, 3 = Somewhat Feasible, 2 = Probably Not Feasible, and 1 = Definitely Not Feasible. The survey instructed the psychologists to base their ratings in this survey upon the school they served with the highest percentage of minority students in order that comparisons could be made between high and low minority schools.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in order to assess the face validity, the wording of the survey instrument, and the ease of the implementation of the procedures to determine if any final adjustments needed to be made. Second, third and fourth year school psychology graduate students (N = 20) at the University of South Florida were given the Family Services Feasibility Survey and a feedback questionnaire (see Appendices E and F) asking about face validity, readability, and ease of implementation. They were asked to complete the survey and then the feedback questionnaire after the survey was completed. They had two weeks to complete the two forms and return them to the researcher via her department mailbox. The results of this pilot study were used to assess content validity, readability, and ease of implementation. Adjustments to the survey instrument were made accordingly.

Procedures

The collection of data occurred in three stages during the Fall of the 2002-2003 school year: (1) the school psychologist district meeting, (2) the reminder notice, and (3) the email request. When seeking permission to distribute the Family Services Feasibility Survey at the district meeting, the Director of Psychological Services stated that parent involvement was not a priority for the district or her school psychologists. Therefore, the researcher was not allowed to discuss the study or be present at the meeting. Instead, the Assistant Director, rather than the Director, of Psychological Services discussed and distributed the survey at the September school psychologists' district meeting. The packets distributed (N = 100) included a self-addressed, business reply prepaid return envelope, the survey, and a cover letter encouraging participation in the study and a

deadline for response set two weeks after the meeting. This cover letter explained that a consent form was not needed since the school psychologists were giving passive consent by completing the survey and returning it to the researcher. They were also told that for tracking purposes, each survey would be given a code before the initial mailing that would, in turn, correspond to the school psychologist's school but that their responses would be completely anonymous. Thus, the school psychologists did not place their names anywhere on the survey.

After the two-week deadline was reached, the researcher posted a reminder to complete the survey by the school psychologists' mailboxes in their central administrative building on October 9, 2002. In addition, a box with extra survey packets (N = 32) was left near the mailboxes for pick up in case psychologists had misplaced or had never received a survey at the meeting. The reminder and the left over survey packets (N = 22) were removed approximately one month later on November 12, 2002. The total number of responses was still low, so the researcher conducted a third round of data collection. The Assistant Director of Psychological Services for the participating school district forwarded an electronic message from the researcher to every school psychologist in the district, requesting that they complete the survey and return it to a particular mailbox in the district's administrative building. For convenience, the cover letter and survey were attached in electronic format to this message, which was sent on December 10, 2002 and had a response deadline of January 10, 2003.

Data Analysis

First, descriptive statistics were computed for school psychologists' ratings of the 27 activities. The descriptive statistics included the means, standard deviations, and range of the two sets of ratings. These descriptive statistics were needed to compare the ratings for offer and ratings for feasibility and to determine the rank ordering of the aforementioned ratings.

Second, a non-respondent bias analysis was conducted using chi-square tests to determine if any demographic differences existed between this study's sample and the district's school psychologists who did not respond to the survey. The demographic variables compared included (a) the school psychologist's ethnicity and (b) the school psychologist's gender.

Third, the following research questions were addressed through statistical methods: (a) How do school psychologists' perspectives on offer compare to their perspectives on feasibility of the same activities across school type? (b) How do high minority schools' psychologists' perspectives compare to those of low minority schools on the offer and feasibility of these activities? and (c) How do high minority schools' psychologists' perspectives compare to those of low minority schools on the current involvement activities being offered? For this study, a high minority school was defined as 50% or more minorities, whereas a low minority school was defined as less than 50% minorities.

To answer these research questions, mean comparisons were made and Spearman rho rank order correlations and *t*-tests were computed using the mean ratings. The assumptions associated with the *t*-test were considered, which include independence, normality, and homogeneity of variance. Independence means the scores are independent of each other. The school psychologists did not collaborate in the completion of the surveys, they worked on them individually. Normality means that the dependent variable scores are normally distributed. This study's offer scores were somewhat positively skewed, but the feasibility scores tended towards normality. However, considerable research has shown the normality assumption to be rather robust such that a violation is of little consequence. Homogeneity of variance means that the variances of the populations are equal. The sample variances were analyzed for homogeneity and no significant differences were found.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This section will present the results of the school psychologist survey. In addition, each of the four hypotheses will be addressed in terms of whether or not they were supported by the data. The data were analyzed using SPSS Version 11.0 for Windows. An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests.

Treatment of the Data

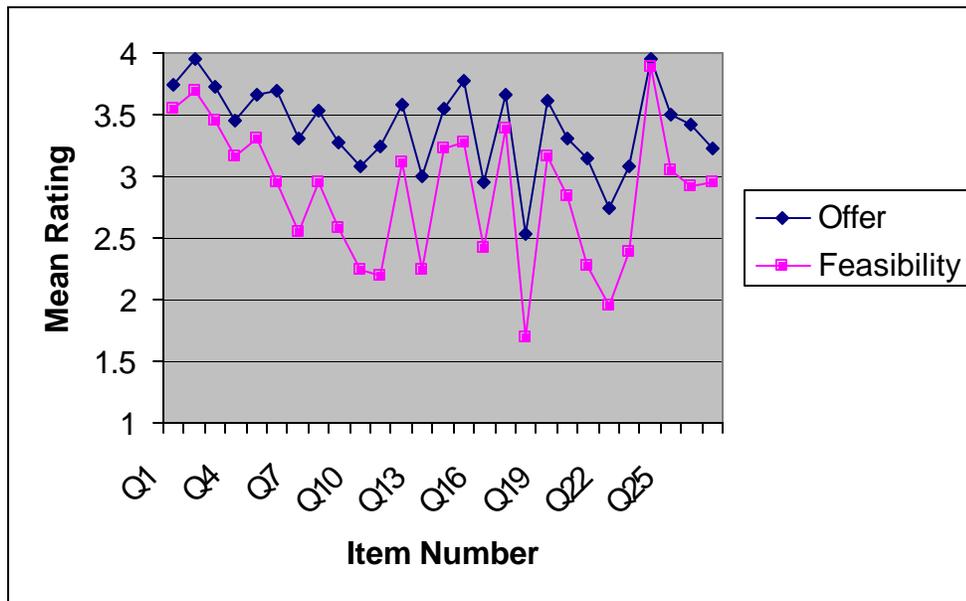
In order for a survey to be included in the data analysis, the school psychologist must have completed a minimum of 75% of the rating scale portion of the survey. The school psychologist must also have been based in the schools and not in the psychological services building. Based on these criteria, two surveys were excluded from the 38 surveys returned. The rating scale portion of one of the surveys was only 33% complete. The school neuropsychologist completed the other survey, but he is not school-based since he serves the entire district. Therefore, the data analysis was based on 36 completed surveys.

For this study, a high minority school was defined as 50% or more minorities, whereas a low minority school was defined as less than 50% minorities. The surveys were initially divided into these two groups based on which ethnic group was checked by the school psychologists in question 11 of the demographics section (i.e., "I estimate most students in my school are from ___ ethnic group"). Then, they were regrouped based on the schools' ethnic percentages provided by the school district. The final count was 24 high minority schools and 12 low minority schools.

The reliability was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha. The alpha coefficient for the full scale was .91. This is similar to the alpha coefficient of .90 found by Christenson et al. (1997) for the school psychologists' feasibility items.

A non-responder bias analysis was conducted using chi-square tests to determine if any demographic differences existed between this study's sample and the district's school psychologists who did not respond to the survey. The demographic variables compared included (a) the school psychologist's ethnicity and (b) the school psychologist's gender. The study's sample contained 31 females and 5 males, with 32 European Americans, 3 Latinos, and 1 school psychologist who marked other. The total number of school psychologists in the school district includes 105 females and 35 males, with 11 African Americans, 18 Hispanics, 1 Asian, and 110 Whites. The chi-square test revealed that the differences between the sample and the population for ethnicity were not statistically significant, $X^2 = 2.37$, critical value ($df = 2, \alpha = .05$) = 5.991. A second chi-square test revealed that the differences between the sample and the population for gender also were not statistically significant, $X^2 = 2.37$, critical value ($df = 1, \alpha = .05$) = 3.841.

Figure 1. Offer and Feasibility Mean Ratings Per Item



Descriptive Statistics

Appendix C shows means and standard deviations for school psychologists' ratings of offer and feasibility of implementation of the 27 parent involvement activities across school type. The mean ratings for offer ranged from 2.53 to 3.94, whereas the mean ratings for feasibility ranged from 1.69 to 3.89. The offer and feasibility means for

each item across school type are graphically displayed in Figure 1. Though there was overlap, it is clear that feasibility ratings tended to be lower than offer ratings across the board.

Table 2 shows means and standard deviations for school psychologists' ratings of offer and feasibility of implementation of the 27 parent involvement activities by high and low minority schools. The mean ratings for high minority offer ranged from 2.50 to 3.92, whereas the mean ratings for high minority feasibility ranged from 1.79 to 3.83. On the other hand, the mean ratings for low minority offer ranged from 2.58 to 4.00, whereas the mean ratings for low minority feasibility ranged from 1.50 to 4.00.

Table 2. School Psychologists' Offer and Feasibility Mean Ratings of Involvement Activities

| Rank-ordered Involvement Activities By High Minority Offer | High Minority | | | | Low Minority | | | |
|--|---------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| | Offer | | Feasibility | | Offer | | Feasibility | |
| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
| 24. Give parents information about community agencies that support children's and family's needs. | 3.92 | 0.28 | 3.83 | 0.38 | 4.00 | 0.00 | 4.00 | 0.00 |
| 2. Give out information on "how tos" for parents related to academics (e.g., how to help with school work, how to monitor child's progress in school). | 3.92 | 0.28 | 3.71 | 0.55 | 4.00 | 0.00 | 3.67 | 0.49 |
| 15. Set up after or before school tutoring programs. | 3.83 | 0.38 | 3.17 | 1.01 | 3.67 | 0.49 | 3.50 | 0.80 |
| 3. Give out information on "how tos" for parents related to children's emotional and social development (e.g., how to enhance self-esteem, how to increase responsibility). | 3.75 | 0.53 | 3.54 | 0.72 | 3.67 | 0.49 | 3.25 | 0.87 |
| 17. Create family-school nights for parents and educators to discuss report card grades/grading, student behavior, children's progress, test scores, or other academic issues. | 3.71 | 0.46 | 3.33 | 0.82 | 3.58 | 0.67 | 3.50 | 0.80 |
| 6. Do workshops to provide information in items 1-5 (i.e., school functioning, "how tos", and child development). | 3.71 | 0.62 | 3.13 | 0.80 | 3.67 | 0.49 | 2.58 | 0.79 |
| 5. Give out information on how children develop socially, emotionally, and academically. | 3.67 | 0.56 | 3.38 | 0.71 | 3.67 | 0.49 | 3.17 | 0.83 |
| 8. Set up a lending library so parents can check out the print materials, books, or tapes described in item 5 (e.g., talking to children or children's development). | 3.63 | 0.65 | 3.08 | 0.93 | 3.33 | 0.78 | 2.67 | 0.98 |
| 1. Give out information on how schools function (e.g., how grades are earned, scheduling, transitions, homework). | 3.63 | 0.71 | 3.42 | 0.88 | 4.00 | 0.00 | 3.83 | 0.39 |
| 14. Create family-school nights for parents and educators to get to know each other and have fun. | 3.54 | 0.78 | 3.08 | 0.97 | 3.58 | 0.67 | 3.50 | 0.80 |
| 19. Have family-school meetings to problem solve with parents and teachers on ways to improve child's learning or behavior. | 3.50 | 0.83 | 3.08 | 0.93 | 3.83 | 0.39 | 3.33 | 0.65 |
| 12. Organize a parent volunteer program to help teachers. | 3.46 | 0.78 | 2.92 | 0.93 | 3.83 | 0.39 | 3.50 | 0.80 |
| 4. Give out information on how to develop children's talents and strengths. | 3.46 | 0.66 | 3.21 | 0.88 | 3.42 | 0.51 | 3.08 | 0.79 |
| 25. Offer group or individual meetings with the school psychologist to get information and talk about parents' concerns for their children and on ways to improve behavior, social skills, and student learning at home. | 3.46 | 0.78 | 3.04 | 0.91 | 3.58 | 0.51 | 3.08 | 0.67 |

| Rank-ordered Involvement Activities By High Minority Offer | | High Minority | | | | Low Minority | | | |
|---|--|---------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| | | Offer | | Feasibility | | Offer | | Feasibility | |
| | | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
| 26. | Give workshops for parents and teachers at each grade level on subjects that both groups are interested in (e.g., curriculum, behavior management, etc.). | 3.42 | 0.65 | 3.04 | 0.81 | 3.42 | 0.67 | 2.67 | 0.78 |
| 20. | Offer opportunities for parents to share decisions with educators (e.g., on sex education, on homework policies, on discipline in the classroom). | 3.33 | 0.64 | 2.79 | 0.78 | 3.25 | 0.75 | 2.92 | 0.79 |
| 7. | Give out print materials, books, or tapes on how to talk to children about schoolwork and what they are learning at school, or on children's development. | 3.33 | 0.76 | 2.63 | 0.82 | 3.25 | 0.75 | 2.42 | 1.08 |
| 27. | Give parents opportunities to serve on a team or board with educators to make important school-wide decisions (e.g., on curriculum, hiring and firing). | 3.29 | 1.04 | 2.92 | 1.21 | 3.08 | 1.08 | 3.00 | 1.04 |
| 9. | Set up parent-to-parent opportunities (e.g., support groups for parents, a parent center) for sharing information, raising questions, or discussing specific topics (e.g., raising children as a single parent, how to deal with parental stress). | 3.29 | 0.81 | 2.63 | 0.71 | 3.25 | 0.62 | 2.50 | 0.67 |
| 11. | Create more time for parents and teachers, meeting in groups or individually, to share information about children, school requirements, and family needs. | 3.13 | 0.90 | 2.04 | 0.81 | 3.50 | 0.67 | 2.50 | 1.00 |
| 10. | Provide community services for families with child concerns (e.g., medical or social services in schools). | 3.13 | 0.95 | 2.25 | 1.07 | 3.00 | 1.13 | 2.25 | 0.97 |
| 23. | Provide counseling or counseling resources for families (e.g., chemical dependency, family conflict). | 3.04 | 0.86 | 2.25 | 1.07 | 3.17 | 1.03 | 2.67 | 0.98 |
| 16. | Offer Basic Adult Education Programs (e.g., GED for parents, reading instruction or family literacy programs). | 3.04 | 0.86 | 2.46 | 0.93 | 2.75 | 1.29 | 2.33 | 1.23 |
| 13. | Set up a telephone hotline to answer parent questions about children, homework assignments, and schooling in general. | 3.04 | 0.86 | 2.25 | 0.79 | 2.92 | 0.90 | 2.25 | 1.14 |
| 21. | Create recreational and community service programs after school for students. | 3.04 | 1.00 | 2.17 | 0.92 | 3.33 | 0.65 | 2.50 | 0.90 |
| 22. | Train parents on ways they can help other parents create positive home support for their children's learning and school success. | 2.71 | 0.86 | 1.88 | 0.68 | 2.83 | 0.83 | 2.08 | 0.79 |
| 18. | Make home visits to teach parents activities they can do at home to support student learning or to answer parents' questions about their children's schoolwork. | 2.50 | 0.93 | 1.79 | 0.83 | 2.58 | 0.90 | 1.50 | 0.52 |

Note: For offer, 1 = No or Should Not, 2 = Probably Not, 3 = Maybe, and 4 = Definitely Yes. For feasibility, 1 = Not Feasible, 2 = Somewhat Feasible, 3 = Feasible, 4 = Very Feasible.

Table 3 shows the mean ratings and standard deviations for offer and feasibility by the school grouping of low versus high minority schools. The mean ratings for the offer variable for both high and low minority schools indicate that, on average, school psychologists believed the 27 involvement activities should be offered. However, the mean ratings for the feasibility variable for both high and low minority schools indicate that, on average, school psychologists believed the 27 involvement activities were slightly less than feasible to implement in their schools during the next 5 years.

Table 3. School Psychologists' Mean Ratings By School Groupings

| Survey Variable | School Type | N | Mean | SD |
|-----------------|-----------------------|----|--------|--------|
| OFFER | High Minority Schools | 24 | 3.3873 | .39755 |
| | Low Minority Schools | 12 | 3.4136 | .42869 |
| FEASIBILITY | High Minority Schools | 24 | 2.8519 | .37198 |
| | Low Minority Schools | 12 | 2.8981 | .28300 |

Data Analysis

In order to answer the research questions, Spearman rho rank order correlations and *t*-tests were computed using the mean ratings. This section is a description of those results, including several tables to assist in the illustration of some of these results. The data analysis is divided into two subsections: 1) all analyses related to comparing offer versus feasibility across school type, and 2) all analyses related to comparing high versus low minority schools.

Analyses by dependent variables. A Spearman's rho correlation was conducted to determine the degree of similarity in the rank ordering of school psychologists' offer and feasibility ratings for the 27 parent involvement activities. The Spearman's rho correlation ($r_s = .657, p < .001$) indicated a moderate similarity between the rank ordering of activities by offer and by feasibility.

A dependent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the offer ratings mean ($M = 3.40$) and the feasibility ratings mean ($M = 2.87$) for the entire sample of school psychologists. The *t*-test revealed a significant difference between these two means, $t(35) = 9.669, p < .001$.

Dependent samples *t*-tests also were conducted for each item to compare offer and feasibility ratings across the entire sample of school psychologists. In order to control for Type I error, a Bonferroni correction procedure was used to determine significance for the set of 27 *t*-tests. Based on the Bonferroni correction ($p = .002$), 20 out of the 27 item *t*-tests revealed statistically significant differences between the item means for offer versus feasibility (see Appendix D for item *t*-tests table). Specifically, there were significant differences in offer and feasibility ratings for items 5-16, 18-23, and 25-26. A majority of these activities were related to organizing meetings or programs that are more

time and resource intensive. However, many of these activities are also more collaborative, with schools trying to work with parents as partners as has been recommended in the parent involvement literature.

Effect sizes were calculated for each survey item to determine if the differences in means between offer and feasibility ratings were large enough to suggest a practical importance. Table 4 shows the results of the effect sizes calculations. The item effect sizes ranged from small to large, with the majority being large. Specifically, the effect sizes for the items ranged from .20 to 1.22. According to Cohen's Table of Effect Sizes, effect sizes of .10, .30, and .50 are considered to be small, medium, and large, respectively. It is noted that positive effect sizes in this study indicated the high minority schools' means of offer or feasibility were higher than those of the low minority schools.

Table 4. Item Effect Sizes for Item Dependent Samples *t*-tests

| Item | ES | Offer <i>M</i> | Feasibility <i>M</i> |
|---|----------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Q1: Give out information on how schools function (e.g., how grades are earned, scheduling, transitions, homework). | .28 | 3.7500 | 3.5556 |
| Q2: Give out information on "how tos" for parents related to academics (e.g., how to help with school work, how to monitor child's progress in school). | .62 | 3.9444 | 3.6944 |
| Q3: Give out information on "how tos" for parents related to children's emotional and social development (e.g., how to enhance self-esteem, how to increase responsibility). | .42 | 3.7222 | 3.4444 |
| Q4: Give out information on how to develop children's talents and strengths. | .38 | 3.4444 | 3.1667 |
| Q5: Give out information on how children develop socially, emotionally, and academically. | .55 | 3.6667 | 3.3056 |
| Q6: Do workshops to provide information in items 1-5 (i.e., school functioning, "how tos" for parents, and child development). | 1.0 5 | 3.6944 | 2.9444 |
| Q7: Give out print materials, books, or tapes on how to talk to children about schoolwork and what they are learning at school, or on children's development. | .90 | 3.3056 | 2.5556 |
| Q8: Set up a lending library so parents can check out the print materials, books, or tapes described in item 5 (e.g., how tos; children's development). | .70 | 3.5278 | 2.9444 |
| Q9: Set up parent-to-parent opportunities (e.g., support groups for parents, a parent center) for sharing information, raising questions, or discussing specific topics (e.g., raising children as a single parent, parental stress). | .97 | 3.2778 | 2.5833 |
| Q10: Provide community services for families with child concerns (e.g., medical or social services in schools). | .82 | 3.0833 | 2.2500 |
| Q11: Create more time for parents and teachers, meeting in groups or individually, to share information about children, school requirements, and family needs. | 1.2 2 | 3.2500 | 2.1944 |
| Q12: Organize a parent volunteer program to help teachers. | .58 | 3.5833 | 3.1111 |
| Q13: Set up a telephone hotline to answer parent questions about children, homework assignments, and schooling in general. | .85 | 3.0000 | 2.2500 |
| Q14: Create family-school nights for parents and educators to get to know each other and have fun. | .40 | 3.5556 | 3.2222 |
| Q15: Set up after or before school tutoring programs. | .68 | 3.7778 | 3.2778 |
| Q16: Offer Basic Adult Education Programs (e.g., GED for parents, reading instruction or family literacy programs). | .52 | 2.9444 | 2.4167 |

| Item | ES | Offer <i>M</i> | Feasibility <i>M</i> |
|---|----------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Q17: Create family-school nights for parents and educators to discuss report card grades/grading, student behavior, children's progress, test scores, or other academic issues. | .41 | 3.6667 | 3.3889 |
| Q18: Make home visits to teach parents activities they can do at home to support student learning or to answer parents' questions about their children's schoolwork. | 1.0 0 | 2.5278 | 1.6944 |
| Q19: Have family-school meetings to problem solve with parents and teachers on ways to improve child's learning or behavior. | .56 | 3.6111 | 3.1667 |
| Q20: Offer opportunities for parents to share decisions with educators (e.g., on sex education, on homework policies, on discipline in the classroom). | .65 | 3.3056 | 2.8333 |
| Q21: Create recreational and community service programs after school for students. | .95 | 3.1389 | 2.2778 |
| Q22: Train parents on ways they can help other parents create positive home support for their children's learning and school success. | 1.0 3 | 2.7500 | 1.9444 |
| Q23: Provide counseling or counseling resources for families (e.g., chemical dependency, family conflict). | .71 | 3.0833 | 2.3889 |
| Q24: Give parents information about community agencies that support children's and family's needs. | .20 | 3.9444 | 3.8889 |
| Q25: Offer group or individual meetings with the school psychologist to get information and talk about parents' concerns for their children and on ways to improve behavior, social skills, and student learning at home. | .58 | 3.5000 | 3.0556 |
| Q26: Give workshops for parents and teachers at each grade level on subjects that both groups are interested in (e.g., curriculum, behavior management, etc.). | .68 | 3.4167 | 2.9167 |
| Q27: Give parents opportunities to serve on a team or board with educators to make important school-wide decisions (e.g., on curriculum, hiring, firing, etc.). | .25 | 3.2222 | 2.9444 |

Analyses by school groupings. An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the offer variable means between high ($M = 3.39$) and low ($M = 3.41$) minority schools. The *t*-test revealed no significant difference between these two means, $t(34) = -.182, p = .857$. An independent samples *t*-test also was conducted to compare the feasibility variable means between high ($M = 2.85$) and low ($M = 2.90$) minority schools. The *t*-test, again, revealed no significant difference between the two means, $t(34) = -.379, p = .707$. Effect sizes were calculated for the offer and feasibility variables and were found to be rather small, $d = -.0642$ and $d = -.1339$, respectively. It is noted that negative effect sizes in this study indicated the low minority schools' means were higher than those of the high minority schools.

Independent samples *t*-tests also were conducted for each item to compare ratings between high and low minority schools on the offer and feasibility variables. In order to control for Type I error, a Bonferroni correction procedure was used to determine significance for the set of 54 *t*-tests. Based on the Bonferroni correction ($p = .002$), none of the item *t*-tests revealed significant differences between the item means for high versus low minority schools (see Appendix E for item *t*-tests table).

Effect sizes were calculated for each survey item to determine if the differences in means between the high and low minority schools' psychologists' responses were large enough to suggest a practical importance. Table 5 shows the results of the effect sizes calculations. The item effect sizes ranged from none to moderately large, though the majority were small to medium. Specifically, the effect sizes for the offer items ranged from -.64 to .42, whereas the effect sizes for the feasibility items ranged from -.66 to .68.

Table 5. Item Effect Sizes for Item Independent Samples *t*-tests

| Item | ES Offer | High <i>M</i> | Low <i>M</i> | ES Feas | High <i>M</i> | Low <i>M</i> |
|--|----------|---------------|--------------|---------|---------------|--------------|
| Q1: Give out information on how schools function (e.g., how grades are earned, scheduling, transitions, homework). | -.64 | 3.6250 | 4.0000 | -.55 | 3.4167 | 3.8333 |
| Q2: Give out information on "how tos" for parents related to academics (e.g., how to help with school work, how to monitor child's progress in school). | -.36 | 3.9167 | 4.0000 | .08 | 3.7083 | 3.6667 |
| Q3: Give out information on "how tos" for parents related to children's emotional and social development (e.g., how to enhance self-esteem, how to increase responsibility). | .16 | 3.7500 | 3.6667 | .38 | 3.5417 | 3.2500 |
| Q4: Give out information on how to develop children's talents and strengths. | .07 | 3.4583 | 3.4167 | .15 | 3.2083 | 3.0833 |
| Q5: Give out information on how children develop socially, emotionally, and academically. | .00 | 3.6667 | 3.6667 | .28 | 3.3750 | 3.1667 |
| Q6: Do workshops to provide information in items 1-5 (i.e., school functioning, "how tos" for parents, and child development). | .07 | 3.7083 | 3.6667 | .68 | 3.1250 | 2.5833 |
| Q7: Give out print materials, books, or tapes on how to talk to children about schoolwork and what they are learning at school, or on children's development. | .11 | 3.3333 | 3.2500 | .23 | 2.6250 | 2.4167 |
| Q8: Set up a lending library so parents can check out the print materials, books, or tapes described in item 5 (e.g., talking to children or children's development). | .42 | 3.6250 | 3.3333 | .44 | 3.0833 | 2.6667 |
| Q9: Set up parent-to-parent opportunities (e.g., support groups for parents, a parent center) for sharing information, raising questions, or discussing specific topics (e.g., raising children as a single parent, how to deal with parental stress). | .06 | 3.2917 | 3.2500 | .18 | 2.6250 | 2.5000 |
| Q10: Provide community services for families with child concerns (e.g., medical or social services in schools). | .12 | 3.1250 | 3.0000 | .00 | 2.2500 | 2.2500 |
| Q11: Create more time for parents and teachers, meeting in groups or individually, to share information about children, school requirements, and family needs. | -.45 | 3.1250 | 3.5000 | -.52 | 2.0417 | 2.5000 |
| Q12: Organize a parent volunteer program to help teachers. | -.55 | 3.4583 | 3.8333 | -.66 | 2.9167 | 3.5000 |
| Q13: Set up a telephone hotline to answer parent questions about children, homework assignments, and schooling in general. | .14 | 3.0417 | 2.9167 | .00 | 2.2500 | 2.2500 |
| Q14: Create family-school nights for parents and educators to get to know each other and have fun. | -.06 | 3.5417 | 3.5833 | -.45 | 3.0833 | 3.5000 |
| Q15: Set up after or before school tutoring programs. | .40 | 3.8333 | 3.6667 | -.35 | 3.1667 | 3.5000 |
| Q16: Offer Basic Adult Education Programs (e.g., GED for parents, reading instruction or family literacy programs). | .29 | 3.0417 | 2.7500 | .12 | 2.4583 | 2.3333 |

| Item | ES Offer | High M | Low M | ES Feas | High M | Low M |
|---|----------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|
| Q17: Create family-school nights for parents and educators to discuss report card grades/grading, student behavior, children's progress, test scores, or other academic issues. | .23 | 3.7083 | 3.5833 | -.21 | 3.3333 | 3.5000 |
| Q18: Make home visits to teach parents activities they can do at home to support student learning or to answer parents' questions about their children's schoolwork. | -.09 | 2.5000 | 2.5833 | .39 | 1.7917 | 1.5000 |
| Q19: Have family-school meetings to problem solve with parents and teachers on ways to improve child's learning or behavior. | -.46 | 3.5000 | 3.8333 | -.29 | 3.0833 | 3.3333 |
| Q20: Offer opportunities for parents to share decisions with educators (e.g., on sex education, on homework policies, on discipline in the classroom). | .12 | 3.3333 | 3.2500 | -.16 | 2.7917 | 2.9167 |
| Q21: Create recreational and community service programs after school for students. | -.32 | 3.0417 | 3.3333 | -.37 | 2.1667 | 2.5000 |
| Q22: Train parents on ways they can help other parents create positive home support for their children's learning and school success. | -.15 | 2.7083 | 2.8333 | -.29 | 1.8750 | 2.0833 |
| Q23: Provide counseling or counseling resources for families (e.g., chemical dependency, family conflict). | -.14 | 3.0417 | 3.1667 | -.40 | 2.2500 | 2.6667 |
| Q24: Give parents information about community agencies that support children's and family's needs. | -.36 | 3.9167 | 4.0000 | -.53 | 3.8333 | 4.0000 |
| Q25: Offer group or individual meetings with the school psychologist to get information and talk about parents' concerns for their children and on ways to improve behavior, social skills, and student learning at home. | -.18 | 3.4583 | 3.5833 | -.05 | 3.0417 | 3.0833 |
| Q26: Give workshops for parents and teachers at each grade level on subjects that both groups are interested in (e.g., curriculum, behavior management, etc.). | .00 | 3.4167 | 3.4167 | .47 | 3.0417 | 2.6667 |
| Q27: Give parents opportunities to serve on a team or board with educators to make important school-wide decisions (e.g., on curriculum, hiring and firing). | .20 | 3.2917 | 3.0833 | -.07 | 2.9167 | 3.0000 |

Independent samples *t*-tests were conducted to compare the means between the high and low minority schools on the four variables related to why school psychologists rated involvement activities as somewhat or not feasible. The four variables included 1) time, 2) current work responsibilities, 3) little knowledge or skill in this area, and 4) little district support to involve families in education. All four variables were rated on a 4-point scale with 1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree. Table 6 displays the means for these four variables. The *t*-test for the time variable revealed a statistically significant difference between these two means, $t(32.4) = -2.174, p = .037$. An effect size was calculated and was found to be moderately large, $d = -.633$. The differences in the means for the other three variables were not statistically significant, $t(33) = -1.095, p = .281$ (responsibilities), $t(33) = -.095, p = .925$ (no skill), and $t(33) = 1.00, p = .325$ (no support). Effect sizes were calculated for each of these variables and were found to be medium to small, $d = -.399, d = -.034, d = .364$, respectively.

Table 6. Means and Standard Deviations for Four Barriers to Implementation

| Variable | School Type | N | Mean | SD |
|----------------|---------------|----|--------|--------|
| TIME | High Minority | 24 | 3.5833 | .58359 |
| | Low Minority | 11 | 3.9091 | .30151 |
| RESPONSIBILITY | High Minority | 24 | 3.3750 | .71094 |
| | Low Minority | 11 | 3.6364 | .50452 |
| NO SKILL | High Minority | 24 | 1.7917 | .65801 |
| | Low Minority | 11 | 1.8182 | .98165 |
| NO SUPPORT | High Minority | 24 | 2.5833 | .82970 |
| | Low Minority | 11 | 2.2727 | .90453 |

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the number of current parent involvement activities listed by school psychologists in high versus low minority schools. Though the mean for high minority schools was slightly higher than that of low minority schools ($M = 5.46$, $M = 4.83$, respectively), the *t*-test revealed no significant difference between these two means, $t(34) = .457$, $p = .651$. An effect size was calculated using these two means and was found to be small, $d = .1614$.

Research Question 1

How do school psychologists' perspectives on offer compare to their perspectives on feasibility of the same activities across school type?

Hypothesis 1. There will be a high correlation between rank ordering of activities by school psychologists when comparing offer versus feasibility.

This hypothesis was not supported by the data. The Spearman's rho correlation found ($r_s = .657$, $p = .000$) was not high enough to support the hypothesis. However, it was not low either, indicating a moderate similarity between the rank ordering of offer and feasibility.

Hypothesis 2. There will be a significant difference between the ratings of offer and the ratings of feasibility by school psychologists.

This hypothesis was supported by the data. A significant difference was found between the offer mean and the feasibility mean across the entire sample of school psychologists, $t(35) = 9.669$, $p = .000$. In addition, statistically significant differences were found at the item level for a majority of the items (see Appendix D).

Research Question 2

How do high minority schools' psychologists' perspectives compare to those of low minority schools on the offer and feasibility of these activities?

Hypothesis 3. There will be a significant difference between ratings of activities by school psychologists from high versus low minority schools.

This hypothesis was not supported by the data. No significant differences were found between school psychologists' ratings of activities from high versus low minority schools either for offer ($t(34) = -.182, p = .857$) or feasibility ($t(34) = -.379, p = .707$). In addition, no significant differences were found at the item level either (see Appendix E).

Hypothesis 4. There will be a significant difference between school psychologists from high versus low minority schools on their ratings as to why involvement activities were not feasible to implement.

This hypothesis was partially supported by the data. Significant differences were not found for 3 of the 4 variables (e.g., current work responsibilities, little knowledge or skill in this area, and little district support to involve families in education). However, a statistically significant difference was found for the time variable, $t(32.4) = -2.174, p = .037$.

Research Question 3

How do high minority schools' psychologists' perspectives compare to those of low minority schools on the current involvement activities being offered?

Hypothesis 5. There will be a significant difference between the numbers of parent involvement activities listed by school psychologists from high versus low minority schools.

This hypothesis was not supported by the data. No significant difference was found between high versus low minority schools in the number of current activities the school psychologists listed ($t(34) = .457, p = .651$).

Summary

The results of the study revealed that although school psychologists' ratings of offer and feasibility tended to be lower at high minority schools than at low minority schools, none of these differences were statistically significant. However, when

comparing school psychologists' ratings of offer and feasibility across school type, there were significant differences in the means, with offer means tending to be higher than feasibility means. There was no significant difference in the number of current parent involvement activities being implemented at high versus low minority schools. Finally, the Spearman's rho correlation between offer and feasibility across school type was moderate. Therefore, hypothesis 2 was supported by the data, hypothesis 4 was partially supported, and hypotheses 1, 3 and 5 were not.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine school psychologists' perspectives on the offer and feasibility of 27 parent empowerment and involvement activities and determine if there were any differences between these two variables and between school psychologists at schools with a high number of minority students versus schools with a low number of minority students. This study was conducted as a partial replication of the Christenson et al. (1997) study measuring parents' and school psychologists' perspectives on 33 parent involvement activities. The current study's participants included 36 school psychologists from a large urban school district in Florida. Their perspectives were measured using the Family Services Feasibility Survey.

The results of this study revealed that the rank ordering of the offer ratings was moderately similar to the rank ordering of the feasibility ratings across school type. This demonstrated that the activities rated as most important to offer were typically rated as most feasible to implement and vice versa. However, school psychologists did significantly differ on their ratings of whether an activity should be offered at their schools and whether they thought it was feasible to implement that same activity over the next 5 years. These significant differences were overall and at the item level, which was reflected in the mostly large effect sizes. The ratings tended to be higher for offer and lower for feasibility, indicating that even though school psychologists thought it was important to offer these activities, they did not think that they, necessarily, were as feasible to implement. Nonetheless, the actual feasibility ratings were generally higher than expected, with 77% (N = 21) ranging at or between 2.5 and 3, indicating that a majority of the activities were rated somewhat feasible to feasible to implement. This last finding is encouraging in light of the differences in rating between offer and feasibility.

Additional results of this study revealed that school psychologists at high minority schools did not differ significantly on their offer and feasibility ratings from school psychologists at low minority schools. Neither was there any practical significance in the differences between these group means because the effect sizes were small. When comparing the high and low minority school groupings at the item level, there also were no significant differences. However, a number of items had moderately large effect sizes ($d = \pm .5$), demonstrating a practical importance in these mean differences.

Specifically, effect sizes for Items 1 (i.e., give out information on how schools function) and 12 (i.e., organize a parent volunteer program to help teachers) indicated that school psychologists at low minority schools thought these activities were more important to offer and more feasible to implement than those at high minority schools. With Items 11 (i.e., create more time for parents and teachers to share information about children, school requirements, and family needs) and 24 (i.e., give parents information about community agencies that support children's and family's needs), school psychologists at low minority schools thought these activities were more feasible to implement than those at high minority schools. Conversely, school psychologists at high minority schools thought the activity in Item 6 (i.e., do workshops to provide information in items 1-5, such as school functioning, "how tos" for parents, and child development) was more feasible to implement than those at low minority schools.

Results related to why school psychologists rated certain activities as somewhat or not feasible to implement revealed that school psychologists at both high and low minority schools thought time was the biggest reason why activities were not feasible to implement, with current work responsibilities a close second for both groups. However, the difference in means for time between the high minority and low minority groups was statistically and practically significant, meaning that though both groups rated time as the largest barrier to implementation of the four barriers rated, the low minority group thought it much more so. The differences in ratings for the other three barriers were neither statistically or practically significant when comparing high and low minority schools.

Finally, results revealed that high minority schools were currently implementing, on average, slightly more parent empowerment and involvement activities than low minority schools. This difference in number was not statistically or practically significant, however, showing that there really was not much of a difference in the number of parent empowerment and involvement activities being implemented at high and low minority schools. What was more interesting were the types of activities offered at each school. The traditional Parent Teacher Association (PTA) was active at 67% of the low minority schools but only at 50% of the high minority schools. A number of schools also have school advisory committees (SAC), which allow parents to directly influence the decision-making at a school level. There were a number of similar activities across schools beyond the PTA and SAC, such as report card nights, parent-teacher conferences, and school to home letters/communication. There were also some creative activities unique to one or a few schools, such as Family Day or some kind of festival with families, Donuts with Dads or Parent Coffees, home visits to work with parents, Books and Buddies Night, and parent workshops or trainings.

Relationship to Previous Research

The only other study examining home-school collaboration with school psychologists is the Christenson et al. (1997) study upon which this current study is based. However, their study made comparisons between school psychologists' and parents' perspectives on the involvement activities, as well as between parents' ratings on offer and use variables, unlike the current study's comparisons between school psychologists on the offer and feasibility variable, as well as between the high and low minority schools. In addition, they did not have the psychologists consider an offer variable, having them only rate feasibility of the activities. Finally, the sample sizes are extremely divergent, with only 36 school psychologist participants in the present study and 409 in the Christenson et al. study. Therefore, the comparisons that can be made between the Christenson et al. study and the current study are limited.

Where comparisons can be made, the present findings are consistent with Christenson et al.'s (1997) previous research specific to school psychologists' ratings of feasibility. The feasibility mean ratings across all the involvement activities for the present study and the Christenson et al. study were almost the same ($M = 2.9$ and $M =$

2.7, respectively), and the range of these means was rather similar as well (1.69 to 3.89 and 1.71 to 3.57, respectively).

Interestingly enough, the two activities rated 3.5 or higher for feasibility in the Christenson et al. study were the exact same as two of the three activities rated 3.5 or higher in the present study (i.e., give out/provide information on how schools function, and give/provide parents information about community agencies). In both studies, the majority of the activities that were rated as feasible (3.0 or higher) were concerned with providing information from school to parent. Also rated as feasible to implement in both studies were family-school nights and parent volunteer programs. On the other hand, eight activities were rated 2.5 or lower for feasibility in the present, whereas 12 were rated as such in the Christenson et al. (1997) study. Nonetheless, school psychologists in both studies rated family counseling and home visits among those activities least feasible to implement.

Implications

The findings from this research have several implications for professional practice. First, this study demonstrated that there are discrepancies in school psychologists' perceptions of wanting to offer parent empowerment and involvement activities and actually thinking they are feasible to implement. Researchers, schools, and, more importantly, school psychologists should continue to search for measures that can be taken to eliminate this discrepancy and create an environment that is conducive to home-school collaboration. One measure that can be taken is changing the role of the school psychologists from itinerant diagnostician to school-based prevention and intervention expert. The traditional role of school psychologists is to work in multiple schools assessing students for special education or gifted placement. With this kind of focus, there is limited or no time to work in other areas, such as prevention and intervention, of which parent empowerment and involvement activities are an important aspect. Yet, when the focus is on prevention and intervention, there is less need for assessment because the students are getting the assistance they need. The field of school psychology has been attempting to move in this direction for some time, but this is a difficult change to make. Individual school psychologists should be working with their schools to adjust their roles and make prevention and intervention a priority.

Second, the findings related to which activities were rated highest for offer are consistent with previous research indicating that a historical barrier to parent involvement is the traditionally limited nature of typical parent-school contacts (Raffaele & Knoff, 1999; Swap, 1987). School psychologists rated highest the items related to providing information to parents and parent-teacher meetings, which are the traditional or typical parent-school contacts that tend to limit the chances for meaningful interaction and effective problem-solving (Raffaele & Knoff; Swap). Schools can eliminate this barrier by creating alternative formats to these traditional roles or expanding these roles to include, among others, opportunities for making joint decisions with educators about student- or school-related matters, opportunities to volunteer in the classroom and at the school, and opportunities to participate in workshops with school personnel (Swap). When previously discussing the activities school psychologists listed that are currently being implemented, it was noted that several schools were creative and moved beyond the traditional means of contact. More schools need to move in this direction.

Third, this study's findings related to time and current work responsibilities as barriers to implementation are consistent with previous research reporting time constraints as a major barrier to implementing parent involvement activities (Christenson et al., 1997; Gettinger & Waters Guetschow, 1998). As Christenson et al. stated, "Although we recognize the challenge for educators and parents to address the issue of time in developing partnerships to enhance student learning, we contend that time constraints can no longer be ignored" (p. 125). This barrier needs to be dealt with at the school level, and school psychologists have the opportunity to take the lead in working with the school administration to make sure that time constraints (and current work responsibilities for that matter) are eliminated as an impediment to strong home-school collaboration. Again, these barriers are related to the traditional role of school psychologists. If they were not so assessment-driven and could spend more time at one school, rather than jumping between multiple schools, then time and current work responsibilities would not be as much of an issue. As previously stated, school psychologists can work to restructure their roles at their individual schools to make prevention and intervention a priority.

Limitations

Generalizations of this study's results are limited. First, participation by school psychologists was voluntary. The characteristics of the general population may differ from the characteristics of those who volunteer to take part in research. The participants of the present study may have believed that parent empowerment and involvement are important issues, more so than those who chose not to participate. Therefore, these results may be positively skewed and may not represent the general population of school psychologists across the country.

Second, the sample of school psychologists was extremely small and from a single school district. This is likely the key reason a majority of the results were not statistically or practically (i.e., effect sizes) significant and why a factor analysis could not be conducted of the modified survey used in the present study. Yet, although this study did not reveal any significant differences on ratings between school psychologists from high minority schools and those from low minority schools, this does not mean that the two perspectives are truly the same. The minor differences in means that did exist might be magnified with a much larger and diverse sample. Therefore, these results may not generalize to school psychologists at other high and low minority schools.

Third, the participants in this study were school psychologists and were surveyed as representatives of the school in which they work. However, since school psychologists usually are not as involved in the day-to-day functioning of the school as are teachers or principals (particularly if they are itinerant), their perspectives on the offer and feasibility of parent empowerment and involvement activities may not be as valid nor generalizable to the school as a whole. Nonetheless, it is important to understand their perspectives regarding these issues since school psychologists have the skills and training to be playing a much larger role in the implementation of these activities.

Fourth, the school groupings of high and low minorities may not have been different enough to convey true differences in ratings. The criterion for a high minority school was 50% or more, whereas the criterion for a low minority school was less than 50%. This means that a school with 52% and 48% minorities may have been compared when the difference in the percentage of minorities at either school is minute. In fact, six schools in the high minority group had 60% or less of minorities, whereas two schools in

the low minority group had higher than 45% of minorities. This problem of not having truly different groupings may have also attributed to the lack of statistically and practically significant results.

Fifth, the negative attitude conveyed by the Director of Psychological Services towards parent involvement and this present study may have impacted the response rate by the district's school psychologists. She overtly stated parent involvement was not important, did not allow this researcher to discuss the current study or be present at the meeting when the survey was distributed, and did not discuss and distribute the survey at the district meeting but, rather, had the Assistant Director of Psychological Services do it. These negative attitudes and actions conveyed the message to the district's school psychologists that this issue and this study were not important. All of this may have limited the current study's response rate, which was rather low.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies should be conducted to further explore research on school psychologists in relation to parent empowerment and involvement activities. However, much larger samples of school psychologists are necessary to determine if any significant differences do exist between those from high minority schools and those from low minority schools. A large sample would also enable a factor analysis to be conducted of the items on the Family Services Feasibility Survey. Results from a factor analysis would lend support to the validity of this scale and provide much needed psychometric properties beyond reliability. In addition, this survey should be used with other educational groups, such as administrators, teachers, guidance counselors, and social workers, to determine if school psychologists' perspectives are unique within the educational system and whether the other school representatives have attitudes that engender or limit parent involvement.

Future studies also should use criteria that define the high and low minority school groupings into two distinguishably separate groups. One recommendation is that only the extremes should be compared when looking at high and low minority schools. A 70/30 split is one possibility, where high minority schools are defined as 70% or more minority students, and low minority schools are defined as 30% or less minority students. By analyzing only the extremes, differences in the responses are likely to be found

statistically and practically significant. If they are not, then one can be more confident that the lack of significance resulted from the lack of real differences between the two groups.

Finally, more emphasis should be placed on studying the barriers to implementation within this survey. This could be done by extending the barriers rating section and including more of the barriers proposed by the parent involvement literature, such as lack of resources (e.g., money, staff), ease of implementation, whether or not parents are asked to participate, and parents', teachers', administrators', and school psychologists' attitudes towards parent involvement. This would allow future research to further clarify and examine the barriers to implementing involvement activities, services, or programs from the school representatives' perspective. For schools that have the goal of increasing effective parent involvement, an extended section rating barriers would provide a better understanding of the potential barriers to such programs and offer a starting point from which these schools could begin to tear down these barriers. Another means of researching barriers might be to use an extended barriers section as a tool in conducting focus groups to discuss barriers in more detail and from a variety of perspectives. The qualitative data gathered in a focus group format would be invaluable to school districts and its schools in their efforts to eliminate barriers and promote home-school collaboration.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

September 2002

Dear Hillsborough County School Psychologist:

We are asking you to participate in a research study examining home-school collaboration funded by the Florida Association of School Psychologists. The study is a partial replication of a study conducted in 1993 by Drs. Sandra Christenson, Christine Hurley, Susan Sheridan, and Kevin Fenstermacher on behalf of NASP (to review original study, see the 1997 *School Psychology Review*, 26 (1), 111-130). For this study, we are asking each of the 140 Hillsborough County School Psychologists to complete the attached survey, which takes about 10 to 15 minutes, and to return it in the attached self-addressed, prepaid envelope. We need your participation to make this effort a success. However, your decision to participate is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate, please complete the attached survey by **October 4, 2002**.

The survey consists of items on home-school communication and ways of involving parents in their children's education. The information collected will assist schools in planning feasible ways to involve parents in their children's education. We hope that you will participate and be part of an effort to understand how schools can best involve parents in education. For your participation, you will receive a summary copy of the survey results. We hope this information will be of assistance in any of your future efforts to feasibly and effectively involve parents at your schools.

By completing and returning the survey, you will be allowing us to use your responses in the study through implied consent. For the purpose of analysis, each survey will be coded according to the school's name you include in the demographics section of the survey. Your responses will be anonymous, and the research records will be kept confidential to the extent of the law. Authorized research personnel, employees of the Department of Health and Human Services, and the University of South Florida Institutional Review Board may inspect the records from this research project, which will be kept in a locked cabinet at USF. There are no risks to you for participating in this study. The results of this study may be published. However, results will not include any of your personally identifying information. It would be most helpful if you would complete the attached survey immediately and return it in the envelope provided. Should you have any questions about this research study, we can be reached at (813) 974-7872 (Michelle) or (813) 974-1255 (Linda). If you have any questions about your rights as a research study participant, you may contact a member of the Division of Research Compliance of USF at (813) 974-5638.

We look forward to receiving the enclosed survey from you by **October 4, 2002**. Thank you for your participation!

Sincerely,

Michelle M. Darter-Lagos, M.A.
School Psychology Graduate Student
University of South Florida

Linda M. Raffaele Mendez, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
University of South Florida



Michelle Darter-Lagos is currently a fourth year doctoral student in the School Psychology Program at the University of South Florida. She works as a graduate assistant at the Florida Mental Health Institute. Before attending USF, Michelle worked for almost six years in the realm of politics, advocacy, and non-profit work in Washington, D.C. Specifically, she has been an advocate for Latino civil rights, especially in education. Michelle is Costa Rican-American and speaks Spanish fluently. She is married to Jose Santos Lagos, a Nicaraguan and U.S. Resident. They have one tiny dog named Tito. They reside in Brandon, Florida.

This Research Study has been reviewed and approved by the University of South Florida Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. The Board may be contacted at (813) 974-5638.

Appendix B

Family Services Feasibility Survey¹

- I.** Many suggestions for creating home-school partnerships appear in books, journals, and educational newsletters. Although the suggestions may be helpful to enhance children’s learning, they may vary in the degree to which they are feasible to implement in schools. Listed are 27 services that have been suggested for schools to provide for families. Please rate these activities according to whether you think schools should offer them (1st column) and whether they are feasible to implement over the next five years at your school (2nd column). Keep in mind that implementation of these services can be shared by many school personnel (counselors, teachers, social workers, school psychologists, etc.). Your four choices in the “Offer” column include:
Definitely Yes (Y), Maybe (M), Probably Not (PN), and No or Should Not (N).
 Your four choices in the “Feasibility” column include:
Very Feasible (VF), Feasible (F), Somewhat Feasible (SF), and Not Feasible (NF).

| Schools should: | Offer | | | | Feasibility | | | |
|--|-------|---|----|---|-------------|---|----|----|
| | Y | M | PN | N | VF | F | SF | NF |
| 1. Give out information on how schools function (e.g., how grades are earned, scheduling, transitions, homework). | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. Give out information on “how tos” for parents related to academics (e.g., how to help with school work, how to monitor child’s progress in school). | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. Give out information on “how tos” for parents related to children’s emotional and social development (e.g., how to enhance self-esteem, how to increase responsibility) | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. Give out information on how to develop children’s talents and strengths. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. Give out information on how children develop socially, emotionally, and academically. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6. Do workshops to provide information in items 1-5 (i.e., school functioning, “how tos” for parents, and child development). | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. Give out print materials, books, or tapes on how to talk to children about schoolwork and what they are learning at school, or on children’s development. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8. Set up a lending library so parents can check out the print materials, books, or tapes described in item 5 (e.g., talking to children or children’s development). | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 9. Set up parent-to-parent opportunities (e.g., support | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

¹ Modified version of the NASP Family Services Feasibility Survey (Christenson et al., 1997)

Schools should:

| | <u>Offer</u> | | | | <u>Feasibility</u> | | | |
|--|--------------|---|----|---|--------------------|---|----|----|
| | Y | M | PN | N | VF | F | SF | NF |
| groups for parents, a parent center) for sharing information, raising questions, or discussing specific topics (e.g., raising children as a single parent, how to deal with parental stress). | | | | | | | | |
| 10. Provide community services for families with child concerns (e.g., medical or social services in schools). | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 11. Create more time for parents and teachers, meeting in groups or individually, to share information about children, school requirements, and family needs. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 12. Organize a parent volunteer program to help teachers. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 13. Set up a telephone hotline to answer parent questions about children, homework assignments, and schooling in general. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 14. Create family-school nights for parents and educators to get to know each other and have fun. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 15. Set up after or before school tutoring programs. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 16. Offer Basic Adult Education Programs (e.g., GED for parents, reading instruction or family literacy programs). | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 17. Create family-school nights for parents and educators to discuss report card grades/grading, student behavior, children's progress, test scores, or other academic issues. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 18. Make home visits to teach parents activities they can do at home to support student learning or to answer parents' questions about their children's schoolwork. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 19. Have family-school meetings to problem solve with parents and teachers on ways to improve child's learning or behavior. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 20. Offer opportunities for parents to share decisions with educators (e.g., on sex education, on homework policies, on discipline in the classroom). | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 21. Create recreational and community service programs after school for students. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 22. Train parents on ways they can help other parents create positive home support for their children's learning and school success. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Schools should:

| | <u>Offer</u> | | | | <u>Feasibility</u> | | | |
|--|--------------|---|----|---|--------------------|---|----|----|
| | Y | M | PN | N | VF | F | SF | NF |
| 23. Provide counseling or counseling resources for families (e.g., chemical dependency, family conflict). | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 24. Give parents information about community agencies that support children's and family's needs. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 25. Offer group or individual meetings with the school psychologist to get information and talk about parents' concerns for their children and on ways to improve behavior, social skills, and student learning at home. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 26. Give workshops for parents and teachers at each grade level on subjects that both groups are interested in (e.g., curriculum, behavior management, etc.). | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 27. Give parents opportunities to serve on a team or board with educators to make important school-wide decisions (e.g., on curriculum, hiring and firing). | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

II. Think about the above listed activities that were rated as somewhat or not feasible, and rate the extent to which you agree with the following four statements using: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), or Strongly Disagree (SD).

The services were rated as somewhat or not feasible because of:

- | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|----|
| 1. time. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 2. current work responsibilities. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 3. little knowledge/skill in this area. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 4. little district support to involve families in education. | SA | A | D | SD |

III. Demographics

1. My ethnicity is:

1. ____ African American
2. ____ Asian American
3. ____ European American
4. ____ Latino/Hispanic
5. ____ Native American
6. ____ Multiethnic, be specific _____
7. ____ Other, be specific _____

2. My gender is: 1. ____ Female 2. ____ Male

3. In addition to English, I am fluent in _____ language(s): *(check all that apply)*

1. _____ Chinese
2. _____ French
3. _____ Japanese
4. _____ Italian
5. _____ Spanish
6. _____ Other, be specific: _____

4. I have _____ years of experience as a school psychologist.

5. As a school psychologist, I serve students at the _____ level:
(put the number of schools you serve at each level in the blank spaces below)

1. _____ preschool
2. _____ elementary
3. _____ middle school/junior high
4. _____ high school

6. As a school psychologist, I am responsible for _____ school(s): *(check one)*

1. _____ 1
2. _____ 2-3
3. _____ 4-6
4. _____ 7-10
5. _____ more than 10

The following questions refer to the school upon which you based your survey ratings:

7. The name of the school upon which I based my responses is _____.

8. It is a _____ school: *(check one)*

1. _____ elementary
2. _____ middle school/junior high
3. _____ high school

9. I work primarily with minorities: 1. _____ Yes 2. _____ No

10. [If yes to #9] I have been working primarily with minorities for _____ years/months
(circle one)

11. I estimate most students in my school are from _____ ethnic group: *(check one)*

1. _____ African American
2. _____ Asian American
3. _____ European American
4. _____ Latino/Hispanic
5. _____ Native American
6. _____ Heterogeneous, be specific _____
7. _____ Other, be specific _____

12. I estimate most students in my school are from _____ income households: *(check one)*

1. _____ low (below 20K)
2. _____ middle (20-60K)
3. _____ high (above 60K)

13. Total number of students in my school: _____

14. I estimate that _____% of students are bused to my school from other parts of town.

III. Please use this page to list the parent empowerment and involvement activities that are currently in place at your school (the one upon which you based your survey ratings) and what role you have with each activity (e.g., assisted in developing, coordinating, conducting, etc.), if any.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Appendix C

Offer Means in Rank Order

| Item | N | M | SD |
|------|----|--------|---------|
| Q24O | 36 | 3.9444 | .23231 |
| Q2O | 36 | 3.9444 | .23231 |
| Q15O | 36 | 3.7778 | .42164 |
| Q1O | 36 | 3.7500 | .60356 |
| Q3O | 36 | 3.7222 | .51331 |
| Q6O | 36 | 3.6944 | .57666 |
| Q17O | 36 | 3.6667 | .53452 |
| Q5O | 36 | 3.6667 | .53452 |
| Q19O | 36 | 3.6111 | .72812 |
| Q12O | 36 | 3.5833 | .69179 |
| Q14O | 36 | 3.5556 | .73463 |
| Q8O | 36 | 3.5278 | .69636 |
| Q25O | 36 | 3.5000 | .69693 |
| Q4O | 36 | 3.4444 | .60684 |
| Q26O | 36 | 3.4167 | .64918 |
| Q20O | 36 | 3.3056 | .66845 |
| Q7O | 36 | 3.3056 | .74907 |
| Q9O | 36 | 3.2778 | .74108 |
| Q11O | 36 | 3.2500 | .84092 |
| Q27O | 36 | 3.2222 | 1.04502 |
| Q21O | 36 | 3.1389 | .89929 |
| Q23O | 36 | 3.0833 | .90633 |
| Q10O | 36 | 3.0833 | .99642 |
| Q13O | 36 | 3.0000 | .86189 |
| Q16O | 36 | 2.9444 | 1.01262 |
| Q22O | 36 | 2.7500 | .84092 |
| Q18O | 36 | 2.5278 | .90982 |

Feasibility Means in Rank Order

| Item | N | M | SD |
|------|----|--------|---------|
| Q24F | 36 | 3.8889 | .31873 |
| Q2F | 36 | 3.6944 | .52478 |
| Q1F | 36 | 3.5556 | .77254 |
| Q3F | 36 | 3.4444 | .77254 |
| Q17F | 36 | 3.3889 | .80277 |
| Q5F | 36 | 3.3056 | .74907 |
| Q15F | 36 | 3.2778 | .94449 |
| Q14F | 36 | 3.2222 | .92924 |
| Q4F | 36 | 3.1667 | .84515 |
| Q19F | 36 | 3.1667 | .84515 |
| Q12F | 36 | 3.1111 | .91894 |
| Q25F | 36 | 3.0556 | .82616 |
| Q8F | 36 | 2.9444 | .95452 |
| Q6F | 36 | 2.9444 | .82616 |
| Q27F | 36 | 2.9444 | 1.14504 |
| Q26F | 36 | 2.9167 | .80623 |
| Q20F | 36 | 2.8333 | .77460 |
| Q9F | 36 | 2.5833 | .69179 |
| Q7F | 36 | 2.5556 | .90851 |
| Q16F | 36 | 2.4167 | 1.02470 |
| Q23F | 36 | 2.3889 | 1.04957 |
| Q21F | 36 | 2.2778 | .91374 |
| Q13F | 36 | 2.2500 | .90633 |
| Q10F | 36 | 2.2500 | 1.02470 |
| Q11F | 36 | 2.1944 | .88864 |
| Q22F | 36 | 1.9444 | .71492 |
| Q18F | 36 | 1.6944 | .74907 |

Appendix D

Item Dependent Samples *t*-tests by Offer and Feasibility

| Paired Items | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> (2-tailed) |
|--------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|---------------------|
| Q1O - Q1F | .1944 | .57666 | 2.023 | 35 | .051 |
| Q2O - Q2F | .2500 | .50000 | 3.000 | 35 | .005 |
| Q3O - Q3F | .2778 | .61464 | 2.712 | 35 | .010 |
| Q4O - Q4F | .2778 | .70147 | 2.376 | 35 | .023 |
| Q5O - Q5F | .3611 | .63932 | 3.389 | 35 | .002 |
| Q6O - Q6F | .7500 | .76997 | 5.844 | 35 | .000 |
| Q7O - Q7F | .7500 | .64918 | 6.932 | 35 | .000 |
| Q8O - Q8F | .5833 | .73193 | 4.782 | 35 | .000 |
| Q9O - Q9F | .6944 | .62425 | 6.675 | 35 | .000 |
| Q10O - Q10F | .8333 | .69693 | 7.174 | 35 | .000 |
| Q11O - Q11F | 1.0556 | .86005 | 7.364 | 35 | .000 |
| Q12O - Q12F | .4722 | .65405 | 4.332 | 35 | .000 |
| Q13O - Q13F | .7500 | .73193 | 6.148 | 35 | .000 |
| Q14O - Q14F | .3333 | .47809 | 4.183 | 35 | .000 |
| Q15O - Q15F | .5000 | .84515 | 3.550 | 35 | .001 |
| Q16O - Q16F | .5278 | .81015 | 3.909 | 35 | .000 |
| Q17O - Q17F | .2778 | .56625 | 2.943 | 35 | .006 |
| Q18O - Q18F | .8333 | .84515 | 5.916 | 35 | .000 |
| Q19O - Q19F | .4444 | .55777 | 4.781 | 35 | .000 |
| Q20O - Q20F | .4722 | .73625 | 3.848 | 35 | .000 |
| Q21O - Q21F | .8611 | .79831 | 6.472 | 35 | .000 |
| Q22O - Q22F | .8056 | .70991 | 6.808 | 35 | .000 |
| Q23O - Q23F | .6944 | .74907 | 5.562 | 35 | .000 |
| Q24O - Q24F | .0556 | .23231 | 1.435 | 35 | .160 |
| Q25O - Q25F | .4444 | .69465 | 3.839 | 35 | .000 |
| Q26O - Q26F | .5000 | .69693 | 4.305 | 35 | .000 |
| Q27O - Q27F | .2778 | .70147 | 2.376 | 35 | .023 |

Appendix E

Item Independent Samples t-test by High and Low Minority Schools

| Item | Levene's Test For Equality of Variances | F | p | t | df | p (2-tailed) |
|------|---|--------|------|--------|--------|--------------|
| Q10 | Equal variances not assumed | 21.349 | .000 | -2.584 | 23.000 | .017 |
| Q20 | Equal variances not assumed | 4.987 | .032 | -1.446 | 23.000 | .162 |
| Q30 | Equal variances assumed | .212 | .648 | .454 | 34 | .653 |
| Q40 | Equal variances assumed | 1.554 | .221 | .192 | 34 | .849 |
| Q50 | Equal variances assumed | .092 | .763 | .000 | 34 | 1.000 |
| Q60 | Equal variances assumed | .020 | .889 | .202 | 34 | .841 |
| Q70 | Equal variances assumed | .112 | .740 | .311 | 34 | .758 |
| Q80 | Equal variances assumed | 1.192 | .283 | 1.192 | 34 | .242 |
| Q90 | Equal variances assumed | .996 | .325 | .157 | 34 | .876 |
| Q100 | Equal variances assumed | .024 | .877 | .350 | 34 | .728 |
| Q110 | Equal variances assumed | .853 | .362 | -1.272 | 34 | .212 |
| Q120 | Equal variances not assumed | 11.733 | .002 | -1.926 | 33.986 | .063 |
| Q130 | Equal variances assumed | .005 | .946 | .405 | 34 | .688 |
| Q140 | Equal variances assumed | .473 | .496 | -.158 | 34 | .875 |
| Q150 | Equal variances not assumed | 4.250 | .047 | 1.029 | 17.798 | .317 |
| Q160 | Equal variances not assumed | 6.286 | .017 | .710 | 16.053 | .488 |
| Q170 | Equal variances assumed | 2.658 | .112 | .656 | 34 | .516 |
| Q180 | Equal variances assumed | .066 | .798 | -.256 | 34 | .800 |
| Q190 | Equal variances assumed | 6.772 | .014 | -1.634 | 33.937 | .111 |
| Q200 | Equal variances assumed | .376 | .544 | .348 | 34 | .730 |
| Q210 | Equal variances assumed | .629 | .433 | -.915 | 34 | .367 |
| Q220 | Equal variances assumed | .000 | .983 | -.415 | 34 | .680 |
| Q230 | Equal variances assumed | .452 | .506 | -.385 | 34 | .702 |
| Q240 | Equal variances not assumed | 4.987 | .032 | -1.446 | 23.000 | .162 |
| Q250 | Equal variances assumed | 1.299 | .262 | -.502 | 34 | .619 |

| Item | Levene's Test For Equality of Variances | F | p | t | df | p (2-tailed) |
|------|---|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------------|
| Q26O | Equal variances assumed | .000 | 1.000 | .000 | 34 | 1.000 |
| Q27O | Equal variances assumed | .194 | .662 | .558 | 34 | .580 |
| Q1F | Equal variances not assumed | 16.767 | .000 | -1.966 | 33.721 | .058 |
| Q2F | Equal variances assumed | .005 | .944 | .221 | 34 | .826 |
| Q3F | Equal variances assumed | 1.167 | .288 | 1.070 | 34 | .292 |
| Q4F | Equal variances assumed | .461 | .502 | .413 | 34 | .682 |
| Q5F | Equal variances assumed | .318 | .577 | .782 | 34 | .439 |
| Q6F | Equal variances assumed | .028 | .867 | 1.925 | 34 | .063 |
| Q7F | Equal variances assumed | 1.840 | .184 | .643 | 34 | .524 |
| Q8F | Equal variances assumed | .161 | .691 | 1.244 | 34 | .222 |
| Q9F | Equal variances assumed | .149 | .702 | .506 | 34 | .616 |
| Q10F | Equal variances assumed | 1.483 | .232 | .000 | 34 | 1.000 |
| Q11F | Equal variances assumed | 2.743 | .107 | -1.484 | 34 | .147 |
| Q12F | Equal variances assumed | .408 | .527 | -1.857 | 34 | .072 |
| Q13F | Equal variances assumed | 3.441 | .072 | .000 | 34 | 1.000 |
| Q14F | Equal variances assumed | .271 | .606 | -1.280 | 34 | .209 |
| Q15F | Equal variances assumed | .907 | .348 | -.998 | 34 | .325 |
| Q16F | Equal variances assumed | 2.354 | .134 | .341 | 34 | .735 |
| Q17F | Equal variances assumed | .187 | .668 | -.582 | 34 | .565 |
| Q18F | Equal variances assumed | 1.259 | .270 | 1.105 | 34 | .277 |
| Q19F | Equal variances assumed | 1.738 | .196 | -.833 | 34 | .411 |
| Q20F | Equal variances assumed | 1.233 | .275 | -.451 | 34 | .655 |
| Q21F | Equal variances assumed | .173 | .680 | -1.033 | 34 | .309 |
| Q22F | Equal variances assumed | .405 | .529 | -.820 | 34 | .418 |
| Q23F | Equal variances assumed | .111 | .741 | -1.127 | 34 | .268 |
| Q24F | Equal variances not assumed | 14.167 | .001 | -2.145 | 23.000 | .043 |

| Item | Levene's Test For Equality of Variances | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>t</i> | df | <i>p</i> (2-tailed) |
|------|---|----------|----------|----------|----|---------------------|
| Q25F | Equal variances assumed | 2.060 | .160 | -.141 | 34 | .889 |
| Q26F | Equal variances assumed | .032 | .858 | 1.330 | 34 | .192 |
| Q27F | Equal variances assumed | .847 | .364 | -.203 | 34 | .840 |

**Feedback Questionnaire
Family Services Feasibility Survey and Parent Interview
Spring 2002**

Please rate both of the instruments using the following scale:

- 5 = strongly agree
- 4 = agree
- 3 = neither agree nor disagree
- 2 = disagree
- 1 = strongly disagree

Place the number which *best* represents your reaction to each statement on the lines provided beside each statement.

Family Services Feasibility Survey

- _____ 1. The cover letter to school psychologists was easily read and understood.
- _____ 2. The wording of the survey directions was easily read and understood.
- _____ 3. The wording of the survey items was easily read and understood.
- _____ 4. The wording of the demographic questions was easily read and understood.
- _____ 5. The survey items appear to measure the feasibility of parent involvement activities.
- _____ 6. The survey did not take long to complete (exact time: _____ minutes).

If you scored any of the items a 3 or lower, please explain why on the lines below and be as specific as possible. Also, if you have any additional comments, suggestions, or recommendations of how to improve the survey, please write them in here.

Please return to Michelle Darter-Lagos. Thanks for your feedback and time.