



Parker Performing Arts School

Parker Performing Arts BOD Monthly Working Meeting

****VIRTUAL MEETING****

Published on March 21, 2023 at 4:37 PM MDT

Date and Time

Tuesday March 21, 2023 at 5:45 PM MDT

Location

PPA BOD Working Meeting

Tuesday, March 21 · 5:45 – 7:00pm

Google Meet joining info

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/yvv-zixe-idj>

Or dial: (US) +1 216-839-9654 PIN: 481 443 058#

More phone numbers: <https://tel.meet/yvv-zixe-idj?pin=8404901589467>

Agenda

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
I. Opening Items			5:45 PM
A.	Call the Meeting to Order	Rochonne Sanchez (A, #8)	
B.	Record Attendance & Introduce/Recognize Visitors	Elizabeth Remington (A, #2)	1 m
C.	Reading of Vision and Mission	Katie McDonald (E, #4)	1 m

PPA Vision

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
As the performing arts school of choice, we foster confidence, celebrate diversity, and emphasize academic excellence.			

PPA Mission

Parker Performing Arts School equips students to become independent creative thinkers, critical problem solvers, and successful collaborators. In our safe learning environment, students engage in rich and innovative instruction in academics and the performing arts in preparation for their roles as citizens of a diverse and increasingly globalized community.

II. Approval of Consent Agenda 5:47 PM

A. Adoption of Agenda	Vote	Rochonne Sanchez (A, #8)	1 m
B. Approval of 3/7/23 Business Meeting Minutes	Approve Minutes	Elizabeth Remington (A, #2)	

III. Public Comments/Scheduled Appearances 5:48 PM

A. Public Comments	FYI	Rochonne Sanchez (A, #8)	15 m
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All public comments must be submitted 3 hours prior to any public Board meeting.

IV. Actionable Items 6:03 PM

A. Restructuring format of PPA Board Working Meetings	Discuss	Rochonne Sanchez (A, #8)	30 m
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In an effort to be more proactive and less reactive to the needs of our school, we'll be changing the format of our working meetings to reflect the urgent needs of PPA. We will determine our work focus for each month at the monthly Business meeting - these may be new topics or continuing projects. The ultimate goal is to be better prepared when going into our annual strategic planning meeting with initiatives for the upcoming year so that we can successfully execute on our plans throughout the year.

March working meeting topic:

Community Engagement/Volunteer Activity: How do we as the governing board of PPA inspire willing and engaged involvement in our school to assist our staff and Admin team in executing on their goals? A key point to remember in our planning - community is what drives many families' desire to stay with our school until their students move to HS.

<http://parents-teachers.com/cgi-bin/library/jump.cgi?ID=2159>

<https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/frss/publications/98032/index.asp?sectionid=7>

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
	https://medium.com/@neelamc/barriers-to-parental-involvement-in-schools-and-what-ptas-can-do-about-it-927fa6b2c00b		

B.	PPA BOD Annual Strategic Planning Meeting 23/24 SY	Discuss	Rochonne Sanchez (A, #8)	10 m
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Set date for Annual Strategic Planning Meeting - August before school starts is preferable.

V. Other Business **6:43 PM**

A.	Other Business/Actionable Items	Discuss	Rochonne Sanchez (A, #8)
B.	Plans for Next Meeting	Discuss	Rochonne Sanchez (A, #8)

The next Board meeting is the Business Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, April 4th, 2023 at 5:45 PM Parker Performing Arts School in room 140.

VI. Closing Items **6:43 PM**

A.	Adjourn Meeting	Vote	1 m
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Coversheet

Approval of 3/7/23 Business Meeting Minutes

Section: II. Approval of Consent Agenda
Item: B. Approval of 3/7/23 Business Meeting Minutes
Purpose: Approve Minutes
Submitted by:
Related Material:
Minutes for Parker Performing Arts BOD Monthly Business Meeting on March 7, 2023

APPROVED



Parker Performing Arts School

Minutes

Parker Performing Arts BOD Monthly Business Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday March 7, 2023 at 5:45 PM

Location

Parker Performing Arts School
15035 Cmpark Blvd
Parker, CO 80134

Room 140 unless stated otherwise on the meeting agenda

Directors Present

C. Thomas (A, #5) (remote), E. Remington (A, #2), J. Adamson (remote), K. McDonald (E, #4),
R. Sanchez (A, #8), S. Cooke (E, #6), V. Olivas Smith (E, #7)

Directors Absent

C. Walker (E, #1)

Ex Officio Members Present

P. Molfino

Non Voting Members Present

P. Molfino

Guests Present

T. Maestas

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

R. Sanchez (A, #8) called a meeting of the board of directors of Parker Performing Arts School to order on Tuesday Mar 7, 2023 at 5:50 PM.

B. Record Attendance & Introduce/Recognize Visitors

C. Reading of Vision and Mission

Reading done by Director K. McDonald

II. Approval of Consent Agenda

A. Adoption of Agenda

Motion to approve agenda by Director R Sanchez
Seconded by Director K McDonald
Passed as written

B. Approval of 2/21/23 PPA BOD Working Board Meeting Minutes

R. Sanchez (A, #8) made a motion to approve the minutes PPA BOD Working Board Meeting on 02-21-23.
V. Olivas Smith (E, #7) seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

III. Public Comments/Scheduled Appearances

A. Welcome scheduled guests and meeting attendees

none submitted

B. Public Comments

none submitted

IV. Administration Reports

A. PrinciPAL Update with Mr Molfino

Update by P. Molfino

- good place for fiscal year
- required spending on kitchen to upgrade for the needed expansion due to the free lunch being added for school year '23/'24

- end of year fiscal spending is ongoing
 - 15 day buffer goal to clear out
 - supplemental budget to come to the board to be able submit to district
- Compark situation big deal - waiting to get the update and on paper agreement
- CMAS after break - will dominate the month of April
- Hiring
 - one job posted at this time - elementary SPED K-3
 - AP job - C Woo will be stepping back from a full time role
 - potentially kept on as a psychologist
 - Deb Rohr will step into Middle School role
 - will need to back fill the Elementary role (a lot of interest)
- Need to bring in more kids to get to the 670 kids mark
 - tours are very full
 - enrollment across district is in a rough place
 - 1st grade still biggest need
- PPR number is strong for next year
 - looking to do as much as possible to keep teachers - flat increase of 3% currently scheduled
 - teacher retention looks good
- New schedule and registration is in process will look at numbers after break

B. Business Manager's Report

T. Maestas

- Feb Financials
 - Rescheduled for March 20th for review
 - will present after
- May 30th deadline for approval of budget

Finance committee looks to be full at this time - if interested parent send name to Director JT Adamson should a space opens up

V. Committee Reports

A. School Accountability Committee (SAC)

Director K McDonald

- went over teacher and parent survey and did small edits
 - technical difficulties caused delay for sending out to parents
 - new date for sending 03/08/2022
 - anonymously and confidential

- 1 week to complete the survey
- Stand alone email to let everyone know about the survey
- Teacher survey for after spring break
- Elementary literacy research mostly finished will present to SAC soon
 - order will happen in next fiscal year

B. Marketing Committee

- Implementation of some of the ideas previously presented are in progress
- Google information is being down through postal service as the business claiming can not be done currently through the phone system
- revamped website in a couple weeks
 - niche connections
 - 10 week ad buy in Parker Chronicle
- Partners in the Arts have been added to the website this week

C. Grant Committee

Director C Thomas

- Feb wash for the committee due to scheduling conflicts
- Narrowing down niches and narratives development
- current research to identify which grants are most fitting and beneficial for the school
- meeting with Deb 03/08/2023
 - narrow down grant pathways for research and application process
- what types of grants are we currently looking for?
 - potential playground grant catalogue could be provided

D. Fundraising Committee

Director S Cooke provided update

- Chick Fil A successful spirit night
 - food credit vs dollars
 - \$284.86 as a check (10%) or \$712.15 as a food credit (25%)
 - available for performers to use during Lion Witch and wardrobe
 - would have excess after production that could be used for something else, teacher appreciation?
 - does it expire?
 - money already earmarked for production/other area would then go to the general fund
- Approval to do the food credit as long as it does not expire
- Next Spirit day 4-8pm at Chipotle 33% return

- will ask for extra hours
- drive line fliers for day of communication
- District text communication available to use for communications
 - can it be used for anything other than emergencies?
 - can use for Spirit night reminders
- Finishing the year to ramp up structure for next year for the gala
 - still one consistent committee member
- Low key fundraiser ideas?
 - Krispy Kreme digital dozens?
 - through website purchase and get back 50% back to the school
 - goal for the school set in the system 100 vouchers
 - March 22 to April 22
 - will work anywhere there is a Krispy Kreme
- Fun Run May 5th
- Maybell's labels gives a good bit back push for over the summer

E. Finance Committee

Director JT Adamson

End of Jan

- assets sitting at 2.2 million compared to 1.7 same time last year
- liabilities 408,000 current vs 474,000 same time last year
- total fund balance 1.8 million which includes tabor reserve -
 - 1.6 unrestricted fund vs just over 1 million same time last year
- upcoming things on radar is the Fun Run meeting established goals and working on freeing up money to reinvest in capital and school assets
- sitting well financially

VI. Other Business

A. Other Business/Actionable Items

PCA update by Director V. Olivias Smith

- dance was very successful
- looking for ways to get more consistent communication on volunteer opportunities with events such as the dance
- \$7500 in ticket sales
- Book Fair approximately \$12,000 in sales

- June 6th Business meeting will take place

- can be done virtually
 - supplemental budget will need to be voted on
 - retention bonuses will needed to be voted on as well
- Strategic meeting currently May 20th 9am-3pm
 - need to reschedule as everyone needs to be able to be there
 - end of July early August send dates unavailable for meeting to Director R Sanchez
 - after July 17th to allow for admins to be back and able to participate
- Please start accepting the Board On track meeting notices
 - should all be fixed for meeting links as of now

B. Plans for Next Meeting

March 21st will be a virtual meeting

VII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

Director R Sanchez moved to adjourn meeting

Director S Cooke seconded

none opposed

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

E. Remington (A, #2)

Coversheet

Restructuring format of PPA Board Working Meetings

Section:	IV. Actionable Items
Item:	A. Restructuring format of PPA Board Working Meetings
Purpose:	Discuss
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	3.Javid-Jafarov.pdf Barriers to Parental Involvement.pdf

Factors Affecting Parental Involvement in Education: The Analysis of Literature

Javid Jafarov

Queen's University of Belfast, UK

What does parental involvement mean?

There is no exact and common definition of parental involvement in the literature. For example, to LaRocque et al. (2011, p.116) parental involvement is 'the parents' or caregivers' investment in the education of their children'. Alternatively, Christenson et al. (1992) stated how parents play a role in their children's education, in both home-related and school-related. Parental involvement is parental intervention in their children's education in order to be able to obtain information about their children's academic growth, participation, when they define parental involvement (Crozier, 1999). "Family and community involvement frequently means helping reach goal defined by the schools (administrators and teachers) that reflect only school values and priorities" (Jordan et al., 2001, p10).

Barge and Loges (2003) identified that teachers', students' and parents' view and approach to parental involvement are different. They found that for parents parental involvement refers to:

- Regular supervision of students' homework by parents. Parents reported that it was essential to be sure that their children did their homework completely and to help them when needed.
- Developing individual relations with teachers. Parents thought that if they had adequate relationships with teachers and teachers saw that they paid attention to their children, the teachers' treatment of their children would be better.
- Taking advantage of extracurricular school programs. Particularly, parents who do not have enough ability to help their children with their homework or other curriculum related tasks state the importance of this involvement.
- Improving supportive collaboration within the community. According to the parents' reports, developing collaboration within the community plays an important role in students' educational achievement.

As Barge and Loges (2003) found, for students parental involvement means:

- Parental assistance with homework
- Stimulation from parents
- Communication between parents and school

Interestingly, students can distinguish whether or not authority is supportive by addressing and stating the importance of authority (Barge and Loges, 2003). When it comes to teachers' perception about parental involvement, in teachers' opinions, some forms of parental involvement- a) contact, b) taking part, c) parental monitoring, and d) discipline- are supportive, while some of them- a) negative contact, b) lack of encouragement, and c) lack of parenting abilities- are unhelpful.

The importance of parental involvement

Parental involvement plays an important role in students' education, and the advantages of it for students are numerous (Jeynes, 2003, 2007). For example, parental involvement has a positive influence on the students' academic success (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2003; Jordan et al., 2001; Gonzalez-pienda et al., 2002; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). In particular, parental involvement has more effect on students' test scores than GPA (grade point average) (Jeynes, 2003). According to Shaver and Walls (1998), students with high levels of parental involvement are better in reading and math than those with a low level of parental involvement. Furthermore, Gonzalez-peinda et al. (2002) identified that parental involvement makes a positive contribution to students' academic achievement by affecting their academic self-concept which is of considerable importance in academic success. Even Hara and Burke (1998) claimed that the key to improvement of children's academic accomplishment is boosted parental involvement. In contrast, Bobbett et al. (1995) found that the effect parental involvement has on students' academic achievement is not significant. Some researchers have even identified that when parents get involved with students' homework and communicate with school, it negatively affects the students' academic success by decreasing their test scores (Izzo et al., 1999; Shumow & Miller, 2001). In addition, Cooper et al. (2000) found that direct parental involvement particularly negatively affects the students' academic achievement.

Moreover, when parents get involved, they make a contribution to their children's emotional development and behaviour (Cai et al., 1997), well-being (Pelletier & Brent, 2002), social skills (Sanders, 1998; Henderson & Mapp, 2002) and even school attendance (Haynes et al., 1989). According to Desimone (1999), parents' participation in school activities may establish connections between teachers and parents that have a positive influence on teachers' impressions of and views about

students. In all cases, the importance of relationships between parents and school is inarguable because “the family is the most important and most enduring resource in a child’s life” and “family-school partnerships produce impressive results for children and teachers” (Petr, 2003, p11).

However, the effects of not all forms of involvement are statistically significant (Jeynes, 2011). For example, Jeynes identified that conversations about school between students and their parents and parental participation at school events have a statistically considerable influence on the students’ academic achievement, whereas the effect of checking the students’ homework by parents is not statistically significant. On the other hand, according to Jeynes (2007), the effect of parents’ participation at school events on students’ academic achievement is less than parents’ expectancies and parental styles. Interestingly, parental expectancies and discussion have more influence on middle-income students’ academic achievement than on low-income students’ academic achievement (Desimone, 1999). Furthermore, Desimone (1999) identified that talking with their mother or both parents (mother and father together) positively affects the students’ academic success, but discussion with only their father can lead to a reduction in the students’ test scores. Also, the research conducted by Bobbett et al. (1995) showed that the effects of parental involvement can be different based on the students’ ages. They found that the influence parental involvement has on secondary or high school students’ academic success is not measurable.

According to Fan and Chen (2001), parental control is weakly related to pupils’ academic success, while parental desire and hope for students’ academic success is strongly related to students’ academic success. They found that close parental control may even have a negative influence on students’ academic achievement.

Finally, parental involvement plays an important role in general school culture. As Deal and Peterson (2009, p184-185) stated: “A school, by its essential nature, must be an open system with highly permeable boundaries” and “parts of the school culture must reach out and connect with parents”.

Factors affecting parental involvement

According to literature related to parental involvement in education, factors influencing parental involvement can be divided into three groups:

- Parent related factors
- School related factors

- Student related factors

Parent related factors

Parental involvement can be affected by several socio-political factors, such as socioeconomic condition and parents' negative school experience (LaRocque et al., 2011). Studies have shown that one of the factors contributing to the level of parental involvement is parents' educational background (Pena, 2000; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Jordan et al., 2001; Potvin et al., 1999; Crozier, 1999; Baeck, 2010). For example, Lee and Bowen (2006) found that parents with 2-year or higher college degree have considerably more attendance in the activities or meetings organized at school, talk more often about educational issues with their children and expect their children to be more successful in their education. Conversely, parents whose educational levels are low may be less involved, because they do not feel self-confident enough to contact school staff (Lee & Bowen, 2006). However, Pena (2000) identified that parents with low levels of education more frequently volunteer in different types of activities at schools than those with high levels of education. The researcher stated that the problem for parents with low levels of education, as reported by the parents themselves, is that they cannot help their children with homework or other school-related issues, because their knowledge is limited. Interestingly, when it comes to parents with a university degree, they show lack of time as a main reason for not getting involved (Baeck, 2010). This can be seen in Table 1 adopted from Baeck (2010, p558).

Table 1. Parents' responses to the question of why they do not want to take part in four different activities:

Type of activities and parents' level of education	Reasons not to want to participate				
	Lack of time	Lack of knowledge	Not interested	Other	Total
Parents' Working Committee(a)***	37.9	15.6	15	31.5	546
Primary/lower secondary	23.9	33	11.4	31.8	88
Upper secondary	37.2	18	15.5	29.3	239
University/college	44.3	5.9	16	33.8	219
Total	207	85	82	172	546
Voluntary work(b)	47.1	1.1	10.7	41	261
Primary/lower secondary	34.1	2.3	9.1	54.5	44
Upper secondary	46.1	0.9	12.2	40.9	115
University/college	53.9	1	9.8	35.3	102
Total	123	3	28	107	261
School committee(C)***	25.5	41.9	13.3	19.4	542
Primary/lower secondary	12	66.3	10.9	10.9	92
Upper secondary	22	44.7	14.2	19.1	246

University/ College	35.8	27.5	13.2	23.5	204
Total	138	227	72	105	542
Parent representative(d)*	41	5.3	14.7	39.1	361
Primary/lower secondary	33.3	9.7	12.5	44.4	72
Upper secondary	39.4	6.9	17.5	36.2	160
University/ College	47.3	0.8	12.4	39.5	129
Total	148	19	53	141	361

Notes: Percentages in boldface indicate total percentages

*p<.05, ***p<.001

(a) Chi-square testchi=39.692, df=6, p=.000

(b) Chi-square testchi=6.394, df=6, p=.381

(c) Chi-square testchi=45.867, df=6, p=.039

According to Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1992), parents' beliefs about whether the effects of involvement will contribute to their children's academic achievement also influence their levels of involvement. Furthermore, parents' income levels also affect their levels of involvement (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). The researcher found that high-income parents take part more often in the activities organized by school than low-income parents. Furthermore, parents with high socio-economic status try more effectively to get involved than parents with low socio-economic status (Domina, 2005). In contrast, Shaver and Walls (1998) identified that parents' income level is not a contributing factor to their level of involvement.

In addition, family structure also has an effect on parental involvement (Astone&McLanahan, 1991; Potvin et al., 1999; Jordan et al., 2001). For instance, Astone and McLanahan (1991) found that children with a single parent or step parents are provided with less support and control in comparison to children who live in two-parent families. The interesting fact identified in this research is that single parents' children have a greater desire to talk to their parents. According to Potvin et al. (1999), the indirect influence of family structure on students' school success through parental assistance is impressive. Marital disruption in the family can lead to low levels of involvement by reducing the amount of time parents spend with children. This change is particularly typical for fathers, because the number of children who live with their mothers after divorce is significantly higher (Astone&McLanahan, 1991). Furthermore, parenting style is another factor influencing the level of involvement (Cooper et al., 2000). Interestingly, Mapp (2002) identified that parents' own experience of parental involvement when they were school pupils also affects how they get involved.

Not only the child's gender, but also the parent's gender is a factor contributing to the level of involvement (Feuerstein, 2000). For example, mothers spend more time dealing with their children's homework than fathers (Jordan et al., 2001). Another reason why parents do not get involved is that they do not perceive their involvement as a parental duty (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005); to some parents, it is the responsibility of school to educate students (Carrasquillo & London, 1993).

Finally, cultural differences, parents' own unsuccessful school experiences (Aronson, 1996) and lack of transportation (Pena, 2000) are also considered as influential factors.

School related factors

Another issue that has an influence on parental involvement is language (Aronson, 1996; LaRocque et al., 2011). The language used at schools can be very academic (LaRocque et al., 2011) and most school staff do not know how to contact parents with a different language background (Aronson, 1996). Even when parents and teachers do not have any problem in understanding each other, teachers' attitudes influence the level of involvement (Pena, 2000; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). According to Mapp (2002), if parents trust the attitude of school staff, they are likely to get more involved because "every parent wants to trust the school and to be trusted" (Deal & Peterson, 2009, p189). Moreover, Pena (2000) identified that parents anticipate the most important stimulation from teachers, but sometimes they do not feel this stimulation. Comer and Haynes (1991) stated that teacher requests made within an adequate and attractive school environment have a noticeable effect on parents deciding to get involved. On the other hand, sometimes parents' roles in getting involved are unclear, and they may need clear explanations from teachers about what they are expected to do (LaRocque et al., 2011). Fields-Smith (2005) found that parents respond more frequently to teachers' demands that are well defined.

Moreover, many parents confront the reality of a confused academic curriculum that brings its own difficulties: '...parents do experience a significant degree of confusion about what their children are doing in school' (Crozier, 1999, p228).

Student related factors

Likewise, parents are likely to get involved if they comprehend that not only teachers, but also students expect them to get involved (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001). Interestingly, students' calls for involvement can be prominent or allusive

depending on several factors, including their desire for freedom and their academic achievement (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001). Crozier (1999) identified that although parents frequently quote their children's claim for freedom as a reason not to get involved, most students value their parents' support and find it beneficial.

Interestingly, Hornby and Lafaele (2011) showed students' age as an issue affecting the level of parental involvement. They explain this in addressing the downward trend in parental involvement in upper grades. Even students' gender may be considered as a factor contributing to parental involvement (Deslandes&Potvin, 1999; Carter &Wojtkiewicz, 2000). Deslandes and Potvin (1999) found that male students' mothers contact teachers more frequently than female ones. Interestingly, according to Cooper et al. (2000), male students' parents' involvement levels are higher than females in elementary school, but in high school female students' parents' involvement levels are higher than males. Furthermore, according to Eccles and Harold (1996), parents of students with high achievement are more willing to take part in the activities organized by school than those of students with low achievement.

In conclusion, according to literature evaluated above, it is possible to say that the factors affecting the level of parental involvement are:

- Parents' educational background.
- Lack of knowledge about curriculum.
- Lack of time.
- Language
- School staff attitudes and environment.
- School demands (certain or uncertain for parents).
- Children's invitation.
- Teachers' invitation.
- Children's desire for independency.
- Parents' beliefs about their skill to develop learning.
- Parents' income level.
- Family structure.
- Parenting style.
- Parents' own parental involvement.
- Students' age.
- Students' gender.
- Parents' gender.
- Students' achievement level.
- Parents' beliefs about parental duty
- Culture.

- Parents' own negative school experience.
- Lack of transportation.

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Summary

Factors Affecting Parental Involvement in Education: The Analysis of Literature

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This study examines the factors affecting parental involvement by evaluating and analysing literature about parental involvement in education. It also answers the questions: a) What does parental involvement mean? and 2) Why is parental involvement important? In this article more than five hundreds literatures related to the factors affecting parental involvement were evaluated and analysed. The result of the analysis of literature showed that there are many factors influencing parental involvement or the level of parental involvement and these factors can be parent related, school related or student related.

Keywords: Parental involvement, Factors affecting parental involvement



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Barriers to Parental Involvement

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Abstract

The research discussed in this paper explores parent and educator perspectives towards family involvement activities, and the barriers that cause lower participation rates. The foundation of this research is built from Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological theory, asserting that children have more meaningful experiences when there is a positive connection between their mesosystems. This study surveys pre-k families regarding their perspective on the importance of parental involvement in school activities. Such activities include class celebrations, family activity nights, parent trainings/workshops, volunteering in the classroom, and attending pre-k parent groups. Parents report on the barriers preventing them from being able to attend school activities. Other factors, like the time of day, season, and external incentives are also explored. Educators were interviewed to gain insight about their perspective on parental involvement in the activities they offer at school. Parents and educators agree that work schedules are the most common barriers that parents confront.

Key Words: parent involvement, barriers, pre-k, school activities, relationship

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Introduction

As Bronfenbrenner's theory asserts, children learn best when their surrounding systems positively interact with each other (Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017). Bronfenbrenner (1977) encourages us to consider the relationship between multiple settings, as that may have an effect on behavior. In this current study, the children's family and educators are the two systems that should be interacting together. When the quality of this partnership is strong, it brings many benefits to both the parents and the students (Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017). For educators, it is important to remember that parents are a child's first teacher. Therefore, through a partnership, educators are able to learn more about the children, which aides in their interactions and teaching (Kirkwood, 2016).

For the sake of this study, the researcher has defined partnership as an ongoing relationship with open communication from all people involved. Such communication should include positive contact from teachers to parents, rather than just when the child behaves negatively. According to Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, and Doan Holbein (2005), parents report that they are contacted by their child's teacher mainly to discuss the child's behavior concerns. Positive communication promotes a stronger relationship between educators and parents, resulting in better participation (Baker, Wise, Kelley, & Skiba, 2016).

Another part of this partnership includes inviting families to school for different family involvement opportunities. Family involvement, for the purposes of this study, refers to family participation within their child's school. Such school activities may include parent/teacher conferences, parent meetings/workshops, family nights, classroom celebrations, or volunteering within the school.

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Williams, Williams, and Ullman (2002), surveyed mothers in the UK and found that 72% wanted more involvement opportunities in their child's school. Family involvement in school activities leads to increased benefits for children's learning, both academically and socially (Kirkwood, 2016). Historically there have been gains in the level of family involvement within schools, however such progress differs depending on income status. In 2016, 62% of families living in poverty attended a school event, compared to 93% of higher class families. Twenty seven percent of families living in poverty volunteered within the school or joined a committee, compared to 47% of higher class families (Child Trends, 2018). There clearly are some barriers, especially for lower income families with fewer resources, that prevents them from attending school activities (Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017). This needs to be addressed. Families should have access to participate in school activities regardless of their income status. As data informs, family involvement leads to increased success for children in school (Baker et al., 2016). Therefore, researching the barriers that families face should be of high priority so educators can begin to create plans to address such barriers and support family involvement. This study will address the following questions:

- What are early education teachers currently doing to promote family involvement in school?
- What types of engagement opportunities are families most motivated to attend, and what do they perceive as barriers to being involved in their child's education?

Answering these questions will provide information for educators to begin brainstorming ideas to increase family involvement. Learning about what teachers are currently doing to promote family involvement is a strategy to gain new ideas. Educators can examine patterns in

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the types of successful experiences teachers have seen in comparison to the activities that resulted in low family participation. By surveying families, we learn new information about how they value family involvement, how to meet their personal needs, and how to support them through whatever barriers are preventing their participation. Pre-k families are the main subjects of this study so they can contribute to the existing research around this topic and ensure there is education regarding what families with some of the youngest children face. By learning about the family's values and addressing barriers when children are young, hopefully schools can make changes to increase involvement as children are growing from grade to grade.

Literature Review

As parents are engaging in a two-way partnership with their child's teacher, they gain a better understanding about their role in their child's education (Baker et al., 2016). Once parents realize they can make an impact on their child's learning, they may be more motivated to be involved (Hoover-Dempsey, 2011). Teachers can encourage parent involvement by inviting them to participate in different school activities. When children observe their parents participating in school events, they conclude that their learning is important, which is more likely to motivate them to try harder in school. This also leads to social/emotional benefits such as increased levels of effort, focus, and attention (Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Doan Holbein, 2005), along with stronger relationships, fewer behavior concerns (Baker et al., 2016), and more positive attitudes and school climate (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

Academic attendance also tends to be more regular with stronger parent/teacher partnerships (Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2005), and smoother kindergarten transitions occur (Kang, Horn, & Palmer, 2017). Galindo and Sheldon (2011) researched the academic benefits of parent

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involvement with kindergarteners and found that the children's math and reading scores increased when there was a stronger partnership between home and school. As families are attending school activities, they also strengthen the partnership they have with their child's teacher. By doing so, they are bridging the child's home life with their school life, which supports a more holistic approach (Ada, 2003 as cited in Arndt & McGuire-Schwartz, 2012).

Parents perception of barriers to involvement

While it is ideal for parents to be involved in school activities, there are also some barriers that decrease participation. Baker et al., (2016) spoke with parents to gain an understanding of such barriers that prevent parent involvement at school. Parents identified language and communication barriers, which included insufficient notice of school events. Parents prefer more notice than they were given. They also reported that they received contact from the teachers more often when their child was demonstrating negative behaviors, rather than sharing positive information (Baker et al., 2016). Parents of children with disabilities stated that they hear more negative feedback from the teachers than positive (Darch, Miao, & Shippen, 2004 as cited in Al-Dababneh, 2018).

Parents also expressed that it was difficult to be involved due to their work schedules. In another study, 70% of participants stated that their work schedules or own school schedules were the number one barrier preventing participation in school activities with their children (La Paro, Kraft-Sayre & Pianta, 2003). If both parents work, there is typically less time for school activities, or sometimes the job itself does not allow for much time off. On the other hand, parents who are not working may be trying to cope with financial stress and are unable to afford the resources to get to the school (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

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Other barriers described by parents included time conflicts, a lack of resources (Reece, Staudt, & Ogle, 2013), scheduling conflicts with older siblings (Kang, Horn, & Palmer, 2017), or feeling nervous about going to the school due to their own personal experiences (Baker et al., 2016).

Educator perception of barriers to involvement

Educators identified what they believe to be barriers to parent involvement based on their experiences and observations. In some instances their responses aligned with what parents identified, but they also made their own determinations. One area of agreement was communication. Teachers believe it is a barrier because they often struggle to get in contact with some families. Therefore, resulting in a lack of general communication (Baker et al., 2016).

Teachers also believe that a parent's own negative experiences in school could be a barrier. Parents might feel uncomfortable or intimidated by just being at school if they struggled with education when they were younger (Baker et al., 2016). It is possible to see a difference in the level of involvement between parents who did not complete high school versus those who attended college. Parents who did not attend college may also feel less qualified to support their child as they know the teacher has a degree (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Along with their personal feelings about school, parents may have conflict occurring in their personal lives such as divorce or social anxieties that results in less involvement (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). Parent stressors may lead to an overall lack of interest in school activities (Baker et al., 2016).

A lack of time was identified as another barrier. Teachers feel that they do not have enough time to fully communicate with and support parents. They expressed a need for more training around supporting the family more holistically (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018).

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Effects of poverty on parent involvement

Hampden-Thompson and Galindo (2017), determined that families with low socioeconomic status may be harder for teachers to engage with because they tend to be less involved in school activities. They take a more hands off approach, even if teachers personally invite them, as they believe that it is the teacher's responsibility to teach, and their role is to provide for children at home. Since this type of relationship is not a partnership, parents may disagree with what the educator is teaching because they are not on the same page due to the lack in communication (Fan, Li, & Sandoval, 2011).

Working class parents may also feel less comfortable helping their children with homework depending on their own education (Gordon & Cui, 2014), or they may not be as familiar with schools or their role in their child's education (Ingram, Wolfe, & Lieberman, 2007 as cited in Fan, Li, & Sandoval, 2011). Some families may experience increased barriers due to a lack of resources or time. This could be because they are working multiple jobs (Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017), or single parents who are trying to balance work with their family responsibilities, or parents who are caring for many children (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

Solutions to increase parent involvement

Improved communication was identified as an area of need by parents and educators. Increased, positive communication makes parents feel more comfortable and welcomed into the school. Parents want to hear beyond the negative and learn about their child's achievements (Baker et al., 2016). Also, teachers can show that they value parent involvement by communicating what the parent's role in education could look like and invite them to school.

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When parents feel that the school really values and encourages parent involvement, they are more likely to participate (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

Providing a sense of openness and welcoming parents is another important piece of making parents feel comfortable. When parents feel comfortable they are more likely to be involved. Welcoming them as they enter the building or personally inviting them into classrooms are simple steps to breaking down the barrier of discomfort for parents (Baker et al., 2016). However, parents are required to complete a background check before regularly volunteering in a classroom, which poses another barrier for some. Teachers expressed frustration because they have lost good volunteers who were afraid to complete the background check. No solutions were offered to address this concern (Baker et al., 2016).

Parents provided suggestions to address the concern of scheduling conflicts. They believe that by providing weekend activities, schools are more likely to accommodate working families. Providing childcare could alleviate the challenge of working around siblings schedules, as well as checking with other schools to make sure their events are spread out on separate days. Parents and educators also agree that providing food makes events more enticing (Baker et al., 2016).

Teachers are also requesting professional development training so that they feel better equipped to support families. Without the training, it is difficult for teachers to have the understanding and knowledge to guide families when they need help in their personal lives (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018).

Other factors to consider

Kang, Horn, and Palmer (2017), found that quantity was less important than quality in regards to parent involvement. It did not matter how many school activities parents chose to

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participate in, but just that there was some level of involvement, which lead to positive academic results for kindergarten children. This is important for teachers to consider as it means that they do not need to stress about whether or not parents participate in every single activity. Instead, encourage parents to attend one to start and work on strengthening the home-school partnership.

Hornby and Lafaele (2011), found that parents tend to be more involved in education when their children are younger. As children grow older, they are less likely to want their parents to be part of their school as they are working towards independence (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). It is also easier for parents to be involved when their child is doing well at school. When children are consistently struggling, parents may feel defeated and leave it up to the teachers to provide the support (Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017).

Over all, the research presented here promotes parent involvement in school activities. Unfortunately, as discussed in this paper, there are barriers preventing parents from participating. One goal of this study is to begin thinking about ways to break down the barriers and provide support to families. By asking families directly about the barriers they face, we can gather more accurate information.

Methods

Research Design

Pre-k families and educators from three schools in central Maine were invited to participate in this mixed-methods study. A mixed methods approach was selected because it allowed the researcher to gather and review data from the multiple perspectives involved in the home-school partnership. Families were sent an anonymous survey which collected information directly from children's parents regarding their thoughts and struggles with involvement.

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Educators were invited to participate in an interview that would identify their experiences with parent involvement. The interview provided useful data for other educators to learn from in terms of successful involvement strategies versus the less productive types. With both sets of data, the researcher can compare the educator's perspective to the results of the parent survey to see if families and their child's teacher had similar ideas or not.

Population and Sample

Each school is part of the same school district where poverty rates are high, which is why all children receive free breakfast and lunch at school. Each pre-k classroom is part of a collaboration between the district and Head Start. All of the pre-k students receive the same Head Start services. The study participants consisted of two groups: families who have a child in pre-k, and pre-k educators at each school. This group of participants is considered part of a convenient sampling as all the schools were located within close range of each other and the researcher. This population is considered to be quite small, but the results will provide information for educators and administrators to consider.

Protection of Human Rights

In order to ensure that this study was ethical and respectful of the human participants, the research proposal was approved by an Institutional Review Board. The proposal outlined how the researchers would gain consents and ensure confidentiality. The parent participants were told how to complete and return the survey anonymously. Educator participants were invited to take part in the interview via email, phone call, or in person. The interviewees names and other identifiable information were not used as part of data collection.

Instruments

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One instrument used in this study was the survey titled, Family Involvement in School Activities. This survey asked parents questions related to their priorities in terms of involvement at school, and about the barriers they confront. The last part of the survey also collected suggestions about the time of the year and the incentives that would support parents to be more involved.

The second instrument used in this study was the interview questionnaire for educators. The questions gathered data about the types of parent involvement activities educators use and find successful. It also asked for the educators perspective about the barriers preventing parent involvement.

Procedures:

Subject recruitment.

The three elementary schools were chosen for this study out of convenience and location. The purpose of this study was explained to the principals at each school and they agreed to allow their pre-k programs to participate. Pre-k teachers at each school were informed of the research, at which point they were asked to send the surveys and consent forms home with each of their students. The teachers were entrusted to send home the reminder messages provided and encourage the return of the surveys, recruiting parents to be part of the participant pool. Educators were also invited to participate in the interview process, but they were aware that it was optional and voluntary.

Procedures for data collection and analysis.

The results of the parent survey were analyzed one question at a time to compile parents' answers. The mode score was identified in order to discuss the most common answers. Parent

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answers are represented in numerical form, and then displayed in a chart or histogram.

Percentages were also used to compare the data and determine the results. The results of the educators interviews were broken down into common themes and also displayed using a histogram. In some cases, like identifying barriers, these themes were compared to the results of the parent survey.

Reliability and validity.

With survey research, there is always a risk for parents to misinterpret the questions, but efforts were made to minimize that threat. Survey questions were direct and brief in an effort to be as clear as possible. To ensure that the parents understood the survey, the researcher provided an explanation for the scales of measurement (Creswell, 2011). This type of self-report survey relies on the answers of the parents. Assurances were made to parents on the consent forms, survey, and reminder notices, that the survey was anonymous so parents could feel free to be honest in their answers. It is also important to consider that inevitably parents will communicate about the survey, which may influence some of their answers.

Surveys and consent forms were dispersed on March 1, 2019 to all classrooms except for one. In this one particular classroom, the teacher was unable to send surveys home, so they went home on Monday March 4, 2019. Therefore some families had less time to complete the survey than others. However, the researcher gave ample time for families to participate without feeling rushed. The survey was purposefully created to be brief so that families would not be deterred by having to spending a large amount of time completing it.

Results**Parent Survey: Importance of School Involvement Activities**

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The results of the parent survey answer the following research questions: What types of engagement opportunities are families most motivated to attend, and what do they perceive as barriers to being involved in their child's education? Twenty-eight families responded to the survey, providing information about their potential involvement in school activities.

Families were asked to rate how important they felt each type of school activity was, level 1 being not important and level 5 being most important. Table 1 shows the 5 different involvement activities assessed in this study. Class celebrations had the highest response rate with 14 families rating it at a level 5. In other words, 50% of participants believe class celebrations are the most important type of school involvement activity. Table 2 shows which type of activity parents thought they were most likely participate in. The majority of families, with fifteen votes, reported that they are most likely to attend class celebrations. Therefore, 54% of families are most motivated to attend class celebrations.

Table 1. Parent Opinion on the Importance of School Involvement Activities

Level of Importance	Type of School Activity				
	Class Celebration	Family Activity Nights	Parent Trainings/ Workshops	Volunteering in the Classroom	Parent Meeting

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1	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	3	1	0
3	4	8	13	7	5
4	10	9	6	15	14
5	14	11	5	5	9

Table 2. How Likely Parents are to Participate

Level of Likelihood	Type of School Activity				
	Class Celebration	Family Activity Nights	Parent Trainings/ Workshops	Volunteering in the Classroom	Parent Meeting
1	1	1	5	3	3
2	0	3	6	4	3
3	4	7	8	9	7
4	8	7	4	4	4
5	15	10	5	8	11

Parent Survey: Barriers

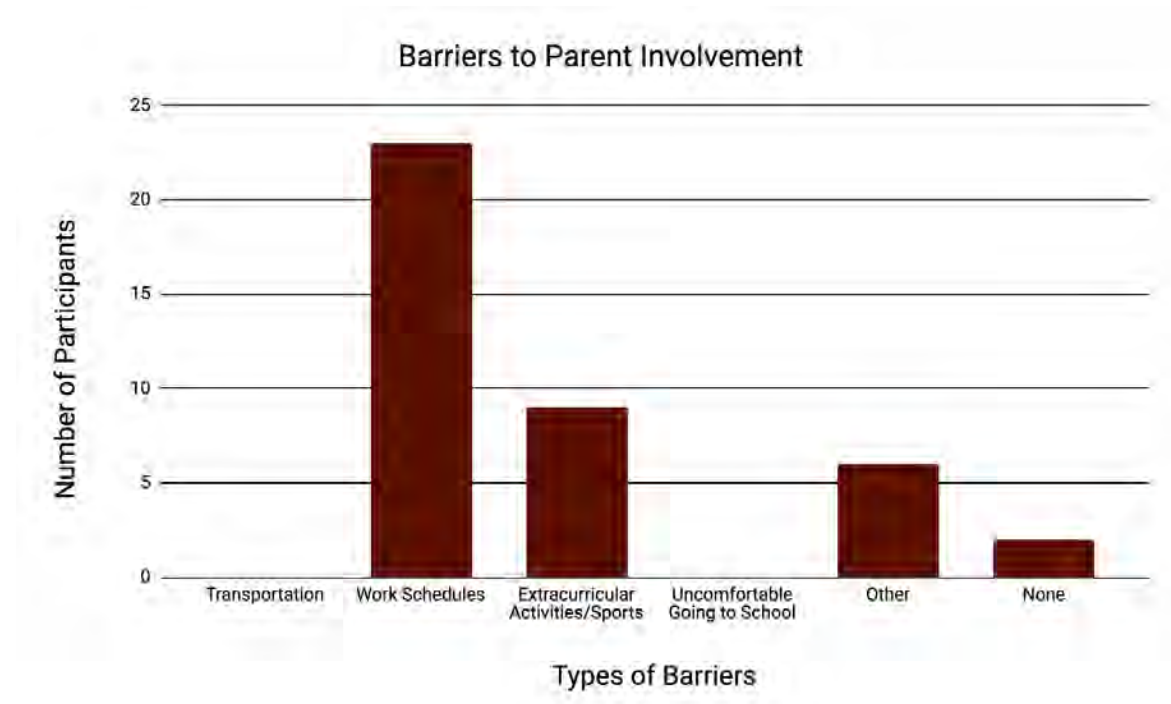
The second part of the research question asks parents what they perceive as barriers to participating in school activities. Figure 1 shows the types of barriers that participants may confront. Twenty-three participants identified work schedules as a barrier for their family, making this the most common barrier identified by 82% of families. Six participants identified other barriers and then were asked to specify what the other barriers were. These included conflicts with childcare, having younger siblings, or having many children in the family with

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different schedules. The weather, the times that activities are offered, and anxiety within the family were all indicated as barriers as well. Transportation and family comfort levels were not considered barriers by any of the participants.

Figure 1: Barriers to Parent Involvement



Parent Survey: Other Factors

Other factors, such as the time of day and season, were considered when thinking about how to promote participation in school activities and begin to address the barriers. Figure 2 shows that a large majority, 66.7%, of participants are more likely to attend activities after school. Some participants commented specifically that after 5:00 pm works best due to their work schedules. Other participants made statements like, “I have to work, so reducing time I have to miss work is important.” Other comments included, “After school is nice so the entire

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family can attend” and “after school gives more time and less rushing.” Only 11% of families indicated they would attend activities before school because they could attend before going to work. One parent chose before school because it is a quieter time of the day. Time of day barriers were not specified in this study.

Figure 2: Time of Day Parents are Most Likely to Attend School Activities

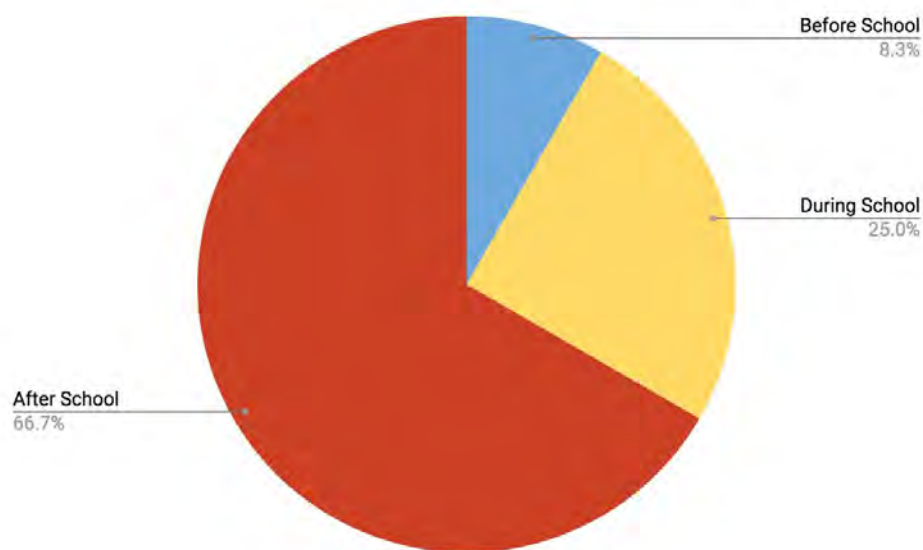


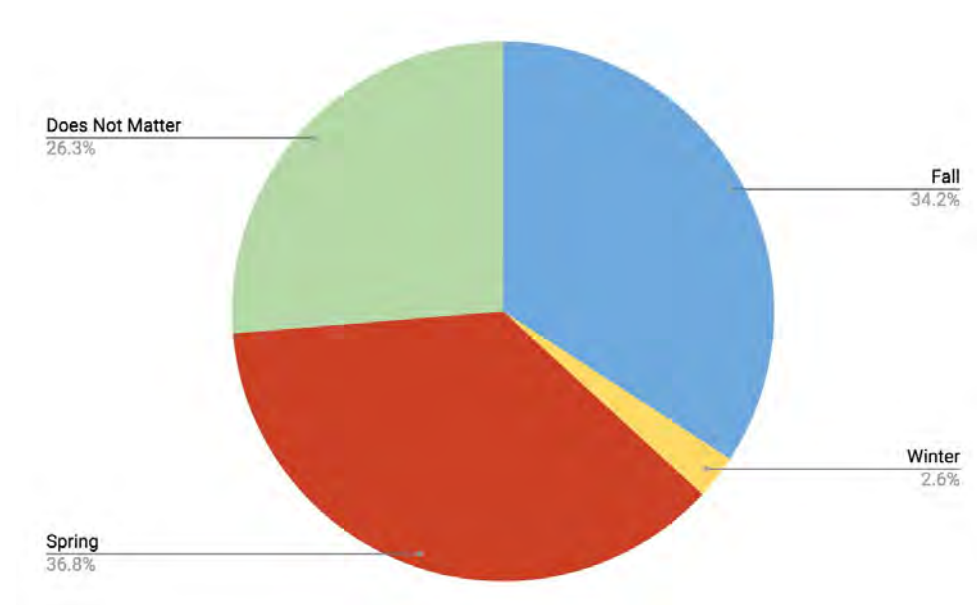
Figure 3 shows that parents prefer to attend school activities that are planned for the fall or spring instead of during the winter months. Participants advocated for fall or spring by commenting, “It’s light out and I don’t have to worry about the weather.” “I don’t particularly care to drive in the winter. It’s cold and yucky usually.” Fall and spring are “warmer and longer daylight.” One participant said, “fall is an exciting time of year at the beginning of the school year. Spring, we are ready to get out after a long winter.” Another participant expressed concern

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about cold and flu season being during the winter months, which would decrease overall participation.

Figure 3: Time of Year Parents are Most Likely to Attend School Activities



Parent Survey: Parent Group

The last part of the parent survey asked specifically about parent group and what kinds of incentives would motivate parents to attend. Parent group did not rate as a high priority for parents earlier in the survey, but it is a required component of Head Start programs, including the schools who participated in this study. Therefore, this section of the survey was intended to provide information about how educators can increase parent participation. The incentives included in the survey were childcare, food, door prizes, and doing an activity with their child during the group. The majority of participants, 13 out of 28, said they were more likely to attend parent group if child care was offered. Nine out of 28 participants said they were more likely to

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attend parent group if they could do an activity with their child during the meeting. Currently, all of the parent group meetings are designed for parents only. Food and door prizes were not rated as motivating for many families.

Teacher Interview:

The results of the teacher interviews address the question: what are early education teachers doing to promote family involvement in school? Teacher responses were divided into four categories: communication, evening events/celebrations, daytime events/celebrations, parent meetings, and volunteer opportunities. Teacher's clarified communication as newsletters, phone calls, in person contact, parent/teacher conferences, and applications like Class Dojo or Remind. Evening or daytime events included an open house, pinata party, math or literacy nights, and end of the year celebrations. Parent meetings referred to the pre-k parent group, and volunteer opportunities included in the classroom as well as preparing materials.

Fifty-five percent of teachers identified the pinata party and/or the end of the year celebration as the most successful involvement activity with the most family participation. When asked why they thought the pinata party was so successful, many teachers made comments like, "the kids make invitations to invite families so when the kids are invested the parents are more likely to be invested." One teacher described the party saying, it was "at the end of the day during school, in the cafeteria. Families signed up to bring snacks, we read the book, and then broke the pinata."

Fifty-five percent of teachers identified the pre-k parent group as having the least participation. When asking the other 45% of teachers about their parent group, they also admitted to having very little or no participation. Teacher's brainstormed why they thought parent group

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had such low participation rates. They thought parents might not be interested or comfortable, and they might not be available at the time of the meeting due to scheduling conflicts. One teacher said, “Maybe if kids were making invitations for their family to come to parent group and do something together we might get more. Parent group always feels like so much business. They come early in the year to see what it’s all about and it’s so much information instead of doing something fun.” The school district’s partnering organization, who oversees the Head Start services, dictates part of the parent group agendas. This promotes a more formal meeting for families, especially early in the school year.

Teachers were also asked to consider the barriers they believe their families confront, preventing participation in school activities. A lack of transportation and parents work schedules were most commonly identified. Other thoughts included that parents just might not be interested or they might feel intimidated. One teacher commented, “they don’t know what they can do. There’s a lot that they can do, but they don’t know that.” This teacher spoke on the importance of teaching families about their possible roles in children’s education.

Discussion

What types of engagement opportunities are families most motivated to attend?

Of all the different types of engagement opportunities offered by educators, families reported class celebrations to be the most important. It is difficult to speculate why families chose class celebrations since the responses came from a Likert rating scale. One limitation of this type of scale is that families were not asked to specify their answers. However, educators did provide their opinions during their interviews.

Most educators commented that they found class celebrations to be the most successful

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engagement opportunity offered. In terms of class celebrations, a pinata party was mentioned in multiple interviews. Educators held the party during school hours in celebration of the children's learning around pinatas. This learning was part of a larger unit on friendship. Educators described the pinata party as a time where they read a story, broke a pinata that the children had created, ate food, and families mingled with each other. One educator explained her theory about why the pinata party was so successful. She said, "the kids make invitations to invite families so when the kids are invested the parents are more likely to be invested."

The researcher concluded that the pinata party was a time that was truly centered around the children. It was a time to celebrate everything that the children had accomplished at school, which was something the parents were proud about. When families were in attendance, the children got to see that their learning and accomplishments were valued by their parents. This is likely going to motivate children to want to succeed in school, (Gonzalez, Willems, & Doan Holbein, 2005), therefore, by offering class celebrations, educators are enhancing children's learning. The children had made invitations ahead of time, which was part of the curriculum. They brought the invitations home and gave them to their families. This promoted excitement in the children, which may have been a motivator for families to attend.

Multiple educators also talked about the end of the year celebration. This type of event occurred in the evening and included games and food for children and their families. Some educators included a program where children got certificates and a parting gift for completing pre-k. This is another example of an event that is centered around the children's accomplishments. Families attended to show their support and sense of pride for their children.

The pinata party and end of the year celebration were the only two celebrations discussed

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during the interviews. Since families have now expressed that classroom celebrations are the most motivating, and educators have identified class celebrations to be most successful, it is recommended that educators begin to think about how to incorporate more celebrations of student learning. This might include planning more events like the pinata party that coincide with the units of the OWL curriculum, which will allow families to celebrate what the children are learning at that time. During the planning stages of the events, have children make invitations and get children excited so that they are talking about it at home with their families to help motivate them to attend. According to Baker et al., (2016), families are requesting better communication. Families want to have more notice about school events and receive more communication in general. Having children send home invitations well before the event is one way to provide more communication.

What are early education teachers doing to promote family involvement in school?

The 11 teachers who participated in this study provided a list of the involvement activities that they offer. Activities included an open house, a pinata party, math or literacy nights, parent/teacher conferences, parent group, volunteering in the classroom, end of the year celebrations, and various modes of communication. Knowing now that families prefer class celebrations, educators may want to take a look at the list of opportunities they offer and adjust their current practices. Consider offering more celebrations or adjust current activities to feel more like celebrations of children's learning. For example, turn math night into a celebration of math learning by offering activities that children have been working hard on and that they can teach their families about. Work with children on how they would teach their families to play, and include making invitations to get children excited and talking about the activities at home.

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Parents want to learn more about their children's accomplishments, rather than just receive communication about the negative behaviors their children exhibit at school (Baker et al., 2016). Class celebrations are a great way to utilize school events to highlight children's accomplishments.

Based on survey results, educators may be able to plan more successful celebration opportunities during the fall or spring time. Families expressed concern about traveling to school in winter weather. With that said, it is well known that t-ball is offered in the spring for pre-k children. While families did not specify t-ball to be a barrier in the spring, 32% of families did indicate after school sports and activities to be a barrier. Educators should be aware of the sports schedules when planning the dates and times of their events.

All educators indicated that they have low participation rates within their parent group meetings. It is unclear why parent group has such low participation. Parent group is a Head Start requirement and includes making decisions for the children and the program. According to Hampden-Thompson and Galindo (2017), low income families tend to believe that their role is to take care of the children at home, and it is the teachers role to take care of the children at school. This might explain why parent group is not a priority for families as they may not feel that it is their responsibility to make decisions for the classroom.

Families were asked through the survey about incentives that would motivate them to participate in the meetings. Incentives included childcare, food, door prizes, and engaging in an activity with their child. Childcare was the top rated incentive, although each center already offers childcare during the meetings. Most meetings occur right after school around 3:30, but families already specified their work schedules as a barrier. Perhaps offering the meetings in the

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evening with childcare would be more successful. Families also indicated that they would be more likely to attend if they could engage in an activity with their child during the meeting. Teachers described parent group as “business-like.” Perhaps educators can promote better attendance if parent group began with a time for parents and children to do a learning activity together. Then the second part of the meeting could offer childcare, and parents and teachers could conclude with the business-like agenda. As we learned from this study, it is apparent that families want to attend events that are centered around their children. With this in mind, educators need to find ways to center parent group around the children too, and offering an activity for families to do together is one suggestion.

What do families perceive as barriers to being involved in their child’s education?

The majority of families indicated that their work schedule is the largest barrier they confront. These results match the results of another study, which found that 70 % of participants indicated their work schedules to be the biggest barrier (La Paro, Kraft-Sayre & Pianta, 2003). Many families are working during the school day, making it difficult for them to attend daytime events. Now that the results are validated, educators can begin thinking about solutions for families. By planning activities for evening hours, such as 5:30, educators can address this barrier for many families as evening celebrations allow working families to attend. The educators who planned their end of the year celebration for the evening shared that almost all of their families were in attendance, validating this recommendation.

Educators should expand on their current success of high attendance at the end of the year celebration by planning more celebrations for evening hours. However it is worth noting that all of the pinata parties were scheduled during the day, and all teachers said they had high

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attendance rates. Therefore, it is difficult to say whether it is the time of day or the type of activity that will have the biggest impact for families. It is possible that some families might find it worth taking time off work to celebrate their child's accomplishments during the day, but this is not necessarily possible for all families.

Interestingly, 9 out of the 11 educators said they believed transportation to be a barrier for families. However, not one single parent indicated transportation to be a barrier on their survey. With only 31% of the surveys returned, it is impossible to say that none of the families within the pre-k programs experience transportation barriers. If educators are aware of specific families who lack access to transportation, they should consider this when planning school events.

Limitations

This was a very small scale study, making it difficult to generalize the results for other populations. However, the researcher hoped that the results would provide accurate information for the families within the rural area of Maine of which they all live. Ninety-one families received surveys and 28 families returned them. With only a 31% return rate, it is difficult to say if the results can be generalized for the remaining 69 percent of families who chose not to participate.

Using a paper survey provides its own limitations as well. The surveys were sent home in children's folders and most children ride the school bus home. There was no guarantee that the families received the survey in a timely fashion or at all. If families chose not to check children's folders everyday, they may have had less time to complete the surveys. There is also a risk of misinterpretation when reading the survey questions. The researcher kept the questions simple and brief, and provided an explanation of the rating scales to limit misinterpretation, but it still

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could be a limitation.

Conclusion

Overall, the researcher was able to gather enough data to answer each of the research questions. Even though the data collected cannot be generalized to other populations, it can be reviewed in addition to other current research. Educators can use this research to enhance their current practices with family involvement. It is well known that children benefit when their families are involved and support their learning. The research discovered in this study informs readers about the value of implementing more classroom celebration activities since that is what families specified as most important. The researcher was also able to highlight the importance of keeping family involvement activities centered completely around the children and getting children motivated and excited to attend. By adapting current activities or adding new opportunities around classroom celebrations, educators are supporting what families value and in turn, enhancing children's learning.

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