CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

It is often said that two heads are better than one. This cliché is often used to represent the importance of partnerships, and can be applied to almost any situation, including education. Students will benefit if their teachers and parents are in consensus with one another. A great deal of research and investigation has gone into improving the state of parental participation and it has begun to grow into an important part of education. Methods have developed to increase the level and quality of parent's participation.

The kinds of parent participation investigated include telephone and written home-school communications, attending school functions, parents serving as classroom volunteers, parent-teacher conferences, and homework assistance/tutoring, home educational enrichment, and parent involvement in decision making and other aspects of school administration.

The present chapter synthesizes information from different documents on different aspects of parent involvement. Documents were selected to reflect research on the effects of parent involvement on school administration, student achievement, and other school activities.

2.2 SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

The term "School Administration" here includes any activity which provides parents the opportunity to take part in decision making about school programs. This may include being a school board member, a participant on a parent
review of related literature

advisory committee or a local school improvement council. Areas in which parents may be helping to make program decisions include goal setting, development and implementation of program activities, assessment, personnel decisions, and funding allocations.

This area of parent involvement is one of the most controversial. Surveys show that most parents would like to play a more active role in this type of involvement, whereas most school administrators and teachers exhibit great reluctance to encourage parents to become partners in governance.

The literature reviewed for this report indicates that although administrators agree that parents should be involved with the schools in a variety of ways and that school personnel should spend time encouraging and training parents to become involved, they disapprove of parent involvement in administrative areas such as teacher and principal selection and evaluation, and are less enthusiastic than parents regarding the utility of parent participation in other activities, such as the selection of texts and other teaching materials or setting priorities for the school budget. They also tend to feel that parents do not have enough training to make school decisions, although surveys of parents indicate that the majority of them feel they are capable of making sound decisions.

The lack of evidence linking parent involvement in governance and student achievement should not be taken to mean that parents should not be included in some aspects of school decision making, however. Researchers and others have identified benefits other than student achievement which have been found to emerge from involving parents in governance. These include:

The elimination of mistaken assumptions parents and school people may hold about one another motives, attitudes, intentions and abilities.
The growth of parents' ability to serve as resources for the academic, social and psychological development of their children with the potential for much longer term influence. (Because of continued interaction with their children over time)

The increase of parents' own skills and confidence, sometimes furthering their own educations and upgrading their jobs, thus providing improved role models for their children. The increase in parents serving as advocates for the schools throughout the community.

Research indicates that the kinds of parents' participation referenced earlier in this report—attending parent teacher conference and school functions, volunteering in classrooms, tutoring children at home, etc. Provide the best training ground to help prepare parents for roles in school decision making. These activities enable parents to understand something of the school's structure and its instructional programs and provide basic experience in working with school personnel. These experiences can expand parents' knowledge and increase their credibility with school staff as they move into decision making roles.

3.3 THE ROLE OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION IN PARENTS PARTICIPATION

Administrator approachability appears to be the key to successful parent involvement in schools. Are all administrators aware of the influence they have? Are principals concerned about the welcoming atmosphere in their schools? Insider/outsider tension may be reduced with a welcoming school environment: parent bulletin boards, special coffee room, computer accessibility, resource materials, and invitations to participate in educational
activities. The administrator’s role is to create a welcoming climate and become more open to the community. Principals are considered strong role models for their staffs and they must be aware of the messages they send out.

Support from all parties involved in the change process is essential for success. Fullan (1991) states that change in schools occurs vigorously when parents play key roles in the change process. Using the term ‘decentralization’ does not, in itself, create change. It will happen only if parent involvement in decision-making is supported in schools. School staffs and parent communities must accept and actively participate in order for change to occur. Administrative and principals are viewed as a key factor in the success or failure of school-based decision making and parent involvement.

Davies et al (1992) observed that principal support appears to be essential in reaching acceptable decisions for two reasons: input from school staffs is required and the process is quite different from the usual operating procedures in traditional schools.

Administration must coordinate, manage, support, fund, and recognize parent involvement in order for teachers to successfully involve parents (Butler, 1992). Principals must encourage and facilitate the building of trust and mutual respect between teachers and parents.

2.4 THE ROLE OF PARENTS PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING OF SCHOOLS

In order to encourage parent/care-giver participation in decision-making, schools and the school system need to carefully cultivate networks and contacts, rather than focus on documents and meetings. Such networks and
contacts are important ways to gauge the concerns and the interests of parents, and to anticipate conflicts, barriers and opportunities.

Not all parents are easily able to participate in formal and informal decision-making due to their paid and unpaid work commitments, access to transport, distance from central locations and access to telecommunications and so on. Such issues are vital, if difficult, for the school system and schools to address. However, some barriers to parent participation are well within the reach of schools and the wider system.

If parents are to participate in decision-making, then schools and the school system must educate the parent body about decision-making and its rules.

Participation in decision-making also relies on parental knowledge of current policies and practices. This can be readily addressed.

Tensions will of course inevitably arise. The task of maintaining and valuing professional knowledge in difficult times, at the same time as opening up educational matters to parent discussion, is a dilemma not easily or simply resolved.

**2.5 BARRIERS TO PARENT PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION**

Schaeffer and Betz (1992) have created some categories of barriers to parent involvement:

**2.5.1 HUMAN NATURE FACTORS**

Human nature factors may be defined as threats to one’s self esteem, such as fear of failure, fear of criticism, or of each other’s differences (Schaeffer and
Betz, 1992). Examples of human nature factors include attitudes, insecurity, intimidation, distrust through power struggles between school and home, and protection of professional territory.

The skepticism of school staff is seen as a major barrier to parent involvement in schools (Canada-Newfoundland Agreement, 1995). As one participant in Taylor’s research (1992) stated, “There is a strong rooted traditional system and this is what must be overcome” (p. 24). Although parent involvement in instruction has been clearly linked to student success (Epstein, 1992), many teachers and administrators are negligent at establishing meaningful connections between home and school. Parents and teachers in Taylor’s research (1992) concur that in order for the home and school partnership to succeed, new attitudes must be learned.

Parents often feel powerless when they communicate with educators (Gareau & Sawatsky, 1995). Educators, for a multitude of reasons, are reluctant to share their power with parents. A study of the power struggle of parents in the Chicago school system found that “many parents were chided by teachers and administrators for their arrogance in thinking they could run the schools” (Marchesani, 1993). Dixon’s research (1992) outlined that the barrier to more parent involvement is “not parent apathy but lack of support from educators” (p. 15). “In some cases, parents actually felt that their children might be singled out or treated unfairly in grading by teachers who deemed parents to be interfering” (Marchesani, 1993, p. 58). Carlson’s (1991) research further supports this finding. She states, “Despite the strong confirmation by statistics and research reports of the benefits of parent involvement, programs are still rare and resistance from teachers is often strong” (p.12). Teacher control creates walls between home and school and limits parent involvement.
Teachers and administrators fear the self-interest and confidential issues those parents may bring to meetings with them. One example of a parent’s hidden agenda was the lowering of academic standards in Kentucky to allow otherwise excluded students to participate in interscholastic sports (Marchesani, 1993).

2.5.2 EXTERNAL FACTORS

Schaeffer and Betz (1992) outline external factors as those including lack of time, busy lifestyles, personal problems, administrative policies, unclear roles, and inadequate training or support. These factors are external to the personal characteristics of individuals, yet have a significant influence over what happens.

Malaspina (1993), Butler (1992), and Conley (1993) found that lack of time appears to be an issue for teachers and parents: teachers have little time available for meetings due to the rigid structure of school days and parents may have jobs and other commitments to schedule around. An additional obstacle may be that teachers have families and do not have the flexibility to meet at the parent’s convenience, particularly when so many women are teachers. This is in support of Butler’s study (1992) where lack of time and conflict in work schedules were identified as significant barriers for increased involvement in children’s education by 90 per cent of the 4,800 Parent Teacher Association (PTA) chapter presidents in the United States. Conley (1993) also identifies time as an obstacle and states the importance for parents in finding time to be involved in their children’s education and accepting education as a shared responsibility. The issue of parent involvement often comes as a middle-class issue. As Payne(1997) states, the poor either consider themselves
unworthy, or they are too oppressed or too disinterested; whereas the rich can afford private education, if they are at odds with public system.

Inadequate parent training in the various aspects of education is yet another barrier. David (1994) states that the lack of expertise is clearly a reason why curriculum and instruction issues are not addressed by parent councils. Parents are more comfortable addressing issues such as discipline and extracurricular activities.

Gaffuri (1992) addresses the issue that teachers are often not adequately trained to work with parents. The school system in her study assumed that all teachers had mastered information distribution to parents; however in reality, very few were prepared. Malaspina (1993) also found that barriers to parent involvement include an absence of preserve education for teachers concerning working with parents, and little provision during the school year for much staff development of any kind.

It is important that schools and the school system ensure that parents can participate in school decision-making through:

Consultation, in which schools and the school system inform parents about issues and proposals and invite them to respond; schools and the school system actively seek out parent views through surveys, focus groups, polls, community studies, telephone trees, town meetings and neighborhood meetings; and schools and the school system invite parents to planning days and meetings to participate in discussions

Representation, in which parents are elected to decision-making bodies. Schools need however to support parents to consult with other parents and to
communicate decisions. They can provide parents with training about meeting procedure, system and school policies and practices. Some have found that it is good to have a dedicated coach or mentor available before and during meetings to assist.

Schools and the school system need to consider how to intervene if nominations to and from parent organizations are narrowly representative, what alternative structures might allow minority and socially disenfranchised groups and individuals greater representation in systemic consultation and decision-making, and what support is required to allow parents from minority cultural and language groups to participate.

2.5.3 SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

Socioeconomic status has been recognized as an influential factor concerning parent's participation. “The Coleman (1966) report, which stated that the best predictor of student achievement is the socioeconomic status of the parents, led to a flurry of investigations on student achievement” Schneider and Coleman, (1993) stated that several researchers have found that parent qualities typically associated with socioeconomic status are positively related to parent's participation. For example, Lareau (1987) found that upper middle class parents were typically engaged in school activities and influential in school decision, while working class parents took on a more supportive role with respect to their participation with their children’s school.

As a result of his personal experiences, reading, and research, Motsinger (1990) asserted that “the developers of Teacher Expectation Student Achievement (TESA) workshops found that teachers do tend to give high achieving students more attention than those who lag behind” (p.5).
Underachieving children feel disliked by the instructor. Parents then feel, “it is because we are poor (p.5).” and resentment grows. According to Henderson (1988), some low income parents feel schools discourage their participation and view them as the problem, and they believe that stereotypes of poor parents as inadequate care givers and uninterested in their children’s education persist among educators. He also states that children of low income families benefit the most when parents are involved in the schools and parents do not have to be well educated to make a difference.

2.5.4 CULTURAL BACKGROUND

The cultural background affects the relationship between home and school. Rudnitski (1992) found that “parents from racial, ethnic and cultural minorities, especially those of low socioeconomic status, tend to feel less affinity for the school than those in the mainstream middle class” (p.15). This shows that schools in the United States have different values than those of the family as well as inability to communicate with culturally diverse families effectively.

Also in Rudnitski (1992), Liontos (1991) writes that: Low income, culturally different parents have traditionally been marginalized through an inability to communicate with schools and through the inflexibility of the school as an institution. This tradition has fostered the feelings of inadequacy, failure, and poor self-worth which are cited as reasons for low participation of parents from marginalized groups (p.15).
2.5.5 LANGUAGE

A language barrier happens when a lack of English proficiency prevents communication between immigrant families and the school system. Ascher’s (1988) work discussed the language barrier that affects Asian/Pacific American parents. Since English is not the native language of this group, parents think their language skills are so poor that they cannot be useful as participants in assisting their child in school. “Involving parents from any background is no easy task and in light of cultural and language differences, linguistic minority parents present a special challenge” (Zelazo, 1995, p.19). In a study by Violand-Sanchez (1995) it was found that more English than Spanish speaking parents are involved at the school site as volunteers and in attending school meetings. “Parents whose English proficiency is limited may find it difficult or intimidating to communicate with school staff or to help in school activities without bilingual support in the school or community” (Violand-Sanchez, 1993, p.20). Lack of language skills became an intimidating factor when parents and schools could not communicate effectively.

2.5.6 PARENT LITERACY

Students cannot expect parental support in their home schooling when their parents are not literate. As stated by Liu (1996), “Students’ academic performance at school is closely related to the family literacy environment and their parents’ educational levels” (p.20). Children need families that can provide literacy rich environments that often foster readers in the school (Edwards, 1995). Unfortunately, not all students can have literacy rich environment at home because many parents did not receive an adequate education and therefore are unable to provide academic support for their children. This issue is severe with many parents whose English proficiency and
education level is low (Lareau, 1987). Parents who dropped out of school needed to support the family or care for siblings. Limited schooling impaired parental help on homework beyond the primary level. A compound problem exists when the dominant language in the home conflicts with assignments in English (Finders and Lewis, 1994). If parents are not literate, they cannot assist their children with school work at home.

2.5.7 FAMILY STRUCTURE

These days, the changing structure of the family affects parent's participation and student achievement. According to Lee (1991) the structure of the American family has undergone significant changes over the past thirty years, and as a result of this, it is clear that many children experience multiple family compositions resulting from the transitory nature of the modern family. Students who have complete families may have problems that effect parental participation, but according to Motsinger (1990), “having two parents will give a student a 200% better chance at success in school.” This does not mean that students who do not have two parents cannot succeed, but they have a more difficult time or have to struggle harder to succeed.

2.5.8 WORKING PARENTS

Working parents can still participate in parent's participation programs, but it is harder than those who do not have a job. Unfortunately, many parents hold down two or three jobs in order to cope with economic realities, and quite frequently work schedules prevent these parents from attending meetings and other events at the school (Onikama, 1998). According to King(1990), “in the United States, more than half of the women with children under six years of age are in the labor force” (Onikama, 1998, p.21). How can educators
effectively involve working parents in children’s education, especially in families where both parents are working, is a major issue today. As stated by Onikama (1998), working class parents want their children to do well, but tend to give educational responsibility to the teacher.

2.5.9 TEACHER ATTITUDES

Teacher attitudes can be one of the barriers in parent's participation. According to the State of Iowa Department of Education (1996), “School staff interest may vary in terms of commitment to family involvement, and may generate mixed messages to parents” (Onikama, 1998, p.2). Many schools believe that classroom learning is best left to the professors. They also argue that involving parents is a time consuming “luxury” that places yet another burden on already overworked teachers and principals (Henderson, 1988). These worries make parents feel that the teachers don’t want them around, which drops off the level of parent's participation.

2.6 THE ROLE OF PARENTS PARTICIPATION IN CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Many studies have examined the impact of family involvement in student learning and student achievement. Historically, these studies provided a basis to support active intervention programs to support parent's participation in schooling. (Epstein, 2001)

There is considerable variation in research studies as to the definition of parent involvement (Baker & Soden, 1998). Some have focused on parental aspirations or expectations of children’s educational success. Others have
focused on behavioral aspects such as assistance with homework while others looked at parenting styles and family environment.

In general, these studies demonstrate that particular forms of family involvement have an important and positive impact on student outcomes. One study reviewed by Henderson and Berla (1995, p.110) found several ways in which families, through their attitudes and behavior, influence their children’s performance in school: parents become involved with teachers and schools; parents spend time with their children pursuing educational activities; parents impart values, aspirations and motivations needed to persevere in school; and parenting styles promote good communication and responsible behavior.

Kellaghan et.al (1993) suggest that the following factors are important aspects of parent support for children’s learning: a regular family routine and priority given to schoolwork over other school; encouragement and guidance for children’s schoolwork; providing opportunities to experience and explore ideas and activities; providing opportunities for language development; parent awareness of their children’s school experience; and high parent aspirations for their children and their school achievement.

Family attitudes such as parental expectations and the child’s self esteem provide part of the emotional framework for children’s home learning environment and appear to be a strong influence on student achievement. A large number of studies have found that creating a positive learning environment, including encouraging attitudes towards education and high expectations of children’s success, has a powerful impact on student achievement (Henderson and Berla 1994, Kelleghan et.al. 1993). While most studies focus on early childhood and primary school years, some studies have
also demonstrated that parent expectations, beliefs and support are also important in secondary school success. (Bryk et.al, 1990)

Parent involvement in learning activities at home is generally found to be a critical factor for student achievement. It involves reading to children, listening to children reading, helping with homework and other activities. The success of such involvement has been confirmed by many studies. (Epstein et.al. 1997, Henderson and Berla 1994, pp.43-44, 63, 110-111)

Parent involvement with the school also appears to have a positive impact on student outcomes. This includes regularly talking to teachers, assisting in planning curriculum choices in secondary school, monitoring of school work and attending school functions (Henderson and Berla 1994, pp.14-15, 88-89, 110-111). In particular, a positive attitude toward the school, as exemplified in participation in school events and interaction with teachers, seems to be important. These positive effects are apparent in secondary schools as well as primary schools.

The few studies that look at parent involvement at the high school level reached similar findings. Students whose parents monitored their schoolwork and daily activities, talked frequently to their teachers, and helped develop their plans for education or work after high school, were much more likely to graduate and go on to post-secondary education. (Henderson and Berla, 1994)

Parenting style also appears to be an important influence on student outcomes. Studies reviewed by Henderson and Berla (1994) found that parenting style is a more powerful predictor of student achievement than parent education, ethnicity or family structure. For example, students whose parents
adopt authoritarian or permissive practices tend to do worse than those of parents who adopt more considered and authoritative approaches.

Henderson and Berla (1994) also report that the evidence is mixed on the effects of parent participation in decision-making on student achievement. There is little evidence that putting parents on advisory committees or governing bodies improves student outcomes unless the parents are also involved in the school and their child’s learning in other ways. The best results seem to occur when parents were involved in both learning and decision-making roles.

However, it should also be noted that the rationale for parent participation in decision-making has more to do with the role of parents as citizens and the need to ensure school accountability to the parent community than as a way of improving student outcomes.

One important measure of the significance of parent involvement is the differences in outcomes for students from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds. While there is a general relationship between socio-economic background and student achievement, a low socio-economic background does not automatically mean poor school outcomes. Many students from such backgrounds achieve very successful school outcomes. It appears that parent involvement in their children’s learning is likely to be a factor contributing to these different outcomes for students of similar backgrounds.

The socio-economic level or cultural background of a home need not determine how well a child does at school. Parents from a variety of cultural backgrounds and with different levels of education, income or occupational status can and do provide stimulating home environments that support and
encourage the learning of their children. It is what parents do in the home rather than their status that is important. (Kellaghan et. al. 1993)

There is evidence to support this. Several studies have found that parent participation in children’s learning in low SES families contributes to successful student outcomes. A large-scale United States study of the impact of SES background and parent involvement on high school achievement found that parent involvement has an important positive effect on outcomes independent of SES background (Henderson and Berla, 1994). Two small studies of low income Black families in the United States (Henderson and Berla, 1994) show that high-achieving students generally came from families who had clear goals and expectations about schooling, played a supportive role in learning at home and had a family life conducive to the development of children. Another study showed that the students of low-income parents who maintained contact with teachers and supported literacy learning at home achieved better results than other students from similar backgrounds. (Henderson and Berla, 1994)

Epstein (2001, p.45) considers that parent participation in student learning is at least just as important as family background factors for student achievement.

Teachers’ practices to involve families are as or more important than family background variables such as race or ethnicity, social class, marital status, or mother’s work status for determining whether and how parents become involved in their children’s education. Family practices of involvement are as or more important than family background variables in determining whether and how students progress and succeed in school.
While home is not a school, and cannot be the same as a school, what parents do at home can directly affect student learning. Activities such as helping with homework and reading to and with children can be important for school success. Parents also mediate students’ learning experiences by interpreting school work, guiding television viewing, supervising sport and artistic participation and so on. Perhaps most importantly, parents indirectly affect student learning through the provision of material, cultural, social and linguistic resources. Some of these - such as visits to films and museums, travel, provision of literature and conversations about the world are particularly useful to academic work as it is presently taught. Not all parents are equally able to provide these particular kinds of resources but this does not mean that their children do not have family experiences, literacy's and knowledge's on which the school can build.

Sometimes teachers say or imply that there are some parents who do not or cannot assist their children in their learning. These parents are seen as unsupportive to education. They are often the very parents whose life circumstances, formal education and/or cultural, social and linguistic backgrounds are different from those valued in the school system. When relations are predicated on a deficit view, families, parents, children and young people are seen in terms of ‘needs’ and ‘lacks’, and teachers and other professionals are seen as having superior knowledge and skills. This leads to particular kinds of paternalistic school practices in which the views of parents and children are neither sought, nor valued when they are offered. Important Australian research has shown that the vast majority of parents are extremely committed to their children’s education. They understand that life chances, social mobility and personal security are very connected to being well
educated. The vast majority of parents also do their best to help their children at home. This work is often invisible to the school.

A more productive alternative approach is to see families, parents, children and young people as having strengths and assets (knowledge's, networks and skills). These positive features become the basis for developing home-school relationships, for developing curriculum and literacy's, and for constructing various avenues of participation.

Researchers have found that the more active forms of parent involvement produce greater achievement benefits than the more passive ones. That is, if parents receive phone calls, read and sign written communications from the school, and perhaps attends and listens during parent teacher conferences, greater achievement benefits accrue than would be the case with no parent involvement at all. However, considerably greater achievement benefits are noted when parent involvement is active when parents work with their children at home, certainly, but also when they attend and actively support school activities and when they help out in classrooms or on field trips, and so on.

Educators frequently point out the critical role of the home and family environment in determining children's school success, and it appears that the earlier this influence is "harnessed," the greater the likelihood of higher student achievement.

What about orientation and training for parents who wish to become more involved in their children's learning? Those research studies which have compared parent involvement programs that include orientation/training components with those that do not indicate that providing orientation and training enhances the effectiveness of parent involvement. Research in this
area indicates that parents generally want and need direction to participate with 
maximum effectiveness. Orientation/training takes many forms, from 
providing written directions with a send-home instructional packet; to 
providing "make-and-take" workshops where parents construct, see 
demonstrations of, and practice using instructional games; to programs in 
which parents receive extensive training and ongoing supervision by school 
personnel.

Researchers have also found that the schools with the most successful parent 
involvement programs are those which offer a variety of ways parents can 
participate. Recognizing that parents differ greatly in their willingness, ability, 
and available time for involvement in school activities, these schools provide a 
continuum of options for parent participation.

2.7 PARENT AND TEACHER ROLES IN CHILDREN'S LEARNING

Dunning (1995) states that schools, parents, and community members should 
agree upon clearly articulated roles for each constituency within the school 
community. Through discussions, teachers and parents develop their 
parameters of control over content, methodologies, techniques and classroom 
norms. Finding this balance between parent involvement through school 
councils and the authority of school boards promises to be a major challenge 
for those involved.

Parent and teacher interviewees agree there is great value in having parents 
involved in schooling and that there would be reduced tension if they more 
clearly understood their mutual roles. In the Carleton Elementary Magnet 
School in New York, parents, teachers and students sign contracts outlining 
expectations for the year. Smrekar (1996) speaks highly of the parent
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involvement at this school compared to the other two schools in her case study. Gaffuri (1992) states that groups of teachers and parents working together to clarify roles is most effective. In Taylor’s study (1992), parents felt that instruction was best left to teachers, but they did want greater participation for parents in school governance, setting budget priorities, and in the education of each and every child at the school.

2.8 FORMAL TRAINING FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

Teacher respondents identified a need for formal training where parents and teachers can dialogue, define roles, establish a Code of Ethics or standards of behavior, and discuss other relevant issues at school. Inexperienced teachers would appreciate an experienced mentor to guide them through parent involvement dynamics. Other respondents spoke of support groups where they could share successes and receive feedback for perceived failures.

A component of a university class dealing with community relations, parent involvement, working with parents and school councils should be designed and implemented.

The university needs to prepare Education students to work with parents in decision making in classrooms. A component of a university class dealing with community relations, parent involvement, working with parents and school councils should be designed and implemented. New teachers need to boost their confidence in communicating and working with parents.

2.8.1 TEACHER'S INITIATIVE

Teachers are more often than not the initiators of a school-family relationship, and must be aware of the ways parental involvement can be
implemented. These methods can range from very simple behaviors to elaborate programs. The little things a teacher can do to improve parent-teacher relationships are simple, but vital to a healthy relationship. First and foremost, the teacher should keep his/her word. It develops credibility with the parent that they will respect. The teacher should accept the parents, and not try to induce fundamental changes on the parents or family of the child. When speaking with parents, teachers should listen for the cognitive and emotional content of what the parents are trying to communicate. The teacher should be accessible; he/she should make the parents feel comfortable and should share information with the parents to keep the lines of communication as open as possible. In conferences, the teacher should have material and research prepared so if the parent has any questions, the teacher can become a valuable resource.

The teacher should understand the parents’ aspirations and concerns, while communicating the school’s or classroom’s needs. Finally, it behooves the teacher to allow the parent to offer whatever expertise he/she may possess, and the teacher should be available to the parent for questions or concerns. Obviously the teacher cannot be on call every hour, but there should be a consistent time in which the parent can contact the teacher. Creating an organized program for a teacher’s personal classroom can be a little more difficult. For one thing, getting a program started involves extra time and effort for the teacher, which can be hard to come by in the busy school year. However, once the program is established, the parents often pick up much of the work, and the teacher can benefit from parent involvement as much as the students.
Some tactics to get a parent involvement program going include distributing newsletters and purpose statements for the classroom and scheduling meetings for the teacher to interact with the parents. Once the initial correspondence is opened, it is vital to the growth of the program to continue it through newsletters, personal notes, phone calls, and in this technological age, e-mail.

It is important to involve the children in activities outside of the classroom, and to have these activities include the parents in these activities. It allows everyone to meet each other on an informal and relaxed atmosphere. Solutions to classroom problems often are found if parents are aware of the teacher’s needs, and the parents will most likely respond if they feel needed. Inquiring into a student’s family’s background can open a variety of talents, hobbies, cultural backgrounds, career information, and help in other aspects of education. Obtaining this information can be as easy as sending home a survey on the first day of school.

Encouraging family relations in the classroom is also a fantastic way to inspire parents to take a more active role in their child’s education. Finally, a teacher can encourage continued participation in a family oriented program by being appreciative for the parent’s time and effort. The teacher can send thank-you notes and give parents awards and it’s always best to maintain contact and touch-base with parents every so often for positive reasons. Parents will be more likely to become involved in their children’s education if they feel their involvement will be beneficial, and teachers are critical in encouraging their participation (Sheldon, 1998). Simple things can make a large difference in the level of parental participation. In a study taken by Steven Sheldon (1998), it was found that only 15% to 26% of mothers volunteered in their child’s
school. If improvements can be made by this small percentage, one can only imagine the possibilities if every child’s parent were involved. In the same study, 12% of those that were not involved said they had never even been invited to become involved (Sheldon). That 26% could become 35% had the teachers or administrators took the initiative to invite the parents into the school or classroom.

2.8.2 THE ROLE PLAYED BY PARENTS IN ACHIEVING SUCCESS AT SCHOOL

"The idea that it is essential for families to be involved, if the pupil is to be successful at school, now seems to be fully accepted. When the role of the school system, whatever the extent of the child's difficulties, was to provide every child of the Republic with basic skills"(Durning, 2006). As Paul Durning stresses, parental contribution to the schooling aspect of a child's overall education is now fully accepted by the consensus. Numerous studies carried out since the Sixties have highlighted the extent to which social and cultural background (as well as a family's specific actions and values vis-à-vis education) can facilitate or hamper school performances.

Results show that whilst the objective consists of directly influencing school results and the learning process, the school establishment and the teachers must give particular priority to the parents' assessment of their own skills. Parents are motivated to participate if they believe that their involvement will make a difference to the child's success and learning. This requires that someone explains the teaching programs and approaches to them, which are occasionally very different to what they would have experienced as pupils! Furthermore, teachers must not only provide the information, they must also think about activities that will enable parents to exchange with the teachers and
with other parents, and consequently benefit from positive experiences (i.e. providing concrete aid that is clearly visible in the child's development).

J.M. Miron (2004) looks at this problem in an article published in the journal Recherché et formation (Research and training). Parental skills can be defined as a combination of knowledge, know-how and 'savoir-vivre', tailored to the situations encountered by the parents. Furthermore, there is a type of mistreatment on the part of institutions and society with regard to families, in the sense that they will consider parents to be incompetent without taking into account the economic and social conditions that hamper the skills concerned, and without taking into account the conflicts of interest or values between the child's personal development and the political and economic stakes. Moreover, in addition to the fact that value judgments are often abrupt, teachers will usurp these skills by deciding on a project for the pupil in the name of the school. Going a step further, J.-M. Miron asks the question: “is parental construction possible in a suspicious environment?” In response to this question, parental groups are now organized in the form of discussion groups designed to give parents the feeling of being qualified (empowerment). It is then a case of comparing the training of parents with the training of professionals in the construction of “action knowledge” (Miron, 2004).

The problem is acute in the case of immigrant families who know little about the educational system in their host country. A survey carried out in Great Britain concerning Asian families (from Bangladesh and Pakistan) shows that all parents, whatever their ethnic or socio cultural origins, want to see their children succeed, and see education as important. Contrary to certain misconceptions, there are no cultural obstacles linked to certain religions. However, parents are poorly informed as to the way the school system operates
and their children's school 'careers'; information for parents is rarely translated into foreign languages and parents sense, through their children, low levels of expectation on the part of the teachers .(Crozier, 2004)

Parental education programs often need to be considered in conjunction with the concepts of empowerment and enabling, which aim to help parents' appropriate knowledge and skills. This is therefore not solely a case of teaching parents (experiencing difficulties in their educational role) what they need to know in order to better bring up their children, but also of helping them to acquire greater confidence in their educational capacities.

One could mention the abundant amount of literature that targets parents with young children, designed to help them with pre-school education and accompany their children as they take their first learning steps, especially as far as reading is concerned. But these good recommendations should not be allowed to hide the other approaches designed to exclude parents from any expert advice concerning the learning to read process, stressing their responsibilities prior to the child starting school and then subsequently excluding them on the grounds that they don't have the right skills. In the words of Roz Stooke: if they repeat too many times to parents that “having more than one pair of hands makes life easier but that too many cooks spoil the broth”, teachers should not be surprised if parents with the right attitude become increasingly difficult to find .(Stooke, 2005)

2.9 INVOLVING FAMILIES IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

There are many reasons for developing school, family, and community partnerships. They can improve school programs and school climate, provide family services and support, increase parents skills and leadership, and connect
families with others in the school and in the community and help teacher with their work. However, the main reason to create such partnerships is to help all youngsters succeed in school and in later life. (Epstein 1995, p.701)

Children's chances for success in school and life are likely to be improved. Their parents and other family members can also gain skills, knowledge, and confidence that will help them in rearing children, improving their economic condition, and being good citizens. When families are informed about how the teacher and the school are supporting the child's efforts to learn, family expectations for children's success goes up. Teachers and schools are also helped. When families see that teachers communicate frequently and positively with them, they give higher ratings to the teachers and the schools. Families are more likely to understand the goals of the teacher and the school and to be more supportive of proposed changes.

Community agencies and institutions also can benefit when they collaborate effectively with schools. They can reach more of their constituents, increase public support for their work, sometimes realize cost savings, and gain access to school facilities and expertise. In some cases, school-based collaboration may be an opportunity to coordinate their services with other community organizations. (Davies, 1988)

Moreover, the benefits extend beyond education and include social and financial benefits. These include improved health outcomes, reduced welfare dependency and reduced crime. (Wolfe and Haveman, 2002)

There is a significant body of research on the connection between parent involvement and student achievement. Many studies over the last thirty years have found that parent participation in children’s learning and schools
generally has positive benefits on student outcomes whatever the family background and circumstances, parent relationships with schools and teachers, the resources available to schools and the general school environment (Henderson 1988, Henderson and Berla 1994, Epstein et.al, 1997). For example, a review of 66 studies of parent participation, including several literature reviews, by Henderson and Berla (1994, p.14) concluded as follows: Regardless of income, education level, or cultural background, all families can and do contribute to their children’s success. When parents encourage learning and voice high expectations for the future, they are promoting attitudes that are keys to achievement. Students who feel that they have some control over their destiny, that they can earn an honorable place in society, that hard work will be recognized and rewarded, are students who do well in school.

Although these attitudes are formed at home, they can be either strengthened or discouraged at school. Henderson and Berla ([1994] also cite the following conclusion of one extensive review on parent involvement in education:

In summarizing the research on parent participation, it becomes very clear that extensive, substantial, and convincing evidence suggests that parents play a crucial role in both the home and school environments with respect to facilitating the development of intelligence, achievement and competence in their children.

In general, parent involvement is associated with children’s higher achievement in language and mathematics, enrolment in more challenging academic programs, greater academic persistence, better behavior, better social skills and adaptation to school, better attendance and lower dropout rates. (Henderson and Mapp, 2002)
Two different types of studies support these conclusions. One group of studies has examined family life, the way families behave and the interaction of parents and their children. The focus of these studies is parent involvement in children’s learning in the absence of support from the school. This group of studies may be termed ‘parent involvement’ studies (Epstein 2001, p.40).

The second group of studies has assessed the effects of school programs to support parent participation in schooling. Following Epstein, these may be described as school and family partnership program studies.

The other major area of research on parent participation in schooling is on programs designed to support parent involvement in learning at home and at school. There is a vast literature on general programs operated by schools and programs directed at specific interventions such as parent involvement in literacy learning (Swap 1993, Cairney et. al. 1995, Epstein et. al. 1997, Epstein 2001, Henderson and Berla 1994, Wolfendale and Topping 1996).

The vast majority of the programs aimed at supporting parents in assisting the learning of their children involve parents of young children and of primary school children. There are relatively few studies of programs involving parents of secondary school age.

This research generally shows that parent participation programs are successful in increasing the involvement of parents in the learning of their children at home and at school and lead to improved student outcomes. For example: When schools encourage families to work with their children and provide helpful information and skills, they reinforce a positive cycle of development for both parents and students. The studies show that such
intervention, whether based at home or at school, whether begun before or after a child enters school, has significant, long-lasting effects.

The reverse is also true. If schools disparage parents, or treat them as negative influences, or cut them out of their children’s education, they promote attitudes in the family that inhibit achievement at school. Programs and policies to improve outcomes for students will be far more productive if they build on the strengths of families and enlist them as allies. (Henderson and Berla 1994, p.14)

The available research also attests to the positive impact of home-school partnership programs on literacy development. Parental involvement in reading programs has been an important factor in literacy improvement for many students. For example, Topping(1996, p.159) concludes that the evaluation of several parent involvement programs is generally positive:

The majority of parental involvement in reading literature reporting ‘objective’ outcomes thus provides evidence of generally positive results. Subjective feedback from participants, gathered in various ways, is ubiquitously positive. Long-term follow up data are very limited in quantity, but are positive.

Generally, it is a case of the more the better as the more extensive the involvement, the higher are student outcomes.

Across the programs studied, student achievement increased directly with the duration and intensity of parent involvement …Each one reported that the more parents are involved, the better students perform in school. (Henderson and Berla 1994, p.6)
A detailed analysis by Epstein (1991) of student outcomes associated with teachers who use parent participation in different degrees found that teacher leadership in parent involvement in learning activities at home positively and significantly influences improvements in reading achievement. Teacher leadership in involving parents can have a significant impact whatever the family background.

Parents are one available but untapped and undirected resource that teachers can mobilize to help more children master and maintain needed skills for school, but this requires teachers’ leadership in organizing, evaluating, and continually building their parent involvement practices. (p.233)

Some studies show that the children who are the farthest behind make the most gains from parent involvement in their learning (Henderson and Berla 1994, p.16). Young children whose background place them 'at-risk' of failing or falling far behind will outperform their peers for years if their parents are given training in home learning and support. Older children whose performance starts to decline can be helped by home re-enforcement and support.

Several studies also show that programs designed to involve parents more in their children’s learning can achieve significant improvement in outcomes for students from low-income families (Comer 1988, Henderson and Berla 1994, pp.37-38, 45-46, 97-98, Swap 1993).

The OECD (1997, p.3) says that one of the most interesting findings relates to the relatively untapped potential of parental education in assisting parents from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds to support their children’s learning more effectively. Improving their understanding of the educational
process not only enables them to become more involved with the school, but can give them confidence to continue with further education. In this way, school-based initiatives to involve parents serve to build parent capacity to assist the learning of their children and reduce exclusion and improve equity.

Finally, it should be recognized that the effects of programs to increase parent participation are not always positive. Parent participation in schooling can also have negative influences on student and these effects have been largely ignored by researchers. One exception is Lareau (2000) whose study revealed that parent involvement can lead to increasing pressure and stress for students not performing to family expectations and to family strains and tensions. Many parents reported regular and serious conflicts with children over homework. Such family tensions around schooling were not as apparent in families who did not see it as their role to intervene in their children’s education.

There is also limited research on the impact of parent participation in schools on student achievement. Some studies suggest a positive impact and there is evidence of significant relationships between parent participation in school activities (such as parent organizations, attending school functions and participating as a volunteer in the school) and student achievement, between decision-making involvement of parents and good parent-teacher relationships and between parent involvement and satisfaction with the school (Delgado-Gaitan 1990, Henderson and Berla 1994, pp.88-9, 123-4, 152).

Bringing parents into the school also improves overall school outcomes. Schools can call on more resources and support. There are more adults to assist in general education. All this makes a difference for the school as a whole.
Not only do individual children and their families function more effectively, but there is an aggregate effect on the performance of students and teachers when schools collaborate with parents. (Henderson 1988, p.150)

A key effect is on the culture of the school. A study reviewed by Henderson and Berla (1994) concluded: It is important to recognize that the presence of parents in the school not only provides more adults to teach reading or offer help and support to children, but also transforms the culture of the school. (p.152)

When parents are more involved in the school, teachers learn more about the cultural and ethnic communities served by the school. This knowledge gives teachers greater understanding of the students and the stresses the children encounter in daily life that may impact on their school experiences and learning (Comer and Haynes, 1991)

Henderson and Berla (1994) cite several studies that found that parent participation had a positive influence on school outcomes as a whole. These studies indicate that schools with high achievement levels are also schools that are more open to parent and community involvement. This impact is present irrespective of family income and background characteristics.

Parents also develop better attitudes toward schools and staff members. The more a school works with parents, the more highly the parent's rate the school and its staff (Dauber and Epstein 1993, Henderson and Berla 1994, pp.30, 88-9, 130).

Thus, parent participation provides benefits which are critical to the success of schools. We cannot afford to sequester parents on the periphery of the
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educational enterprise. Parent involvement is neither a quick fix nor a luxury; it is absolutely fundamental to a healthy system of public education. (Henderson 1988, p.153)

For successful family programs at school, focus on climate, collaboration, and communication. Parents in diverse families, including those that may have immigrated recently, may be unfamiliar with school functions and often are especially concerned about them. They also might be concerned about whether students will have freedom to enter and exit the building, and whether children from other schools in the district will be attending.

Everyone benefits when parent and family involvement occurs in educational settings (Epstein, 1987; Barrera, 2002). Parents want to know what is happening in the school environment; administrators want to keep teachers and parents as happy as possible; and teachers are aware that having parents on their side improves student behavior and achievement. Whether a program is at the preschool, elementary, or high school level, parent involvement enhances education for students, parents, teachers, and schools. (Chen, 2001)

Three components are essential to successful programs that involve families in an educational setting: climate, collaboration, and communication (Henderson, 1987; Barrera, 2002). These constructs set a strong foundation for educators to plan and facilitate any school event and achieve desired outcomes for all involved. Regardless of significant student population growth, increased ethnic diversity, and escalating poverty, educators in public schools can employ the strategies presented here to invite positive parent involvement.
2.9.1 CLIMATE

Parents who face major problems, such as their own unemployment, homelessness, or lack of support from other adults, are not likely to be able to meet their children's needs (Epstein, 1987). Diverse parents' needs may be so great that they overshadow the children's needs. Recognizing difficult circumstances, educators can begin to focus on the needs of diverse families—parents and their children—and work to establish a climate of trust and cooperation.

Effective parent involvement programs match the needs of school and community in creating a positive school climate. Some parents are able to help and support schools and children's learning in many ways: as volunteer tutors; as field-trip supervisors; as classroom assistants and curriculum resources; as lunchroom, nurse's office, and administrative office assistants; as organizers of school events and assemblies; and by attending student performances, sporting events, and other school-related activities.

Parents can participate in programs to foster the development of their own knowledge and skills. Learning activities for parents may include literacy instruction, basic adult education, job training, continuing education, child development instruction, and parenting education. Schools can offer the use of facilities and other resources to encourage teachers and other personnel to learn about cultural and community values and practices that are common to their students and their families. See Table I for other examples of school-climate strategies.

Parents should be encouraged to support their children's education through home-learning activities. These activities include ensuring that children's
health and environmental conditions are conducive to learning. Parents can supervise children's homework and model support for education through their own continuing education activities. Educators can play an important role in teaching parents about the school's expectations for student learning, including curriculum options, graduation requirements, and school and community-based services that support student growth and learning (Connors and Epstein 1995).

2.9.2 COMMUNICATION

Communication between home and school is the foundation of a solid partnership. When parents and educators communicate effectively, positive relationships develop, problems are solved more easily, and students make greater progress (Comer and Haynes, 1991). Often parent-teacher conferences can be one-way communications when the goal is merely reporting student progress. Effective home-school communication is characterized by two-way sharing of information vital to student success. This communication needs to be regular and meaningful, with sharing coming from both parents and schools.

Parents and schools should communicate with one another about school activities and programs, discipline codes, learning objectives, and children's state of knowledge. This sharing of information can be accomplished through newsletters, school handbooks, parent-teacher conferences, open houses, informal messages, and telephone calls. Schools can work through community-based organizations to develop relationships with parents from diverse backgrounds and others who previously have not been involved actively in school-parent activities. Schools should establish programs, such as the following, to encourage close communication and strong parental involvement at a school-wide level:
School newsletters created by students, teachers, and parents, with multiple languages represented
- School-community projects with staff facilitating endeavors
- Parent awareness workshops in the languages of the community
- School policy that includes parental input
- A variety of resources that parents and volunteers can use
- Adult basic education
- Technology training

Home–school relationships are the formal and informal connections between the family and school. Home–school relationships seem to be just as important for youth as they are for younger children. Although home–school relationships tend to wane during or even before children reach adolescence, such relationships continue to play an important role in youth outcomes. Aspects of home–school relationships include communicating with teachers and school personnel, attending school events, volunteering at school, and participating in parent–teacher organizations and leadership groups. The extent to which parents attend and volunteer at school functions, for example, has a consistent positive impact on adolescent academic achievement. Moreover, when parents, especially those from diverse ethnic backgrounds, are involved on formal leadership committees, youth benefit. For example, higher levels of Latino parent representation on Local School Councils in Chicago was associated with a substantial increase in the number of Latino youth meeting academic standards.

There are several reasons why home–school relationships matter in middle and high school. Involvement and presence at school helps parents monitor their youth's academic and social progress, acquire information they need to
make decisions about their children's academic future, and foster positive relationships with school staff. Home–school relationships also increase student achievement by conveying to both teachers and students parents' beliefs about the importance of education and appropriate behaviors for adults in society.

In addition, when families of diverse backgrounds are involved at the school level, teachers become more aware of cultural and community issues and, in turn, become more likely to engage and reach out to parents in meaningful and effective ways.

Home–school relationships are also linked to various student achievement outcomes beyond grades, including adjustment across transitions and students' educational expectations for themselves. For example, parents' frequent contact with school personnel and involvement in school policies and parent–teacher organizations are positively related to students completing high school. Youth also make successful transitions from middle to high school when parents monitor their progress, evaluate that information, and intervene by actively communicating with teachers.

However, as in earlier periods of development, family involvement in adolescence may function differently and serve different purposes depending on parents' levels of education and ethnicity. In one longitudinal study, when parents with higher levels of education were involved, youth exhibited fewer behavior problems, which, in turn, was associated with achievement and aspirations. By contrast, when parents with lower levels of education were involved, family involvement was related to student aspirations for success but not achievement. Moreover, in the same study, family involvement was more strongly related to achievement for African Americans than European
Americans. The authors conjectured that this may be because relationships between teachers and African American parents may counteract negative stereotypes teachers may have about African American students.

2.9.3 COLLABORATION

Schools can reach out to link families to needed services and community organizations, which in turn can strengthen home environments and increase student learning. Communications with businesses, cultural organizations, and community groups create shared responsibility for the well-being of children, families, and schools by all members of the community (Antunez 2000). As members of advisory councils or other groups, parents can advocate for change, help develop school-improvement plans, and participate in school governance.

All of these groups can lead the community in assessing school needs and developing goals, especially when parents are included in the discussion. The best parent-involvement programs allow plenty of time for open-ended, parent-dominated discussions that foster positive school climate and communication. Public school educators should encourage family involvement in policy making.

Educators in diverse schools always should make parents feel welcome. For bilingual parents to feel appreciated and comfortable, volunteer work must be meaningful and valuable to them. Capitalizing on the expertise and skills of parents provides much needed support to educators and administrators already taxed in their attempts to meet academic goals and student needs. Though there are many parents for whom volunteering during school hours is not possible, creative solutions like before- or after-school "drop-in" programs or "in-home"
support activities provide opportunities for parents to offer their assistance as well.

2.9.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND PARENTS

Overall, the studies showed parent involvement to have a positive effect on the achievement of students. Home-based types of parent involvement were found to have a significant and positive relationship with achievement (Hickman, Greenwood, & Miller, 1995). The Coleman report (Coleman et al., 1966), as well as Mosteller and Moynihan (1972), and Coleman (1975) also reported that home-based variables were at least as important as the school-based variables in accounting for the total amount of student achievement variance.

Home-based type findings agree with the contentions of Bauch (1988). Examples of this type of direct involvement could include having the parents monitor the homework of their children or help with editing school reports.

All parents are a vast resource which can be tapped to increase student learning. The high schools of the future should work to incorporate these parents into the daily plan (or at least the weekly plan).

2.10 INCREASING PARENT PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

2.10.1 SHIFTING POWER

Our newspapers, magazines and governments describe and demand increased parent participation in schools. There exists much interest in
recognizing the rights of parents to make educational decisions concerning their children, along with a trend that emphasizes the importance of home and school collaboration to meet the needs of children (Gareau and Sawatsky, 1995).

“The process of schooling is moving from a top-down model delivering professionalized and bureaucratized educational services to passive and apathetic students to a collaborative or bottom-up model, with parent and community involvement in governance, decision making and advocacy at the local school level (House, 1995, p. 29).

Our current hierarchical, bureaucratic structure is becoming ineffective in meeting needs in education today. “The top-down model reflects the hierarchical world of the past, where parents were denied access to educational decision making, and where respect for authority sheltered the system from criticism by parent groups” (House, 1995, p.35). The move from centralization to decentralization, site-based management, or local school governance is results of the shift from top-down governance. As emphasized by House (1995), “The process of schooling is moving from a top-down model delivering professionalized and bureaucratized educational services to passive and apathetic students to a collaborative or bottom-up model, with parent and community involvement in governance, decision making and advocacy at the local school level” (p. 29). A bottom-up structure includes all participants who share in the decision making and form the programs and goals of the system. Transition from a top-down hierarchy to one of decentralized must take into consideration the rights and tradition of the prior system. The shift of authority and responsibility from the school system to parent and community is a change from those distant to those closest to the school.
Riley (1995) also describes the relationship between schools and parents as one of unequal power. He suggests that parents were expected to follow the instructions of professionals who continued to separate themselves even further from the community “by adopting arcane professional dialogue” (p. 11). This language barrier tended to further distance parents from school activities. Other interested parents felt alienated from school life. Gareau and Sawatsky (1995) went as far as to claim that “schools discouraged parental intrusion, and the education function of parents was downplayed” (p. 464). Many parents had unpleasant experiences as students and are still reluctant to enter schools today.

Butler (1992) discovered that some parents are extremely interested in being involved, not only as classroom volunteers, but as decision makers and advocates in education. These parents continue to spark the current developing educational philosophy of parent involvement in local school governance. Unfortunately, teachers and administrators have not ranked parent involvement as important as have these parents. Gareau and Sawatsky (1995) went as far as to claim that “schools discouraged parental intrusion, and the education function of parents was downplayed’’ (p. 464).

2.10.2 SCHOOL COUNCILS

Today, parents are being organized into structures often called school councils. These councils are designed to be proactive and a part of the decision-making process, rather than reactive and having things being done to them (Dukacz and McCarthy, 1995). It is the process of inclusion in decision making, rather than the resulting decision, that is important. School-based decision-making models have been implemented and studied extensively in North America. Observations reveal that parents are frequently being included
as members of these school based teams. Gareau and Sawatsky (1995) believe that educational reform calls for local school governance or school-based management which includes parents as part of the decision-making team.

School councils in Canada tend to be advisory in nature, versus ‘the real power’. Additional power may come as councils become more established, and governments become more confident in the councils’ ability. A serious concern for all jurisdictions is what to do should there be lack of interest in forming a council. Creation of the parent structures does not ensure commitment or long term continuation (Fullan, 1997). Parent councils have recommended increasing the power for councils whereas teachers, principals, and school boards recommend a less powerful role.

2.11 EFFECTIVE FORMS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

An effective form of involvement presented by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) includes out of school or home-based partnerships as well as school-based activities with parents and children. They discuss that when parents get involved (going to school events, helping with homework) children’s schooling is benefited. Benefits include knowledge, skills, and confidence.

Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) (2006) believes that children must have a range of learning environments around them, or complementary learning. Such learning environments include family, early childhood programs, schools, out-of-school time programs and activities, libraries, museums, and other community-based institutions. HFRP believes that complementary learning will provide a linking of consistent learning and development. This linkage is similar to that of Epstein’s (2001) spheres of
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influence. HFRP linking of community and Epstein’s spheres of influence are similar that they each incorporate community, school and family so that they all affect one another.

In Cotton’s (2001) book, The Schooling Practices That Matter Most, there are signs that the most effective forms of parental involvement are those where parents’ work directly with their children. Programs that show the most effective results include tutoring, working on homework with children, and reading with children. These active forms of parental involvement have had a greater impact on achievement than passive forms of involvement. Passive forms of parental involvement have still been shown to improve children’s achievement, so they are better than no parental involvement at all.

The book expresses another effect of parental involvement is shown when the parent intervenes at an early age. The earlier in a child’s life that the parents become involved, the greater the effects will be on the child’s educational process. The effectiveness of this approach has been shown through various childhood education programs such as Head Start.

According to studies done by Reutzel and Cooter (1996) positive effects on parental involvement were shown to increase when choices were provided to the parents. The schools that offered a variety of ways for parents to get involved had an increased effect on student achievement. Giving parents various methods or activities to involve them in their children’s lives increased the willingness and ability of parental involvement. This increase in parental involvement has shown a consistent, positive relationship in students’ achievement and development in school.
2.11.1 POSITIVE EFFECTS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Research has indicated that parental involvement improves components of children’s education such as daily attendance, cognitive and social skills or achievement, behavior and attitude, confidence, and motivation (Cotton & Wikelund, 2001; Epstein, 2001; Sheldon, 2003).

2.11.2 POSITIVE EFFECTS ON ATTENDANCE

Many studies of students at all grade levels show that students with high attendance rates are less likely to drop out of school and are more likely to achieve at high levels and graduate from high school on time. In other words, students learn more and are more successful if they have good attendance. With attendance being so crucial and such an important issue in education, it has become a major objective for schools. In 1996-97, the National Network of Partnership Schools invited various schools to investigative a “Focus on Results” study. The aim was to learn whether and which family and community involvement activities affect student attendance. Twelve elementary schools were examined for this study. Each school was noted for their prior level of attendance then several family involvement activities were put into place. They resulted in significantly increased rates of daily attendance, reduced chronic absenteeism, or both. This investigative study proposes that schools can improve or uphold good attendance by executing family and community involvement activities (Epstein, 2001).

2.11.3 POSITIVE EFFECTS ON BEHAVIOR AND ATTITUDES

In Cotton’s (2001) book there was information on The National Network of Partnership Schools conducted another “Focus on Results” study to learn
whether school, family, and community partnerships improve student behavior and attitudes at school. There were two rounds of data collection involving forty-seven schools. The schools were from a variety of locations including urban, suburban, and rural areas. Seventy three percent of the schools were elementary and 27% were middle and or high school. Before the partnership program was put into place, information was collected from the schools. The quality of their partnership programs, their use of family and community involvement practices, and also occurrences of student discipline actions were examined in depth. After great analysis from one year to the next with improved quality of their partnership programs, the study demonstrated lower levels of students involved in school discipline actions. More specifically, the schools that improved their partnership programs had fewer students who were sent to the principal, received detention, and who received in-school suspensions. This research and findings recommend that larger school relationships help improve students’ behavior in school.

2.11.4 POSITIVE EFFECTS ON COGNITIVE AND SOCIAL SKILLS OR ACHIEVEMENT

Many studies highlight the point: parent participation in education is very closely related to student achievement. A Stanford study found that using parents as tutors brought significant and immediate changes in children's I.Q. scores. Other research projects found that community involvement correlated strongly with school wide achievement and that all forms of parent involvement helped student achievement. The Home and School Institute (1985) concluded that parent tutoring brought considerable improvements to a broad array of students.
The idea that parent involvement is a key determinant of student achievement is widely accepted today. Many authors agree that children, families, schools, teachers and community agencies all benefit from home/school partnerships. For example:

While the general message from a large number of research studies is that parent involvement in children’s learning has a positive effect, issues have been raised about the methodology of many of these studies and there are gaps in the research evidence on which practices work best and how. Few of the many studies of parent participation, at least until recently, are well designed and most are very general in their approach. One study concludes that the claimed benefits of parent participation are without foundation (Henderson and Berla 1984, pp.146-7). It analyzed a wide range of studies of parent involvement and concluded that few of them were well-designed, most being methodologically flawed. The study argues that most research on parent involvement fails to meet rigorous standards for validity.

Another study notes several flaws of studies into parental involvement which result in a lack of confidence in their findings and which limit their accuracy and usefulness (Baker and Soden, 1998). The flaws include the use of non-experimental design, lack of isolation of parent involvement effects, inconsistent definitions of parent involvement and non-objective measures of parent involvement. Wolfendale (1992) notes that it is difficult to measure the contribution of parent reading programs to student outcomes and to ascribe improvements exclusively to increased parent input.

Nevertheless, these authors acknowledge there is mounting evidence that parent involvement contributes to better student achievement and that there are valid studies that point to such benefits. The significance of methodological issues is not so much to undermine the general conclusions about the
importance of parent participation for successful student outcomes but in
determining what practices are most effective.

Epstein (2001) concedes that while there are positive connections between
family involvement and student achievement, little is known about which
practices, how, when, for whom, and why particular practices produce positive
student outcomes. She states that research about school and family connections
needs to improve in many ways.

Early research was often based on limited samples, too global or too narrow
measures of involvement, and limited data on student outcomes. As research
proceeds with clearer questions, and better data, measurement models should
be more fully specified, analyses more elegant, and results more useful for
policy and research.

2.12 EPSTEIN'S FRAMEWORK OF SIX TYPES OF INVOLVEMENT

Joyce Epstein of Johns Hopkins University has developed a framework for
defining six different types of parent involvement. This framework assists
educators in developing school and family partnership programs. "There are
many reasons for developing school, family, and community partnerships," she
writes. "The main reason to create such partnerships is to help all youngsters
succeed in school and in later life."

Investigators have identified lack of planning and lack of mutual
understanding as the two greatest barriers to effective parent involvement.
School staff wishing to institute effective programs will need to be both open-
minded and well-organized in their approach to engaging parent participation.

Epstein's framework defines the six types of involvement and lists sample
practices or activities to describe the involvement more fully. Her work also
describes the challenges inherent in fostering each type of parent involvement as well as the expected results of implementing them for students, parents, and teachers.

1. **Parenting**: Help all families establish home environments to support children as students.
   - Parent education and other courses or training for parents (e.g., GED, college credit, family literacy).
   - Family support programs to assist families with health, nutrition, and other services.
   - Home visits at transition points to pre-school, Elementary, middle, and high school.

2. **Comminuting**: Design effective forms of school-to-home and home to-school communications about school programs and children's progress.
   - Conferences with every parent at least once a year.
   - Language translators to assist families as needed.
   - Regular schedule of useful notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters, and other communications.

3. **Volunteering**: Recruit and organize parent help and support. School and classroom volunteer program to help teachers, administrators, students, and other parents.
   - Parent room or family center for volunteer work, meetings, and resources for families.
Review of Related Literature

- Annual postcard survey to identify all available talents, times, and locations of volunteers.

4. **Learning at home**: Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning.

- Information for families on skills required for students in all subjects at each grade.
- Information on homework policies and how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home.
- Family participation in setting student goals each year and in planning for college or work.

5. **Decision making**: Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.

- Active PTA/PTO or other parent organizations, advisory councils, or committees for parent leadership and participation.
- Independent advocacy groups to lobby and work for school reform and improvements.
- Networks to link all families with parent

6. **Collaborating with community**: Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

- Information for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other programs/services.
Review of Related Literature

- Information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including

2.13 ENHANCING PARENTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Parent participation extends from support for children at home with their academic work, to involvement in classroom and school decision-making. There is a range of benefits produced by such participation:

2.13.1 ENHANCED STUDENT LEARNING

There is evidence that children whose parents are actively involved in their learning are more successful in schooling. The benefits for children and young people from parental involvement include improved academic performance, improved school behavior, greater academic motivation and lower dropout rates.

2.13.2 BETTER SCHOOLS

Researchers suggest that schools with high parent participation have a ‘healthier’ school climate than others. They get good information from ‘stakeholders’ about perceived problems, needs and preferred courses of action. They have a greater spread of leadership in the school; better and more highly regarded administration; and a better ‘fit’ between the services they provide and community and parent need. Schools that involve parents are also more able to become more distinctive, by developing special programs that create valuable and attractive opportunities for parents and students.
2.13.3 SOCIAL BENEFITS

Schools with significant numbers of parents involved in a range of school activities and decision-making build a sense of community. This not only benefits the school but also its surrounding neighborhood. Parent participation can be seen as a generational commitment through which adults ensure that the next generation acquires important knowledge's, values and ways of behaving and being in the world. Parent participation can also be seen as a civic commitment, in which participation builds a sense of social solidarity, social coherence and cohesion. Schools that enhance parent participation can help to support a healthy democracy in which citizens can take an active part in social life, thus creating social bonds and networks.

2.13.4 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

When parents participate in school activities they often enjoy enhanced social networks and personal support. They have opportunities to engage in formal training and education. They learn increased planning and management skills and greater social agency (often called ‘empowerment’).

The positive impact of parental involvement in education is evident in students’ success. A study taken of students whose parents were actively involved in their education showed higher reading and writing test scores as well as higher report card grades (Sheldon, 1998). James Comer, Head of the School Development Program at Yale University can personally attest to the effect that parental involvement can have on a student. Growing up as a poor, African-American boy in the sixties, his academic future did not look very bright. His father had an elementary school education, and his mother had less. He entered school with three other boys of the same economic, social, and
intellectual status as he possessed. Comer attributes his success to his parents’ involvement in his education. Although they may not have had the same academic achievement Comer eventually acquired, they took an interest in his educational career and supported and encouraged him along his schooling. Of the four boys that entered school together, only Comer went on to pursue a successful, healthy life. One of the boys was imprisoned, another died of alcoholism, and the third went in and out of mental institutions for the rest of his life (Hall). Due to his struggles throughout his education, Comer has developed a method that many schools are adapting, called the Comer process. In this process, parents and teachers should approach every situation in the same manner. They should assume a no-fault approach, in which both parties agree that there is no one to blame and discuss what can be done about a given situation. The teachers, parents and administrators should act in coordination and cooperation with the student’s best interests in mind. Decisions should be made by a consensus in all possible cases. Meetings should be held on a regular basis with representation from all groups of the educational process, including students. Parents should be involved as much as possible in the school and know what the school is doing. In the Comer process, he proposed a SGMT, or a school governance and management team. Many schools have formed their own versions of this organization, and it serves to represent all who are involved in education.

Support for parent involvement in schools does not stop at the local community level. There is a national organization that devotes its practice to parental involvement in schools. The NCPIE (National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education) is a nonprofit organization that focuses on five major benefits that stem from parental and family involvement in education. NCPIE recognizes that due to parental involvement:
Review of Related Literature

- Students do better in school and in life.
- Parents become empowered.
- Teacher morale improves.
- Schools get better.
- Communities grow stronger." (NCPIE, home page)

This organization attempts to be a representative for parental involvement in education, to initiate actions that encourage and support family involvement and to provide resources and legislative counsel regarding education. NCPIE works to create partnerships with families and schools that support communication, school activities, home activities, continued learning, advocacy and shared governance, and community organizations. Monthly meetings are held at the National Education Association in Washington D.C., and the organization distributes newsletters and updates in the progress of education. The resources that NCPIE administers to its members include resources for families and parents, resources for teachers, and resources for administrators. The parental and family resources address parents' rights, parenting and educating adolescents, special education, managing anger and many other topics pertinent to being the parent of a student. The teacher's resources include aid in teaching students of a different language, teaching students, curriculum suggestions, and handling parent-teacher conferences. Administrative resources consist of suggestions on how to handle after school activities, managing inner city schools, building a community school and how to get parents involved, as well as many other useful resources (NCPIE). The NCPIE is a credible organization committed to getting parents and families involved in education, and having an organization like this is constructive in maintaining beneficial parent-teacher relationships (NCPIE).
2.14 A COMPARATIVE STUDY ABOUT PARENTS PARTICIPATION IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

In France, the Education Law of July 10, 1989 defined a broad framework for the parental role in school: “parents are members of the educational community; participation in school life and dialogue with teachers and other staff will be guaranteed in each school and establishment. Parents will participate through their representatives in school committee meetings, board meetings and class meetings”.

A Canadian research report was produced on the participation of parents in the process of improving schools (Leithwood et al., 2004). This research is a compilation of case studies carried out over three years on approximately one hundred elementary schools in Ontario, and attempts to answer questions on the factors that most influence the nature and success of the planning and implementing of school improvement strategies. It examined the different parental involvement modes, school and school community committee meetings and the impact of the school improvement plans on pupil performances. The conclusion drawn is that it all seems to depend on the capacities of those involved, i.e. the heads, teachers and parents. The proposals suggest that all actions require reference frameworks and tools enabling schools to evaluate the relevance of recommendations. The direct involvement of parents in the education of their children must be accompanied by an acknowledgement of parents' ideas, together with those of the local society, with regard to the priorities of the school district and the school, and their implementation after evaluation. One should give special priority to the improvement strategies that have already proved themselves rather than the
linear or “mechanical” school planning models (creation of professional learning and leadership development communities, for example).

In Mexico, the school management decentralization programs lead to the implementing of a program that involves parent associations in the local management of schools. A research report financed by the World Bank, Empowering parents to improve education: evidence from rural Mexico (2006) reveals significant results in the involvement of parent associations in the local management of schools. This study, which was based on more than 6,000 rural schools between 1995 and 2003, compared the failure, staying-down-a-year and leaving-school rates at schools participating in the AGE program with those at other schools. The results of the 'other' schools show that a greater demand for education formulated by families has a significant impact on children's learning. Whilst being involved in the management of expenses and costs for infrastructures and small equipment, parents have the impression that this program puts pressure on the establishment heads and teachers, and that as a result they are better informed and their communication with the teachers is improved.

In South Africa, the country's history, politics and geography have created a relatively complex educational system. The parental role varies significantly between the schools “at home”, the private schools and the State schools. The National policy on state schools introduced the school governing body (SGB), consisting of teachers, parents and pupils (for secondary schools), who must decide on the admission policy, the school's language, religious practices, code of ethics and disciplinary procedures. This body must also determine its operational mode, management and administration rules, teaching hours, and the school's values and convictions, as well as defining non-academic
activities, optional subjects and operational expenses and purchases (Heysteck, 2004).

The government of the **French Community of Belgium** produced a Declaration of community policy for the years 2004-2009 (2004), which is a sort of contract covering several principles linked to the role of parents in school. The objective is to incite schools to sign “school/parent” contracts, with a view to better involving parents in the establishment's educational project, to improve their understanding of the responsibilities involved, to incite them to be present at the school on a regular basis, to encourage various forms of parental participation in school life and to better co-ordinate the monitoring of the child.

The parents of pupils in the French-speaking community seem very present in the educational system. In addition to representations similar to those of French parents, they also participate in the Educational system management committee, created in 2002. This committee examines educational reforms, the curricula, skill platforms, policies, inter-network training, evaluations, textbooks, the implementing of indicators and the verification of any issues relating to the quality and equivalence of the schools' teaching approach.

In the United States, the Harvard Family Research Project (at the Harvard graduate school of education) is examining all the issues linked to family participation in education, and the evaluation and improvement of school/parent relationships. It is working on the professional development of these relationships through the observation of those who are in direct contact with children and young people. The latest published studies reinforce the idea of an additional apprenticeship (complementary learning), taking the form of a network of support, encompassing young childhood, obligatory school, further
education, out-of-school activities, the family environment and the community (health, social services, business, etc.).

As an example, it is interesting to take a closer look at the article published by the three HFRP researchers, entitled Intermediary Organizations as Capacity Builders in Family Educational Involvement, which reports on a survey carried out over three years on the administrators of organizations, and which focuses on three levels of parental involvement: individual, relational and organizational, as well as on coaching or consulting. The authors aimed to evaluate the impact of the different actions carried out by these organizations on parents' involvement in the school and concluded that the intermediary organizations - very present in the American system - should not solely propose action programs but also construct strategic models (communication, alliance etc) and help circulate them (Lopez, Kreider & Coffman, 2005).

2.15 PREVIOUS STUDIES ABOUT PARENTS PARTICIPATION

Different studies have been conducted on the subject of parents' participation.

Saadatmand (2002) in her research on the participation of family in educational and instructional programs of school pointed out the relational obstacles of parents and educators and divided it into three factors related to: 1) teacher 2) school and 3) parents. In from points of view the association of parents and educators is one of the bases of the school which supervises through financial counseling relative to the way of seeking help.

Riley (1995) describes the relationship between schools and parents as one of unequal power. He suggests that parents were expected to follow the
instructions of professionals who continued to separate themselves even further from the community “by adopting arcane professional dialogue” (p. 11). This language barrier tended to further distance parents from school activities. Other interested parents felt alienated from school life.

Scoolsberg (1996) an article titled as ‘‘when the parents participate, the children succeed more’’ has stated the four stages of the parent’s role in the children educations:

1. Participating parents at home through home instructions and supervising on performing homework.

2. Participating parents through creating the relationship with the teacher of elementary school.

3. Participating parents through creating the relationship with the teacher of high school.

4. Participating in educational system through cooperation with the school administration. (Scoolsberg, 1996)

A literature review for the English Department of Education and Skills (Desforges&Abbouchaar, 2003) observed in 2003 that numerous, solid research studies have been carried out on the relationships between pupil success at school and the spontaneous participation of parents in the education of their children. The report shows several examples of signs of parental commitment or involvement:

A special report entitled “Family educational practices and schooling” by the Revue Française (published in 2005) focused on the ways in which parents
educate their child at home and the repercussions that this has at school. Its introduction outlines the principal research trends in this area (Bergonnier-Dupuy, 2005), specifying the objective, i.e. an analysis of family educational styles, an analysis of parental aid with schooling and, for the youngest pupils, an analysis of the educational practices and parent/child interactions linked to learning (problem solving, language interactions and the different approaches to reading).

A report details findings from qualitative research by Russel, K. & Granville, and S. in 2005 addressing the issue of parental involvement in the education of their children. The need for the research derived from a growing recognition of the importance of the role of parents and home-school partnerships in improving levels of achievement and attainment in schools and the overall quality of the educational experience.

This study yielded numerous findings, some of which are detailed below:

- There are a variety of perceptions and expectations about what parental involvement means, and the range of roles and responsibilities that parents expect the school to offer.
- Most parents recognize that they are required to offer some fundamental support and input into their children's learning, for example to help them be punctual, behave well and respect others. These are generally regarded as basic expectations that schools can reasonably expect of any parent.
- Parents have expectations for how the school interacts with them and their children, for example through the welcoming ethos, communications and responses to issues raised.
Review of Related Literature

- The majority of parents currently have relatively low levels of involvement whilst perceiving that what they already do is all that is needed. Some parents are not satisfied with current levels of active participation and wish to change this.
- Many parents hold fixed assumptions about the division of labor between home and school and it may be challenging to overcome these.

Forms and patterns of parental involvement

- Parents are involved in many different ways. Parents are most likely to be involved in informal activities requiring a lesser amount of commitment and time. Few parents participate in active, formal and school based activities, such as membership of the PTA and the School Board1.
- Pressure of time, due to work or family commitments was the most quoted reason for any lack of involvement.
- There are a number of key factors affecting variable degrees of involvement. The age and stage of the children is one such factor with parents being more involved when their children are younger.
- Parents are also primarily concerned for the welfare of their own child. The concern to keep track of their own child's educational experience is what motivates parents to participate in school events or formal bodies.

The Transition Project in Manchester by Dyson (2007) have had a program for training and supporting primary school staff in working with parents to build strong relationships, good two-way communication, effective support, and involvement in their children's education from the outset. The program was developed by the Parental Involvement Team and Primary consultants from Manchester Education Partnership and has been funded by Children's
Fund. It focuses on parental involvement at two key transition points - the entry to school at the Foundation Stage, and the Transition from Foundation to Year 1. Some of the key findings of this project include:

- This project suggests that the role of the 25 head teacher is crucial in embedding parental involvement work in school policy and culture.
- Any strategy for developing parental involvement further at school, local or national level cannot rest on the assumption that all staff in all schools feels totally comfortable with the parental involvement agenda. Indeed, any local or national initiatives to enhance parental involvement will need to take into account the existing relationships, barriers, and communication needed which will affect how different schools are likely to approach such initiatives.
- The Project suggests that the local authority may have a key role to play in promoting parental involvement work, perhaps within a broader parenting strategy.

Overall, the Project suggests that parental involvement work can be developed in schools at low cost and through simple measures. These involve creating a 'space' within which staff can build their confidence, explore new approaches, receive support and network with other schools. This is best done in the context of whole school development. Local and national government can contribute by keeping the profile of parental involvement high and supporting the development of this work, though schools have to be free to respond to local circumstances.

A study conducted in the United States (Amundson, K., NSBA, 1988) demonstrated the numerous benefits of programs to develop parent participation:
• Parents who participate develop more positive attitudes towards the school and its staff;

• Teachers who become involved in parent participation programs improve their teaching methods; those reporting excellent parent-teacher relations experience more job satisfaction;

• Parent participation programs are effective ways to add to the school’s achievements for the benefit of the pupils;

• The General Assembly is the gateway to parents’ involvement in the school.

Attending this meeting is important in order to learn what is happening in schools, to elect parent representatives and, perhaps even to stand as candidates for one of the positions.

• The Governing Board is the best place to participate in making important decisions concerning the school and the pupils. Here, dialogue with others involved in the school is encouraged. Being elected to the Governing Board places a parent at the center of school life.

Brown (1994) concludes that administrators must be sensitive to teacher perceptions and take time to build relationships necessary for change to occur. Resistance from teachers must be addressed by educational leaders.

A report by the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services about "Parenting practices that shape the lives of young children" in 2005 shows that opportunities for parents to develop their young child's language development and eventual reading success are missed. Parents reported that on average only 43% of children were read to daily by a parent or family member. More
specifically, they found that parents reported that 36% of infants 6 to 11 months old were read to daily, and 54% of 5 year olds were read to every day. The likelihood of daily reading to their children increased as parents' education increased. This study also found that 73% went to bed and 75% had meals the same time every day, and 57% of households ate at least one meal together as a family every day. Among children aged 2 to 5 years, 73% watched less than three hours of television each day.

A paper by Gillies in 2006 about "Parenting, class and culture: exploring the context of childrearing" is based on data from qualitative interviews with 25 mothers and 11 fathers from 27 households. The households were approximately evenly divided between working class and middle class. The report argues that distilling 'good parenting' into a series of universally applicable skills ignores the fact that views on successful childrearing are specific to class and culture.

The report focuses on three practices for which working class parents are commonly criticized: disinvestment from their children's school; defense and protection of their children's behavior; and provision of treats and comforts that are deemed inappropriate.

In the discussion of schooling, the paper reports that for most working class parents, education was associated with disappointment and failure, in terms of their experiences both as children and parents. Education was viewed from a distant position characterized by wanting their children to do well, but feeling resigned to having little control in a situation where the odds were stacked against them. The school was often viewed as a hostile, dangerous world, in which children were successful if they avoided attention from the teachers, and
from which home was a sanctuary where alternative values could be promoted to affirm the self-worth of children.

The report also concludes that professionals giving advice to parents must have detailed knowledge of, and be careful to respect, the particular demands associated with disadvantage, in order to avoid cutting across the personal expertise of parents, and take a flexible and constructive approach.

A study report by Barrett in 2004 about UK families and of attitudes to families and family life in the UK between 1994 and 2004. The first chapter considers the nature of demographic changes in the UK population and focuses on the nature of population growth and change, the impact of immigration and changes in access to global information network. Chapter two looks at the role of mothers and considers who work-life balance issues may have affected their relationships with their children, with other family members and with themselves. Chapter three considers the role of the fathers and the extent to which the quality of fathers' involvement in family life may have been influenced by evolving family formations as well as by tendencies towards democratization of relationships. In chapter four, the parent-child relationships are examined and it is asked whether qualitative changes may be observed in these or in attitudes towards socialization, parental care and supervision. Chapter five considers the wider social context and explores whether family networks and support needs might have changed throughout the diverse communities that constitute UK society in 2004. This report then concludes with a summing-up the major trends and considers what implications they might have for future research and policy.
A review of the international evidence regarding the effectiveness of parenting support programs by Moran & Merwe in 2004 shows that link various aspects of parenting with outcomes for children.

Some of the conclusions for policy about "what works" in practice are summarized below:

- Both early and later intervention: Early interventions report better and more durable outcomes for children; but late interventions are better than none and may help parents deal with parenting under stress
- Interventions that have measurable, concrete objectives as well as overarching aims
- Interventions that pay close attention to implementation factors for getting, keeping and engaging parents
- Interventions using more than one method of delivery
- Interventions delivered by appropriately trained and skilled staff, backed up by good management and support
- Interventions that work in parallel with parents, families and children

Some of the conclusions for policy with regard to what is still not known about "what works" on the basis of current research:

- How effective UK parenting interventions are, which cannot be determined without more robustly scientific research methods than are currently the norm
- The extent to which interventions developed and shown to be effective in other countries can be translated to a British context
- The specific characteristics of participants and programs that contribute to success for programs that show promise or are effective
What aspects of resilience and which protective factors in parenting moderate the outcomes of parenting support for both parents and children.

Whether and to what extent parenting support interventions in the UK are cost-effective

Some of the key findings about national policy based on the evaluation literature are:

- Parenting support benefits families, and this review shows the potential benefits that may be realized through continuing investment in this type of social intervention.
- There needs to be a consistent message about supporting parents delivered across the board, reflecting the wider ecology of parenting, from the provision of individual programs to the implementation of national policies.
- It will be vital for the future of this field that government invests in building capacity and skills in the social care workforce and related progressions that provide parenting support.

Butler (1992) discovered that some parents are extremely interested in being involved, not only as classroom volunteers, but as decision makers and advocates in education. These parents continue to spark the current developing educational philosophy of parent involvement in local school governance. Unfortunately, teachers and administrators have not ranked parent involvement as important as have these parents.

Christopher (1996) states, “We are prepared in undergraduate classes to work with students, but an area overlooked is working with parents.”
Conley (1993) studied that expanded parent roles can occur when parents become knowledgeable about learner outcomes, setting learning goals with teacher and students, communicating with teachers about the child’s interests and learning styles, becoming involved in local school governance, and advocating and supporting change in the school. He contends that it is through information exchange and shared knowledge that parent roles will continue to expand.

Dixon (1992) points out that there is no preparation at university for teachers in working with parents. University training of teachers needs to prepare educators in working with all partners in education. He also states, “Colleges of education must give strong consideration to promoting full partnerships. They may do this by including instruction in effective parent involvement techniques in preserves and recertification training programs for all teachers and administrators. Teachers are taught how to work with children, not adults; consequently, many teachers are uncomfortable working with adults.

Dunning (1995) in his research found that members of school councils require training in the basics of governance, management, educational policy and finance, and community consultation. The training should also include local policies, family background, effective communication skills, effective parent/teacher conferences, educational content issues, and ideas for increased school-home cooperation.

Gareau and Sawatsky (1995) went as far as to claim that “schools discouraged parental intrusion, and the education function of parents was downplayed” (p. 464). Many parents had unpleasant experiences as students and are still reluctant to enter schools today.
Henderson and Berla (1995) state that increased attendance, less discipline problems, and higher aspirations are dirtily related to and have been correlated with an increase in parent involvement. The positive effects of increased parental involvement have been known for sometime.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) contend that both parents and teachers must perceive the meaning and roles of parent involvement in similar and compatible means. Useful outcomes for children, teachers, and parents hinge on parents and teachers developing a shared commitment. Misunderstanding and conflict can take place when teacher's and parent's have different views of the functions and meanings of parent involvement.

In 1992, parents and educators association of America sent a questionnaire for 27000 members and 3000 counselors of the school and asked about problems they faced when they tried to involve the parents in the school affairs. The participants mentioned that the most important factors include lack of parents’ time and unfamiliarity with the participation methods, cultural and lingual differences and lack of accepting the participation of the parents by schools.

In Gaffuri’s (1992) research it was found that having both parents and teachers at the same training sessions is effective and that separate training furthers the distance between them. It was suggested by participants that in service include: communication skills, collaborative decision making, confidentiality, conflict resolution, and training specific to their role. Such a training program should be comprised of a series of joint workshops or forums. The use of videos and reading material should be considered to alleviate the pressure on busy schedules. A high turnover rate of parents could be an issue for ongoing training, continuity and informed decision making.
Upon conclusion of the in service, parents and teachers should be comfortable with each other and the implementation and strategic plans developed.

   Jahanian (2002) studied "The ways of supporting the people in education of Semnan province in Iran” and regards the attraction of people’s participation in education as following stages:1) Gaining trust 2) responsibility and making participation 3) evaluation and analysis.

   Jewell and Rosen (1993) studied educational reform in New York and discovered that parents needed to know more about a variety of areas: budgets, decision making, and curriculum, in order to participate meaningfully in discussions about the school.

   Kopacsi and Koopmans (1991) found that 82 percent of the teachers felt a need for in service training to understand and implement effective parent involvement. Ninety-one percent felt they would try to involve parents in very useful ways in their classrooms. Teachers are expected to talk, relate to and work with parents.

   Lalavis (2003) in an attempt studied the role of parents in the future of instructional changes and concluded that those students whose parents have an active role in their instructions take the most advantage of educational system and instruction presented and the average of their grades is higher compared to the other students.

   Moles (1987) also identified a need for parent involvement skills through training in teacher’s college and through staff development. In a study looking at teacher agreement and attitudes on parent involvement.
Moles (1987) indicates that the most effective training for parents or councils is shared, where teachers and parents share the same information, participate in discussions and develop working relationships.

- Participation in school events.
- Participation in the management and administration of the school.

Sarason (1995) contends; why not train them for this? Results of an American wide survey were shared at a Parent Involvement Summit. Four thousand eight hundred Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) chapter presidents had been surveyed and only 30 per cent indicated that their school offered parental involvement training for the staff (Butler, 1992).

In the article by Bal and Goc (1999), they indicate that: Numerous methods to increase parent involvement have been suggested. Such strategies include increasing communication between teacher and parents, involving parents with limited English proficiency, providing information regarding how parents can enhance learning at home, and encouraging parental academic engagement at home (p. 17).

Taylor’s study (1992) found that parents were aware that their participation in school-based decision making could be misinterpreted or misused by other parents. Parents often mistrust community members who are active on councils or other formalized structures. Formalized parent organizations need to work at reducing tension with those in informal roles in schools.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCBL Act) reauthorized the elementary and secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), and is predicated on four principles that provide a framework through which families, educators,
and communities can work together to improve teaching and learning. Theses principles are accountability for results, local control and flexibility, expanded parental choice, and effective and successful programs that reflect scientifically based research.

The research results generated in the different fields are relatively consistent and highlight the benefits of a family education approach based around improving a child's level of autonomy and personal fulfillment. The combination of available affection and encouraged autonomy always has a positive impact on a child's behavior and achievements, notably in school.

The studies of Epestin in 1991 shows that the involvement of the parents in school affairs is beneficial for students, parents, teachers and schools whether these programs are executed in elementary, guidance school and high school period. Warm (1990), and Malaspina (1993) found that teachers are not trained to work with parents.

2.16 THE CHARACTER OF PRESENT RESEARCH

In this research the researcher has studied the parental and family participation in high schools administration for discovering the extent of the correlation between parent's participation and increased student's learning. This research supports on-going efforts to create stronger bonds between school and home.

Through analyzing several studies, the researcher found significant proof that parents and family are the leading models and motivators for high schools students.
Many of the parents of these students stay involved during the high school years, as well. This, of course, is not an easy task. As children approach their teen years, many parents find it difficult to strike a balance between "letting go" and "being there" for their children. The high school years are difficult for young people, filled with growing peer pressure, dramatic physical changes, and an awakening need for more independence. Research shows that parent involvement begins to decline at the onset of the adolescent years but that doesn’t mean children wouldn’t still benefit from it.

2.17 SUMMARY

There are hundreds of books, journal articles, and reports on the subject of parents' participation in their children's education and school activities. These writings include research reports, expert opinions, theory papers, program descriptions, and guidelines for setting up programs. A great many of these reports are informative and useful, and, because parent involvement has become a "hot topic" in the past few years, there is considerable current information.

When discussing parent's participation, the most commonly appearing-word will be “parents”. Before introducing parental participation strategies, it is necessary to define the meaning of “parents”. As Lockette (1999) mentions, “When we use the term ‘parents’ participation, we need to remember that ‘parent’ can also mean other adults who play an important role in a child’s life” (p.1). Lunts (2003) includes parents, guardians, stepparents, siblings, members of extended family, and any other adults who might carry the primary responsibilities for a child’s health, development and education into the meaning of “parents”.
Teachers have a plethora of conflicts to deal with in their careers, in addition to providing students with a valuable education. Parents can provide an enormous amount of support for teachers in the classroom and can be the reinforcement students need at home to succeed in their education. Teachers can illicit parents’ help through small actions and the results are more successful students. The cooperation between teachers, parents and students is the right equation for improvements in education, and the more educators work to combine the efforts of everyone involved in education, the better the results will be.

In spite of this fact, many teachers still show their concerns about the lack of parental involvement at schools and its negative effects on students’ academic performances on grades. Parents are also dissatisfied that they are not well informed about their students’ behaviors or test grades conducted in the classroom and admit that they are not actively involved in these school activities and it affects on their own students’ performance. Knowing about the most state-of-the-art strategies of parental involvement and taking them into practical actions are essential not only for parents and their students but also for everybody who is involved in education such as teachers, educators, practitioners, and community.

If parents are to participate in decision-making, then schools and the school system must educate the parent body about decision-making and its rules. Participation in decision-making also relies on parental knowledge of current policies and practices.

Recognizing diverse family structures, circumstances, and responsibilities—including differences that might impede parent participation—is an important ingredient in the three constructs of climate, communication, and
collaboration. Because the persons responsible for a child may not be the child's biological parents, policies and programs should include participation by all persons interested in the child's educational progress. Home–school relationships are the formal and informal connections between the family and school. Home–school relationships seem to be just as important for youth as they are for younger children. Although home–school relationships tend to wane during or even before children reach adolescence, such relationships continue to play an important role in youth outcomes. Aspects of home–school relationships include communicating with teachers and school personnel, attending school events, volunteering at school, and participating in parent–teacher organizations and leadership groups.

Many researchers have identified effective parental involvement programs: Epstein (2001) defines six types of involvement that are effective forms of connecting the larger school community: parenting (skills), communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) include out of school or home-based partnerships as well as school-based activities with parents and children. Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) believes that effective parental involvement includes children having a range of learning environments around them, or complementary learning. Cotton’s (2001) book, The Schooling Practices That Matter Most, suggest the direct help from parents is a major benefit over passive learning.

The research reviewed for this study has indicated that parental involvement improves components of children’s education such as daily attendance, cognitive and social skills or achievement, behavior and attitude, confidence, and motivation. Many studies have been conducted that illustrate
Review of Related Literature

this information such as a study done by Reutzel and Cooter (1996) and “Focus on Results” done by the National Network of Partnership Schools.

As barriers that block parental involvement, there are several aspects of obstacles: the socioeconomic status has been recognized as an influential factor concerning parental involvement. The cultural background also affects the relationship between home and school. As cited in Rudnitski (1992) found that “parents from racial, ethnic and cultural minorities, especially those of low socioeconomic status, tend to feel less affinity for the school than those in the mainstream middle class” (p.15).

Understanding parental involvement can reach further to the broad range of parents and teachers. They are not only restricted in biological parents and home-room teachers, but also a group of people involved in a child’s education and development can be understood in parent-teachers involvement programs.

Parental involvement programs are getting developed in more productive and parents’ friendly ways. Still programs mainly focus on the child’s early education, but many different approaches are used to reach up to middle, high school, and even district-wide communities. Many schools are trying to put efforts in developing relationships between parents and schools by using electronic methods such as e-mails, voice mail systems, and on-line conferences.

The present chapter synthesizes information from different documents on different aspects of parental involvement. Documents were selected to reflect research on the effects of parental involvement on school administration, student achievement, and other school activities.