

## ABSTRACT

Title: TITLE 1 MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS'  
PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL  
INVOLVEMENT MANDATES

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Research findings show a positive relationship between parental involvement and students' academic performance and motivation to learn (Epstein, 2001). Data also indicate that administrators play a key role in improving parental involvement in schools (Epstein, 2001; Griffith, 2001; Kafka, 2009; Richardson, 2009). As such, the federal government has mandated, via the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, that principals adhere to certain policies pertaining to parental involvement. However, the extent to which principals of Title I middle schools are implementing practices consistent with these policies remains unknown.

To improve our knowledge of how to increase parental engagement in high-poverty schools, a survey-based study was conducted among 30 principals of Title I middle schools in a large, demographically diverse Local Educational Agency to assess their perceptions of (a) the value of parental involvement activities and (b) their preparation to perform these activities.

Although the respondents perceived that the Title I Parental Mandates regarding parental involvement activities were important and that they were prepared to perform them, the perceived importance was greater than perceived preparation to perform them ( $t[29] = 5.114, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = .936$ ).

Another important finding concerned respondents' perceptions of barriers to implementing Title I parental involvement mandates. The most important barrier that the respondents perceived as limiting their ability to perform the mandated parental involvement activities was time (43% of participants). Other barriers mentioned were personnel, budget, training, and parents' nonparticipation. When asked to report parental engagement strategies they had used and found effective, 60% mentioned parent meetings, 37% mentioned other types of school-initiated contact, and 30% mentioned various types of opportunities for parents to initiate contact with the school.

The results corroborate those of Barnyak and McNelly (2009), who found that although administrators have strong beliefs about parental involvement, their specific practices do not always align with their beliefs. The findings of the current research add that one reason for the disconnect between beliefs and practice might be lack of preparation.

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INVOLVEMENT MANDATES

by

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## Dedication

I dedicate this accomplishment to several people, but first and foremost, I want to give thanks and honor to God for sustaining me. It was certainly a challenge, but I thank him for giving me grace and mercy and always showing me favor. His love is sufficient. I also want to dedicate this accomplishment to my parents, Bobby and Alma Marshall. Thank you for always believing in me and encouraging me to do my best. I also dedicate this accomplishment to my children, Bobby and Kalyn, who give me life. Their unfailing love and constant “I love you mommy” reminders were constant encouragement. Thank you to my sister Kimberlyn and my brother Robert, who stood by my side every step of the way. Thank you to my sister-in-law, Daphne, and brother-in-law, Tony, who gave me the time I needed to work on my paper. I also want to thank all of my nieces and my nephew and closest friends who have been by my side and always took time to send a friendly text to remind me that failure was not an option. Thank you to my Aunt Ruby who always asked when was I going to finish and get this degree. You are one of my biggest cheerleaders. This was the toughest three years of my life, as I lost my husband of three years and my daughter’s grandfather (BaBa); he and Mrs. Bardwell called me Doctor from the very beginning. I thank my family for never giving up on me and for not allowing me to give up on myself. Finally, I dedicate this accomplishment to my Grandad Jones. I receive this doctoral degree in your honor. Your spirit has been my guiding light through this process. We will walk the stage together in December.

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## Section I: Introduction

The Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965, Title I, provides more than \$13 billion in conditional grants annually to state and local districts. Title I is the largest federally funded education program for elementary and secondary schools. Title I, which is also designed to focus on special needs populations, was created for high-poverty schools to reduce the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students.

Title I includes various mandates that eligible schools must adhere to and document. This study focuses specifically on the parental engagement mandates in Federal Title I schools and how principals carry out those mandates in one large urban school district in State.

### *Title I Schools*

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (2017), as of 2017, nearly 14,000 of the 15,000 school districts in the nation have Title I programs. The initial purpose of Title I was to provide additional resources to states and local educational agencies (LEAs) for remedial education for children in poverty. The 1994 reauthorization of Title I shifted the program's emphasis from remedial education to helping all disadvantaged children achieve the rigorous state academic standards expected of all students. Title I is designed to help students served by the program to achieve proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards. Title I schools with 40 percent of students from low-income families can use Title I funds, along with other federal, state, and local funds, to operate a "schoolwide program" to upgrade the instructional program for the whole school. Title I schools with less than the 40 percent schoolwide threshold or that

choose not to operate a schoolwide program can offer a "targeted assistance program" in which the school identifies students who are failing, or who are most at risk of failing, to meet the state's challenging academic achievement standards. Targeted assistance schools design, in consultation with parents, staff, and district staff, an instructional program to meet the needs of those students who are failing or most at risk of failing. Both schoolwide and targeted assistance programs must use instructional strategies based on scientific research and implement parental involvement activities. As a result, states and school districts can use Title I funds for instructional activities, counseling, parental involvement, and program improvement. In return, the federal government requires that districts and states meet accountability requirements for raising student performance (United States Department of Education [DOE], 2015).

The amount of Title I funding a school receives is also based on the school's academic data. If the school's assessment data are historically low compared to either the state or the nation, those schools might receive additional Title I funding. A schoolwide Title I program can provide benefits to all students and is not limited to those students who are considered to be economically disadvantaged. Title I provides federal funding to schools that have low poverty levels. Specifically, this funding would help only those students who are at risk of falling behind academically. Title I can provide supplemental instruction for students who are economically disadvantaged or at risk for failing to meet state standards. Students are expected to show academic growth at a faster rate with the support of Title I instruction than those enrolled in non-Title I Schools.

***Data used to determine Title I funding.*** According to the Department of Education, federal funds are currently allocated through four statutory formulas that are based primarily on census poverty estimates and the cost of education in each state (United States Department of Education, 2015). The four formulas are as follows:

1. Basic Grants provide funds to LEAs in which the number of children counted in the formula is at least ten and exceeds two percent of an LEA's school-age population.
2. Concentration Grants flow to LEAs where the number of formula children exceeds 6,500 or 15 percent of the total school-age population.
3. Targeted Grants are based on the same data used for Basic and Concentration Grants except that the data are weighted so that LEAs with higher numbers or higher percentages of children from low-income families receive more funds. Targeted Grants flow to LEAs where the number of schoolchildren counted in the formula (without application of the formula weights) is at least ten and at least five percent of the LEA's school-age population.
4. Education Finance Incentive Grants (EFIG) distribute funds to states based on factors that measure:
  - a state's effort to provide financial support for education compared to its relative wealth as measured by its per capita income; and
  - the degree to which education expenditures among LEAs within the state are equalized.

Once a state's Education Finance Incentive Grants (EFIG) allocation is determined, funds are distributed (using a weighted count formula that is similar to Targeted Grants) to LEAs in which the number of children from low-income families is at least ten and at least five percent of the LEA's school-age population. LEAs target the Title I funds they receive to schools with the highest percentages of children from low-income families. A school that has more than 70% low-income families is provided funds to operate a schoolwide Title I program. This allows the funds to address the needs of all students. A school that has less than 70%, but more than 40%, is listed as “targeted assisted” and can only focus on the students who are listed to receive free and reduced-price lunch (DOE, 2015).

**Monitoring of funds.** Monitoring formalizes the integral relationship between the United States Department of Education and the states. It emphasizes, first and foremost, accountability for using resources wisely in the critical venture of educating and preparing our nation's students. Using monitoring indicators clarifies for states, and for DOE monitors, the critical components of this accountability and provides a performance standard against which state policies and procedures can be measured. As a result of monitoring, the Department of Education is able to gather accurate data about state and local needs and use that data to design technical assistance initiatives and national leadership activities (DOE, 2015).

### *Scope and Need for Study*

This section provides information regarding the policies that have been in place with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, and its transition to the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015). The mandates for each act are discussed as they pertain

to parental engagement and the use of federal funds.

**Federal policy related to parent and family engagement.** The signing in 2001 of NCLB, a reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), served as a significant step forward for policy makers seeking to meet the needs of all students and help all children attain high levels of academic achievement. In 2007, NCLB was scheduled for revision because the law was unable to meet the needs of all learners (DOE, 2015). In 2010, the Obama administration joined the effort to revise NCLB, and in December 2015, President Obama signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the latest reauthorization of the 50-year-old ESEA. Under this new Act, Parent and Family Engagement is no longer called Parent Involvement.

One of the components of ESSA mandates that schools use Title I federal funds to develop or implement strategies that promote parental involvement among low-income populations. Title I of the ESSA (2015) defined parent involvement as the building of “partnerships between home and school,” but left the development of strategies for building these partnerships up to the local schools and districts. The legislation does, however, provide guidelines for the development of these strategies, stating that they must include (a) policy involvement by parents at the school and district level; (b) shared school-family responsibility for high academic performance, as expressed in school-parent compacts; and (c) the development of school and parent capacity for productive mutual collaboration (ESSA, 2015). These Title I requirements might serve as useful guidelines for all school because they strengthen school-family partnerships.

Title I requires that parents receive information and training in a variety of areas related to their children's education, including the state's standards for what all children are expected to know and be able to do. Schools must also (a) inform parents about the state's assessment procedures for measuring performance and progress and (b) involve them in Title 1 decision-making, including the development of the school's improvement plan. Additionally, the law requires that parents or legal guardians receive assistance and support, including literacy assistance if necessary, to assume these roles to work with their children at home (DOE, 2015).

Title I also mandates that schools develop a written parent involvement policy and create, with parents, a school-parent compact that describes the responsibilities of both the school and parents as they work together to help achieve established benchmarks. Parents and teachers must discuss these compacts, and each party's progress in meeting stated responsibilities, during parent-teacher conferences. According to Title I, compacts should recognize the full range of roles that parents can play in their children's education, as well as the need for parents and schools to develop and maintain partnerships and ongoing dialogue around children's achievement (United States Department of Education, 2015).

Section 9101 of Title I requires LEAs to reserve funds from their Part A (basic programs operated by LEAs) allocations to fund parent involvement activities such as family literacy and parenting skills education (ESSA, 2015). The funds can also be used for professional development, instructional materials, resources to support educational programs, and for parental involvement promotion (ESSA).



*School District Policy Requirements for ESSA Title I Schools*

**Monitoring and implementation policies for Title I schools.** To help District schools comply with these federal mandates, the District that is the focus of this study's 2016 Bridge to Excellence Master Plan incorporated suggestions and mandates for engaging parents, particularly those of high minority and Title I schools (School District, 2016). However, while the plan defined parental involvement, it devoted very little attention to recommendations or regulations for parental involvement. Whereas the plan did provide guidance on providing support to various subgroups, such as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), minority, special education, and homeless families (School District, 2015, pp. 432–433), it provided no overall direction for implementing federal parental involvement requirements. Despite these shortcomings, the Plan did recommend that the Office of Diversity improve the capacity of principals to work collaboratively with students of different cultural backgrounds to build relationships with families and improve parental outreach (School District, 2016). However, there were no specific District suggestions for principals to consider regarding implementing parental engagement.

The Title I Office in this District is responsible for documenting, reporting, and providing technical assistance to all Title I schools. The District designates Title I instructional specialists to provide technical assistance to each school and meet with school-based personnel to review the school-based policy plans relevant to parental involvement. The purpose of these meetings is to ensure that each Title I school's parent policy meets all statutory requirements and that the requirements are easily identifiable in each plan. The District also requires Title I instructional specialists to use a Title I monitoring form to review documents and processes, as well as the

implementation of school-level parent policy plans. The instructional specialist for each school and the school's principal sign the monitoring form, then submit it for review by the Title I supervisor, Title I coordinating supervisor, or Director of State and Federal Programs. The final monitoring form is kept in the District Title I Office.

The study District also appoints district area instructional directors, who provide assurances that principals and school staff are incorporating parental input into any revisions to school-based policies designed to meet statutory requirements. The Title I Office also provides training on strategies for increasing parent involvement, implements the six components to build parent capacity, and involves parents in the development and implementation of the school-based parent policy and school-parent compacts (School District, 2015).

#### *District Mandates for Parental and Family Engagement*

The study District has established four district requirements related to parental involvement for Title I middle schools that receive Part A funding. These four requirements include the development of: (a) parent compacts, (b) the Comer parent retreat, (c) parent annual meetings, and (d) a Title I Component Plan.

**1. Parent compact.** Each school that receives Title I, Part A funding must work with the parents of children served under Title I, Part A to develop a school-parent compact as a component of the school's written parental involvement policy. The school-parent compact is a written agreement that identifies the activities that the parents, the entire school staff, and the students will undertake to share the responsibility for students' improved academic achievement. In addition, the school-parent compact outlines the activities that the parents, school staff, and students will undertake to build and develop a partnership to facilitate the Parental Involvement

Guidance. The United States DOE (2015) mandates that a school-parent compact includes the following:

- the school’s responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables children served under Title I, Part A to meet the state’s student academic achievement standards;
- ways in which parents will be responsible for supporting their children’s learning (e.g., monitoring attendance, homework completion, or television watching; volunteering in their child’s classroom; and participating as appropriate in decisions relating to the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time);
- parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during which participants will discuss the compact and its relationship to the individual child’s achievement;
- frequent reports to parents on their child’s progress;
- reasonable access to staff; and
- opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child’s class or observe classroom activities.

**2. Comer Retreat.** The Comer Retreat uses the Comer process, developed by James Comer (1984), to improve the relationships that children and families develop in schools to promote academic and social success. Using the Comer model, the District representatives place three administrative teams within each school—the school planning and management team, the student staff support team, and the parent

team. During the annual Comer Retreats, parents attend a variety of information sessions that help them address various situations that will allow them to provide the support that their children need to improve their academic performance. Some of those sessions have included training on connecting with students, preparing for college, or supporting the middle adolescent. Ongoing training is also available to address problematic student behaviors.

The parent retreat includes both home-based and school-based involvement strategies such as active connections and communication between home and school, volunteering at school, and assisting with homework. Although the District has implemented the Comer Retreat for over 20 years, it is important to note that there was no funding for it during this 2015–2016 fiscal year.

**3. Parent annual meetings.** Principals must conduct an annual meeting with parents to review and provide feedback on activities conducted based on prior recommendations. These meetings should include parents of students with disabilities and parents with limited English proficiency (School District, 2017).

**4. Title I Component Plan.** The District mandates that all Title I schools in the District develop a Title I Component Plan. According to the District, the plan must (a) discuss how the school will increase parental or family involvement in school planning and the decision-making process; (b) describe the strategy for encouraging parent participation on the school planning and management team (SPMT) and in parent organizations; (c) detail how parents will engage in committee work, provide input and feedback into the school improvement planning process, and support the implementation of the Title I Component Plan; (d) explain how

community and business partners support the school; and (e) describe the activities that align with the six requirements of parental involvement (communicating, parenting, student learning, volunteering, school decision-making and advocacy, and collaborating with community). The plan should also include strategies for involving parents in the development and dissemination of parent involvement policies and parent compacts (e.g., Title I parent orientation and parent night activities), as well as approaches to increasing business and community partnerships that will promote improved student learning. Parents must also provide input on how schools will spend parent involvement funds (DOE, 2015).

It is important to note that each Title I District school has been assigned a Title I specialist to assist with developing and implementing the Parent Component Plan and Compact. Title I Instructional Specialists are required to document the review process, the revisions made, and the implementation of school-level parent component and compact plans through the Title I monitoring form (District, 2017).

### *Problem Statement*

Research findings show a positive relationship between parental involvement and students' academic performance and motivation to learn (Epstein, 2001). Data also indicate that administrators play a key role in improving parental involvement in schools (Epstein, 2001; Griffith, 2001; Kafka, 2009; Richardson, 2009). As such, the federal government has mandated, via the ESSA Act of 2015, that principals adhere to certain policies pertaining to parental involvement. However, the extent to which principals of Title I middle schools are implementing practices consistent with these policies remains unknown. To address this void in literature and to improve our

knowledge of how to increase parental engagement in high-poverty schools, this research study explored the way that principals of Title I middle schools perceived (a) the value of parental involvement activities and (b) their preparation to perform these activities in a large, demographically diverse LEA in a mid-Atlantic state.

This study placed a particular focus on Title I schools, because these institutions tend to exhibit poor indicators of student academic performance (DOE, 2011). While many individual and school dynamics influence these indicators, Epstein (2001) asserted that parental involvement was one of the most important factors. Epstein (2009) also found that principals played a major leadership role in efforts to engage families.

Although a prior study (Jackson, 2015) identified middle school administrators' adherence to specified parental involvement activities as contributing to academic socialization, no data exist on (a) the extent to which school administrators endorse the importance of these parental involvement activities related to District policies, or (b) their perceptions of their capacity to perform them. The current study will show middle school principals' perceptions of the level of importance and their preparedness to adhere to the Title I Federal Mandates. Having this information is important for several reasons:

- Parental involvement in Title I is a mandated activity that school administrators must perform.
- Parental involvement increases students' academic performance.
- Administrators can play a pivotal role in influencing the implementation of parental activities through distributive leadership.

- Administrators' role in following through on Title I parental engagement activities are an important element of federal accountability at the district level.

As mentioned previously, the federal government requires that principals of Title I schools meet the mandatory requirements of the ESSA. This study examined the perceptions of principals in Title I middle schools regarding parental involvement practices. Given the amount of research detailing the importance of family involvement in student learning, and the critical role principals can play in increasing parental involvement, the results of this study provide valuable data on (a) principals' perceptions of mandated parent engagement activities and (b) whether they have the capacity to implement these activities with fidelity.

#### *Evidence Supporting the Problem*

**Principal's role.** As mentioned previously, the federal government requires that principals of Title I schools to meet the mandatory requirements of the ESSA. This inquiry involves the extent to which Title I school administrators endorse practices associated with significant parental involvement, which directly impacts academic performance and speaks to principals' perceptions regarding implementing policy (DOE, 2015).

Specifically, this study will focus on the role of principals, since they are charged with implementing federal mandates to increase parental engagement (DOE, 2002). Although principals play an important, and even mandatory, role in engaging families in the schools, there is little data available regarding principal perception and principal capacity to implement policy. Given the amount of research detailing the

importance of family involvement in student learning, and the critical role principals can play in increasing parental involvement, the results of this study address this gap.

**Academic performance of students in the District.** The data in Table 1 reflect the standardized test performance of 8th grade students who attended District Title I middle schools or academies from 2014 to 2016. Whereas the District serves students in Grades K–12, this study focused on 7th- and 8th-grade student performance. The researcher used students’ scores on the science portion of the 8th grade State Assessment (SA) as the standardized score criterion for comparing the academic achievement of Title I middle schools for the years 2014–2016. The researcher selected the 8th grade science SA as the criterion because scores are available for a three-year period, and it is a standardized test reflective of student achievement in middle school. SA data were selected because this is the only middle school data from a three-year period that could be selected from the state that could be analyzed over three years. In addition, the school system did not have any other disaggregated data to show proficiency or advanced scores as a school and per grade level. These data support the assertion that Title I middle schools within the District demonstrate deficiencies in academic achievement.



Table 1

*State Assessment Performance (Grade 8)*

Study District	% proficient or advanced on science		
	2014	2015	2016
Title I middle schools			
Middle School 1	39.1	39.6	28.7
Middle School 2	41.7	46.2	33.2
Middle School 3	22.7	16.0	29.6
Middle School 4	44.9	31.4	39.4
Middle School 5	48.5	52.6	38.2
Middle School 6	52.6	56.5	49.3
Middle School 7	47.6	46.2	36.7
Middle School 8	42.4	39.4	39.0
Middle School 9	53.2	56.4	50.8

*Note.* From State Report Card, [www.mdreportcard.org](http://www.mdreportcard.org)

Table 1, which includes the nine middle schools that are designated Title I, shows that between 2014 and 2016, the average percentage of students who scored at proficient and advanced levels on the 8th grade SA in science across the District was 51.5% (2014), 52.1% (2015), and 48.9% (2016), compared to 66% (2014), 70.1% (2015) and 68.2% (2016) on the same metric in a neighboring school district.

Table 1 also denotes some variation by school on 8th grade SA scores. For example, across the three-year time span, the percentage of students who earned a proficient or advanced score on the science SA ranged from a low of 16% to a high of just over 56%. Although there is no research literature examining the relationship between specific academic achievement content (such as science) and parental engagement, the data from the table indicated a need for the study and identification of relationships, if they exist, between one indicator of academic achievement and principals' beliefs regarding parental engagement.

### *Prior Solutions to Problem in a Large Urban School District*

Over the past several decades, the District has implemented a number of policies and programs to promote family engagement, some of which were applicable to all schools, and others that were relevant only to Title I schools. As indicated in an earlier section, one of the seven goals articulated in the District's Bridge to Excellence Master Plan states: "Family, school, businesses and community relationships will be strengthened to support student achievement" (p. 432). This goal embodies the District's efforts to improve parental engagement. As noted in the Jackson (2015) study, the District provided a number of practical guidelines and recommendations for operationalizing the Master Plan goal. Jackson also concluded that the implementation of parental engagement practices remained uneven across middle schools, as well as across the three stakeholder groups sampled: principals, teachers, and parents. However, the Jackson study did not disaggregate data specific to Title I school stakeholder practices.

**The Comer Retreat.** The results of Jackson's (2015) study regarding implementation of parental engagement practices are surprising, given the prior efforts the District had made to promote these activities. For example, the District was among the first to adopt the Comer Development Program in its schools. As described earlier, the Comer process (Comer, 1988) is a school reform model designed to improve interpersonal relationships and social climate in a school as a means of enhancing student social and academic achievement. Designed and implemented in conjunction with the Yale School of Psychiatry (Comer), the primary structure in the Comer process for facilitating school reform is the school planning and management team. This team, consisting of all stakeholders in the educational

process (i.e., administrators, teachers, parents, community leaders, and students), works together in establishing institutional goals, eliciting support, monitoring progress, and evaluating outcomes.

In partnership with James Comer and his team from Yale, the District implemented the Comer process at 23 middle schools over a four-year period in the 1990s, and conducted an intensive evaluation of its implementation and outcomes using a randomized control design. Findings indicated that the Comer School Development Programs did not affect District school climate or student outcomes, although they may have improved student social and intrapersonal adjustment. These disappointing results may explain why the Comer model was not intensively implemented across the District after this pilot evaluation study, although the District did adopt certain aspects associated with the model, such as parental outreach and student development programs, and provided “parental engagement frameworks as a general practice for all schools” (Jackson, 2015, p. 33).

Two of those processes relevant to the current study are the Comer Parent Retreat and the School Climate Survey. The Comer Parent Retreat became a District-wide effort to promote parental engagement by funding an annual opportunity for school administrators, parental engagement staff, parents, and other community members to meet, receive professional development and related training, and share practices and implementation plans. The Comer Retreat was administered under the auspices of the Department of School Development/Family and Community Outreach and was a mandatory requirement for administrators and school staff at Title I middle schools (Jackson, 2015). Although Jackson indicated that the District dissolved this

department in 2010, it continued to offer the Comer Parent Retreats through 2016. Despite the continuation of the initiative, this researcher could not find any attendance data or evaluation of the retreat's success in improving parent engagement.

**School Climate Survey.** Another enduring practice first initiated during the Comer Pilot Evaluation in the District was the School Climate Survey, administered biannually by the District's Office of Research and Evaluation. Jackson (2015) indicated that the survey measured the extent to which school communities engaged all stakeholders, including parents. Jackson noted that the Climate Survey's anecdotal reports suggested significant variance across schools and stakeholder groups regarding implementation of parental engagement practices. There were no data on the extent to which the District utilized evaluation reports based on the survey instrument to structure school reform efforts to improve parental outreach and engagement practices.

**Parent compacts.** Another effort to increase parental engagement as mandated under the Title I regulations cited earlier are the parent compacts (District, 2015). These compacts encourage "families to become involved in their children's education," and are operationalized by requiring each Title I school to develop a compact or plan identifying each stakeholder's responsibilities in the school's efforts to build parent partnerships and improve student achievement. Although each Title I school must complete a school compact, there is no evidence of the extent to which the District monitors each school's implementation of the activities outlined in the compact or provides feedback to help schools improve parental engagement.

**Parent Engagement Assistants.** The Parent Engagement Assistant (PEA) position was formerly known as Parent Liaison. This position was instituted for FY2015 under the central supervision and direction of the newly established Department of Family and Community Engagement. The PEA supports assigned schools by working closely with school system staff, parents or families, community groups, and business partners to support effective teaching and learning. PEAs are charged with implementing research-based strategies focused on literacy for increasing student achievement (School District, 2016).

The principal is responsible for providing dedicated space in the school to support the work of the PEA. The PEA uses this dedicated space to meet with parents, community and business partners in order to develop and implement effective partnership activities to support all learners. The PEA also develops and presents family engagement workshops for school-based staff and families focused on literacy. Ultimately, the PEA serves as a liaison who:

- educates teachers and staff on how to communicate and work effectively with parents or families as equal partners;
- advises and trains parents on how to address concerns with staff in school meetings;
- provides referrals to community-based services for families;
- expands opportunities for continued learning, voluntary community service and civic participation;
- develops community collaborations;

- promotes sharing of power with parents as decision-makers; and
- helps parents and families understand the educational system so they can become better advocates for their children's education (School District, 2016).

The Parent Engagement Assistant must have the ability to communicate and work with all families. Fluency in both English and other commonly spoken language(s) identified in the school is preferred, as this position requires effective speaking, reading, and writing in languages of the school community. In FY2015, school system funding afforded the District's executive leadership team the opportunity to place PEAs in 63 schools identified as having English Language Learner populations above 30 percent.

This brief examination of the documents, structures, and records of historical practices highlight the attempts that the District has made to engage parents in the system's academic processes. However, the lack of data reflects the District's inconsistency in providing any resources for preparation or supports to administrators to improve their competency regarding the implementation of specific structures, systems and procedures.

#### *Literature and Supporting Federal and Local Mandates*

This literature review presents the existing research on topics related to parent involvement and the principal's role in implementing parental involvement policies and procedures.

**Parental involvement and academic achievement.** Studies conducted over the past 30 years indicate a clear relationship between parent involvement and

increased student achievement. Researchers have generally described this involvement as parents' participation in the educational processes and experiences of their children (Epstein, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2003). In an analysis of decades' worth of national research published by Harvard researchers, Henderson and Mapp found a clear correlation between the level of family involvement and students' academic success. The data clearly indicate that students with involved parents—regardless of their economic, racial, ethnic, or educational background—were more likely to accomplish the following:

- earn high grades and test scores and enroll in higher-level programs;
- be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits;
- attend school regularly;
- have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school; and
- graduate and go on to enroll in a postsecondary program.

Hara and Burk (1998) stated in their research: “When parents are involved in their child’s education, the child’s academic performance (cognitive and affective) improves” (p. 9). Parental involvement has been at center stage for a long time as an improvement strategy since there has been a decline of student performance. Epstein (1995) summarized six effective program characteristics and guidelines for building parent partnerships. Epstein suggested that schools follow five steps for implementation:

1. Create an action plan.
2. Obtain funds and other support.

3. Identify starting points.
4. Develop a three-year plan.
5. Continue planning and working to improve the program.

In 2003, the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) examined the relationship between (a) diversity; (b) student achievement; and (c) school, family, and community connections. The SEDL focused on different parental involvement activities that could leverage opportunities for parents to have input and found that a direct relationship existed between parental involvement and student achievement. The data gathered from 64 student respondents also indicated that schools needed to take greater care in addressing the issue of parent and family involvement in order to promote student achievement more effectively (Boethel, 2003).

Henderson and Mapp (2002) also examined growing evidence that family involvement influenced students' academic success. The researchers focused on 51 studies dated from 1995 to 2002, which expressed different perspectives on and discussed varying approaches to increasing parental involvement. Specifically, Henderson and Mapp reviewed literature that explored three areas: (a) the impact of family and community involvement on student achievement; (b) effective strategies for connecting schools, families, and communities; and (c) parent and community organizing efforts to improve schools. According to the researchers, the data revealed that (a) parental and community involvement had an impact on students' overall school academic performance, and (b) more families were motivated to become involved



because of their relationships with school staff and administrators (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

In a similar review, Mattingley, Prislín, McKenzie, Rodriguez, and Kayzar (2002) examined 41 studies that evaluated the degree to which K–12 parental involvement programs were an effective means of improving student learning. The authors found that most of existing data on the connection between parental involvement and student achievement came from correlational studies. Of the few experimental studies analyzed in their review, two found significant improvements in performance on standardized achievement tests among children whose parents participated in an intervention program, and two found no significant effects. All four of the experimental studies addressed minority or low-income populations. Mattingley et al. concluded that the majority of the intervention programs reviewed focused on changing parent behavior, especially in the areas of parenting and supporting home learning.

Lunenburg (2011) explored the Comer process, an intervention developed by the Comer School Development program to increase parental involvement. In 1968, James Comer found a correlation between poor academic performance and a school's failure to bridge the social and cultural gaps between home and school. Comer designed a program that would help each student feel safe and want to come to school. His approach, the Comer process, had three components: a parent group, a mental health team, and a school performance management team (Lunenburg, 2011).

Lunenburg (2011) reviewed the extant literature and concluded that further research was necessary to determine why certain aspects of parental involvement,

particularly those that entailed creating an educationally-oriented atmosphere, might be more effective than other approaches. Lunenburg also asserted that additional research would aid in understanding why and how principals' beliefs and involvement influenced their implementation of state and federal parental involvement mandates.

A number of researchers have also explored various practices and strategies implemented by schools and systems to improve parental involvement. Constantino (2007), for example, explored the major challenges involved in increasing parental involvement at the secondary school level. The researcher found that parental engagement decreased after elementary school and continued to decline as students journeyed through middle and high school. Constantino recommended that to advance students' achievement levels, principals implement systems and processes that connect families to schools. These systems and processes included the following:

- “creating a welcoming environment,
- facilitating effective two-way communication,
- increasing the engagement of every family, and
- providing school support for home learning” (Constantino, 2007, pp. 57–61).

Hill and Tyson (2009) described the significant role that families and school-family relations played in promoting student achievement across elementary and secondary school levels. The authors addressed different approaches to improving parental involvement, including linking schoolwork to current events, communicating parental expectations for education and its value or utility through home-based and

school-based involvement, discussing learning strategies with children, and making preparations and plans for the future.

According to Hill and Tyson (2009), home-based involvement included strategies such as communication between parents and children about school engagement with schoolwork. The researcher also explained that parents could work with their child at home to ensure that their homework was completed or ask questions to determine what their child learned in school. Home-based involvement allowed parents to help their child make connections to what they learned at school and review the information at home (Hill & Tyson). School-based involvement, alternatively, included visits to school for school event and meetings, participating in school governance, volunteering at school, and communicating with school personnel (Hill & Tyson).

Although there is significant literature on the value of parental involvement, Jeynes (2007) explored whether parental involvement really improved educational outcomes for urban children. Jeynes examined the work of Fan and Chen (2001), who conducted a meta-analysis and concluded that parental involvement did, in fact, have a positive influence on the educational outcomes of urban students. Jeynes also explored the differences between the involvement of parents in Title I schools and schools with a higher income base. The author found little evidence of any difference between the differing types of schools in terms of parents' impact on student achievement (Jeynes, 2007).

Similarly, Cheung and Pomerantz (2012) found a positive correlation between parental involvement and student achievement in their longitudinal study of 7th and

8th grade students. The data revealed an association between increased parental involvement and high levels of motivation and self-regulated learning (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012).

The data clearly show a correlation between parent involvement and student achievement. The challenge, then, becomes developing and assessing effectiveness of the programs within schools that successfully and actively engage parents in the educational process. Education World (2016) stated that although involving parents is important, if principals do not know how to implement effective parental involvement strategies, or if they are not intentional about engaging parents, then it is only by chance that parents become involved. The article posited the following:

Too often administrators view parent involvement programs as neglected gardens. If by chance they grow and bear fruit, terrific. If they don't, it can't be helped. But a national institute says that, with some planning, all schools can grow parent involvement programs. (Education World, 2016, p. 1)

**The principal's role in parent engagement.** The literature on parental engagement indicated that efforts to improve parent and community involvement in schools would be more effective if leaders were trained to assess and understand the community in which they work, and if they acknowledged the power of parents and community when seeking to manage available resources more effectively (Epstein, 2008). Recent inquiries examining administrators' relationships with parents found that principals valued parental involvement primarily for its power in raising student achievement (Epstein).

Research has revealed that in most schools, the principal is the one responsible for making connections with parents. Rapp and Duncan (2012) stated that to establish these connections, the school leader must first understand the definition of parental involvement. The researchers described five dimensions of parental involvement: (a) parenting, (b) assisting with homework, (c) communicating with the school, (d) volunteering time at the school, and (e) participating in school decision-making.

Epstein (2009) identified six similar dimensions of parental involvement and defined them as follows:

- ***Parenting***. Parenting refers to the educational support that children receive in their own homes. To assist parents, schools can provide families with a greater understanding of child development.
- ***Volunteering***. Volunteering involves parents' donation of their time for the betterment of the educational establishment. Volunteering benefits many students at once.
- ***Learning at home***. Learning at home encompasses homework and other curriculum activities, including reading to children in the home.
- ***Decision making***. Parents become involved in decision-making when they take on roles as leaders and representatives of councils and committees for the school. These councils and committees should have a positive impact on the school culture. Parents should have the opportunity to serve on committees that determine the varying management and fiscal plans of action for the school.

- ***Communicating.*** Effective communication involves ongoing written and oral communication between school and home. These interactions should focus on school progress and should be a two-way process between parents and the school community.
- ***Collaborating.*** Collaborating with the community includes seeking resources and services from the larger community for the benefit of the students (Epstein, 2009).

Epstein's (2009) work provided various strategies that principals can implement to successfully improve parental involvement in their schools. Epstein believed that it was important for principals to understand the definition and potential impact of parental involvement before they could implement effective programs.

Jeynes (2012) researched three strategies that would help principals increase parental involvement in their schools. The first strategy involved staff-led interventions such as shared reading activities, parent-teacher collaboration in areas targeted for student improvement, homework reviews, and communication about rules and goals. Jeynes reported that staff-led parental involvement programs exerted positive effects on student outcomes across elementary and secondary school levels and that the size of the effect was as great at secondary levels as at elementary levels.

Jeynes's (2012) second strategy entailed sharing data with parents. Jeynes explained that data systems provided useful information that could aid in improving outcomes for students. When effectively shared with families and community members, these data could influence the ways that families supported their child's progress and could impact communities' efforts to support education (Jeynes, 2012).

Like Epstein (2009), Jeynes (2012) also discussed the importance of collaborating with the local community. Jeynes's third strategy involved the development of partnerships between schools and reputable community members that would make essential information about students' achievement accessible to parents and prompt them to pursue more focused in-house conversations about how to address students' strengths and weakness. Jeynes explained that changing or sharing the role of messenger helped to build trust and foster support. Trusted community members could assist educators in designing easy-to-understand data formats, assembling the target audience, and effectively delivering the data.

Epstein (2001) noted that principals needed to approach parent and community involvement the same way they did curriculum, professional development, and other areas critical to school life. Epstein also asserted that most postsecondary teacher and administrator training programs typically did not prepare educators to address parental involvement, even though this component should be an integral part of their instruction. As a result, principals are often unprepared to develop and implement effective parental engagement strategies (Epstein).

Richardson (2009) conducted a case study of elementary, middle, and high school principals in Ohio and found that the physical and organizational structure of parent engagement, along with the beliefs and attitudes of teachers and principals, played a role in parents' level of involvement in secondary schools. A principal may either facilitate or hinder a parent's level of involvement in secondary schools (Richardson).

McNelly and Barnyak (2009) examined the practices and beliefs of administration and teachers regarding parental involvement in an urban school district. The researchers surveyed teachers and administrators using the Parental Involvement Inventory published by the Illinois State Board of Education (1994). McNelly and Barnyak conducted a two-tailed  $t$  test, and their findings indicated some statistically significant differences between the respondents' beliefs and practices. The researchers concluded that although teachers and administrators had strong beliefs about parental involvement, their practices did not always align with those beliefs.

LaBahn (1995) found that some schools struggled with parental involvement initiatives because the staff did not always understand the meaning of the term *parental involvement* and lacked an understanding of nontraditional families. His research suggested that improving parental involvement at the secondary level was tied directly to the support and encouragement of the principal. LaBahn stated that principals played a key role in helping parents and educators understand each other, and additionally suggested that the ultimate responsibility for creating harmony between the school and the home rested with the principal.

As is evident in this literature review, there is a wealth of research on parental involvement, and the literature reveals a number of strategies designed to increase parental involvement. Research also indicates that a correlation does exist between parental involvement and student achievement and provides certain key approaches to engaging parents within the school environment. Research has also shown that principals' beliefs about parent engagement activities, as well as their perceptions of



the importance of their involvement in such efforts, influence their implementation of parental involvement mandates. This study was designed to discover principals' perceptions in addressing federal and District mandates as well as their capacity to implement such mandates within their organizational framework.

### Investigation

To address the need to identify how Title I middle school principals perceive federal and District policies on parental engagement, a survey-based study was conducted to assess principals' perceptions regarding parental involvement and their level of confidence in implementing parental involvement federal mandates and District mandates.

### Key Definitions

This section provides definitions for the following critical terms used throughout this research project.

**Academic Deans.** School County Public Schools recognizes Academic Deans as Assistant Principals. For the purpose of this study, the term Assistant Principal will also refer to Academic Deans.

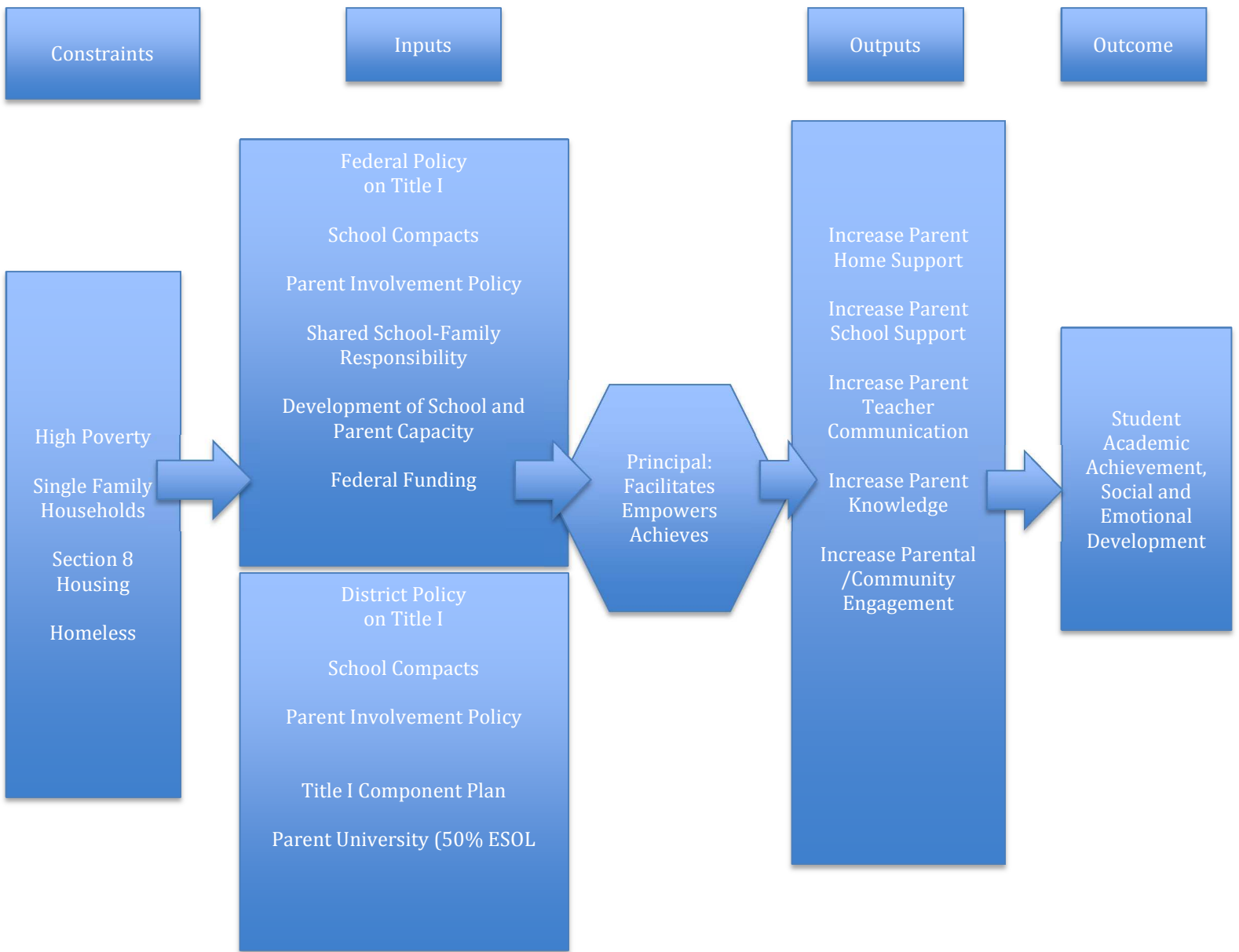
**Parental involvement.** For the purposes of this study, the term *parental involvement* refers to the engagement of the parent(s) in both the formal and informal education of the child (DOE, 2015). The terms *parental involvement* and *parental engagement* were used interchangeably. This definition of parental involvement sets the parameters, in conjunction with other sections of the law, by which state educational agencies (SEAs), LEAs, and schools implement programs, activities, and procedures designed to involve parents in Title I, Part A programs. According to the United States Department of Education (2001), the term "parent" can refer to a

natural parent, legal or other person standing in loco parentis (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the child's welfare).

## Section II: Methods

In this section, the logic model framework is depicted, followed by the research questions, design, methods, procedures, and data analysis used in this study.

The study followed the framework illustrated in the logic model (see Figure 1), which focuses on external factors, policies, principals' involvement and their role in leading to the outcome of student achievement and positive social and emotional behaviors, and community partnerships to increase student achievement. This framework illustrates the impact that parent involvement, along with a focus on principal perception and preparation, has on a student's academic achievement. Parents and educators must be informed and operate as partners in order to improve student achievement. It is important to note that the focus of this study, within the logic model framework, is on the pivotal role of the principal in facilitating, empowering, and eventually achieving parental engagement activities and mandates. The issues identified under inputs in the logic model are derived from both the literature review, and the review of specific federal and District policies relevant to parental engagement described in Section I. The constraints describe the surrounding environmental context in which most Title I schools operate. It is also important to note that this specific study does not measure or address school-based outputs or outcomes; rather they are illustrative of anticipated results of principals effectively implementing parental involvement activities.



*Figure 1. Logic model*

### Research Questions

The following research questions guided both the development and implementation of this inquiry:

1. How do school administrators rate the importance of the activities required to implement mandated components of Title I parental engagement?
2. How do school administrators rate their preparation to perform required activities to implement mandated components of Title I parental engagement?
3. What barriers do school administrators perceive limit their ability to perform activities to implement mandated components of Title I parental engagement?
4. What strategies do school administrators identify as facilitating implementation of parental involvement activities?

Data were collected using a survey created by the researcher, based on the operationalization of parental engagement mandates governed by the federal government and District. Both principals and assistant principals of each of the nine Title I middle schools in the sample were surveyed. Assistant principals were included because in some cases they were responsible to oversee and implement school parental involvement activities.

The survey informed school and District leadership regarding (a) how principals perceive the importance of various parent involvement initiatives, and (b) principals' perceptions of their capacity to implement parental engagement activities.

This inquiry also explored any needs identified by participating principals for additional information, knowledge, or training on how to improve parent

involvement, as well as recommendations or strategies they used to improve parental engagement in their schools.

### Study Design

This study utilized a quantitative method involving the anonymous electronic administration of surveys to answer the research questions. The quantitative data design helped to gather factual information that could be reliably analyzed statistically to objectively generalize results across the District without value-laden assumptions (Creswell, 2011). The quantitative design afforded the researcher the opportunity to collect information from a sample of respondents from a well-defined population (Czaja & Blair, 2005). Lastly, the quantitative design allowed for the use of an online survey to enable the researcher to collect data in a relatively short period of time and for convenience of respondents.

Babbie (2001) described the following advantages of the use of the survey method around which this study was designed:

- One can collect a large amount of data in a fairly short time.
- Surveys are easier and less expensive than other forms of data collection.
- Questionnaires can be used to research almost any aspect of human perceptions regarding the variable under study.
- Surveys can be easily used in the field setting.

To this end, the researcher selected the survey questionnaire as the best tool for this study.

### Methods and Procedures

**Participants.** The participants for this study were drawn from the nine Title I schools that serve the Grades 6–8 middle school population of students in the District. These schools were purposively selected since the study was focused on the Title I schools. All of the principals and assistant principals in each of these schools were recruited for this study. The potential sample pool of principals and assistant principals from the nine schools numbered 33; of those, 30 participated in this study.

**Procedures.** In order to conduct the study, the researcher first gained permission from University of Maryland College Park Institutional Review Board to conduct research involving human participants. The researcher received permission from the local school District research and evaluation office to conduct the study and file that letter as an amendment to this IRB protocol.

Using publicly available data, the researcher identified nine Title One middle schools. The researcher distributed a survey link to all principals and assistant principals of the nine Title One middle schools. The link went to an online survey hosted on Qualtrics. Each survey participant answered six demographic questions and background questions, and 19 questions related to their perceptions of the importance and preparation of parent engagement practices in Title One middle schools. The survey took approximately ten minutes to complete. Questions concerned the principals' and assistant principals' perception of the importance of implementing federal and District parent engagement mandates. All of the items were directly related to the purpose of the survey, which was to explore the perception of principals and assistant principals in implementing parental engagement federal and District mandates. The researcher offered a \$10 Starbucks gift card to the first 15 respondents

who submitted a completed survey. The remaining 20 participants each received a \$5 card. It is important to note that the participant's email address was not associated with the responses to the survey

The researcher first contacted the principals, assistant principals and academic deans of the nine Title I Middle Schools by email to participate in completing this survey. The recruitment emails contained the embedded electronic survey link. The researcher sent a follow up email to those who did not respond two days after the initial email was distributed. The researcher then sent a third followup email and visited schools whose principals did not respond to the initial survey request. The survey was fielded for approximately three weeks to allow for maximum response rate. Out of a potential sample of 33 respondents from the 9 Title I middle schools, the researcher received completed responses from 30, for a response rate of 91%.

**Instrument.** The instrument was developed by the researcher, based on the research questions and the mandated Title I elements. The survey content was based, to the largest extent possible, on existing surveys (e.g., Carey, Lewis, Farris, & Burns, 1998; Harvard Family Research Project, 2013; Jackson, 2015), on findings from the literature review that indicated the important issues, and on the researcher's experience and discussions with colleagues. The survey consisted of six demographic questions, followed by 19 Likert-type items and two open-ended questions. The survey was self-administered anonymously via computer. The survey was limited in the number of items to ensure cooperation of the participants. It was piloted on two principals or assistant principals to ensure that participants comprehended the survey



as the researcher intended. Additionally, the pilot provided approximation of how long the survey took to complete and ensure that the computer administration worked.

### Survey Development

In designing this survey, the researcher used the mandated or recommended elements on Title I parental engagement described in Section I. Specifically, these included the following categories:

- Parent Compact (PC)
- Parent annual meetings (PAM)
- Title I component plan (TCP)

Each of these categories was then operationalized into a specific practice or behavior, with specific items aligned with each of the categories. Table 2 shows the survey items related to the three categories.

Table 2

*Survey Items Aligned With Title I Parent Engagement Categories*

Survey item	Title I parent engagement mandated practices/elements: Parent Compact (PC), Parent Annual Meetings (PAM) or Title I Component Plan (TCP)
7. How important is it for parents to share in school-family responsibility for high academic performance?	PC, RQ1
8. How prepared are you to encourage parents to share in school-family responsibility for high academic performance?	PC, RQ 2
9. How important is the development of school parent capacity of productive mutual collaboration?	TCP, RQ1
10. How prepared are you to build parent capacity for productive mutual collaboration?	TCP, RQ 2
11. How important is it for you to inform parents about the state's assessment procedures for measuring performance and progress?	PC, RQ 1
12. How prepared are you to inform parents about the state's assessment procedures for measuring performance and progress?	PC, RQ 2
13. How important is it for you to involve parents in Title I decision-making, including the development of the school's improvement plan?	PC, PAM, RQ 1
14. How prepared are you to involve parents in the Title I decision making in developing your school's improvement plan?	PC AND PAM, RQ 2
15. How important is it to discuss (e. g., in SPM meetings) how the school will increase parental/family involvement during the school planning and the decision-making process?	TCP, RQ 1

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16. How important is it to involve parents in participating on the school planning and management team (SPMT) and in parent organizations?	TCP, RQ 1
17. How prepared are you to involve parents in your school planning and management team and parent organizations?	TCP, RQ 2
18. How important is it to have parents engaged in committee work in order to provide input/feedback into school improvement planning process?	PAM and TCP, RQ 1
19. How important is it for parents to know how community and business partners support the school?	PAM, RQ 1
20. How well prepared are you to inform parents of your community and business partnerships?	TCP, RQ 2
21. How important is it to include the six requirements of parental involvement (e. g., communicating, parenting, student learning, volunteering, school decision-making & advocacy, and collaborating with community)?	PAM, RQ 1
22. How prepared are you are to plan activities for parents to participate in that align with the six requirements?	PC, RQ 2
23. Is professional development important for you to improve parent involvement in the school?	PC, RQ 1
24. How important is it to have parent meetings that address the needs of all students, including the needs of students with disabilities and with limited English proficiency?	PAM, RQ 1
25. How well prepared are you to have parent meetings that address the needs of all students, including the needs of students with disabilities and limited English proficiency?	PAM, RQ 2

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The items comprising the perceptions of parental engagement practices used a Likert-type scale, asking the respondents to indicate how important they perceived the specific practice to be in parental engagement, and how prepared they are to perform it. The survey items had response options that ranged from high to low: (1) extremely important or well, (2) important or well, (3) slightly important or well, or (4) not at all important or well. In order to address Research Question 1, the majority of the items on the scale tapping perceptions of importance of specific parental involvement activities were matched to items asking respondents to identify the perceptions of their preparation to perform it. The full survey is included in Appendix A. The survey was limited in number of items in order to ensure cooperation of the participants.

#### Analysis Plan

First, since the instrument used in the study was new, its psychometric properties were analyzed in order to provide a context for analyses of the results. Descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations were reported for each of the scales on the survey: importance and preparation. A paired sample *t* test was conducted to analyze any differences between perceptions of importance and preparation for each of the scale items, to identify gaps for potential training or professional development activities. In addition, descriptive statistics were calculated for each of the demographic questions and for each Likert-type item. Frequencies were reported for non-Likert survey items.

The Likert-type survey questions were each categorized as importance questions or preparation questions. Table 3 shows how the importance and preparation survey questions were aligned.

Table 3

*Parallel Importance and Preparation Survey Questions*

Importance questions	Preparation questions
7. How important is it for parents to share in school-family responsibility for high academic performance?	8. How prepared are you to encourage parents to share in school-family responsibility for high academic performance?
9. How important is the development of school parent capacity of productive mutual collaboration?	10. How prepared are you to build parent capacity for productive mutual collaboration?
11. How important is it for you to inform parents about the state's assessment procedures for measuring performance and progress?	12. How prepared are you to inform parents about the state's assessment procedures for measuring performance and progress?
13. How important is it for you to involve parents in Title I decision-making, including the development of the school's improvement plan?	14. How prepared are you to involve parents in the Title I decision making in developing your school's improvement plan?
15. How important is it to discuss (e.g., in SPM meetings) how the school will increase parental/family involvement during the school planning and the decision-making process?	
16. How important is it to involve parents in participating on the school planning and management team (SPMT) and in parent organizations?	17. How prepared are you to involve parents in your school planning and management team and parent organizations?
18. How important is it to have parents engaged in committee work in order to provide input/feedback into school improvement planning process?	
19. How important is it for parents to know how community and business partners support the school?	20. How well prepared are you to inform parents of your community and business partnerships?
21. How important is it to include the six requirements of parental involvement (e. g., communicating, parenting, student learning, volunteering, school decision-making & advocacy, and collaborating with community)?	22. How prepared are you are to plan activities for parents to participate in that align with the six requirements?
23. Is professional development important for you to improve parent involvement in the school?	
24. How important is it to have parent	25. How prepared are you to have parent

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meetings that address the needs of all students, including the needs of students with disabilities and with limited English proficiency?	meetings that address the needs of all students, including the needs of students with disabilities and limited English proficiency?
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## Section III: Results and Conclusions

The federal government has mandated that principals adhere to certain policies pertaining to parental involvement. However, the extent to which principals of Title I middle schools are implementing practices consistent with these policies remains unknown. To improve our knowledge of parental engagement in high-poverty schools, a survey-based study was conducted among 30 principals of Title I middle schools in a large, demographically diverse LEA to assess the way they perceived (a) the importance of parental involvement activities and (b) their preparation to perform these activities. In addition, the administrators were asked what barriers they perceived to limit their ability to implement parental involvement activities and what strategies they currently used to encourage parent involvement. The results are based on the responses of the 30 principals of Title I middle schools principals and assistant principals who completed the entire survey.

### Participants

More than half (57%) of the 30 respondents were women (see Table 3). All respondents had master's degrees. Approximately one-quarter (27%) were principals and the others were assistant principals. Of the eight principals, 75% (six) were male, and of the 22 assistant principals, 68% (15) were female. Approximately half (47%) of the respondents had served in their current positions for at least five years. Approximately three-quarters (73%) had been either principals or assistant principals in a Study District public school for at least five years.

Table 4

*Respondents' Gender, Training, and Experience (N = 30)*

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Male	13	43
Female	17	57
Highest degree		
Master's degree	30	100
Position		
Principal	8	27
Assistant principal	22	73
Years in current position		
1–3 <sup>a</sup>	13	43
3–4	3	10
5 or more	14	47
Years in Study District Public Schools as principal or assistant principal		
1–2	5	17
2–4	3	10
5 or more	33	73

<sup>a</sup> This response option should have been 1–2, but was mistakenly labeled 1–3. Thus, it is not clear how respondents with three years in current position answered.

### Scale Reliability

Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the reliabilities of the scales, which were created by the researcher and hence did not have any previous reliability statistics. Table 5 shows the reliabilities of the Importance Scale and the Preparation Scale (PS). Three items (Q15, Q18, and Q23) on the full Importance Scale did not have parallels in the Preparation Scale. Because it was desired to compare the two scales, it was necessary to create a parallel version of the Importance Scale. Thus, two versions of this scale were created: The Importance Scale–Full (ISF) contains all eleven items on the scale, whereas the Importance Scale–Parallel (ISP) contains only the eight items that are parallel to items on the Preparation Scale. Cronbach's alpha



was high for both the ISF and the ISP (.894 and .844, respectively). The value was lower but still acceptable for the PS (.728).

Table 5

*Reliability of Importance and Preparation Scales*

Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
ISF: Importance Scale (all eleven items) <sup>a</sup>	11	.894
ISP: Importance Scale (eight items, parallel to PS) <sup>b</sup>	8	.844
PS: Preparation Scale (eight items, parallel to ISP) <sup>c</sup>	8	.728

*Note.* The items are listed in Appendix A.

<sup>a</sup> Includes items Q7, Q9, Q11, Q13, Q15, Q16, Q18, Q19, Q21, Q23, and Q24.

<sup>b</sup> Includes items Q7, Q9, Q11, Q13, Q16, Q19, Q21, and Q24.

<sup>c</sup> Includes items Q8, Q10, Q12, Q14, Q17, Q20, Q22, and Q25.

*Research Question 1*

Research Question 1 stated: How do school administrators rate the importance of the activities required to implement mandated components of Title I parental engagement? Table 5 presents descriptive statistics for the Importance Scale, as well as for the individual items of the scale. It is important to note the direction of the scale in that a lower numeric mean score indicates a higher rating for importance. Both ISF and ISP had means of approximately 1.5, that is, halfway between the scale points for *Extremely important* and *Important*. Individual respondents' scores on the scale ranged from 1.00 (all items extremely important) to approximately 2.4 (ISP) or 2.5 (ISF; halfway between *Important* and *Slightly important*). The items had means ranging from 1.27 on Q7 and Q9 to 1.90 on Q13. It is noteworthy that on three of the items (Q7, Q9, and Q21), all 30 respondents answered either *Extremely important* or *Important*, and only one respondent on one item (Q13) used the response option *Not at all important*.

Table 6

*Descriptive Statistics for Importance Scale Items (N = 30)*

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
ISF: Importance Scale (all eleven items)	1.53	0.43	1.00	2.55
ISP: Importance Scale (eight items, parallel to the Preparation Scale)	1.48	0.40	1.00	2.38
Q7 Parents share school-family responsibility for high academic performance	1.27	0.45	1	2
Q9 Develop school and parent capacity for productive mutual collaboration	1.27	0.45	1	2
Q19 Have parents know how community and businesses support the school	1.33	0.55	1	3
Q21 Include the six requirements of parent involvement in school	1.33	0.48	1	2
Q24 Have parent meetings that address the needs of all students (including those with disabilities and limited English proficiency)	1.40	0.56	1	3
Q11 Inform parents about state's assessment procedures	1.50	0.63	1	3
Q15 <sup>a</sup> Discuss increasing parental involvement during school planning process	1.60	0.72	1	3
Q23 <sup>a</sup> Professional development	1.60	0.60	1	3
Q18 <sup>a</sup> Have parents engaged in committee work to provide input into school improvement planning process	1.77	0.73	1	3
Q16 Involve parents in SPMT (school planning and management team) and parent organizations	1.80	0.71	1	3
Q13 Involve parents in Title I decision making, incl. school improvement plan	1.90	0.76	1	4

*Note.* The scale points and response options were as follows: 1–*Extremely important*, 2–*Important*, 3–*Slightly important*, and 4–*Not at all important*.

<sup>a</sup> No parallel item on the Preparation Scale.

### Research Question 2

Research Question 2 stated: How do school administrators rate their preparation to perform required activities to implement mandated components of Title I parental engagement? Again, it is important to note that the lower the mean score, the higher the item was rated. Table 6 presents descriptive statistics for the PS, as well as for the individual items of the scale. As one can see, the PS had a mean of approximately 1.9, that is, very close to the scale point for the response option *Well*

(prepared). The range of individual respondents' scores was from 1.25 (six items *Extremely well* [prepared] and two items *Well* [prepared]) to 2.75 (closer to *Slightly well* [prepared] than to *Well* [prepared]). The item means ranged from 1.60 on Q8 to 2.20 on Q17. It is noteworthy that, similar to the Importance scale, only one respondent on one item (Q17) used the response option *Not well at all* (prepared).

Table 7

*Descriptive Statistics for Preparation Scale Items (N = 30)*

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
PS: Preparation Scale (eight items, parallel to the Importance scale)	1.91	0.37	1.25	2.75
Q8 Parents share school-family responsibility for high academic performance	1.60	0.56	1	3
Q12 Inform parents about state's assessment procedures	1.77	0.57	1	3
Q25 Have parent meetings that address the needs of all students (including those with disabilities and limited English proficiency)	1.83	0.65	1	3
Q20 Have parents know how community and businesses support the school	1.87	0.51	1	3
Q10 Develop school and parent capacity for productive mutual collaboration	1.93	0.69	1	3
Q22 Include the six requirements of parent involvement in school	2.00	0.69	1	3
Q14 Involve parents in Title I decision making, incl. school improvement plan	2.10	0.55	1	3
Q17 Involve parents in SPMT (school planning and management team) and parent organizations	2.20	0.76	1	4

*Note.* The scale points and response options were as follows: 1–*Extremely well* (prepared); 2–*Well* (prepared); 3–*Slightly well* (prepared); and 4–*Not well at all* (prepared). The word *prepared* was included in the item stems but not in the response options.

**Comparing importance and preparation.** To compare the respondents' perceptions of importance and preparation, paired-samples  $t$  tests were performed. As Table 8 shows, the mean difference between the Preparation and Importance scales was almost half a level (.44), with higher scores on the Preparation scale. (Recall that higher scores indicate less importance or preparation.) The  $p$  value for the difference was approximately .000, which was statistically significant. Thus, the respondents felt that they were less prepared to perform the activities compared to their perception of the importance of the issues asked about. Five of the pairs of items also had statistically significant differences between importance and preparation (ranging from .40 to .67 of a level of mean difference), and the other three had smaller, nonsignificant differences. The significant items had medium to large effect sizes (Cohen's  $d$ ).

Table 8

*Paired Sample  $t$  Tests Comparing Importance and Preparation ( $N = 30$ )*

Paired items	Mean difference	$SD$ of difference	$t(29)$	$p^a$	Cohen's $d$
PS – ISP	0.44	0.47	5.114	.000	.936
Q22 – Q21	0.67	0.71	5.135	.000	.943
Q20 – Q19	0.53	0.63	4.646	.000	.841
Q10 – Q9	0.67	0.88	4.130	.000	.761
Q25 – Q24	0.43	0.73	3.261	.003	.589
Q17 – Q16	0.40	0.67	3.247	.003	.597
Q8 – Q7	0.33	0.76	2.408	.023	–
Q12 – Q11	0.27	0.74	1.975	.058	–
Q14 – Q13	0.20	0.76	1.439	.161	–

<sup>a</sup> Using the Bonferroni correction with nine  $t$ -tests performed, items with .05/9 or  $p < .0056$  were considered significant.

The data collected were also analyzed nonparametrically, because it can be argued that these data did not meet the statistical assumptions necessary for applying

a parametric test such as the t test. First, the individual item data were not normally distributed: For example, as noted, on three of the Importance items, all 30 respondents answered either *Extremely important* or *Important*. Second, the data for individual items were at the ordinal level of measurement (there were only four response options).

Descriptive statistics for ordinal data are presented in Table 9 for the Importance Scale items (both ISF and ISP). A large majority of the items had medians of 1 (seven of the eleven items on the ISF and six of eight on the ISP), meaning that at least half of the respondents thought the item was extremely important. The 75th percentile for all of the items was 2, meaning that fewer than 25% of the respondents thought that any of the items was only slightly important or not important at all.

Table 9

*Descriptive Statistics (Ordinal) for Importance Scale Items (N = 30)*

Item	Median	25th %ile	75th %ile
Q07 Parents share school-family responsibility for high academic performance	1	1	2
Q09 Develop school and parent capacity for productive mutual collaboration	1	1	2
Q11 Inform parents about state's assessment procedures	1	1	2
Q15 <sup>a</sup> Discuss increasing parental involvement during school planning process	1	1	2
Q19 Have parents know how community/businesses support the school	1	1	2
Q21 Include activities with the six requirements of parent involvement	1	1	2
Q24 Have parents meetings that address the needs of all students (including those with disabilities and limited English proficiency)	1	1	2
Q13 Involve parents in Title I decision making, incl. school improvement plan	2	1	2
Q16 Involve parents in SMPT (school planning and management team) and parent organizations	2	1	2
Q18 <sup>a</sup> Have parents engaged in committee work to provide input into school improvement planning process	2	1	2
Q23 <sup>a</sup> Professional development	2	1	2

*Note.* The scale points and response options were as follows: 1–*Extremely important*, 2–*Important*, 3–*Slightly important*, and 4–*Not at all important*.

<sup>a</sup> No parallel item on the Preparation Scale.

Table 10 shows descriptive statistics for ordinal data for the Preparation Scale items. The statistics were higher than for the Importance scale. All eight of the items had medians of 2, meaning that at least half the respondents thought they were extremely well or well prepared to deal with the issue listed in the item. Regarding the 75th percentile, most items also had medians of 2, but one median was 2.25 and one was 3, indicating that for these two items, at least 25% of respondents felt only slightly well or not at all well prepared to deal with the issue listed in the item.

Table 10

*Descriptive Statistics (Ordinal) for Preparation Scale Items (N = 30)*

Item	Median	25th %ile	75th %ile
Q08 Parents share school-family responsibility for high academic performance	2	1	2
Q10 Develop school and parent capacity for productive mutual collaboration	2	1	2
Q12 Inform parents about state's assessment procedures	2	1	2
Q25 Have parents meetings that address the needs of all students (including those with disabilities and limited English proficiency)	2	1	2
Q22 Include activities with the six requirements of parent involvement	2	1.75 <sup>b</sup>	2.25 <sup>b</sup>
Q14 Involve parents in Title I decision making, incl. school improvement plan	2	2	2
Q20 Have parents know how community/businesses support the school	2	2	2
Q17 Involve parents in SMPT (school planning and management team) and parent organizations	2	2	3

*Note.* The scale points and response options were as follows: 1–*Extremely well* (prepared); 2–*Well* (prepared); 3–*Slightly well* (prepared); and 4–*Not well at all* (prepared). The word *prepared* was included in the item stems but not in the response options. The exception was Q23, which used the response options from the Importance Scale items.

<sup>b</sup> 1.75 indicates that the 25th percentile was between a respondent answering 1 and another answering 2; 2.25 indicates that the 75th percentile was between a respondent answering 2 and another answering 3.

Paired-sample sign tests were used to analyze the data for individual items nonparametrically. The results are shown in Table 11. A positive difference indicates that the respondent thought the issue listed in the item was more important relative to the feeling of being prepared for the issue. A negative difference indicates that the respondent felt more prepared for the issue listed in the item relative to how important the issue was thought to be.

Table 11

*Paired-Sample Sign Tests Comparing Importance and Preparation (N = 30)*

Paired Items	Negative Differences	Positive Differences	Ties	$p^{a, b}$
Q22 – Q21	0	16	14	.000
Q20 – Q19	2	18	10	.000
Q10 – Q09	3	18	9	.001
Q17 – Q16	1	11	18	.006
Q25 – Q24	1	11	18	.006
Q08 – Q07	4	13	13	.049
Q14 – Q13	4	11	15	.118
Q12 – Q11	3	9	18	.146

<sup>a</sup> Binomial distribution used; the comparison was between the number of items with negative and positive differences.

<sup>a</sup> Using the Bonferroni correction with nine tests performed (the eight item comparisons and the *t* test comparing the overall scales), items with .05/9 or  $p < .0056$  were considered significant

Overall, there were many more positive differences than negative differences between preparation and importance, indicating that respondents felt the issues were more important relative to how prepared they were for them. The literature supports the idea that principals' attitudes and beliefs play a role, but no research has explored the degree in which they found what they do to be important or prepared. In three cases, this difference between perceived importance and preparation (more important than prepared) was statistically significant. These items were: Q21–Q22: include activities with the six requirements of parental involvement; Q19–Q20: have parents know how community and businesses support the school; and Q9–Q10: develop school and parent capacity for productive mutual collaboration. In two additional cases, the difference was borderline statistically significant ( $p = .006$ ). These items were Q17–Q16: involve parents in SPMT (school planning and management team) and parent organizations; and Q25–Q24: have parent meetings that address the needs



of all students. These five pairs were the same pairs of items that were found statistically significant in the parametric tests.

### Research Question 3

Research Question 3 stated: What barriers do principals perceive limit their ability to perform activities to implement mandated components of Title I parental engagement? Table 12 shows the single most important barrier to parental engagement listed by each respondent. The single most important barrier, chosen by 43% (13) of the respondents, was time constraints. Seventeen percent (five) of the respondents chose each of personnel and budget, and 10% (three) of the respondents chose training. Three respondents wrote in responses that related to parents' willingness or ability to participate, and one respondent wrote in "collaboration and teamwork."

Table 12

#### *Barriers to Executing Title I Engagement Mandates (N = 30)*

Barrier	<i>n</i>	%
Time	13	43
Personnel	5	17
Budget	5	17
Training	3	10
Parents' nonparticipation	3	10
Collaboration and teamwork	1	3

#### Research Question 4

Finally, the researcher asked respondents to identify one or two strategies they used to improve parental engagement in their schools. The most frequently reported strategy was parent meetings, reported by 60% of the respondents (see Table 13). The next most frequently reported strategy was other types of communication with parents initiated by the school (37% of respondents). Another 30% of respondents reported strategies that might be grouped under the heading of providing opportunities for parents to initiate communication, including listening, collaboration, building relationships, and providing opportunities for the parents to visit the school at any time. Other strategies mentioned included providing information (13%), parent-student activities (10%), and providing food or childcare (7%; this probably refers to providing it during parent activities). Fourteen percent of the respondents mentioned general strategies (spending time on the issue, assigning someone or a team to the task of parent engagement). One respondent mentioned informing parents about community resources that support students' learning and well-being.

Table 13

*Strategies for Engagement That Respondents Found Effective (N = 30)*

Strategy	<i>n</i>	%
Parent nights/meetings/parent academy	18	60
Other communication with parents, e. g., phone messages, provision for bilingual communication	11	37
Providing opportunities for parents to initiate communication, e. g., listening, “giving parents a voice,” collaboration	5	17
Opportunities for parents to visit school, e. g., open-door policy, resource room in building	4	13
Providing information about the school	4	13
Parent-student activities	3	10
Time	2	7
Assigning person or team to task of parent engagement	2	7
Providing food or childcare	2	7
Connecting parents to community resources	1	3

*Note.* Percentages add to more than 100 and *ns* add to more than 30 because some respondents provided more than one strategy.

### Conclusions

Several results of the study are the most notable. First, the administrators answered that all of the Title I Parent Mandates are important. However, they felt that they were less prepared to perform the activity compared to their perceptions of the degree of its importance. Second, although they found the mandates to be important, school administrators in this study cited a number of barriers that impeded their performance of them. For example, almost half of the administrators cited lack of time as a barrier to implementation of the mandates. In addition, respondents cited personnel and budget as factors impeding their capacity to fully implement parental involvement mandates. Finally, even though the responses reflected barriers that might prevent administrators from adhering to the mandates, the principals, assistant principals, and academic deans also indicated strategies or practices that they use to improve or address family involvement. The strategies included: parent nights,

settings (such as a “chat and chew”) in which principals and parents can sit down together and discuss student data, parent concerns as well as the state of the school, providing opportunities for parents to initiate communication such as an open house policy, parent-student activities, and assigning a person or team to the role of parent engagement.

The results of this research support the literature. For example, the results show that principals understand and value the mandates as they pertain to parental engagement. According to Epstein (2008), principals value parental involvement primarily for its power in raising student achievement. The data from the results also show that one aspect of administrators’ understanding the value of engaging parents is that this practice can lead to student growth and performance in that parents feel they share responsibility with the school for high academic performance.

McNelly and Barnyak (2009) concluded that although teachers and administrators had strong beliefs about parental involvement, their practices did not always align with those beliefs. Although the current research did not directly study the relationship between preparedness and practice, it might be that lack of preparedness is a factor in the administrators’ not putting their beliefs into practice.

In the current survey, the administrators listed strategies that they implemented, but none of them aligned with the mandates with the exception of communication with parents and parent meetings. This is evidence that the thinking and belief of what is important is not parallel to strategies that administrators feel are working in their building for example that the principals thought that SPMT was important but they did not give an equal rating of preparedness, nor did they list it as

a strategy. It might be that the administrators lack knowledge of the strategies that specifically address the mandates as well as how to implement those strategies. For example, they might lack information about effective practices to implement parental involvement mandates, which would need to be taught to them, perhaps in a workshop.

The data further indicate that while administrators see the importance of parents being informed about community partnerships, they are not prepared to inform parents of those community partnerships, and in fact, they hardly reported using this strategy. Jeynes (2012) discussed the importance of collaborating with the local community. Jeynes's third strategy involved the development of partnerships between schools and reputable community members that would make essential information about students' achievement accessible to parents and prompt them to pursue more focused in-house conversations about how to address students' strengths and weakness.

Again, as the logic model illustrated in Figure 1 describes, certain activities facilitated by principals can result in positive outcomes. In this study, the focus was on the inputs in the logic model, that is, specific federal and District policies regarding parental engagement. The researcher assumed that if the principal understands the importance and is prepared to follow the mandates, it will lead to the positive outputs identified in the logic model, such as increased parent home support, increased school support, and increase in parental and community engagement. Ultimately, this results in higher student achievement, as well as better social and emotional development.

### Limitations of the Study

Although the findings of this exploratory study are useful, it also had limitations. First, as in many studies, the results of the current research lack generalizability beyond the current setting (the District), primarily due to the small sample size, and also to the unique characteristics of the District being studied. Another possible limitation was that despite the assurance of anonymity, respondents might have tended to respond to the survey questions in a socially desirable manner, perhaps consciously or unconsciously assigning more importance and preparedness than they actually felt. The survey results might indicate social desirability in that many respondents answered *Extremely important* or *Important* to all questions categorized under importance. Those responses might reflect that this is how respondents thought they were supposed to respond because the questions all referred to federal mandates (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003).

### Recommendations: Impact for School District

It is encouraging that Title I administrators endorse the importance of family involvement consistent with the District policies and mandates. However, it is important for the District to realize that administrators in Title I middle schools might need additional resources and training to become compliant with those mandates. There is a difference between their beliefs in the importance of the mandate versus being prepared with strategies that align with it. Time for discussion is provided during principal meetings for planning instruction and analyzing data. The same time and training should be used for administrators to communicate and collaborate with teachers and the school community to develop family engagement strategies that would be implemented with fidelity.

Epstein (2001) asserted that postsecondary teacher and administrator training programs typically did not prepare educators to address parental involvement, even though this component should be an integral part of their instruction. As a result, principals are often unprepared to develop and implement effective parental engagement strategies. It is evident that administrators find the Title I Components for Family Engagement to be important. It is equally important for the District to take time for those Title I middle schools to have specific training designed to provide resources and support to implement those mandates, just as there is training regarding analyzing data, curriculum and instruction and customer service. It is equally important to get feedback for administrators to monitor implementation and school progress as it relates to implementing parent engagement.

#### *Recommendations for Further Research*

Future research might compare the perceptions of Title I middle school principals to a larger sample of principals of non-Title I schools to determine if perceptions of parental engagement activities or recommendation are different. Further research could also determine what additional training and resources might be necessary to increase administrators' preparation for carrying out strategies that align with the parent engagement mandate. In addition, further research is needed to determine if principals are actually implementing the parental engagement mandates, as well as whether and to what extent their perceptions of preparedness are contributing to the implementation. Alternatively, research might elucidate why, if the mandate is important to administrators and they feel prepared to carry out strategies to implement it, why are they not using the strategies? Title I middle

schools will need to be fully supported to uphold and carry out the Title I Parent Family Engagement Mandate.

In addition, further research could address the differentiated training needed for middle school principals so that they can assist teachers and parents with addressing the middle adolescent learner. This level of training would be different than that which takes place in elementary schools.

This study explored Title I middle school principals' perceptions of the importance of parental engagement mandates and their preparation to perform them. It identified some of the barriers and recommended strategies or practices used by the respondents to address parental engagement requirements. Although the results showed the respondents strongly endorsed the importance of all of the mandates, there was a significant gap between their ratings of importance and their ratings of preparation to perform them, suggesting a potential professional development need. In addition, barriers such as having sufficient time and resources to devote to the issue are worthy of note.



## Appendix A: Parental Involvement Survey

. The following questions are focused on your perceptions regarding parental involvement in Title I Middle Schools based on your role as a school administrator. I am interested in your perceptions as it pertains to the importance of each activity and your perception of how well prepared you are to perform the activity and its importance.  
Q1.

1. Do you wish to opt out of completing this survey?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q2. Are you the principal or the assistant principal of your school?

- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Assistant Principal

Q3. How long have you worked in your current position?

- ☐ 1-3
- ☐ 3-4
- ☐ 5 or more

Q4. How long have you worked in School County Public Schools as a principal or assistant principal?

- ☐ 1-2
- ☐ 3-4
- ☐ 5 or more

Q5. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Q6. What degree do you hold?

- ☐ Bachelors
- ☐ Masters
- ☐ Doctorate

Q7. In your opinion, how important is it for parents to share in school-family responsibility for high academic performance?

- ☐ Extremely important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Slightly important
- ☐ Not at all important

Q8. How prepared are you to encourage parents to share in school-family responsibility for high academic performance?

- ☐ Extremely well
- ☐ Well
- ☐ Slightly well
- ☐ Not well at all

Q9. In your opinion, how important is the development of school and parent capacity for productive mutual collaboration?

- ☐ Extremely important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Slightly important
- ☐ Not at all important

Q10. How prepared are you to build parent capacity for productive mutual collaboration?

- ☐ Extremely well
- ☐ Well
- ☐ Slightly well
- ☐ Not well at all

Q11. In your opinion, how important is it for you to inform parents about the state's assessment procedures for measuring performance and progress?

- ☐ Extremely important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Slightly important
- ☐ Not at all important

Q12. How prepared are you to inform parents about the state's assessment procedures for measuring performance and progress?

- ☐ Extremely well
- ☐ Well

- ☐ Slightly well

- ☐ Not well at all

Q13. In your opinion, how important is it for you to involve parents in Title 1 decision-making, including the development of the school's improvement plan?

- ☐ Extremely important

- ☐ Important

- ☐ Slightly important

- ☐ Not at all important

Q14. How prepared are you to involve parents in the Title I decision making in developing your school's improvement plan?

- ☐ Extremely well

- ☐ Well

- ☐ Slightly well

- ☐ Not well at all

Q15. In your opinion, how important is it to discuss (e.g., in School Performance Management Team meetings) how the school will increase parental/family involvement during the school planning and the decision-making process?

- ☐ Extremely important

- ☐ Important

- ☐ Slightly important

- ☐ Not at all important

Q16. In your opinion, how important is it to involve parents in participating on the school planning and management team (SPMT) and in parent organizations?

- ☐ Extremely important

- ☐ Important

- ☐ Slightly important

- ☐ Not at all important

Q17. How prepared are you to involve parents in your school planning and management team and parent organizations?

- ☐ Extremely well

- ☐ Well

- ☐ Slightly well

- ☐ Not well at all
- Q18. In your opinion, how important is it to have parents engaged in committee work in order to provide input/feedback into school improvement planning process?
- ☐ Extremely important
  - ☐ Important
  - ☐ Slightly important
  - ☐ Not at all important
- Q19. In your opinion, how important is it for parents to know how community and business partners support the school (i.e. school supplies, mentoring)?
- ☐ Extremely important
  - ☐ Important
  - ☐ Slightly important
  - ☐ Not at all important
- Q20. How well prepared are you to inform parents of your community and business partnerships?
- ☐ Extremely well
  - ☐ Well
  - ☐ Slightly well
  - ☐ Not well at all
- Q21. In your opinion, how important is it to include the six requirements of parental involvement in your school (e.g., communicating, parenting, student learning, volunteering, school decision-making & advocacy, and collaborating with community)?
- ☐ Extremely important
  - ☐ Important
  - ☐ Slightly important
  - ☐ Not at all important
- Q22. How prepared are you are to plan activities for parents to participate in that align with the six requirements?
- ☐ Extremely well
  - ☐ Well
  - ☐ Slightly well

- ☐ Not well at all

Q23. In your opinion, is professional development important for you to improve parent involvement in the schools?

- ☐ Extremely important

- ☐ Important

- ☐ Slightly important

- ☐ Not at all important

Q24. In your opinion, how important is it to have parent meetings that address the needs of all students, including the needs of students with disabilities and with limited English proficiency?

- ☐ Extremely important

- ☐ Important

- ☐ Slightly important

- ☐ Not at all important

Q25. How prepared are you to have parent meetings that address the needs of all students, including the needs of students with disabilities and limited English proficiency?

- ☐ Extremely well

- ☐ Well

- ☐ Slightly well

- ☐ Not well at all

Q26. What are the barriers that you encounter in executing Title I Engagement Mandates? Include the most common barriers from your perception.

Q27. Can you identify 2 practices or strategies regarding parental engagement that you have found most effective in your role as an administrator?

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