PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION IN JAMAICA: EXPLORING THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE DECISION OF PARENTS TO BECOME INVOLVED IN THE EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN

by

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Abstract

The experience of parental involvement in education in Jamaica was explored with a focus on identifying the factors that motivated parents to become involved in the education of their children. A theoretical construct of parental involvement in education developed by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (2005) was used to guide the research process.

The research suggests that the current state of parental involvement in education in Jamaica was not a direct consequence of a "lack of parental interest"; but an outcome of factors mitigating effective and sustained parental involvement. Parents from across the school levels want to become involved in the education of their children. However, their involvement was limited by factors emerging from their home situations and the institutional reality at the school. These factors were also linked to a broader sociological context where poverty and social class defined the nature and quality of the involvement across the school levels.

The regression analysis indicated that knowledge and skill, time and energy, specific teacher invitation and parental role were predictors of total involvement. This implies that to increase the incidence of parental involvement, the school must facilitate an enabling environment that promotes engaging and meaningful parental involvement and take a leadership role to facilitate the empowerment of parents. This can be achieved by establishing: (a) a shared vision and

common goal for parental involvement;(b) a home-school partnership framework that builds the capacity of schools and parents, especially fathers; and (c) a "complimentary learning framework" that supports families, quality student development and learning outcomes.

The study had a number of limitations; nonetheless, some of findings were interesting because they were counter-intuitive. Therefore, the study was heuristic in nature and served as a basis for further investigation. The recommended areas are: (i) the source of efficacy development and its influence on perceived sense of parent efficacy and behaviour across school levels; (ii) the belief and practice of parental involvement by teachers across school levels and its influence on the choice of parental involvement behaviours; and (iii) and the role of fathers in the education of their children.

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I dedicate this achievement to you all for touching my life.

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"Every Child Can Learn...Every Child Must[1]"

Parental Involvement in Education:

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> This vision of school improvement compels us to create new conceptions of the appropriate relationships between the school and its community, parents and families. Pedagogically, as we have come to know the importance of rooting learning in children's real lives, we can no longer tolerate the artificial boundaries between the classroom and the home. Politically, as we move the authority to those closest to the children, we cannot afford to exclude parents and community members from the process of crafting new schools. Nor can we avoid being held more directly accountable to the immediate community constituency for decisions made at the school-site. Practically, schools have no chance of enacting the fundamental changes on the reform agenda in the absence of whole-hearted support from the community-parents, citizens and business. (Shartrand, Weiss, Kreider, & Lopez, 1997, pp. 56-57)

Introduction

There is a growing discourse which supports the view that the involvement of families and community in the educative and socializing task of schooling is one of the critical factors to facilitate quality school change or effective school improvement. The assertion is based on a consensus that "education operates within a complex framework of inter-relatedness, including the home, school and community with each area as a potential focus of educational change and improvement" (London & Smith, 1989, as cited in Gordon-Muir, 1985, p. 12). More specifically, the research on parental involvement in education suggests that the effective and sustained involvement of parents in the education of their children has significant benefits for students, parents and teachers. The benefits for students, while not exhaustive, include:

[1] Philosophy of Education, Ministry of Education, Jamaica.

1. improved academic performance and achievement;
2. improved attitude and motivation to succeed in school; and
3. the increased likelihood of completing secondary and continuing on to post-secondary education.

For parents, the understanding of their children's learning is enhanced. This puts the parents in a more informed position to be able to motivate their children to succeed; in turn, the child's perceived sense of parent efficacy is enhanced. At another level, the parent's awareness of the school and its culture is improved, which can lead to the parent developing a more favourable opinion of the school. The parent is, therefore, more likely to want to establish a meaningful and engaging relationship with the school. This may facilitate better interaction between the home and the school resulting in parents developing more confidence in the schools, themselves and becoming more empowered to participate in the education of their children (Henderson & Berla, 1994, p. 10). Parent and teacher morale are also enhanced (Becker, 1986; Epstein, 1983; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1997). Leitch and Tangari have noted that teachers, also, have observed that meaningful engagement with parents and families results in increased positive attitudes about teaching, improved staff relationships and less stereotyping of families (as cited in Mitra, 2006, p. 455).

However, while the potential benefits of the home-school relationship and the involvement of parents in the education of their children are acknowledged, there remains a disconnect between this awareness and the actual implementation of effective and sustained parental involvement initiatives. The following questions beg to be asked: (a) why has parental involvement not received more prominence as a strategic priority to support student-centred

learning in the majority of our schools? (b) Why has parental involvement remained a misunderstood, untapped and under-utilized resource?

According to Keyes (2002), the answer lies in the fact that the parent-teacher relationship is not always easy to promote and maintain. "As we have moved from small communities with intimate connections to a very diverse mobile culture, the increasing complexity of relationships and roles and functions has often complicated the collaborations" (p. 179). Keyes further adds that teachers are desirous of having a meaningful relationship with parents. However, there are competing views about what connotes a "good" parent-teacher relationship. On one hand, there are feelings of shared efforts and mutually valued achievements; on the other hand, there is a sense of frustration, helplessness or even anger over conflicting perceptions and understandings. Mitra (2006) is of the opinion that this conflict and tension is due to the fact that schools and families do not always share similar goals and understanding about the importance of parental involvement in education. For example, the school's definition and expectation of "ideal parental involvement" can clash with the values in the homes of some students and cause great conflict and tension. She further contends that "schools base their culture on a middle-class value system that can be culturally incongruent with working-class and ethnic beliefs" (p. 457). It is this perception, to a large extent, that has influenced the schools' attitude towards parental involvement and which has informed the school's viewing parents' actions as "interference" or "support." In addition, this perception has also influenced the nature and quality of the parent-teacher relations, and the context in which this parent-teacher relationship has been operationalized.

In this environment, family-centred schools cannot thrive. In order for schools to achieve creating a learning environment that is supportive, nurturing and student-centered, there must be

a fundamental shift in how parental involvement is defined. Furthermore, parental involvement initiative must be guided by:

1. an awareness of the importance of parental involvement;
2. a shared goal and understanding about the family and school which is situated within a family-school partnership culture and framework (Epstein 1986, 1992); and
3. an established institutional arrangement between the home and the school which promote meaningful parental involvement and the parent-teacher relationship.

It is recognized that the home-school relationship is characterized by inherent conflicts and a lack of complementarities; however, there is growing consensus that the home-school relationship is critical to improving student achievement and quality outcomes (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994, p. 237). For the most part, active and supportive parental involvement has the potential to create a psycho-social learning environment that is supportive and nurturing, improves student achievement and affective gains, builds teacher and parent efficacy and establishes an effective school system, therefore reiterating that parental involvement has the potential to create the environment and relations needed to facilitate quality school change. It is primarily for this reason that we focus our efforts on understanding the complexities and tensions of the home-school relationship so as to manage the relationship effectively and also to create the enabling environment that will encourage meaningful parent-teacher engagement. This study has been seized with the task of exploring the context of parental involvement in education in Jamaica.

> It (parent-teacher relationship) is a dance, a dance between the teacher and the student and parent and child and parent and teacher and so on. Knowing when to respond and when to let go and let them find out on their own is a dance, a subtle

> communication of letting each other know what our needs are and how we can help each other. (Henry, as cited in Keyes, 2002, p. 178)

Background to the Study

Almost two decades ago, delegates from 150 countries and some 155 government organizations gathered at Jomtein, Thailand, to discuss critical issues and concerns affecting the global state of education and its impact on sustainable development and poverty reduction. The theme "Education for All" was chosen to highlight the disparities in the provision of educational goods and services, particularly along the lines of gender, race, ethnicity and class. The nations of the world, speaking through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, asserted that everyone has a right to education; however, while notable efforts were underway by countries around the globe to ensure the right to education for all, formidable barriers persisted. For example:

1. More than 100 million children, including at least 60 million girls, have no access to primary schooling;

2. More than 960 million adults, two-thirds of whom are women, are illiterate, and functional illiteracy is a significant problem in all countries, industrialized and developing;

3. More than one-third of the world's adults have no access to the printed knowledge, new skills and technologies that could improve the quality of their lives and help them shape, and adapt to, social and cultural change; and

4. More than 100 million children and countless adults fail to complete basic education programmes; millions more satisfy the attendance requirements but do not acquire essential knowledge and skill.

These conditions were attributed to the declining state of the world economies and their inability to adequately finance basic education. In many cases, this has resulted in major setbacks in the issue of access, relevance, equity and quality of education. The "Education for All" theme became the focal point around which participating countries sought to address the deteriorating state of education globally. Thereby, access to basic education for the New Millennium is now a global priority. The conference concluded with the international community committing themselves to two significant goals to be achieved by the end of the decade: (a) access to universal primary education; and (b) a massive reduction in illiteracy.

> The vision of Jomtein remains pertinent and powerful. It proves a broad and comprehensive view of education and its critical role in empowering individuals and transforming societies. Its key points and principles include universal access to learning; a focus on equity; emphasis on learning outcomes; broadening the means and scope of basic education; enhancing the environment for learning; and strengthening the partnership. (UNESCO, 2000, p. 12)

According to Levin (2001), the "Education for All" mandate has influenced the "internationalization of education reform" which has in turn, become the driving force for the return of large-scale educational reform initiatives at the national levels. Fullan (1999) has added that the current thrust of large-scale educational reform has occurred as a response to the failure of previous educational change efforts, and as a challenge to accomplish the goals and objectives of the current reform movement. At the national levels, there has been an intensification of initiatives aimed at transforming the educational landscape by a plethora of educational reforms. In significant ways, schools are being mandated to re-organize their educational standards,

operations and institutional arrangements to articulate the global educational reform goals. This is particularly explicit in the areas of educational management and governance. Riley (2000) has suggested:

> Governments around the world are now engaged in the education reform business. Improving the micro-efficiency of the school has come to be seen as a vehicle for addressing some of the macro-problems of schools and society. Rising national expectations of schools and society have been accompanied by reduced teacher autonomy and increasing demands for higher performance by teachers, as well as pupils. (p. 31)

Furthermore, "the context for educational reform (which) is a global one, adding to complexities and creating a high external imperative for change" (Riley, 2000, p. 33) within national education systems and implications for the operations of the school system – that is, the re-shaping of processes that govern the relationship between the educational stakeholders, and in general, the teaching and learning process.

Operationalizing the Global Education Agenda: The Experience of Education Reform in Jamaica

More than a decade and half have passed since the convening of Jomtein. Since then, countries around the world have been engaged in operationalizing the global agenda of education change. Jamaica, like other participating countries at Jomtein, has committed itself to ensuring that the general thrust of the "Education for All Framework" is reflected in its educational and development priorities going forward. As a result, the 1990s witnessed an ambitious effort by the Government of Jamaica to reform the system of education and address the issues of quality, access and equity, particularly in relation to basic education. A project approach was taken to the education reform process, as the Inter-American Development Bank sponsored projects at the primary level and the World Bank sponsored projects at the secondary level. Of notable mention

is the Reform of Secondary Education initiative which was aimed at qualitatively improving the first-cycle of secondary education through:

1. physical upgrades;
2. implementation of a common curriculum;
3. rationalization of certain secondary-level examinations;
4. pre-service and in-service teacher training and the provision of textbooks and other support materials;
5. the rationalization programme for secondary education; and
6. improving the governance and management of schools through capacity building of the school's administration, *teachers and greater involvement of parents and communities.*

As Jamaica embarked on the dawn of the new Millennium, there was an urgent need for the development of a policy document that outlined the government's commitment to education. In 2001, the Ministry of Education produced the *White Paper on Education: The Way Forward* (2001) which reflected the Government of Jamaica's "commitment to engage its people in the strongest possible partnership for development through education and training" (p. 5). This comprehensive document outlined the Government of Jamaica's strategic goals and targets for achieving a high level of quality education and training.

The government has committed critical inputs to the education sector. According to the *Economic and Social Survey Jamaica* (2004a), over the last five years, the social sector, including education, health and security, has remained the main priority of government policy. This sector received $49.1 billion or 53.3% of non-debt expenditure, with education accounting

for the highest non-debt expenditure of $30.2 billion. Other critical inputs include infrastructural development, technical upgrades and the re-classification of selected primary and secondary schools. In keeping with Jomtein, the government has placed an emphasis on quality education. An important outgrowth of this goal was the need to improve the governance of the education system in terms of efficiency, accountability, transparency and flexibility, through the strengthening of the leadership, management and administrative capacities of the Ministry of Education, Education Regional Offices, school boards and school administrations.

However, a situational analysis of the Jamaican system of education has indicated that the effectiveness of the educational inputs, when compared to the quality of educational outcomes and when measured in terms of the critical minimum targets, as outlined in the *White Paper on Education* (2001) and student performance and achievement in national and regional assessments, has been limited in its success in promoting the desired outcomes. This was to the disquiet of educational stakeholders and the society at large, setting the stage for another phase of educational transformation in Jamaica. The attempts of the current educational reform process have met with limited success, particularly in terms of quality and equity of educational provisions. According to Miller (2000):

> at the end of the decade, it is not possible to conclude that the quality of basic education has improved. This is principally, as a result, of: (i) lack of systematic efforts to monitor and measure the impact of the interventions that have been implemented using empirical data; (ii) there are increasing gender disparities in the performance and achievement;(iii) a lack of adequate indicators to assess quality outcomes in secondary education; (iv) there is complacency about adult illiteracy; and (v) the focus of the EFA has been focused on the issue of educational opportunities; however, the challenges of participations and the participants has not been equally addressed, resulting in a weakening of participation of and motivation of parents and students. (p. 40)

Miller (2000) has cited that one of the critical challenges facing the Caribbean for the 21st century is the issue of improving the quality of educational outcomes through increased co-operation among the home, school and the community. He has stated that:

> enhancing the quality of the learning environment and the richness of learning experiences to which infants, children, adolescents and adults are exposed in the delivery of basic education...Teachers, parents and communities need to co-operate and collaborate in the challenging of meeting basic learning needs in ways that are pedagogically sound, stimulating, and intriguing to learners, and with roots in their lived experiences. (p. 42)

The 21st century has arrived; however, the issue of quality basic education remains an intractable challenge.

In October 2003, a historic decision by the members of Parliament was reached announcing increased funding allocation to the education sector for the next five years. This bi-partisan consensus on this national issue of education transformation has set the context for a number of initiatives aimed at qualitatively improving the education system at all levels. In February 2004, former Prime Minister, the Most Honourable P. J. Patterson, appointed a fourteen member Taskforce on Education Reform to "prepare and present an action plan consistent with a vision for the creation of a world class education system which will generate the human capital and produce the skills necessary for Jamaican citizens to compete in the global economy" participation. According to the *Taskforce Report on Education Reform Jamaica* (2004), "parental involvement is inadequate with only a minority of parents being fully involved in their children's education or the life of the school" (p. 64); and recommends the need for "much greater involvement of parent" (p. 7).

There is a general consensus among parents: they are interested in the education of their children. They see themselves as playing a critical role in the development of their children.

However, a number of issues have served to define the current nature and quality of the parent-teacher relationship and parental involvement in education in Jamaica. Firstly, there is a limited definition that has been applied to the concept. Traditionally, the involvement of parents has been confined to just a "fund-raising" exercise or the casual attendance of parents at PTA meetings. Unfortunately, parental involvement in education has not evolved to become more responsive to some of the critical issues now affecting the school community, such as: poor discipline, high drop-out rates, the seeming lack of motivation of our students to succeed in school and their poor attitude towards schooling. These issues that characterize the disaffected nature of our youth, have given rise to a number of other issues now affecting the wider society, the most critical being the increased incidence of crime and violence among youth-at-risk, 15 to 24 years of age.

Secondly, Seaga (1955) in his study, *The Parent-Teacher Relationship in a Small Jamaican Village*, highlighted a misperception that has defined the parent-teacher relationship, that is, the socializing and educative task of schooling, should be left to the teacher since they are deemed better suited for the task. However, as times have changed and the role and responsibility of schooling has become more challenging, teachers feel that they are doing more than enough. This is in stark contrast to parents who have been doing little to monitor their children's academic progress and show minimum concern, and harbour a lack of interest in the educational process. Alternatively, there is the situation where parents have imposed themselves upon teachers in a forceful way, sometimes resulting in confrontations. Hence, two images of parental involvement emerge; on one hand, there's the "uninterested parent" and on the other, the "domineering/interfering parent." This perception has fuelled the tense relationship between parents and teachers.

Thirdly, there is a lack of a systematic approach to using parental involvement in education as a developmental and educational strategy to address some of the motivational and attitudinal issues affecting our students and their performance. Parental involvement in education in Jamaica still remains an underutilized resource. As a consequence, at a strategic level, parental involvement has not been meaningfully incorporated within the management system of most schools as a key educational support mechanism. Hence, in most schools, there are no parental involvement policies, written or otherwise. This, therefore, means that at the operational level, parental involvement programmes are *ad hoc* and uni-dimensional in scope. This, in turn, has contributed to a fragmented and ineffective home-school relationship in most schools.

Finally, there is insufficient information on the issue of the parent-teacher relationship and the practice of parental involvement in Jamaica. This, coupled with the informal treatment of the practice of parental involvement, has resulted in:

1. a limited insight into understanding the context of parental involvement;
2. an inability to identify the issues and concerns affecting parental involvement; and
3. an inability to identify best practices which can be used to strengthen parental involvement in Jamaica and produce more favourable educational outcomes.

In my opinion, the accumulated effect is that we cannot affect the quality and sustained change desired for the parent-teacher relationship, and by extension, parental involvement. Parental involvement in education, according to Borg and Mayo (2001), must be considered a critical component of any school improvement endeavour. The authors have posited that "parental participation, together with deep systemic reform of the very organizational structures and

leadership of the school, is known to have brought substantial changes in individual schools and communities that house them" (p. 247). Recognizing this, the basic assumption guiding this research is that parental involvement is an important element of the school improvement process. The involvement of parents in the education of their children has been shown to influence quality of the education process, and by extension, our schools can be strengthened when parents are involved. This can only be realized when we understand the context of parental involvement and its influence on why parents become involved, the nature and quality of parental involvement, and how parental involvement influences student achievement. A means of pursuing this objective is first to explore more specifically, the context of parental involvement in education in Jamaica. This undertaking will allow schools and parents to become more aware of and appreciate the benefits of the parental involvement. This knowledge can then be used to create an enabling environment in our schools that facilitates more meaningful and engaging parental involvement.

Research Objective

Parental involvement in education has been often defined as an active and continuous participation in activities by parents or guardians that support the education of the child. Parental involvement in education may take two distinct forms. There are home-based and school-based involvement behaviours. The home-based activities include: (i) helping their children improve school work by providing constant encouragement needed to perform well; (ii) arranging for appropriate study time and space; (iii) modeling desired behaviour, monitoring homework; and (iv) providing the material for school, and actively tutoring children at home. On the other hand, school-based involvement behavior include: (i) parental support of children's schooling by attending school functions; (ii) responding to school obligations; (iii) such as the parent-teacher

conferences and taking a more active role in the decision-making; (iv) and governance process of the school. For the purpose of this study, the definition also incorporates the emotional and psychological influence such of parental involvement which speaks to parental expectation and aspiration and their influence on students' academic and affective outcomes.

The purpose of this research is to examine the experience of parental involvement in education in Jamaica, by applying a parental involvement in education theoretical construct developed by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005), with the intention of exploring why parents become involved in the education of their children. This analysis will focus on three main process variables of the Hoover-Dempsey construct:

1. parents' motivational beliefs;
2. parents' perception of invitations for involvement from others; and
3. parents' perceived life context.

The objectives of the study will be to:

1. examine the perceived context and factors that influence parental involvement decisions;
2. identify issues and concerns impacting parental involvement in education in Jamaica;
3. identify solutions that can assist schools and parents to improve the practice of parental involvement in education in Jamaica; and
4. provide the basis for further studies on the influence of the selected variables on parental involvement decision-making and the implications of the nature and dynamics of parental involvement in education in Jamaica on students' outcomes.

Also, the research intends to address a knowledge gap in the research on parental involvement in education in Jamaica. It has been noted that successive education reforms were focused on governance, finance and learning support issues, for example, the curriculum; however, there was not much attention given to stakeholder participation, specifically parental involvement in education and its capacity to facilitate education transformation at all levels.

The research analysis will draw heavily on the methodology used by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler in their study *The Social Context of Parental Involvement: A Path to Enhanced Achievement* (2005). The current study will focus on establishing the association between the principal dependent variable (parent decision to be involved in the education of their child/ren) and the independent/predictor factors (parental motivational beliefs, parents' perception of invitation for involvement from others; and parents' perceived life context) so as to determine which of these decision-making factors, either as independent or co-dependent variables, is a higher predictor of parental involvement decision-making.

Summary

The Global Agenda for Education expressed through the "Education for All" framework is powerful and remains pertinent. It sought to bring to the fore the critical issues challenging the quality of education, globally. The acceptance of the "Education for All" by the global community has resulted in a number of educational reforms aimed at improving basic education. Within the context, parental involvement in the education of their children is emerging as an important component of quality educational change and transformation. In the case of Jamaica, while there is a high social regard for education and parents strongly agree to their role and responsibility in facilitating the education of their children, parental involvement in the education of their children remains an under-utilized resource. Furthermore, the critical support necessary

to facilitate effective and meaningful parental involvement is limited, resulting in the inadequate participation of parents in the education of their children across the school system. This research was undertaken to examine the factors that motivate the involvement of parents in the education of their children, with specific focus on the psychological and social context of involvement.

Parental involvement in education or the family-school relationship does not occur in a vacuum; but is situated within a social context and is therefore subjected to certain processes inherent within this context (Lareau, 1987). In Jamaica, this context is textured by issues such as poverty and inequalities which affects a significant portion of the population. Poverty and the unevenness of quality, which is linked to the inequalities in schooling in the various school types, may influence the experience of parental involvement by determining the nature and dynamics of the home-school relationship, the interaction between the parent and teacher and also the effects of parental involvement. The following chapter provides insight into the socio-demographic profile of the Jamaican family.

Chapter Two:
A Socio-Demographic Profile of the Jamaican Society

Introduction

The involvement of parents in the education of their children is promoted as an essential element of effective schools. It is generally accepted that parental involvement contributes to student achievement and is an important focus of quality school change. According to Cotton and Wikelund (2001):

> The research overwhelmingly demonstrates that parent involvement in children's learning is positively related to achievement. Further, the research shows that the more intensively parents are involved in their children's learning, the more beneficial are the achievement effects. This holds true for all types of parent involvement in children's learning and for all types and ages of students. (p. 5)

Moreover, the literature on parental involvement does strongly suggest that when parents are involved in the schooling of their children, the school benefits from better parent-teacher relationships which contribute to student learning (Cotton & Wikelund, 2001).

However, there are a number of factors that may mitigate the meaningful and sustained participation of parents and undermine the potential benefits of parental involvement. According to Desimone (1999) and Lareau (1987) these factors are sociological in nature and include social and cultural capital, the structure and characteristics of the family, the power relations between the parent and the teacher due to conflicting class orientations and poverty. These are therefore important units of analysis as they are central to understanding the nature of the parent-school relation and the influences that impact on the experience and effects of parental involvement in education. For example, Gerwitz, Bowe, and Balli (1995) in their study of school choice in Britain illustrated:

> inequalities in social and economic capital influence parents' levels of participation and ability to advocate for their children. Specifically, middle to upper class income parents capitalize on opportunities to influence their children's schooling, whereas lower income parents are disadvantaged because of circumstance or skill. (p. 3)

It is therefore apparent that in order to fully understand the experience of parental involvement in Jamaica, that is, the belief, behaviour, nature and dynamics of the parent-teacher relationship and its ultimate effect on student achievement, an unpacking of the sociological process and its myriad effects on the experience of parental involvement is warranted. This is important because our understanding of these variables will help us to appreciate the context of parental involvement and the factors that influence it. This will in turn help us to create the environment that is conducive to meaningful and engaging parental involvement for all parents, regardless of social class background.

This chapter provides a socio-economic profile of the Jamaican society, based on findings from the Jamaican Population Census (2001), The Jamaica Labour Force Statistics 2001 and The Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions (JSLC) 2004 and 2006. The JSLC is an annual publication of Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) and The Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN). This document provides detailed and comprehensive analyses of socio-economic factors affecting the Jamaica population. This profile provides an overview of the Jamaican economy, population and demographic trends, household characteristics by size, composition and headship and employment and education status of the heads of the households. Additionally, selected household consumption data, by region and quintile, as well as the incidence of poverty by region are highlighted. Within the context of this research, these indicators are critical as they provide insight into the socio-economic factors that impact the lives of households, families and children in a direct way. They also highlight the standard and quality of life of households and

the availability of resources to adequately and effectively carry out their function of securing the well-being of their family members.

The Jamaican Economy

Jamaica is a small island developing state with a population of approximately 2.6 million people. The World Bank in 2005 classified Jamaica as a lower middle-income developing country with medium human development. In this regard, based on socio-economic indicators, it compares favourably with regional and developed country partners. However, for the past decade and a half, despite the significant reform and modernization that has occurred in the country, the Jamaican economy has experienced anemic growth and low productivity compared to its regional partners. In 2005, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was $US3,657 per person. By contrast, Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados had GDP per capita levels of $US12,623 and $US11,088, respectively. This has had implications for the country's competitiveness.

Jamaica has an enormous debt, the fourth highest in the world behind Guyana, Lebanon and St. Kitts and Nevis. In 2005, the debt was recorded at $J827.3 billion (US$18.2), representing 133.3% of GDP. In other words, 60% of the budget is spent on debt-servicing, while the remainder is allocated to critical sectors such as education, health and infrastructure. The debt and the fiscal imbalances have become a major development challenge for the country. This is due to the fact that the national debt reduces the ability of the government to finance critical development in other areas such as education, health and infrastructure and other strategic priorities such as tackling crime. The debt also limits the ability of the private sector to access the local capital market to finance investment in productive ventures.

In addition to the country's debt burden, rampant crime is also taking a toll on the country's economy. According to the report, *Jamaica Road to Sustained Growth* (2004), crime is costing Jamaica at least 4 percent of its GDP, including lost production, health expenses, and public and private spending on security. Poor employment prospects and a high crime rate have encouraged high rates of migration, with the equivalent of some 80 percent of tertiary graduates in the 1990s estimated to have migrated. The report suggests that even when the country was experiencing modest growth in the 1990s, it was unable to create enough jobs because of a decline in the country's competitiveness. Jamaica's lack of competitiveness hurt its tradable goods production and, as a result, employment rose less than 0.3% per year from 1991-2001. As a consequence, the country faces a challenging balancing act sustaining macro-economic stability which includes debt-servicing, managing the fiscal imbalances and facilitating growth and development.

Demography

In 2006, the fertility and mortality rates continued to show declines. This was reflected in the increase in the working age (15–64 years) and the elderly (persons 60+ years), categories and the decrease in the 0–14 age group. This changes in the demographic structure in particular the increase in the working age population places Jamaica in a favourable economic position. However, this situation is likely to be reversed within the next 20 years. According to the 2001 census data, males accounted for 49.2% of the total population. In terms of the gender breakdown, for most age groups, the ratio was largely equal: in the exceptional cases females accounted for a slightly higher proportion. The overall pattern is 49.6% males and 50.4% females. Based on recent demographic projections, the trend remains unchanged.

Household Characteristics

Household size, headship and composition.

The latest statistics on household characteristics by the Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions (2006) indicate that the average size of the Jamaican household was 3.3 persons, consisting of (1.1) adult males and (1.2) adult females. Mean households size continued to be highest in the Rural Areas (4.1), particularly among female-headed households and lowest in the Kingston Metropolitan Area (2.7), especially among male headed households (2.7). However, households in the poorest twenty percent of the population were above the national average, at 5.23 persons; while, the wealthiest twenty per cent had the lowest household size, 2.26 persons.

Household composition is determined by the presence or absence of a male or female or children or both. The survey revealed that approximately 46.7% of the households was female headed. In the KMA, 55.2% of all households were headed by females. There was no notable difference between Other Towns (41.7%) and Rural Areas (43.2).

However noteworthy is the fact that 45 per cent of female headed households (had no partner, but children were present, compared to 7.1 per cent of male headed households. An analysis of female headed households with children showed that 75% were single parents. In relations to their poverty status, the data show that of the poorest female headed households (Q1), 55.4% were single parent. These households were distributed as follows Rural Areas (50%), followed by the KMA (32) and Other Towns (18%).

Education and employment status of household heads.

The educational attainment of household heads is a proxy for incoming earning potential of the household and the ability to break out of the cycle of poverty. According to the report, *The Jamaican Child (2002)*, educational status by household heads data indicated that 29.5% had

attained no higher than a primary level education. Fifty-nine percent (59%) had attained up to a secondary level education, while 10.9% had attained a tertiary level education. A small number reported no schooling or other experience. When juxtaposed with the Labour Force Statistics of 2001, it was revealed that, while many heads of household were employed, 97.6% of males and 96.1% of females, the household heads were employed in low-income occupations such as Skilled Agricultural, Elementary or Craft Categories, while only 5.4% were employed in Professional categories. In 2001, some 68.1% of heads of household categorized as poor were employed.

In 2006, the JSLC presented its findings on the educational attainment of the sampled population, disaggregated by region, quintile and age group. While it is not in direct reference to the educational status of the heads of the households, it provides further insights and paints a picture of the level of education of the society. From the findings important inferences can be made the level of educational attainment and poverty. The data indicated that a high proportion of the population had not passed the requisite terminal examination. This is approximately 78% of the population. In the rural areas 83.4% of population, followed by Other Towns (78.7 %) and the KMA (67.6 %) had no qualification or did not pass any terminal examinations. The poorest quintile (Q1) had the highest proportion of 90.5%. Quintiles 2 and 3 had the second and third highest proportion. When disaggregated by age, a significant proportion of the productive age group, an average of approximately 50 %, was without requisite qualification

A correlation between low education and employment status revealed that persons living below the poverty line had limited educational attainment and were most likely to be employed in manual, low income and seasonal occupations. In the final analysis, these poor households were unable to adequately provide for the well-being of their families; therefore compromising

the capacity of families to function effectively. This has resulted in families being put at risk. Due to the stagnation in the economy and other socio-economic factors, the education and employment status of the heads of households had not changed.

Household consumption and poverty analysis.

Poverty is multi-dimensional and complex and is influenced by many factors. Poverty is defined as a state of being poor in which there is an inability to meet basic human needs. The existence of poverty affects the potential for economic growth of a country; it also reduces productivity, increase social mobility and exerts pressure on Government resources. In Jamaica, poverty is measured using consumption. All persons consuming below an estimated poverty line are deemed poor.

This section examines selected household indicators including mean annual per capita consumption, household consumption by commodity group, share of mean consumption by commodity group, household consumption by quintile, household consumption by gender of household head etc. It is to be noted that the per capita consumption is used as a proxy for income and as a measure of the economic welfare of the Jamaican population. It was noted in the 2006 survey that household size, headship and composition were commonly associated with consumption status.

Mean annual per capita consumption expenditure.

The JSLC 2006 survey revealed an All Jamaica mean per capita consumption of $J139,595 per annum. The average per capita consumption for the Kingston Metropolitan Area (KMA) was $J178,350; and for the Rural Areas, it was $J109,979. With respect to household consumption by commodity group, the Food and Beverage accounted for the highest proportion (42.9%) of the consumption expenditure for All Jamaica. By region, consumption expenditure on

Food and Beverage was highest in the Rural Areas (47.9%) and lowest in KMA (38.2%). Housing and Household expenses and Transportation in the KMA and Other Towns were the second and third largest indicators of consumption, nationally. In the Rural Areas, the reverse trend was noted. Recreation accounted for the lowest proportion of household consumption for All Jamaica. In the KMA, expenditure on Household Durable Goods was the lowest proportion of consumption. It was noted that there were relatively large increases in expenditure in Clothing and Footwear (11.5%), Food and Beverages (7.8%) and Personal Care (6.2%). However, expenditures on Education (14.7%), Household Durable Goods (7.3%) and Housing and Housing Expenses (6.4%) experienced significant declines.

The JSLC 2006 also indicated that the mean per capita consumption of households by quintiles was Quintile 1- $45,106 compared to $294, 198 for Quintile 5. The per capita expenditure for the mid-range quintile, Quintile 3 was $102, 575. In terms of consumption expenditure by commodity across quintiles, the Food and Beverage category continued to account for the highest expenditure. Quintile 1 spent $24, 232 or 54% of its expenditure on the Food and Beverage category, while Quintile 5 spent only $111, 934 or 38% of its budget. Transportation and Housing and Housing Expenses received the second largest allocation of the consumption expenditure in Quintiles 1 and 3. This trend was reversed for Quintiles 4 and 5. While there was an increase in mean per capita consumption expenditure, female headed households continued to have less purchasing power than their male counterparts. In 2006, female headed households had a mean per capita consumption of $125, 027 compared to $155, 169 in male-headed households. This is despite the reduction in gender-based consumption inequality.

Poverty analysis.

In 1990, the prevalence of poverty in Jamaica was 28.4% and currently in 2006, it is 14.3%. This has been a significant decline. In the Kingston Metropolitan Area (KMA) poverty was 9.4%, compared to 9.2 and 19.8.1% in the Other Towns and Rural Areas, respectively. This has been attributed to targeted government poverty reduction interventions, the growth of the informal sector and remittances which have significantly increased. However, despite the downward trend in the prevalence of poverty, there are some worrying trends with far-reaching implications on the welfare of households and their capacity to improve their quality of life (Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions, 2006, p. 37).

Further analysis of the distribution of the poor by region reflects a disproportionately higher percentage of the poor living in the rural areas. While 51 per cent of the population resides in the rural area, it accounts for approximately 66 per cent of the poor.

First, poverty is lower; but there has been an increase in the level of vulnerability, defined as all individuals within 20 per cent of the poverty line. Vulnerability indicates a high probability of falling in poverty. This is most evident in the rural areas where poverty still remains high (21.1%), above the national average (14.3%) and vulnerability has increased relatively more than in the other two regions. In essence although welfare has improved, many of those lifted out of poverty are still very close to the poverty line and are at risk of regressing into poverty because of adverse shocks.

Second, the increased vulnerability is most likely to affect female-headed households in rural areas with lower educational attainment. Female –headed households account for 46.7% of all households, but about two-thirds of the households in poverty. This is related to the fact that female headed households have a lower per capita income ($J125,027) and are larger (4.1

persons) than male-headed households ($J155,169) with households of 2.7 persons. Furthermore, higher incidence of poverty can also be explained by the correlation between households headed by female and single income households and a higher rate of unemployment among women which now stands at 14.5%, twice as much as their male counterpart. Also the educational status of the household is also a strong determinant of poverty. The Labor Market Survey (2001) highlighted that only 16.9% of the labour force had either vocational or professional degrees, diplomas or certificates. This is significantly higher among the poor. This creates the risk of a vicious cycle of lower parental education and poverty which leads to lower education and poverty of the children. This is compounded by the fact that poorer children get tracked into lower quality schools which limits the benefits of education (p. 37).

Third, while the impact of poverty is largely felt in the rural areas, urban poverty seems to garner more attention. This has been attributed to the fact that urban poverty, which is highly concentrated in the inner city communities, may be related to higher crime, violence, and other anti-social behaviours that perpetuate the cycle of poverty by limiting access to education and employment opportunities.

Fourth, over the last decade and a half, even though poverty has declined and growth has been negligible, consumption inequality as measured by The Gini Coefficient, which was 0.3826 in 2006, has not changed significantly since the 1990s when it was 0.381. This is also reflected in the disparities in per capita consumptions which was eluded to earlier in this section. According to the World Bank report, *Jamaica: Road to Sustained Growth* (2004), the distribution of consumption would suggest Jamaica is a country with medium inequality, with less inequality than Latin American but more than most industrial countries (p. 36). Figure 1 illustrates the trend in the levels of poverty compared to the consumption inequality over a 17-year period.

Year	Prevalence of poverty (% of population)	Rural poverty (% of population)	Gini co-efficient	Inflation (CPI,%), Dec-Dec	GDP growth (% per year)	Growth in per capita real GDP $J (% per year)
1989	30.4	40.7	n/a	17.2	7.0	6.4
1990	28.4	37.5	0.381	29.8	6.3	5.2
1991	44.6	57.2	0.397	80.2	0.8	0.1
1992	33.9	42.2	0.375	40.2	1.7	0.8
1993	24.4	29.6	0.372	30.1	2.5	1.5
1994	22.8	28.8	0.382	26.8	1.0	0.0
1995	27.5	37.0	0.362	25.6	2.5	1.3
1996	26.1	32.8	0.360	15.8	0.2	-0.9
1997	19.9	27.4	0.416	9.2	1.0	-1.9
1998	15.9	19.5	0.372	7.9	1.2	-2.1
1999	16.9	22.0	0.379	6.8	1.0	0.3
2000	18.7	25.1	0.379	6.1	0.7	0.1
2001	16.8	24.1	0.384	8.8	1.5	0.9
2002	19.7	25.1	0.398	7.3	1.1	0.6
2003	19.1	24.2	0.379	14.1	2.3	1.8
2004	16.9	22.1	0.382	13.7	1.0	0.5
2005	14.8	21.1	0.381	12.9	1.4	0.9
2006	14.3	19.8	0.383	5.8	2.5	1.7

Figure 1. **Social and economic indicators (World Bank, 2004).**

Children in poverty.

Poverty and its attendant effects continue to be of grave concern to many Jamaican households. Children are among the most affected as their growth and development is stymied. According the JSLC (2006), some 17.44% of children lived below the poverty line. They constituted 45.8% of all persons living in poverty. The rate of poverty among children varied by regions; in the Rural Areas it was 23.7%, followed by KMA (12.6%) and Other Towns (10.41%). With respect to education seeking behaviour of poor children, they attend school less frequently than non-poor children, with only 60.3% achieving full attendance compared with

83.9% of those not living in poverty. The poorest children are almost four times more likely to be absent from school than wealthier children due to "running errands"; an analysis by quintile suggested that 51.4% of households in the poor quintile compared to 14.2% in the wealthiest households gave this explanation for absenteeism. It is strongly believed that the socio-economic conditions of poorer households contribute directly to children being stopped from school to earn to help supplement the household income or there is a genuine inability to cover daily expected routines. This circumstance is among the factors contributing to the higher risk of educational failure of children from poor households.

Social and child protection.

Given what was previously described about the prevalence of poverty in Jamaica, it is apparent that female-headed household families and children are the most vulnerable. The government, recognizing the ramification of this challenge to sustainable national development has, since 2000, initiated the reform of the Social Safety Net with the explicit aim of addressing issues of vulnerability and poverty through the promotion of efficient labour markets, reducing exposure to risks, and enabling and empowering people to protect themselves against hazards and interruption in their economic pursuits. Additionally, the government has also embarked upon creating an enabling environment for children and youth to self-actualize through the provision of assistance to access education, health and protective services. A number of social assistance programmes have been initiated of which the Programme of Advancement through Health and Education (PATH) is a central focus.

PATH was designed to reach a pre-determined target of 236,000 beneficiaries in the poorest 20% of the Jamaica population. Included in this 20% are the elderly, persons with disability, children ages 0-17, pregnant and nursing mothers and destitute adults. In 2006,

200,000 persons were registered on the PATH programme. Quintiles 1 and 2 accounted for 78% of the total number of beneficiaries. Given that PATH is a targeted intervention, the majority of beneficiaries were located in the Rural Areas (47.1%), followed by Other Towns (38.4%) and the KMA (31.4%). Children (77.7%), the Elderly (16.0%) and Persons with Disability (4.2%) from Quintiles 1 and 2 comprised more than 50% of PATH beneficiaries.

Summary

The socio-economic profile of the Jamaican household revealed that there were some positive trends, particularly in areas of demographic structure, real per capita consumption, and the prevalence of poverty. However, the improvements have not necessarily resulted in the improvement in the quality of life for many, this is evident in the disproportionate level of poverty in rural areas. The cyclical nature of poverty among households is characterized by:

1. low educational attainment levels;
2. low income earning capability;
3. inability to access basic social services; and
4. a lack of economic opportunities leading to under-employment, unemployment and low wage employment.

This is most likely to be experienced by households that are:

1. headed by single females with low educational attainment with limited earning potential;
2. large with many children; and
3. concentrated in the poorest quintiles in the rural areas.

This discussion brings into sharp focus the vulnerabilities associated with the single, female headed households and the feminization of poverty. Based on the educational status, income earning potential and the absence of a male partner, the welfare of single female-headed households was lower than male-headed households; and, the former, has a greater chance of being poor and vulnerable. The single female parent has to shoulder the dual roles of bread-winner and caregiver. The children depend on her for emotional, psychological, cognitive and financial support. In order to provide for her family, the mother, more often than not from the lower socio-economic status, has to resort to low-paying jobs which require her to work long hours; and this, therefore, has resulted in her being away from her children. The competing demands on the single parent have resulted in extremely high levels of parental stress with serious consequences for the parent-child relationship and the development of the child.

Another dimension of the female headed household is "the feminization of poverty". As discussion in the preceding section, the feminization of poverty is attributed to certain characteristics of the single, female headed household that makes it vulnerable to shocks- low maternal education, low family income, and limited survival skills. The household head is therefore unable to function effectively as a unit to adequately provide for their families. Unfortunately, this family circumstance has a negative impact the children's developmental accomplishment.

Within this context, this situation is relevant to parental involvement because the ability of parents to participate in an effective and sustained way in the education of their children is limited. Moreover, the nature of the family circumstance can influence the belief, behaviour, nature and dynamics of the parent-teacher relationship. In the final analysis, the cycle of poverty limits the capacity of the family to be able to invest in the improvement of the quality of their

lives. In addition, the cycle is also perpetuated as the quality of the education of poor children is likely to be below required standards. Poor children are most likely to be unready for school because of under-development in the critical areas needed for the child's learning potential to be realized. Hence, poor families are more often likely to exhibit the tendency to remain poor throughout their lifespan and across generations as they are at higher risk of educational failure due to lack of parental education and poverty which leads to low education and poverty of the child. This is a critical concern seeing that poorer students get tracked into lower quality schools which limits the benefits of education and enhances their risk of education failure and poor quality of life.

The chapter provided an overview of the social context and sociological factors that shape the lives of the Jamaican family. In doing so, the chapter focused on the issues of social class, especially poverty, and its effect on the household and its capacity to function effectively in the various dimensions of family life. Given the context of this research, the chapter emphasized that poverty is a grave challenge for many households, especially single, female-headed households with children. This situation has far-reaching implication on the nature and quality of parental involvement behaviour and it effect. This social analysis may explain the inadequacy of parental involvement in education in Jamaica. The following chapter builds on the social analysis presented in this chapter. In this regard, a situational analysis is presented with particular focus on the function of social class in education and its consequent effect on parental involvement across school types and social class.

Chapter Three:
The Jamaican System of Education:
A Focus on Inequality, Poverty and Student Achievement

Introduction

It is strongly believed that the involvement of parents in the education of their children is of critical importance. If this is so, why is parental involvement so inadequate in many of our schools? Lareau (1987) in her article, *Social class difference in family-school relationships: The importance of cultural capital*, emphasized that the discussion on the variation of parental involvement in education has been dominated by three theoretical approaches namely:

1. culture of poverty thesis which suggests that lower and working class families don't value education as highly as middle-class families;
2. unequal levels of parental involvement is a direct result of the institutional barriers; and
3. the role of the teacher is also identified as a determinant of parental involvement in education.

Lareau, applying Bourdieu's theory of social and cultural reproduction, has posited that an analysis of social class in education must also be considered as an important contributor to the variation of parental involvement in education.

According to Bourdieu (1977) as cited in Lareau, 1987, "the school draws unevenly on the social and cultural capital of members of the society. For example schools utilize particular linguistics structures, authority patterns and types of curricula; children from higher social locations enter schools already familiar with these arrangements" (as cited in Lareau, 1987, p.74). It is within this context that deCarvalho (2001) in his book, *Rethinking Family-School*

Relations: A Critique of Parental Involvement in Schools, criticized the current model of parental involvement. He argues that schools play a critical role in class reproduction as they adopt dominant cultures, yet many of the students lack the cultural resources to succeed in it. He further highlights that the current model of parental involvement is being shaped by this cultural system, and therefore, disregards many factors, including how family and cultural conditions and feelings about schooling differ across social class. He strongly believes that this model of parental involvement is more likely to be a projection of the upper-class, suburban families, with an imposition of a particular parenting style and a resulting escalation of educational inequality. The current policy of parental involvement in our schools overlooks the power factor of family-school relationship.

In the final analysis, Bourdieu (1977) added that "the standards of schools are not neutral; their requests for parental involvement may be laden with social and cultural experiences of intellectual and economic elites" (p. 74). Hence, parental involvement in education in this context results in the disparate experience of parental involvement behaviours, effects and outright failure of the practice. Lareau (1987), therefore, highlighted that even though Bourdieu does not examine the question of parental involvement, "his analysis points to the importance of class and class culture in facilitating or impeding children's (or parent's) negotiation of the process of schooling" (p. 74). As a consequence, the school, like the family, is an important unit of analysis as social class in education is an inherent feature of the education system. Social class in education functions to maintain the status quo through the reproduction of "class identities" and "social destinies" through social and cultural reproduction in schools. This results in the unevenness of education quality and academic achievement and the promotion of social inequalities.

This chapter provides a situational analysis of the Jamaican system of education, with specific reference to the public primary and secondary school levels. It is focused on providing a:

1. general overview of the system highlighting certain characteristic features of the primary and secondary systems;
2. the performance indicators of the systems; and
3. current steps now underway to transform the system of education by addressing the issue of quality, equity and relevance.

The Jamaican system of education was established in 1835. The system emerged in response to the social anxieties of the upper class and colonial administrators to the impending social changes being brought on by Emancipation (1835). Two distinct school systems materialized: public elementary schools for the freed slaves and Schools for the children of the elites. This nature of the education devised by the colonial administrators was instrumental in providing, on one hand, "...good moral training to the children of the working class and to develop habits -not book training...but habits, training and discipline" (Turner, 1987, p. 60); while on the other hand, "equipping their children (upper-class) with a prestigious classical type education, fashionable in Europe" (Hurdle, 1980, p. 58). This characteristic nature of the emerging educational system was socially divisive, resulting in a dual education system that reflected the social disparities and inequalities of the society.

For decades after Emancipation, the socially stratified nature of the education system has become entrenched as the system continues, through selective intake, to determine the differentiation of students into certain school types based on academic performance and social class. Thereby, the system has and continues to maintain the social status quo and by extension,

the system continues to contribute to the unevenness in quality and equity within the educational system. This is evidence of the vestiges of the past continuing to shape the current system.

Currently, the education system has evolved in its structure and composition over the years; however, it has maintained its culture of elitism. Basic education in Jamaica is provided at the early childhood, primary and secondary levels which are comprised of distinct categories of school types. The primary school caters to the age group 6 to 11. There are four types of schools at the primary level, namely Preparatory and Primary, All-Age, Primary and Junior Schools. The preparatory schools are private-run schools that are off-springs of the elite school system that emerged after the period of Emancipation. They therefore have a longer history in Jamaica and are more endowed. In their elitist tradition, they continue to cater to the educational needs of the children from affluent backgrounds. These schools are highly resourced and well-equipped. The public primary schools, on the other hand, bare no resemblance to preparatory schools, except that they have a similar genesis. These schools are the off-spring of the public elementary schools which cater to the educational needs of the freed slaves. While slavery has ended, the Primary, All-Age, Primary and Junior Schools continue to provide education predominately to the children from poor families. Additionally, these schools may have a long tradition like their counter-part; however, they are not well-endowed. They lack the critical inputs needed to provide quality education. As a consequence, the Primary, All-Age, Primary and Junior Schools continue to perform way below their comparators and their productive potential.

Second, the secondary school system is made up of three school types namely, Traditional High Schools, Non-Traditional or Upgraded High Schools and Technical High Schools. For the purpose of this study, the focus is on the Traditional and Non-traditional High or the Newly Upgraded High Schools. The Traditional High Schools are the secondary level

complement of the Preparatory schools. The Traditional High Schools are considered better performing schools in the education system. In this regard, they are more prestigious as they are regarded as endowed with better teachers, better school facilities and high achieving students from affluent backgrounds. The students from the Preparatory schools are more likely to attend these schools. The Non-Traditional or the Upgraded High Schools, on the other hand, are like the primary level categories of school; these schools are lacking in some of the basic and critical educational inputs, such as qualified and motivated teachers and adequate school infrastructure. These students are, more likely, from poor backgrounds, low performers and at higher risk for academic failure. The students, usually, especially at the upper level of secondary school (grades 10-11), drop out of school before attaining the requisite qualification to make them employable. This problem is most evident among boys.

The Government of Jamaica has recognized the significant importance of education to country sustainable national development. As a consequence the Government continues to invest significantly in the sector. In 2005/06, the Government of Jamaica allotted $38 billion to the education sector. This represented 11% of the total budget. The investment in education has been geared towards qualitatively and quantitatively expanding and improving the system of education, especially in the critical areas of quality, access, equity and the relevance of educational opportunities and provisions. In this regard, the Government has made significant achievement, namely standardized assessment, a national curriculum, near universal primary education, and access to secondary school for approximately 70% of children 12-16 years, among others. However, despite the efforts of the Government, improvement in terms of quality educational outcomes, have been limited. This is especially poignant when compared to the critical minimum targets set out in the Ministry of Education's *White Paper on Education*

(2001). It strongly suggests that the system is performing way below the minimum standards necessary to produce a quality and competent workforce. The challenges facing the system include:

1. access to full secondary education;
2. equity and quality;
3. poor performance across the system;
4. un-motivated students with poor attitudes towards schools; and
5. gender disparities continue to plague the system.

A paradox is being experienced: while there have been significant improvements related to access, quality and equity through the system, there are still significant challenges which seem to become more and more intractable, resulting in the unevenness in the quality of education which has led to differential levels of achievement according to school type.

Situational Analysis of the Jamaican System of Education

Primary School Education

Primary school education is delivered through two distinct categories of educational institutions: public and private schools. The public primary system is comprised of Primary, Primary and Junior High, and All-Age schools. Private primary education is offered through preparatory. There are approximately 885 public primary schools and 217 preparatory schools. According to the Economic and Social Survey Jamaica (2006), enrolment at the primary levels stood at 318,734, a decline of 2.3% over 2004/05. Public school enrolment accounted for 292,417 of the total, while 26,317 students were enrolled in private institutions. The gross

enrolment[2] rate was 95.5%, male student recorded 97.0% enrolment compared to 93.9% for female students. The Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions 2006 has reported that average attendance rate at the primary level was 72. 1%; while attendance rates in Rural Areas was 68.1%. The report further highlighted that there was a direct relationship between attendance and consumption status with 58.3% of the poorest attending school for the entire reference period, which is period of 20 consecutive school days, compared with 81.7% for the wealthiest (JSLC 2006, p. 74). There are approximately 89.8% trained teachers in the primary system. Female teachers account for 89% of teachers at the primary level. The average teacher to student ratio was 1:37.

The primary level curriculum has been improved to have greater articulation with the secondary level curriculum. It uses an integrated approach at Grades 1-3 and discreet subject areas at Grades 4-5. The primary school curriculum and performance of the primary students are evaluated through the National Assessment Programme (NAP). The NAP is comprised of three examinations, namely, the Grade Three Diagnostic Test, The Grade Four Literacy Test and the Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT). The Grade 3 Diagnostic Test measures the achievement of mastery in key subjects: Language Arts, Mathematics and Communication Skills. In 2006, 42, 464 students (21,856 males) sat the Grade 3 Diagnostic Test. The result indicated that less than 50% of male and female students achieved mastery in any one of the core subjects. The Grade 4 Literacy Test was taken by 47,325 or 93.7% of the age cohort. Of the total 30,674 or 64.8% mastered all three subjects (17,926 females and 12,748 males) compared to 63.9% in 2005. A total of 6,626 students or 14% did not master any of the three sub-tests. Finally, the Grade Six

[2]Gross enrolment refers to the total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education in a given school-year. Gross Enrolment Ratio is widely used to show the general level of participation in a given level of education. It indicates the capacity of the education system to enrol students of a particular age-group. It is used as a substitute indicator to net enrolment ratio (NER) when data on enrolment by single years of age are not available

Achievement Test (GSAT) is the examination that primary school students take at the end of their primary education. A total of 53,017 (26,599 female) students sat the GSAT examinations. This accounted for 96.5% of the eligible age cohort. The mean percentage scores were Mathematics 53.0(57.8 in 2005); Language Arts 54.0 (53.9 in 2005); Social Studies 51.0 (56.9 in 2005); Science 55.0 (51.6 in 2005); and Communication Task 50.0 (40.0 in 2005). Overall girls outperformed boys in all subjects; and students from preparatory schools did better than those from public schools. Performance in the GSAT determines admission to the secondary school system. For example, students attaining high passes are usually awarded admission to some of the islands most prestigious Traditional High Schools; while students who do not achieve high pass marks are admitted to Primary and Junior High Schools, All-Age Schools or Non-traditional High Schools which are considered the less renowned schools.

Secondary School Education

According to the JSLC 2006, during the academic year 2005/06, two hundred and thirty six thousand four hundred and ten students (236,410) were enrolled in the secondary school system. An estimated 9,456 students were enrolled in private secondary schools. At the lower cycle (Grade 7-9), gross enrolment was 95.1%; while at the upper cycle (Grade10-11), the enrolment was 83.1%. Overall gross enrolment for Grades 7-11 was 90.4%. The net enrolment, on the other hand, was significantly lower. For example, Grade 7-9 was 71.1% (70.6% males and 71.6% females). The net enrolment[3] for Grades 10-11 was 54.2%. Females accounted for 50.9% of student enrolment. According to the ESSJ 2006, the average daily attendance rate was 73.6%. At a regional level, KMA maintained the national average (73.6%), while attendance was highest

[3] Net primary (should this be saying primary, since you are at the secondary level in your discussion) enrolment rate in primary education is the number of children of official primary school age who are enrolled in primary education as a percentage of the total children of the official school age population.

in Other Towns (83.4%) and lowest in Rural Areas (70.4%). This result was consistent with the levels in the primary school. There were 12,656 teachers employed in 590 public secondary schools. Of this total, 82.3% were trained, 46.9% were college trained and 35.4 were trained university graduates. Like the primary system, female teachers dominated the sector, accounting for 68.5% of teachers employed in the system. The average teacher to pupil ratio was 1:18.

The academic achievement at the secondary level is assessed by terminal examinations- the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) both administered by the Caribbean Examination Council. These exams are the main indicators of the quality of the output from the secondary school system. The performance in these terminal examinations also provides an indication of the quality of students going on to tertiary level programmes. Four or more passes at Grades I-III, including Mathematics and English Language, represent an acceptable minimum qualification for entry into Teacher's Colleges and Multi-disciplinary College systems. The attainment of six or more subjects is the minimum requirement to pursue the Cambridge General Certificate Examination 'A' Level courses, CAPE and for matriculation to the three local universities.

Based on the Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions (2006), a total of 69,170 candidates (66.1 females) sat the CSEC examinations. Thirty thousand and sixty three candidates were from public school, representing 78.3% of the Grade 11 cohort (38,372). Among the public school candidates, there was a marginal improvement in performance compared with 2005 whereby 28.4% of those sitting or 8 531 students had five or more passes[22] (compared with 26.4% or 7 624 students in 2005). High performers with passes of eight subjects or more numbered 2 363 students or 7.8% compared with 6.8% or 1 971 students who achieved this level in 2005. The

[22] This does not necessarily include Mathematics and/or English

percentage of students with passes in 1-3 subjects was 40.6% compared with 41.1% in 2005. The proportion of candidates in the June 2006 sitting who did not pass any subject declined to 22.1% compared with 23.9% in 2005.

The performance of students in Maths and English continue to be poor. The pass rate in English Language was 50.1%, falling from a high of 60% in 2005. Mathematics pass rates declined to 35.7% down from 39.4% in 2005. Pass rates in Mathematics and English Language worsened across the school types. The highest pass rate for Mathematics was attained by the Traditional High Schools at 50% compared to 51% in 2005. Upgraded High Schools recorded passes of 16% and decline of 2% in 2005. The performance of the Technical High Schools also indicated a decline from 32% in 2005 to 22% in 2006. The pass rate in English Language also recorded declines across the school types.

Notwithstanding the achievements made in the education system, the current analysis of the performance indicators of the education system suggests that there are serious challenges affecting the quality of output in public institutions. This is evidenced in the graphic disparities between (i) average performance of students in different types of schools; (ii) the widening gap between the size of the eligible cohort and the number of students sitting and passing the CXC examinations over the past few years; (iii) the gender disparities in performance and achievement where girls, on average, consistently outperform boys, (iv) and the attainment of secondary education without educational qualification. These issues have been linked to a wide range of inefficiencies within the system and other external factors such as poverty which continue to impede one of the critical priorities of the systems: the achievement of equity by improving quality at the basic level which is accessed by the bulk of the population. For example:

1. unsatisfactory attendance below 80%;
2. poor performance in numeracy and literacy;
3. inadequate levels of student readiness for school;
4. lack of student motivation and poor attitude towards school; (v) lack of trained and qualified staff in school administration;
5. inadequate access to quality facilities;
6. inadequate space at the secondary level;
7. inadequate number of trained teachers at the pre-primary levels and in rural schools;
8. uneven delivery of educational goods and services;
9. inadequate parental support;
10. inability of parents to afford tuition fees and to support students; and
11. over-crowding in urban schools and the increased incidence of violence in schools.

Inequality, Poverty and Student Achievement

There is evidence to suggest that the poor performance of students described above is linked to inequality and poverty. According to a World Bank Report, *Jamaica: Road to Sustained Growth (2004)*, the above-mentioned problems stem, at least in part, from inequality and poverty. This may be linked to family environment, as well as the historical evolution of the school. The analysis from the report suggests that there are disparities with respect to the participation and performance of students from poor and rich households. In terms of enrolment, the analysis indicated that while enrolment ratios of the richest and poorest quintiles start out at the same levels, with increasing age, enrolment of the poor and of males suffers. By age 15 and

16, less than 80% of students from the poorest quintile remain in school, although all students from the top quintile continue with the schooling. By the ages 17 and 18, less than 30% of students from the poorest quintile remain in school, while even in the top quintile, less than 80% stay enrolled. Although males and females start out equally in enrolment in basic education, a disproportionately high number of males drop out after grade 9, so that by the time of tertiary education, females account for 66% of enrolment.

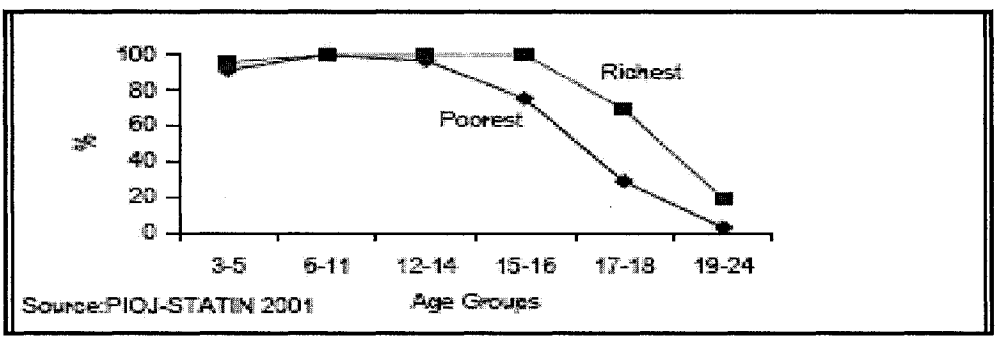

Figure 2. **School enrolment by age and consumption quintile (Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions, 2001).**

Additionally, with respect to enrolment by school type and consumption quintile as shown in Figure 2, the analysis suggests that 43% of students in All-Age schools in 2000 were from the poorest quintile, while over half of the students in the Traditional High Schools were from the top two quintiles. Given that All-Age schools are largely in the rural areas, and do not go beyond Grade 9, about 60% of the "out of school" is from population in rural areas, which also partly explain why poverty is much higher in rural areas. In tertiary education, 77% of students were from the top quintile, and 91% from the top two quintiles, but none are from the poorest quintile.

	Q1 (poorest)	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5 (richest)	Total
All-age (Gr. 7-9)	43	30	18	6	3	100
P&JH (Gr. 7-9)	22	16	19	33	10	100
Comprehensive (Gr. 7-11)	18	24	27	18	13	100
Secondary Highs (Gr. 7-13)	13	17	20	25	26	100
Technical Highs (Gr. 7-11/13)	11	20	15	31	23	100
Voc./ Agricultural (Gr. 7-11)	11	12	39	27	11	100
Adult/Night	12	0	14	24	51	100
Tertiary	0	2	7	14	77	100

Figure 3. **Enrolment by school types in secondary and tertiary education by quintile (Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions, 2001).**

Moreover, in Figure 3, the analysis also suggests under-achieving students tend to lag further as they move into higher grades and the variability in pass rates across different school types is large. For example:

1. in the Junior High School Certificate Examination, the students in Primary and Junior High Schools and former Comprehensive High Schools scored lower than average than the Traditional High Schools in Mathematics and Language;
2. less than half of the students in the former Comprehensive High Schools participate in the CXC examinations which is the key exam for admission to tertiary education and employment; and
3. the academically oriented High Schools (Traditional High Schools) employ a higher proportion of university-trained teachers, as compared to untrained or college trained teachers who are concentrated in the rural communities.

As a consequence, it remains evident that poor students face multiple disadvantages when compared with richer students who receive better quality education because they can afford to

attend preparatory schools. As they are better prepared they tend to achieve higher scores which allow them to be placed in the selected Traditional High Schools. Such tracking of students into different types of secondary schools of very uneven quality is widespread. It is strongly argued that poor school quality and a disadvantaged home environment are mutually reinforcing. Many poor students come from unstable homes which are exacerbated by migration, resulting in children being left behind. Many fathers are in homes irregularly and the absence of a male role model adversely affects the development of the adolescent boys, contributing to lower achievement and early drop-out. In this regard, low achievement has a high correlation with educational aspirations, absenteeism, the risk of drop out and delinquent behaviour; in the short term, poorer children are at higher risk to becoming unemployed and unproductive, while in the long term, this results in the perpetuation of the cycle of poverty.

Teacher Complement

Based on the Jamaica Education Statistics (2006-2007) published by the Ministry of Education, it was estimated that there were more than 24,622 teachers employed in the 1095 public institutions. There were more female teachers in the system, especially at the primary level where they represented 89% of the teaching complement. With respect to the qualification of the teachers, 83% were college trained and the remaining 17 % were university trained. Currently, there is no policy stipulating the continued professional development of teachers once they have received their college training.

The Transformation of the Jamaica System of Education

As stated earlier, in 2001, the Government of Jamaica through the *White Paper on Education (2001)*, explicitly enunciated its policy direction for the system of education with the

strategic priorities and targets to be achieved. In 2003, the Government was faced with harsh reality: the education system was in crisis and needed urgent attention. In an unscientific review of the two major newspapers reports, it was highly noticeable that education drew much attention. The newspaper headlines - "Deep Crisis in Education;" "School Violence Worsening;" Disappointing CXC Results;" Student Failure Rate At Grade One Alarming;" The Nations Schools in Deep Trouble;" Revolution Needed in Education;" "Dreams for a Better Education System for Our Children" - reflected the social disquiet at the state of the education system. In response to the social outcry, a Task Force on Education Reform was established. The goal of this 14 member Task Force was to prepare an action plan consistent with the vision for the creation of a world class education system which will generate the human capital and commensurate skills necessary for Jamaica to compete in the global economy (Education Task Force Report 2004, p. 5).

A situational analysis was conducted by the Task Force. It indicated the successes and also challenges faced by the education system. Four broad areas were identified in need of urgent attention. These areas included:

1. governance and management of the education system;
2. curriculum, teaching and learning support;
3. full participation of stakeholders in the education system; and
4. financing of the education system.

A number of recommendations and implementation plans were devised for the short, medium and long term. Funding in the amount of $J5 billion was secured to implement the recommendations of the report. Additionally, an Education Transformation Team was

established in the Ministry of Education and Youth to manage and co-ordinate the process of transformation. A number of work-streams were established to facilitate the transformation process. These work streams included:

1. modernization of administration,
2. infrastructure and facilities,
3. school leadership and management,
4. curriculum, learning and teaching,
5. behaviour and community, and
6. communication and stakeholder involvement.

To date, the Education Transformation Team has undertaken a number of activities. One of the most significant steps has been the establishment of the National Parent Teachers' Association of Jamaica (NPTAJA). The NPTAJA was established primarily to promote and encourage the involvement of parents in the education of their children and also the involvement of the community in the life of the school. This has been achieved through:

1. the: revitalization of PTA groups across the island;
2. institutional strengthening and building of the capacity of the local PTAs;
3. building better parent-teacher relationships and promoting the importance of parents in the education of their children through public education campaigns and an annual NPTAJA conference.

Summary

The chapter has established that notwithstanding the significant achievements of the system of education, challenges with respect to management, inadequate funding, system wide inefficiencies and poor student participation and performance, especially among boys and the poor, still remain. Some of these features of the system have been linked to the development of the education system. As we have observed the Jamaican system of education, since its inception was built on a policy of inequity, resulting in the development of a two tiered system of education that reflected the divisive nature of the society. Throughout the years of its development, the iniquitous nature of the public education system has become institutionalized. Consequent upon this, there now exists the "traditional" or private schools and "non-traditional" or public school types and the widening disparities with respect to school participation and performance resulting in the unevenness in the delivery of quality education throughout the system of education.

Using a sociological framework, the chapter also focused its attention on the experience of parental involvement in education in Jamaica and the factors that influenced variation in involvement. In doing, the history and the role of social class in education were highlighted as an inherent characteristics feature of the system. As a direct result, social class in education has contributed to variations in the nature, quality and outcomes of parental involvement. However, as we have observed poverty created challenges for families to adequately provide for their children so that they can make the best of their opportunity to learn. This was most evident among female-headed households with low educational attainment and limited earning potential. Poverty has impacted most profoundly the participation of students from poor backgrounds in schooling and their poor performance in school. Additionally, poverty has significantly impacted

on the capacity of parents to participate in the education of their children. Unfortunately, for these students, they are at higher risk of educational failure because of their limited development and parental support.

The current education reform and transformation process is mandated to facilitate an equitable and quality system of education. Among the strategic interventions is the involvement of parents in the education of their children.

The following chapter explores the wealth of literature on parental involvement in education.

Chapter Four:
Literature Review

> Young trees will grow healthy when they develop within an environment characterized by plant, animal diversity, healthy soil, and nutrients from the sun and clean precipitation and air. Each part of the ecosystem has a vital role to play, and each is dependent on the other parts for its health. This is also true for our youth: it takes healthy schools, families and communities to help ensure youth success. Weakness in any part of the system puts our youth at risk. Each part requires the support and collaboration of the others to be effective. (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2004)

Introduction

Parental Involvement in Education: Definition and Dimensions

The term parental involvement stirs up different images in the minds of different people. However, according to Ford and Amaral (2006), in their review of the literature on parental involvement, there are some common elements that are considered fundamental to defining and understanding parental involvement. These common elements include:

1. parental involvement is a complex issue with multiple dimensions that include both parents and school behaviours.

2. parental involvement exists on a continuum from school-centered activities to home-centered activities.

3. the philosophy of parental involvement entails parents, educators, and community working towards a goal of optimal education and development of students with shared responsibility for student outcomes. (p. 3)

Generally speaking, parental involvement may be defined as a "multi-dimensional construct that involves the participation of parents in both home and school-based activities that are designed to

promote optimal development. Parental involvement does not only involve behaviour, but also includes attitudes about involvement" (Ford & Amaral, 2006, p. 2), for example, reviewing the child's home work and monitoring the child's progress, helping with home work, discussing school events or subject issues with the child, providing enriching activities pertinent to school success and communicating with the teacher. In addition, home-based involvement is complemented by school-based involvement, which may focus on activities such as volunteering at school, coming to school for scheduled conferences or informal conversations with the school administrator and/or teacher, attending PTA meetings and other events at the school and serving on parent-teacher advisory groups. Epstein (1984) has developed a widely used typology which accounts for the different types of parental involvement which include:

Epstein's Six Typologies of Parental Involvement:

1. *Type I: Parenting:* Assist parents with parenting and child-rearing skills, family support, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions to support learning at each age and grade level. Assist schools to understand families.

2. *Type II: Communicating*: Communicate with families about school programs and student progress with school-to-home and home-to-school communication.

3. *Type III: Volunteering*: Improve recruitment training, work and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school or in other locations to support students and programmes.

4. *Type IV: Learning at Home:* Involve families with their children in academic learning activities at home, including homework and other curricular linked activities and decisions.

5. *Type V: Decision-making:* Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through PTA committees, councils, and other parent activities.

6. *Type VI: Collaboration with Community:* Co-ordinate the work and resources of the community businesses, agencies, cultural and civic organization, colleges or universities to strengthen school programmes, family practices, and student learning and development. Also provide services to the community. (Epstein, 1992, p. 703)

However, in their observation of the growing body of parental involvement research, Fan and Chen (2001) have noted:

> despite its intuitive meaning, the operational use of parental involvement has not been clear and consistent. This has, to a large extent, influenced the fragmented nature of the limited empirical research in this area which, before now, was being conducted without the benefits of a guiding theoretical framework. (pp. 2-3)

Nevertheless, within the last two decades there has been a thrust towards developing a working definition of parental involvement and a theoretical framework to support empirical research. Two widely recognized models have emerged. They are Epstein's Typology (1995) and the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of Parental Involvement (1997, 2005). The development of these theoretical constructs has given rise to a growing consensus that parental involvement can no longer be conceived as a unitary phenomenon (as cited in Grolnick 1997, p. 538); rather the

research underscores that a broad and multidimensional perspective is needed to include emotional and personal aspects, in addition, to school-like activities.

There has been a stream of research that consistently highlights that the complex and powerful influence of the home, school and community has a significant impact on the educational achievements of young children, and strongly suggests the need for parents and teachers to work together (Caddell, 1996, p. 2). Why is there no sustained focus on the family and community involvement in education? The answer lies in the wealth of evidence emerging from multi-disciplinary schools of thought which strongly suggests that one of the most important factors that has served to emphasize the vital contribution that parents make has been the significant change in our understanding of young children as learners. According to Hughes, "child psychology studies, documenting the significance of a child's early years for future development have increasingly emphasized the wide diversity of experience, knowledge and understanding that children gain prior to coming to school. This perspective viewed children as "active learners" whose learning is "embedded in the network of people and their purposes and interests that make up the community" (as cited in Caddell, 1996, p. 2). Thereby, this body of evidence is recognizing the importance of children's experience beyond the school boundary and the powerful influence of the home and family on children's development and learning. The potential of all homes, even those in extreme poverty, as a context for learning is increasingly highlighted (Caddell, 1996, p. 3). The development of a child's future understanding and knowledge will depend on the educator building on these existing experiences.

Drawing on this, educator and pioneering psychiatrist at Yale's Child Development Centre James Comer M.D. developed a comprehensive school reform model known as the Comer Process or Yale School Development Programme (SDP) which is built on the notion:

children who develop well also learn well. The SDP is an educational change initiative based on the principles of child, adolescent and adult development and emphasizes the notion that healthy child development is the keystone to academic achievement and life success. Comer uses a metaphor of six developmental pathways to characterize the lines along which children and adolescent mature- (a) cognitive; (b) physical; (c) psychological; (d) language; (e) social; and (f) ethical. The SDP believes that:

1. Child rearing, child development and learning are all inextricably linked;

2. Development starts early and must be a continuous process;

3. Children's most meaningful learning occurs through positive and supportive relationships with caring and nurturing adults;

4. Parents are children's first teachers; and

5. All parents, staff and community members, regardless of social or economic status, have an important contribution to make in improving student's education and their preparation for life; therefore, adults must interact collaboratively and sensitively with one another to bring out the best in children. (Yale School Development Programme, 2004, p. 16)

The SDP, which started in 1968, is recognized as the forerunner of all model school reform efforts in the US. The school community – teachers administrators, parents and other concerned adults – are mobilized around this philosophy and encouraged to support the personal, social and academic growth of students.

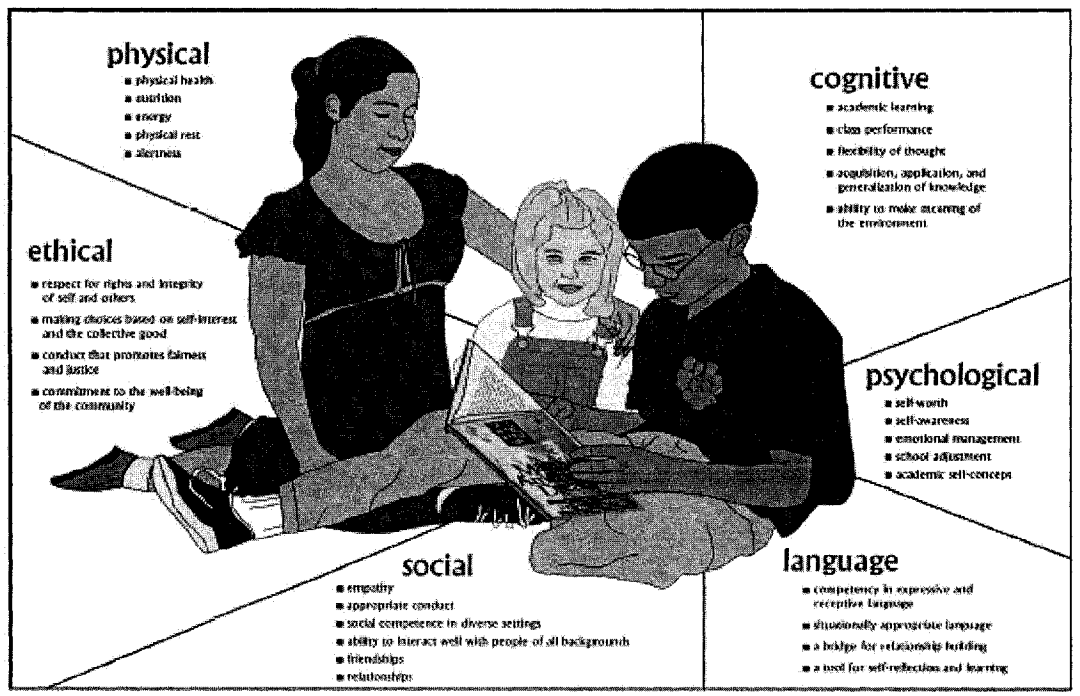

Figure 4. **Six development pathways critical to child development and learning developed by Dr. James Comer.**

The SDP process resonates with the African proverb that "it takes a village to raise a child" and emphasizes a critically important fact that children thrive and depend on the critical roles and meaningful engagement of the primary socializing agents –the home and the school- for its healthy development.

An Historical Overview of Parental Involvement in Education

The concept of the importance of parental involvement is not new. Even before recorded history, and throughout the historic periods of the Greeks and Romans, there was a recognition of the critical role of the parent (mother) or family care in the development of the child. There is evidence to indicate that parents were nurturers and educators of their children through modeling, care giving, and guidance. They (parents) imparted skills, mores, and values of the

times, influenced by their experiences, the environment in which they lived and their cultures. There was no education other than that offered by the extended family and clan in primitive cultures (Berger, 1991, p. 209).

The period of The Middles Ages established an environment that shaped the function of the home and school as it related to the education and socialization of the child. According to Berger (1991):

> as the Roman Empire declined, a feudal system emerged that provided a protective and restrictive social order. The Middle Ages (400-1400 A.D) was a period of family survival; formal education was kept alive by the church. Basic skills were taught by the parents as children worked and participated in everyday life. (p. 210)

Nonetheless, as knowledge increased about parenting, parenting responsibilities, child development and education, due to the influence of theorists such as Comenius, Aristotle, Locke, Rosseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel and their contemporaries, innovative thinking about parenting education programmes and the establishment of kindergartens became current. Rosseau (1712-1778) and Pestalozzi (1747-1827) in their respective writings, *Emile* and *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children*, advocated the need for meaningful parental involvement as they recognized that children were special, and, like plants, needed to be properly cultivated by their mothers. However, despite the obvious gender bias, the role of the mother was of particular significance. As Pestalozzi (1951) stated, "the mother is the first to nourish her child's body, so should she, by God's order, be the first to nourish his mind" (as cited in Berger, 1991, p. 211).

"Parental involvement and parent education today have their roots in parent involvement and education of yesterday" (Berger, 1991, p. 210). However, parental involvement still faces a number of challenges. Of particular concern are tensions that exist within schools as they seek to operationalize parental involvement. Hence, issues such as misperceptions about the parent-

teacher relationship, defining developmentally appropriate strategies for involvement at home and school-based activities, promoting involvement of "hard to reach parents", and addressing the impact of competing family responsibilities on the nature and quality of parental involvement, among others, impact on currency of the practice as a critical element of school effectiveness, the success of parental involvement interventions, and by extension, the parent-teacher relationship. I would like to conclude that these issues may be responsible for the lack luster approach taken to parental involvement in many of our schools which, in turn, has led to the under-utilization of parental involvement. But, if we are to benefit from the parent-teacher relationship and parental involvement in a meaningful way, the next critical step in the process is to focus our attention on the matter in a strategic and systematic way in our schools.

The Parent-Teacher Relationship and Parental Involvement: A Focus on Benefits and Hindrances

> When schools regard their relationship with families as a partnership in which school and home share the responsibility for children's learning, the result is an increase in the levels of parental involvement as well as the support that families demonstrate for schools...Perhaps most important is that when responsibility for children's learning is shared by home, school and community, children have more opportunities for meaningful, engaged learning. (Caplan, 1988, p. 1)

There is overwhelming evidence that suggests the specific benefits associated with parental involvement, particularly, student success demonstrated across a wide range of age levels and populations, particularly those at risk of failure. In addition, parents, schools and communities also benefit. According to Ford and Amaral (2006), Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green, and Wilkins (2005), and Grolnick and Slowiaczek, (1994) the benefits for students include:

1. Higher academic achievement, regardless of socio-economic status, ethnic/racial background or parental educational level;
2. Better student attendance and lower retention rates in grade, lower drop-out rates, higher on time High School graduation rates, and higher rates of participation in advanced courses;
3. Higher rates of homework completion;
4. Improved student motivation;
5. Improved social functioning; and
6. Increased self-esteem and greater perceived competence.

But how does parental involvement influence student success? The answer may lie in compelling evidence emerging from the field of psychology and the new body of knowledge surrounding the notion of the individual as "active learner."

According to Kelly (1974), from the perspective of psycho-social development of children, parental involvement plays an integral role in building and nurturing the basic elements of positive emotional child development necessary to influence a child's attitude and behaviour, which in turn contribute to the overall capacity to succeed in school and life. Kelly (1974) has postulated:

> a child's basic education took place in the home. Their basic values, perception of self and others are primarily formed in the home. Thus without the parent, the values and their behavioural expressions can only be slightly modified, for what is taught in schools become meaningful only when parents are interested in the child's school learning. (p. 14)

The home environment is a powerful educational variable because of both the material resources it offers and the parental expectations that shape the child's attitudes and beliefs about learning (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986, p. 348).

Grolnick and Slowkiaczek (1994) in their analysis have argued that parents in their involvement in the education of their children make certain resources available. According to the researchers, three dimensions of parental involvement are observed. First by the parent's overt *behaviour* such as their involvement in school-based activities, "if the child experiences this behaviour, the parent may be modeling the importance of school. Furthermore, such behaviour may provide the parent with information so that they can help their child manage his or her school. In addition, if the teacher sees the parent involved, she may be the conduit for effects. For example, she may attend to the child more" (p. 173).

Second, according to the Grolnick & Slowkiaczek, 1994, parent's *personal* involvement may influence the child's "affective experience" and convey a "positive feeling towards school and the child".

Finally, a third category of involvement is the *cogntive-intellectual* aspect which speaks to the "cognitively stimulating activities and materials that contribute to the child cognitive development". But in order for the parent's resource to have influence, the child must be subjected to these domains – behaviour, personal and cognitive involvement- through the child's "phenomenological experience." This view highlights the "child" as an "active processor of information, rather than a passive recipient of inputs" (Grolnick & Slowkiaczek, 1994, p. 239).

Furthermore, Hoover et al, have provided more insight into the process of interaction between the parent and child and suggests how the two constructs inform and interact with each

other. A student's motivational, cognitive, social and behaviour attributes are particularly important because these are susceptible to direct parent and teacher influence.

Drawing upon the findings and implications of the Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler study of the parental involvement model, Hoover-Dempsey, Walker et al. (2005) emphasize that positive parental involvement, in its dynamic forms, has an psychological effect on student attitude and behaviour. Three areas critical to motivation and behaviour were identified:

1. The student's sense of competence and efficacy for learning – *"I can do this work;"*
2. The student's mastery orientation; perceptions of personal control over school outcome self regulatory -*"I know how to do this work;"*; and
3. as well as attentive, adaptive school behaviour, engagement in schoolwork, and beliefs about the importance of education – *"I want to do this work;"*(p.107).

In addition to enhancing student outcomes, effective parental engagement in children's education also benefits parents and teachers. Amaral and Ford (2006) also have cited some of the benefits for parents which include:

1. Increased understanding of the school;
2. Increased interaction between parent and child (e.g. improved communication about schoolwork);
3. Parenting style may change in a positive way;
4. Increased access to needed services like health and social services; and
5. Increased level of self-esteem, self-efficacy and empowerment.(p. 7)

The overall school system has also been noted to benefit from meaningful parental involvement, particularly the teaching and learning process. This has led to parental involvement being identified as one of the characteristics of effective schools. Bronfenbrenner (1986) in his observation has conceptualized the school as an ecology in which the home plays a critical role. According to the theorist, the ecological structure of the educational environment contends that the home-school relationship is a critical component of the mesosystem[4] that impacts a teacher's perceived sense of parent efficacy - attitude, expectation, enthusiasm and skill- which can significantly influence a student's level of achievement. Mitra (2006) and Ford and Amaral (2006) have highlighted some of the benefits of parental involvement for teachers. The benefits include:

1. increased positive attitudes about teaching and higher levels of teacher effectiveness;
2. relatively high levels of teaching efficacy and support from parents;
3. improved staff relations;
4. perceived by parents as better teachers which may lead to better teacher morale;
5. less stereotyping of families;
6. sustained school reform efforts including increased accountability and school improvement plans; and
7. mediation of tensions between school and community.

4 Mesosystem is one of the components of the ecological structure of education that is comprised of the inter-relations among the teacher's major settings. For further insight into Bronfenbrenner's analysis, see Ashton, P. T., & Webb, R. B. (1986). *Making a difference: Teacher's perceived sense of parent efficacy and student achievement* [Research on Teaching Monograph].

Finally, parental involvement benefits also extend to the wider school community. Ford and Amaral (2006) also have highlighted the following:

1. Increased community access to school resources and facilities

2. Improved quality of life in the neighbourhood;

3. Skills increase that can be transferred to address community needs and an increased exchange of physical and human resources among organizations;

4. Increased connections that lead to community development that includes attention to economic support, physical redevelopment and community development; and

5. The nature of the local power and politics change as students, teachers and parents engage in learning activities that are relevant to local issues. (p.8)

Studies conducted by the North Central Education Research Laboratory (NCREL) on the role of parental involvement in school improvement supported Bronfenbrenner's observation. The main point highlighted from the NCREL studies is that parental involvement in schooling is vital to establish a supportive learning environment for students, teachers and parents. Parental involvement brings about improved teaching by generating a positive attitude among teachers and raising their self-esteem; teachers feel respected [and supported] by parents who are involved. Improved teaching leads to greater academic achievement by students. Academic achievement and student success lead to a positive school climate (Casey Family Programme, 2000, p. 5).

Therefore, Hester (1989) makes it clear that the home school relationship which emphasizes active and continuous parental involvement must be supported because:

1. parents want more responsible roles in the education of their children;
2. education is a shared responsibility and the school must reach out to parents to establish partnerships; and
3. the full potential of our children will not be realized unless parents are actively involved (p. 23).

An important point to make is, in order to experience the benefits of an effective and sustained parental involvement, Cotton (1989) has emphasized that once a decision to participate is determined, the next step is to consider the nature and quality of parental involvement strategies. "The nature of parental involvement (defined as the type of parental involvement practice employed) and its quality (the level or frequency of parental involvement) can significantly enhance the achievement effects for all types of parental involvement and types and ages of students" (p. 26). Therefore, the characteristic of an effective and sustained model of parental involvement in education is one that promotes:

1. early intervention of parental involvement in the child's development;
2. active and direct engagement with the children in their learning activities;
3. a variety of parental involvement modalities; and adequate parental education and training.

In summary, recognition of the importance and benefits of parental involvement in education is gaining momentum. It is widely accepted that parental involvement has the ability to

influence positively the educational and socializing task of schooling. It has been argued that if the positive gains of parental involvement in education are to be realized, sustained and effective, a partnership between the parents and teacher must be developed and maintained. But at the same time, it must be carefully noted that while it is agreed that parental involvement is critical in a child's overall development, parental involvement on its own cannot ensure a student's academic achievement. In other words, parental involvement in education is necessary, but it is not a sufficient factor to facilitate qualitative school improvement. Parental involvement must be viewed, in addition to other essential components of the school's improvement process, as one of the critical inputs.

Parental Involvement in Education: A Critique

Notwithstanding the many benefits of parental involvement and its direct and indirect influence on student achievement and quality outcomes, there is a school of thought that argues that because of the uni-dimensional nature of current models of parental involvement many parents, especially from low SES are marginalized and further disenfranchised from the schooling process. According to Standing (1999), her research in the experience of lone mothers involvement in the education of their children revealed that while the research on parental involvement is vast, the literature continues to define parental involvement from the perspectives of the school and policy makers; however, "the voices and experiences of mothers and children are notably silent or become homogenized into those of "parents", a category seemingly free from class, gender, ethnicity and culture" (p. 71).

Second, Powell (1991) has highlighted as a result of lack of awareness of schools about the changing demographic nature of the family and the attendant challenges, the policy and

programmatic responses to the evolving needs of the school population has been limited and now poses a challenge to how parental involvement policy and programmes are operationalized within the context of the current schools system. He argues that schools are well positioned to provide the assistance to schools to help their children succeed. However, there is a caution. The school in it contemplation of new or expanding role to support families must consider: (i) the changing family demographics and characteristics; (ii) implications for conventional home-school boundaries of an expanded school role in providing family support services; (iii) the technical expertise of the schools in relation to programmatic approaches to supporting families; (iv) trade-offs involved in providing family-oriented programmes to all families versus targeted populations; and (v) the location of family support programmes as a peripheral or core element of school operations.

The argument can be made that meaningful and engaging parental involvement programme is a consequence of deliberate action that is centered around and guided by the school fundamental interest in improving the academic performance of its students. Therefore, the participation of parents is a necessity. However, schools must be mindful that parental involvement must be defined from the perspectives of the parents and operationalized within the context of the school system. There are risk and opportunities embedded within this framework. As Powell (1991) concludes:

> such as re-thinking carries both an element of risk and opportunities for growth. The risk is to set forth unreasonable expectations for the role of schools as family support systems. Put simply, schools are not equipped to function as a modern-day version of the traditional extended family. The opportunity for growth is to assume that the resources of the school can be recast and applied in ways that foster mutually supportive connections with families and communities. (p. 317)

Barriers to Parental Involvement in Education

> Barriers can originate from beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of teachers and administrators. Lack of commitment to parental involvement, confusion about the role of teachers, concerns about territory and turf, doubts about being able to work with at-risk parents, have all been found to be barriers for schools and parents. Other barriers include low teacher expectations for at-risk children, schools assuming passive roles, schools not helping parents feel welcome and communication between parents and the school that focus on the negative. (Jesse, 1997, p. 4)

The February 2005 issue of Time Magazine was dedicated to the parent-teacher relationship. In the exploration of the subject-matter, Gibb (2005) provided needed insight into the teacher's perspective of parental involvement. According to a Metlife Survey of the American Teacher that was made available to Time Magazine, the following were noted:

1. 90% of new teachers agreed that involving parents in their children's education is a priority at their school, but only 25% described their experience working with parents as "very satisfying";
2. When asked to choose the biggest challenge they faced, 31% of them cited involving parents and communication with them as their top choice; and
3. 73% of new teachers said too many parents treat schools and teachers as adversaries.

The article goes on to point out that parent management was a bigger struggle than finding enough funding or maintaining discipline or enduring the toils of testing. It is primarily for this reason that the Consortium for Policy Research in Education and the Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy believe that 40% to 50% of teachers leave the profession within five years (Gibb, 2005, p. 42).

Parents and teachers will agree that there are a number of issues which act as barriers to the effective involvement of parents in the education of their children. Some of these barriers include differences between parents' and schools' goals for children's education, language differences, and varied structural constraints (e.g., school accessibility limited to workday hours). Parents may also experience barriers due to intervening family commitments (e.g., infant or elder care) or practical and personal issues (e.g., access to transportation, limited skills for helping in specific learning areas, a legacy of weak efficacy for school tasks derived from personal educational history). Liontis (1992) also has observed that parents, in their interaction with the school, may experience feelings of inadequacy, failure, poor self-worth, suspicion, or anger, which in turn may create artificial barriers between the home and the school. Some parents have a "leave it to the school" attitude; others have "logistical problems and some have economic, emotional or time constraints to handle" (as cited in Jesse, 1997, p. 2).

From the teacher's perspective, Flaugher (2006) has argued that teachers, too, may contend with psychological and cultural barriers to parental involvement. He has stated, "perceived challenges to professional prerogatives (Sexton, 1967), different worldviews of parents and professional educators (Lightfoot, 1978) and sociological ambivalence due to structural competition (Merton, 1976) are sources of educators' resistance to outsider participation" (p. 250). Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest cultural and social class barriers to parental involvement. Mitra has highlighted that schools' expectation of "ideal parental involvement" can clash with the values in the home of some students and cause great conflict and tension among families. Schools base their culture on a middle class value system that can be culturally incongruent with working class and ethnic beliefs (p. 457). Flaugher (2006) has supported this observation by Mitra (2006) and has added that "educator's middle-class

definition of appropriate behaviour and communication are sources of self-fulfilling prophecies of the ineptitudes of lower socio-economic status parent" (p. 50).

From a pragmatic perspective, teachers may avoid involving parents because they lack practical support for the extra activities implied by active parental involvement programs. Teachers with limited experience or skills may reach out, only to give up, if initial efforts are not immediately successful. Experienced teachers may be reluctant to invite parents if negative encounters have cast a pall over the perceived likelihood of successful involvement. This may further complicate prospects for effective parental involvement, and teachers who feel uncertain of their skills in dealing with 'traditional' families may struggle even more as they consider trying to work productively with families perceived as 'different' from envisioned norms on a number of dimensions. Swap (1993) reiterates that lack of teacher training to work effectively with parents and the misperception of the parent-teacher relationship, as shared by parents and teachers, create an adversarial relationship between parents and teachers.

> Most teachers regard the school as "turf", not to be invaded by active groups of parents, who in their perception might seize control. In such an instance, the premise from which most schools operate is that of a 'Protective Model." Its aim is to protect schools from interference from parents. The relationship precipitated from this "Protective Model" is an adversarial parent-teacher relationship. Consequently, there is a lack of opportunities for open dialogue between parents and teachers. (p. 45)

Given these barriers to regular positive interactions between home and school, communications between teacher and parent may emerge primarily in situations motivated by dissatisfaction, frustration, mistrust or anger from one or both parties. Unfortunately, interactions in such cases may work to create further separation and distance between parents and teachers rather than effective parental involvement. This perpetuates a quandary: teachers may not know how to invite or sustain involvement efforts; parents whose involvement is not invited may

perceive intentional exclusion or low regard for their involvement. These tensions also have been exacerbated by the process of decentralization and implementation of local school-based management systems. Finally, from a management perspective, the lack of adequate planning and limited participation of stakeholders within the education process also have created barriers to involvement, especially where there was no general consensus or shared goal and understanding regarding parental involvement. According to Skau (1996), "without infrastructure or detailed plans, the down-loading of decisions to the school level has the potential to create tensions between the differing ideologies and expectations that individuals bring to the decision-making situation" (p. 35).

Methodological Challenges of Parental Involvement in Education Research

Finally, careful consideration must be given to the quality of the research methodology employed in parental involvement in education studies. Baker and Soden (1998) in their analysis of parental involvement research have observed that while there's growing support for policy direction of increased parental involvement, there is a "lack of scientific rigor in the research informing parental involvement practice and policy; resulting in a lack of confidence in their findings of the parental involvement research and has limited their accuracy and usefulness" (p. 24). Some of the highlighted methodological flaws identified include:

1. use of non-experimental design;
2. lack of isolation of parental effects;
3. inconsistency in the definition of parental involvement; and
4. non-objective measures of parental involvement.

Of course, the above-mentioned can have far-reaching implications for the direction of future parental involvement studies. Therefore, to safeguard the integrity of parental involvement research and the quality of the analysis derived, it is necessary that we are mindful of these methodological pitfalls.

Home-School Relationship in Jamaica

According to Leo-Rhynie (1993):

> while the home is the first learning environment, schools, churches and the wider society provide formal and informal education opportunities for the intellectual, physical and spiritual and emotional development of the child. Schools serve as an extension of the home in terms of their socializing function. They help the children engender academic competence, self-reliance, moral development, social skills, motivation and personality formation. (p. 9)

In Jamaica, education is held in high social regard because it is a means of social mobility, and most parents see it as a means of breaking the inter-generational cycle of poverty. However, despite this, Grant (1974) in his account of the nature and quality of the parent-teacher relationships in Jamaica highlighted a number of challenges which included the following:

1. Lack of understanding and experience:
    a. Not many teachers have the necessary training or experience to work with parents or the community
    b. Generally, the school personnel do not understand the structures and setting of the disadvantaged family and the educational implications of these conditions;
    c. Teachers and parents are not fully aware of the advantages of good home-school functional relationships.

2. Incongruity/conflicts:
    a. The role and function of the school and those of the parents and community need to be clearly defined, especially in small rural communities where political

influences play an important part in certain decisions. It is observed that the lower class parents are usually inhibited from greater participation in schools because they do not have a clear understanding of the school structure

b. The teacher sometimes is afraid of or wishes to avoid personality clashes with the elected leadership.

3. Aloofness of the school personnel:

   a. In many instances, the school personnel expect parents to come to the school; while not making any provisions for parents to become engaged.

   b. Experience has shown that schools going out to meet parents on their own ground, lay the best foundation for school-parents partnership or community involvement.

4. Attitude towards the poor:

   a. The patronizing attitude of the average school personnel towards the under-privileged parent is that they are too poor and ignorant and they cannot act without instruction

   b. The inflexibility with which schools operate hinders parent, school and community collaboration. The management structure facilitates control rather than service, and the interest is more maintaining the status quo, rather than a partnership operation. (as cited in Smikle, 2003, pp. 64-65)

A preliminary analysis of the current situation of parental involvement in Jamaica suggests that Grant's observation remains the same in many of our schools. But, recognizing the potential benefits of parental involvement and parent-teacher relationship, school administrators, teachers and parents have no option but to explore the factors limiting the realization of a vibrant and effective parent-teacher relationship within our schools. This process must begin with an honest assessment of the context in which the parent-teacher relationship and parental

involvement is situated. Also, in order to facilitate this meaningful and sustained transformation, the leadership of the school must engage itself with parents as partners working towards a shared understanding and goal.

Currently, there is an atmosphere of educational change and transformation that has been initiated through the Education Transformation and the establishment of the National Parent-Teachers' Association. These initiatives have placed significant focus on the need for increased involvement of parents in the education of their children. This context provides a promising vehicle to give prominence to the parent-teacher relationship and encourage effective parental involvement practices.

An Overview of Parental Involvement Studies in Jamaica

The Jamaican family has been the subject of extensive studies in Jamaica. These investigations generally focus on some of the critical issues, such as the structure, characteristics, parenting, the socio-economic conditions and their impact on the capacity of the family to function effectively. A literature review on parental involvement in education studies in Jamaica was conducted. It was revealed that parental involvement in the education of their children has not been comprehensively studied on its own. In most cases, the subject-matter was subsumed in studies and reports that were more focused on the Jamaican family or parenting. The earliest account of parental involvement studies in Jamaica was by Edward Seaga in 1955. The study entitled *Parent-Teacher Relationships in a Jamaican Village* was an outgrowth of his anthropological research on "Psycho-social Aspects of Development in the Child" in a rural Jamaican village. The study is an insightful account of a parent-teacher relation between parents of a rural village and teachers of a public elementary school and the consequent effect of this relationship on parental involvement in the education of their children. Using his anthropological

lens, the author highlighted a school-focused approach to the parent-teacher relationship and the social factors that influence the relationship. This means that the school and teachers are viewed by the parents as being solely responsible for the school success and disciplining of the child. On the other hand, the parent's role is to send the child to school. According to the author, this type of relationship facilitated a power relation and consequent struggle between the home and school. This context of the social environment resulted in limited parental involvement in school-based activities. Seaga's account of the school-focused approach to the parent-teacher relationship and consequent effect on parental involvement in his study can still be seen in many of our schools to some extent today.

Second, Gordon-Muir's (1984) study, entitled *Attitudes of Teachers and Parents to Parental Involvement in the Jamaican School System*, highlighted that parents and teachers had positive attitudes towards parental involvement; however, a number of institutional and home-based barriers existed that mitigated against effective and meaningful involvement. She identified the following:

1. the known and unknown implications of having parents in the classroom;
2. the impact of parents on classroom dynamics;
3. competing responsibilities at home which limits participation in school-based activities;
4. the impact of the socio-economic conditions; and
5. the distance, especially for parents who reside in rural areas.

Munroe (2001) in her study, *Community Participation in Educational Reforms: A Jamaican Experience*, explored the issue of community and parental involvement in the reform

of the Jamaican System of Education (R.O.S.E). Careful emphasis was focused on the role of community participation and parental involvement in school-based management. The measures or strategies to encourage parental involvement within this context of educational reform were also investigated; along with the challenges hindering the successful participation of the stakeholders in the education process.

A general conclusion emerging from these studies is that parents and teachers recognize the important role of parents in the education process. However, there are a number of challenges with defining and operationalizing parental involvement within the schools. These include: the class conflicts that exist between the school and those who they serve, misperception about parent involvement in school-based and possible implications that may disrupt the learning process, and competing family responsibilities. These factors have created formidable barriers that limit the ability and capacity of parents to become effectively involved in the education of their children. These studies are important because they have contributed knowledge towards a better understanding of the context of parental involvement in education in Jamaica. From the limited number of studies identified, they also highlight a knowledge gap that exists in this area. Given the wealth of knowledge emerging within the last decade about the benefits of an effective and meaningful parental involvement and its influence on quality school outcomes, it is paramount that more in depth studies into parental involvement are conducted so as to explore the context that facilitates engaging parental involvement and identify best practices that will be of benefit to parents, teachers and students.

Summary

The past decades have seen a wealth of studies which have highlighted the important role of parents in supporting the development and learning capacity of their children. The research

emerging also has indicated that parental involvement is beneficial, not just for students, but also for teachers and parents. Another significant development in the discourse of parental involvement in education has been a growing trend towards establishing a clearer definition and a theoretical framework for supporting empirical research into parental involvement and its influence on student achievement and quality outcomes. The chapter also highlighted some of the challenges impacting effective parental involvement practices from the perspectives of parents and teachers. They range from a lack of general knowledge of families and the contributions of family involvement in schools, lack of adequate teacher education and training for family involvement, the lack of skills to negotiate, collaborate and communicate with parents, to parental inadequacy and self-worth, misguided perceptions about the school and economic constraints. However, despite the evidence of tensions embedded within the home school relationship, there is overwhelming evidence to strongly suggest the need to address these complexities so that the benefits of the home-school relationship can be fully realized. According to Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, and Brissies (1992), given the critical importance of parental involvement, "avenues for productive interaction must be implemented if schools, families and communities are to be strengthened rather than weakened as effective contributors to the children's development" (p. 419).

The experience of parental involvement in education in Jamaica was explored and some of the featured characteristics of the experience were emphasized.

The next chapter examines the conceptual framework underpinning the research project and explored specific elements of the framework and their significance to understanding the experience of parental involvement in education in Jamaica.

Chapter 5:
Exploring Parental Involvement in Education:
A Conceptual Framework

Introduction

Education is a critically important process in the lives of many Jamaicans because it provides a means of improving their quality of life. Parents therefore have a high regard and expectation for the socializing and educative task of schooling. However, despite this fact, the involvement of parents in the education of their children has been described as being inadequate. Parental involvement practices are also not well documented. As a result, much of the literature on parental involvement and the theoretical construct to be tested in this study have been drawn from the North American experience. This study, therefore, presents an opportunity whereby a Jamaican experience of parental involvement may be constructed. It is hoped that once this model is constructed, schools will have a better understanding of the issues affecting parental involvement in the education of their children and be able to develop strategies that may influence changes in the levels of parental involvement in education.

There is a preponderance of studies that focus heavily on parental involvement as it relates to student outcomes, parental preference for and actual levels of involvement, teacher beliefs and practices that influence parental involvement, and the role of the school's administration and their practices. While these aspects of parental involvement studies have been significant in establishing a correlation between parental involvement and student outcomes, there is limited knowledge of factors that influence the basic decision-making process of parents to become involved in the education of their children. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) have strongly argued that this type of analysis that focuses on the context of parental involvement and

the fundamental process of parental involvement is critical because the personal construct variables that parents develop to assist them to determine the nature and quality of parental involvement. It is the position of this paper that understanding the psychological and social context of parental involvement and its influence on the process of parental involvement decision-making is important because it provides insight into the factors that motivate parental involvement. This insight puts schools in an advantageous position where they can influence meaningful and sustained parental involvement in all families. In addition, this research also gives parents an opportunity to understand their role, the processes engaged during their involvement and the consequent effect of their decision on their children's development and achievement.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of Parental Involvement (1995, 1997, 2005)

In response to this knowledge gap, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, drawing upon psychology and other disciplines, articulated the importance of parental involvement in the education of their children and its influence on student outcomes. The authors have argued that the decision to become involved in the education of their children does not occur by chance; but is as a result of processes and mechanisms which influence parental thinking, decision-making and behaviour. Using this knowledge, Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (1995, 1997) developed a theoretically grounded model of parental involvement construct that has identified the variables associated with parental involvement decision-making and illustrated the process of interaction between the variables and their influence on parental involvement decision-making and student achievement. However since then, consequent research by Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (2005), which was aimed at operationalizing the construct, has led to refinement and revision of the model. Figures 5 and 6 are illustrations of the two models. The refinement of the original is

highlighted. The model being used in this research is the revised model. A brief description of the revised model is presented.

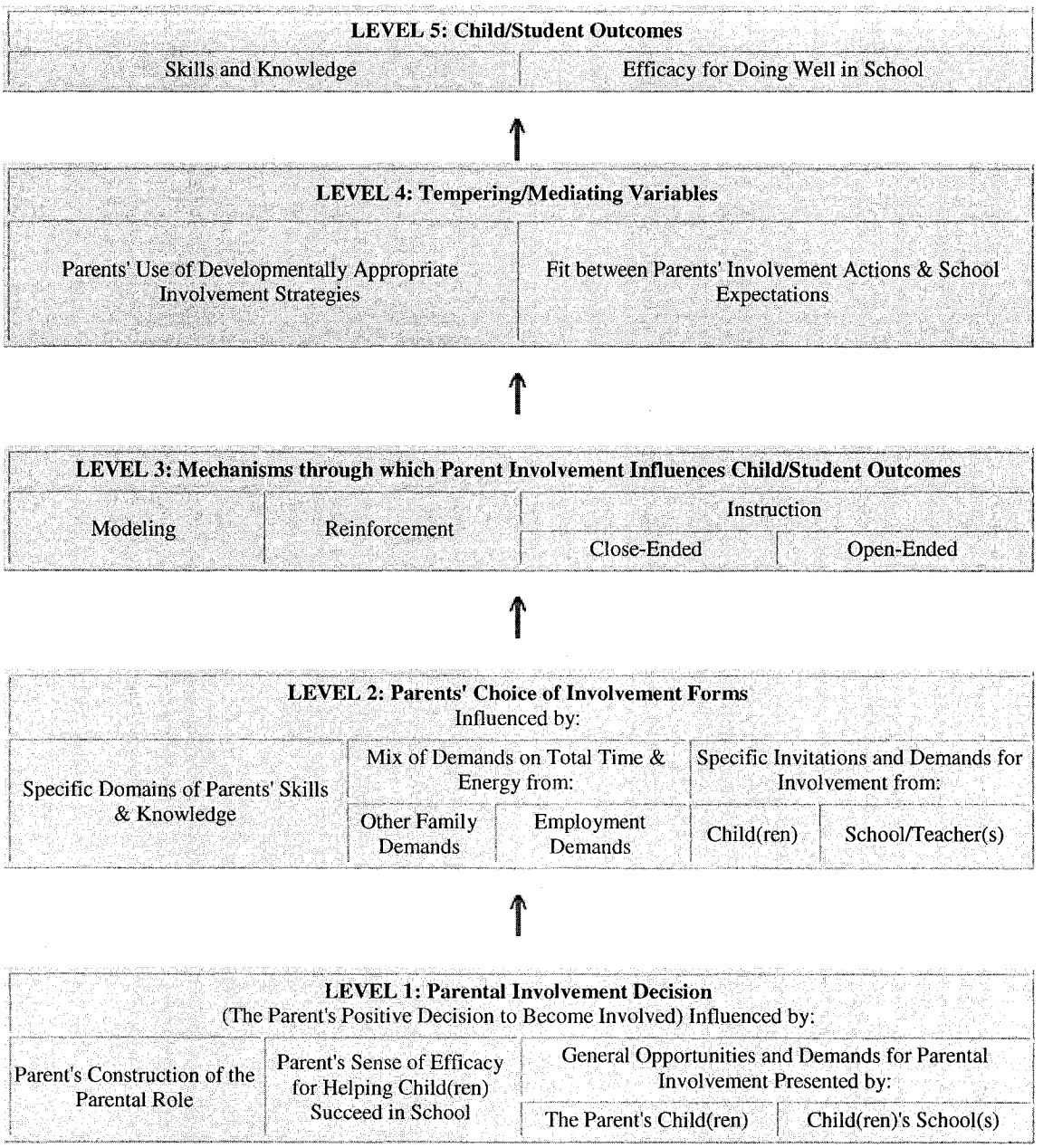

***Figure 5.*[5] Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (1995, 1997) original model of the parental involvement process.**

[5] Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., & Sandler, H. M. (1995). Parental Involvement in children's education: Why does it make a difference? *Teachers College Record, 97*, 310-331.
Hoover-Dempsey, K. V. & Sandler, H. M. (1995). Why do parents become involved in their children's education? *Review of Educational Research, 67*, 3-42.

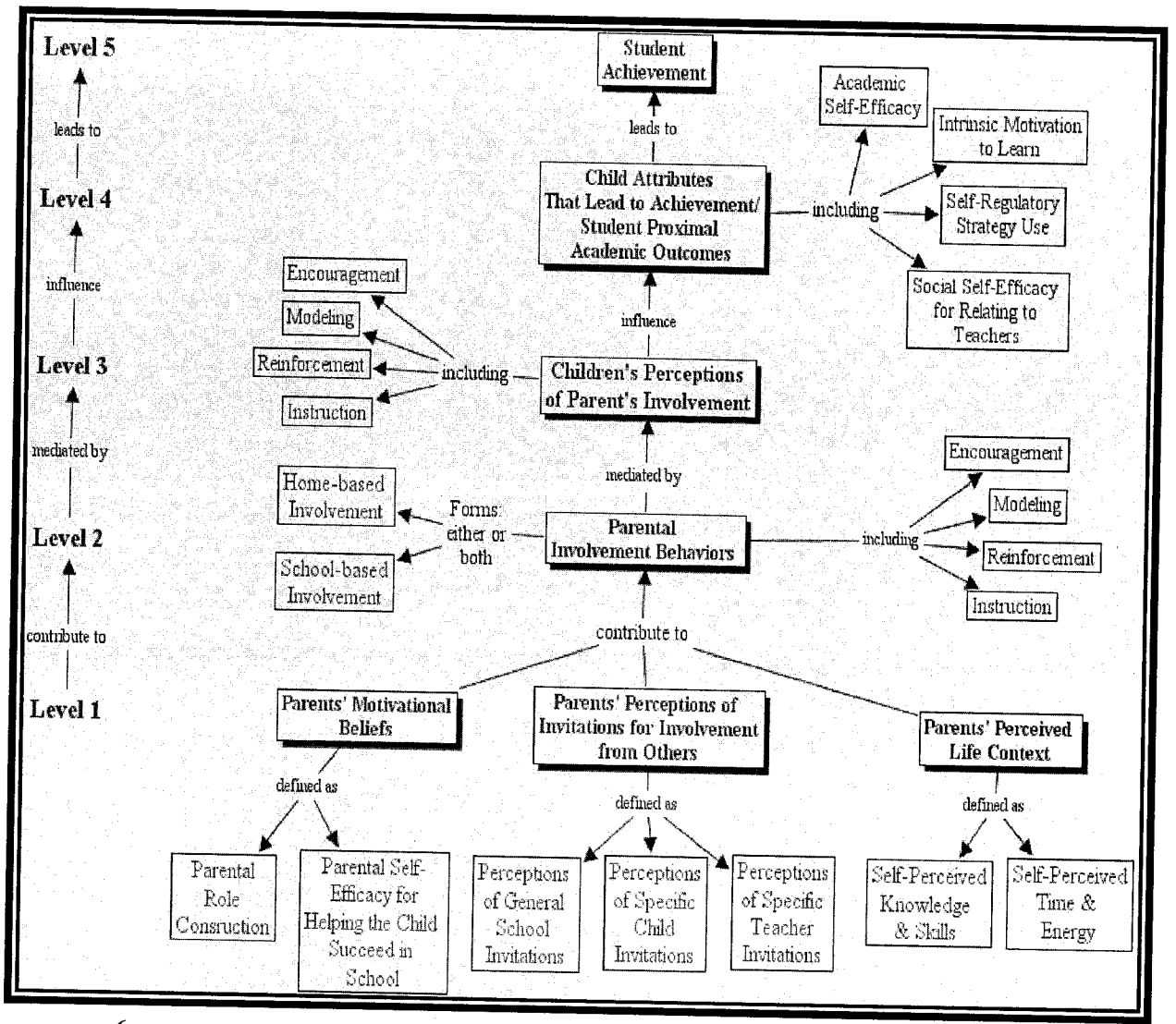

Figure 6.[6] **Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (2005) revised model of the parental involvement process.**

Level 1 of the model suggests that a parent's decision to become involved in the education of their child is influenced by three fundamental variables: (a) their motivational beliefs defined as role construction and perceived sense of parent efficacy for helping their child succeed in school; (b) their perceptions of invitations for involvement from others defined as perceptions of general school invitations or school climate, specific invitations from the child

[6] Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., & Sandler, H. M. (2005). *The social context of parental involvement: A path to enhanced achievement* (Final Report: OERI Grant #R305T010673). Office of Educational Research and Innovation / Institute of Educational Sciences, U.S Department of Education.

and specific invitations from the teacher; and (c) their perceptions of personal life context issues pertinent to involvement defined as perceived knowledge and skill for involvement, perceived time and energy for involvement. Once the decision for parental involvement is made, parental involvement behaviour is determined. *Level 2* of the model identifies these parent involvement behaviours which can either be home based, school based involvement or both and include: encouragement, modeling, reinforcement and instruction. The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model goes on to suggest that the parental involvement behaviours are then mediated by the children's perceptions of parental involvement behaviour at *Level* 3 which in turn, influences the child's attributes or student proximal outcomes that lead to achievement at *Level 4*. These attributes include academic self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, self-regulatory strategy and social self-efficacy for relating to teachers. The final outcome of the involvement process, *Level 5*, results in student achievement.

However, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) have been careful to point out that the model of parental involvement suggested is limited. The model assumes that the parental involvement process is linear. In reality, the process of parental involvement is more "recursive and complex" and may well be impacted by other compounding factors. Nonetheless, the model is valuable in that it provides a basis by which the process of parental involvement can be conceptualized and appreciated.

This study is focused on exploring the factors that motivate parental involvement decision-making in Jamaica. As a consequence, the study has drawn on *Level 1* context variables-parent's motivational beliefs, parent's perception of invitation from others, and parent's perceived life context and *Level 2* outcome variables- parental involvement behaviours, that is home-based, school-based and total involvement to guide the research and analysis.

Parent's Motivational Beliefs

Firstly, the psychological context is described using the notion of parental motivational beliefs which are influenced by two key variables -parental role construction and parental perceived sense of parent efficacy for helping their child succeed in school. Generally speaking, parental role construction refers to a set of personal beliefs that interact and inform a corresponding set of behaviours. These beliefs function in fours distinct ways, they:

> (a) influence individual perceptions and understandings of events in the environment;(b) orient individuals towards particular tasks and action alternatives in varied situations; (c) influence multiple decisions related to goal-setting; and goal attainment (e.g effort, persistence); and (d) influence personal development of commitment and skills related to goal and activities. (Hoover-Dempsey & Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green, Wilkins & Closson, 2005, p. 107)

More specifically, parental role construction in relation to the parent's involvement in the education of their children speaks to the parents' belief about what they can do to support their children's education. It is a motivator because it can direct a parent's choice of parental involvement behaviours and influence the nature and quality of this behaviour. This process of decision-making is situated within a psychological and social context. For example, parental role construction is strongly governed by: (a) a parent's belief about child-rearing; and (b) their home-support role in child and adolescent education. According to Hoover-Dempsey and Jones (1997), role theory refers to a socially constructed set of expectations held by a group for the behaviour of individual members (for example, a school's expectation of the behaviour of a parent); they are also sets of behaviours characteristic of specific kinds of group members. Schwartz (1975) defines roles as "incorporating behavioural expectations derived from individual social status and the accompanying obligation of the individual to behave in ways that are expected" (as cited in Hoover-Dempsey & Jones, 1997, p. 7). This therefore suggests that parental role construction is shaped by the social context in which it is situated. Hoover-

Dempsey, Walker and Sandler (2005) also highlight that parental role construct, based on the social influences, can either be in two forms: passive or active role construction. Passive or active role construction is determined by assessing the parents' role activity beliefs and the parent's valence or general disposition towards schooling.

Another variable influencing parental motivation beliefs is the sub-variable parents' perceived sense of parent efficacy for helping the child to succeed. This variable is informed by theory and research on personal efficacy by Albert Bandura. This construct is defined as a parent's ability to influence the "developmental and educational outcomes of their child; and more specifically, the effectiveness of their capacity to in influencing the child's school learning and their own influence relative to that of peers and child's teachers" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p. 19). The source of the parent efficacy includes cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p. 9). Hence, the efficacy theory when applied to parental involvement functions in the following way:

> parents with higher perceived sense of parent efficacy for helping their children succeed in school will tend to see themselves as capable in this domain; thus they are likely to believe their involvement will make a positive difference for their children. They are likely to believe in their ability to overcome challenges that may emerge during the process and believe to that they can deal successfully with any problems that may arise. They are also likely to persevere when faced with difficulties related to their own achievement of successful involvement or their children's difficulties in meeting current school demand. (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p. 19)

Conversely, parents with relatively weak self-efficacy for involvement are likely to have lower expectation about outcomes of effort to help their child succeed in school. They are also likely to be less persistent when faced with challenges (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2005, p. 109).

Finally, the process variables do not operate in a vaccum. An example of this feature of the variables is self-efficacy and role construction which are linked. According to Hoover-

Dempsey, Jones and Sandler (2005), a parent with high self-efficacy who believes that their effort will help their child learn "is likely to receive support from their belief for a more active role construction. Moreover, like parental role construction, "efficacy is influenced by interactions with others in the social context (teachers, school family and other parents)" (Hoover-Dempsey, Walker and Sandler, 2005, p. 46).

Parent's Perception of Invitation from Others for Involvement[7]

The model considers parental perceptions of invitations for involvement from others as an important motivator of parental involvement decision-making. "Others" is defined in three dimensions. First is the general invitation from the school refers to invitation from the school administration and also included the parent's perception of the school environment, the interest and co-operation shown when discussing their children and the convenience with which school-based activities are scheduled so that parents can participate. Second is the parent's perception of specific invitation from the teacher that examines the demand and opportunity for parental involvement which is initiated by the teacher. Finally, the model also highlights the specific invitation for parental involvement from the child i.e helping with home-work, helping out at school, etc. Specific invitation from the child acts, at critical points of the parent's decision-making process, as an important motivator for involvement. This is primarily due to the fact that the parent is responding to "child attributes (e.g grade level, general school performance) and characteristic behaviours" (Hoover-Dempsey, Jones & Sandler, 2005, p. 47). Specific invitation for involvement can be explicit or implicit.

Parent's Perceived Life Context

Thirdly, the parents' perceived life context variable is comprised of two sub-variables, namely, parent's knowledge and skill and time and energy. Knowledge and skill is defined as a parent's "full mix of personal skills, knowledge, and abilities which contributes to the parent's perceived sense of parent efficacy for helping the child succeed in school and the form of parental involvement behaviour" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, p. 317). The construct is then another important motivator. For example, Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) have noted that in general when parents perceive that their knowledge and skill is adequate, they are more likely to help their child. Consistent with the behaviour is the parent's response to the child's attribute and characteristic behaviour. Conversely, when parents perceive an inadequacy with their ability to help their child, the tendency is not to assist. This response has been linked to the decline in parental involvement across grades because the knowledge base of the parent is not sufficient to help their child with the more complex school work (p.115)

An accompanying domain to the knowledge and skill component of the parent life context construct is the parental perception of demands on their time and energy, especially as it relates to employment and other family needs that influence possibilities of involvement in the education of their children. According to Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (1995), the time and energy, particularly related to work and family demands, are powerful determinants that shape parents' involvement ideas and activities.

Within the context of the dynamic parental involvement construct, the life-context variables may influence the parent's role construction and efficacy. They also have a more direct impact as "resources that limit or enhance the range of involvement options that parents believe they may choose" (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2005, p. 115). Given that parental involvement is

situated within a psychological and social context, this is an important consideration with serious implication for the nature, quality and frequency of parental involvement.

Parental Involvement Behaviours

Based on the conceptual framework, the decision to become involved in the education of their children is reached through a process that is informed by psychological and social factors. According to Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler & Hoover-Dempsey (2005):

> such factors include what parents believe (about themselves, their children's development and educational needs, their children's schools, and their role in children's schooling) and what they think about their choices, options and best course of action given personal, family, child and school circumstances. (p. 97)

These context factors correspond to Level 1 of the model. In this dynamic and interactive process, the decision to become involved is translated into the parental involvement behaviours at Level 2 of the model. The parental involvement behaviours, depending on the availability of resources to the parent, can either be in the form of home-based and/or school-based behaviour.

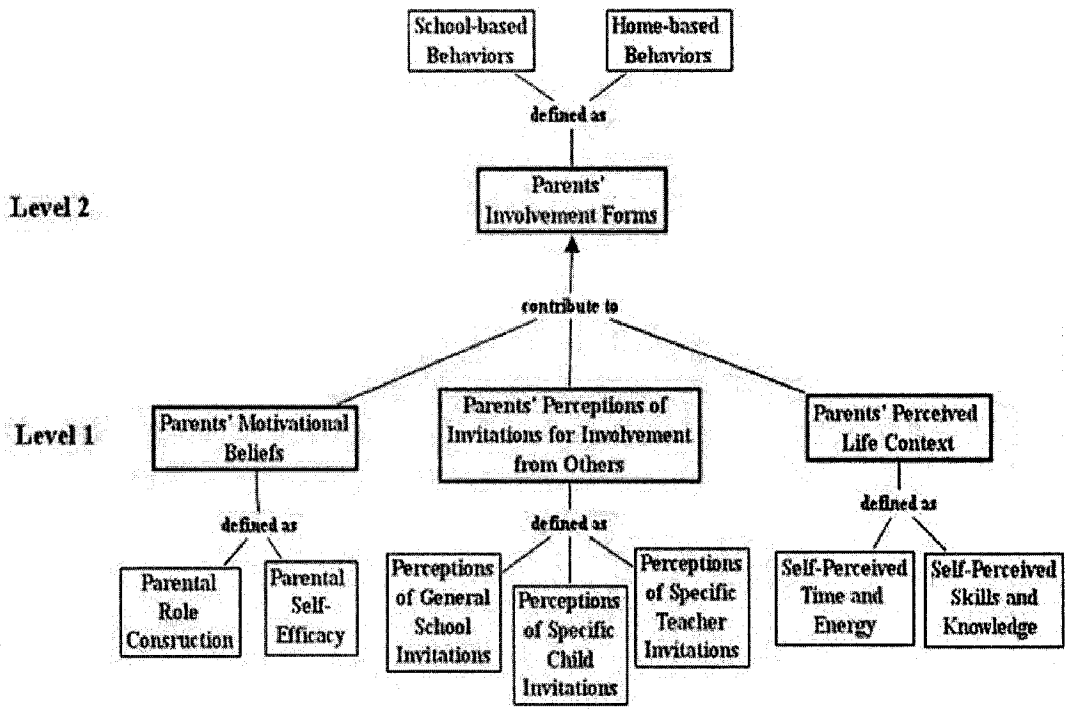

Figure 7. **Levels 1 and 2 of revised model of the Hoover-Dempsey model (2005).**

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) hypothesize that the decision-making variables – parental motivational beliefs, perceived invitation from others or demand and opportunity for involvement from others and parent's perceived life context – "function together in a generally additive fashion to create the likelihood of a positive decision to become involved in the education of their children. (We believe the constructs do not function multiplicatively in part because the absence of one construct does not appear to negate the possibility of a positive involvement decision)" (p. 32). Additionally, the predictability of an affirmative decision of parental involvement, *Level 2*, may be determined by the strength of association and interaction among the variables at *Level 1*. In their observation, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) have noted that:

1. parental role construction is the most important construct in the process of parental involvement decision-making and when absent from the decision-making equation, it is most likely that parental involvement decision will be negative;

2. when parental role construction is determined (*I should be involved in the education of my child*) and a parent's perceived sense of parent efficacy (*I can make a difference in the education of my child*) supports parental role construction; and

3. parent's perception of invitation from others seems to have limited effect, especially when parental role construction and perceived sense of parent efficacy is strong; however, they have the strongest influence when parental role construction and perceived sense of parent efficacy is moderate to weak. (p. 33)

When observed in specific combinations, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) have suggested three possible outcomes of parental involvement decision: high, moderate and low likelihood of positive parental involvement. Figure 8 illustrates that the highest likelihood of positive parental involvement would appear to occur when role construction is high and perceived sense of parent efficacy was high to moderate; however, general invitation did not have much influence on involvement decision. But when role construction was strong and perceived sense of parent efficacy was weak, general invitation has the power to influence positive parental involvement decision. Moderate likelihood appears to occur under conditions of moderate to strong role construction and moderate to weak perceived sense of self-efficacy. General invitation may move parents from moderate to high likelihood of involvement. The middle panel also suggests that parents with moderate role construction and weak perceived sense of parent efficacy and perceived low levels of general invitation would result in negative parental involvement decision. The weakest likelihood of parental involvement occurs when role construction and perceived sense of parent efficacy are weak, even when invitation is high.

Level of invitations and demands from children and school	Level of parental efficacy		
	High	Medium	Low
High/strong role construction			
High	H	H	M
Medium	H	H	M
Low	H	M	M
Medium/moderate role construction			
High	H	H	M
Medium	M	M	M
Low	M	M	L
Low/weak role construction			
High	M	L	L
Medium	L	L	L
Low	L	L	L

Note. H = high, M = moderate, L = low.

Figure 8. **Schematic representations of hypotheses concerning the likelihood of parental involvement by role construction.**

Summary

The development of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997, 2005) conceptual model of parental involvement emerged in response to the lack of empirical evidence to support the positive relationship between the involvement of parents in the education of their children and student achievement and quality outcomes. One of the important contributions of this model is the assumption that parental involvement directly influences attributes that lead to student success. The exploration of this relationship resulted in the development of conceptual framework and hypothesis. This framework was guided by the view that a parent's decision to become in involved in the education of their child is influenced by a psychological and social context. The framework illustrated this concept through a five levels model construct. At *Level 1*, the model identified the fundamental variables that drove parental involvement decision-making. These variables were defined as: (a) parent's motivational belief; (b) parents' perception of

invitation from others; and (c) parent's perceived life context. Throughout *Level 2* through *Level 5*, the model highlighted a linear process through which parental involvement decision-making influenced parental involvement behaviour and the attributes that lead to student achievement. The chapter also highlighted the dynamic and interactive nature of the model by illustrating the specific combination of process variables and the possible outcomes of parental involvement decision-making. Due to the purpose of this research project, the elaboration of the model was limited to *Level 1* and *Level 2*.

The next chapter describes the research methodology and statistical procedures guiding the research project.

Chapter Six:
Research Methodology

Introduction

Research Design

The purpose of the research was to explore the experience of parental involvement in education in Jamaica. The primary focus was placed on identifying the factors that motivate parents to become involved in the education of their children. A five-level theoretical model of parental involvement in education developed by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) was employed to provide insight and understanding of the psychological and social context of parental involvement in education in Jamaica, their dynamic interaction, and consequent influence on parental involvement behaviour. However, given the specific focus of this research which was to explore the motivating factors of parental involvement at the psychological and socials levels, only the variables at *Level 1* and *Level 2* of the model were used. The *Level 1* variables were: (a) parents' personal motivators; (b) parents' perceptions of invitation for involvement from others; and (c) parents' perceived life context. Additionally, *Level 2* variables included parents' involvement behaviour which may take the form of home-based and school based behaviours. Moreover, the research also investigated which of the main variables at *Level 1* was a higher predictor of parental involvement behaviour at *Level 2*; and hence, the variables at Level 1 and Level 2 were used as independent and dependent variables, respectively.

The study employed a mixed method design involving both qualitative and quantitative research strategies that included: (a) literature review of secondary sources; (b) non-participant and participant observations; (c) the administering of questionnaires to parents, teachers and school administrators; (d) separate focus-group discussions with parents and teachers; and (e)

semi-structured interviews with school administrators, policy makers, representative from the Ministry of Education and other key informants. The research analysis was guided by the methodology used by Hoover-Dempsey in their study *The Social Context of Parental Involvement: A Path to Enhanced Achievement* (2005).

Recruitment of Schools

The literature has established that parental involvement is situated within a social context which influences parental involvement behaviours and outcomes. In keeping with the literature and to provide a comparative analysis, the schools selected were carefully chosen as they reflected the variations that are consistent with the socio-demographic reality of the Jamaican society and the Jamaican system of education. The research is focused on exploring the factors that motivate the involvement in the education of their children. In this regard, parental involvement is examined at the primary and secondary levels where parental involvement is of greater demand than at the tertiary level. The selection criteria were based on:

1. school levels in the public education system –primary and secondary;
2. school type at the secondary level - Traditional and Non-Traditional schools;
3. school performance based on national assessments;
4. income of parents, using consumptions levels of household as proxy; and
5. geographic location of the schools.

The researcher's bias influenced the process of purposive selection which was used to deliberately identify the schools for inclusion. The primary reason for selecting these schools was due to the fact that the researcher had full access to these schools because of my previous

experience working with them. Additionally, while the research intended to include other computations, such as above average, high income preparatory schools, to give a more complete reflection of the school system, the research was limited by budgetary constraints and logistics. Finally, the effective management of the research project was also considered, and therefore the decision was taken to limit the research sample to four schools. The research, therefore, was heuristic and provided baseline data upon which other research projects can build. There were two categories of schools. They included 2 primary and 2 secondary schools. The primary school sample was comprised of schools described as: (a) low income, average performing school located in a inner city community in a urban area; and (b) low income, below average performing school located in a rural community.

The secondary schools were also chosen using a similar, but more appropriate sample frame. The schools were drawn from: (a) high income, high achieving Traditional High School located in an affluent urban area; and (b) a low income, low achieving Newly Upgraded High School located in an inner city community in an urban area.

A indication of the income of parents from both samples was derived using data on household consumption by quintile premised on the proxies provided by the Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions (JSLC)[8]. It was possible to disaggregate information on consumption by quintile levels for the communities where the schools were located and also where the parents resided. School performance was based on scores attained in the Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT) for the primary schools and Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) for the secondary High Schools. Schools attaining a national average in core subjects, Mathematics and English, of

[8] The Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions is one of the flagship publications produced by the Planning Institute of Jamaica. This publication is based on annual research on the living standards of Jamaicans. The publication is primarily used to inform evidence-based policy and planning advice to the Government of Jamaica.

80% and above were defined "high performing" and schools achieving 50% or less were considered "low performing". However, the primary schools selected attained 60% and 46% respectively in the national assessment which excluded them from the "high achieving" and "low performing categories". As a consequence, an additional sub-category was devised to reflect the school performance of the primary schools, namely "average performing"and "below average performing" schools.

After identifying the schools, letters of invitation or recruitment were sent out to the school administrators (see Appendix R). A presentation was made to the school administrators about the purpose and objective of the research project. They were also informed about the data collection procedures, the nature of their involvement in this process and the ethical protocol involved. Eventually, letters of acceptance were received from the four schools invited to participate in the research project.

Community and School Profile

Over the years in Jamaica, due to rural poverty, there has been a steady drift to urbanized areas such as Kingston & St. Andrew. This has resulted in this area becoming the most densely populated area in Jamaica with a unique mix of urban, rural and inner-city communities. Kingston & St. Andrew is home to approximately 50% of Jamaica's population, with many of the households residing in inner-city communities. According to the Inner City Renewal Programme 2000-2004, prepared by the Planning Institute of Jamaica, most of the inner-city communities in this area originated as squatter settlements on the urban fringe around the mid-1990s and others declined from the physical and social decline of well-to-do neighbourhoods (p. 38). In general, social disintegration, as evidenced by a breakdown in family life, high levels of inter-personal conflict, domestic violence, crime and gang violence is a characteristic feature of

the inner city areas. The crime and violence, in particular, has contributed to low school attendance and the eventual withdrawal of students from the education system. The low levels of educational attainment and inadequate income generating opportunities have directly contributed to the high incidence of poverty among inner-city households. In relation to economic status and occupation distribution, according to the Social Development Commission, the majority of residents in the inner-cities are employed as machine operators, higglers, security guards, domestic helpers, sales clerks, clerical operators and mechanics. Higglers, who are primarily market vendors, form the largest occupational group. The majority is also largely unskilled, resulting in marginal employment which has helped to produce the relatively high unemployment and underemployment typical of the inner-city areas of Kingston. This has contributed to a high incidence and prevalence of poverty, particularly, among women who are the head of the household and have a lower per capita income than their male counterparts. These households are also large with many children. This has resulted in a high risk for malnutrition, learning disorders, poor school attendance, risk-taking behaviour, for example, entry into gangs and early sex initiation for children and youth. (Planning Institute of Jamaica 2000: pp. 40-45)

Stream in the Desert Primary School.

Stream in the Desert Primary School is a public school under the management of the Ministry of Education. Based on the selection framework, this school represents the average performing, low income school which is located in the West end of St. Andrew and within the inner-city community of Waltham Park, Kingston. The school has a capacity of 715 students; but provides for the educational needs of approximately 1041 students between the ages of 6 and 11. These students are drawn from the immediate environs of Bennett Land as well as other inner-

city communities in the area. The average attendance is 95%. There are 33 members of staff. The student teacher ratio is 37:1.

A decade ago, it can be recalled that no one wanted to send their child to *Stream in the Desert Primary School*. Student enrolment and attendance was low and student performance was dismal. The teachers were unmotivated and parents were uninvolved and expressed frustration. The school acquired a new principal in 1998 and, at the same time, was selected as one of the schools to participate in the New Horizon's Project for Primary Schools.[9] As a consequence, the school has been significantly transformed. Students are excelling, supported by an enthusiastic and highly motivated staff, and are surpassing their peers, in the region and national assessments. In 2003, 22 students earned special awards for outstanding achievement in the GSAT and received over twelve scholarships from private organizations to attend some of the most prestigious High Schools in Kingston & St. Andrew.

In addition to academic development, the school has also placed intense focus on addressing some of the social problems affecting the students and their families. The school, for example, implemented several extra-curricular programmes, including music and physical education to encourage children to attend school regularly and also to build the social and personal deficits of the students. Furthermore, the school recognized the critical importance of parental support and participation; the school implemented several activities to build parenting skills and involve parents directly in the education of their children. *Stream in the Desert*

[9] New Horizon's for Primary School is a USAID sponsored projected aimed at improving primary education in Jamaica. This seven year programme strived to mathematics and language arts achievement among needy student in 72 primary schools across Jamaica. The programme combined technical expertise and common-sense principles including parents and community in a child's education experience The programme focused on forging a new type of learning environment that is child-centered and reflects both better school management and effective teaching.

Primary, while existing in an inner-city environment, no longer allows itself to be defined by its environment. *Stream in the Desert Primary* has become an atypical inner-city school.

Betta Mus' Come Primary.

The rural district of Thompson Town is the home to *Betta Mus' Come Primary School.* The institution has a holding capacity of 290; however, there are 518 students, or almost twice its holding capacity, from ages 6 to 11 enrolled at the school. The average rate of attendance is 75%, which is way below the national average of 97%. There are fourteen qualified members of staff. The teacher to student ratio is 1:32. This school represents the school that is performing below the national average and caters to children from low income backgrounds.

Based on the 2006 Grade Six Achievement Test, the national average in the five subject areas assessed was 60%. *Betta Mus' Come Primary School* attained an average score of 41%. The school has, over the past five years, consistently achieved scores below the national average. A number of factors have been identified as contributing to the school's low performance. One of the critical factors contributing to low performance of students, in general and specific to *Betta Mus' Come Primary*, is low attendance in schools. The far-reaching effect of this situation is that the cycle of poverty is reinforced as the child is unable to acquire basic education to make him/her employable. Other contributing factors that affect the low school performance are that these rural schools are ill-equipped, overcrowded and there is limited involvement of parents.

Goodwill High School.

Goodwill High School is situated in the volatile inner-city area of East Kingston. This area bares similar social characteristics to that of the surroundings of *Stream In the Desert Primary* School. For example, there is a relatively high incidence of poverty occasioned by the high unemployment and underemployment linked to low levels of educational attainment and

employment status of the households. Most of the households are female-headed and are likely to be poor with many children. The decline in the socio-economic well being of the communities has contributed to a high incidence of domestic violence gang warfare and other criminal activities that have affected the schooling of the children in the area. Black Street and Brown's Town are areas known for sporadic flare-up of gang war. Recently, the school's security was breached and gangs were at war on the school's compound; this resulted in the closure of the school.

Goodwill High School is a former secondary school which, under the Government's Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE) project, was reclassified as a "newly upgraded high school". It has a capacity of 810 students; however, 1600 students are enrolled. As a result of the high enrolment, the school has had to operate on a shift system which has created significant challenge for the teaching and learning process. The school has an attendance rate of 79%. The school offers a mixed curriculum of academic and technical and vocational courses. There are approximately 96 teachers with qualifications ranging from Teacher Diplomas to Bachelor of Arts in Education. The teacher student ratio is 21:1. Based on the education statistics, *Goodwill High School* has been performing below the national average in the CXC exams; however, they have been excelling in extra-curricular activities such as sports and performing arts.

Despite the upgrade of this school, it still, unfortunately, suffers from the stigma of being a "low performing school." A new school administration has been established with the intention of changing the perception of *Goodwill High* from that of the ingrained secondary sub-standard school to that of a high school with a more modern, relevant student-centred curriculum. They have expressed the commitment to make *Goodwill High School* a beacon in Downtown Kingston. There is the need to, first and foremost, address the increased incidence of violence in

the school and its environs, and the low levels of student and teacher motivation. The process has begun. Based on the selection framework, this school represents the low achieving secondary school situated in a low income inner-city community.

Excellence is Our Aim College.

Excellence is Our Aim College is a Traditional High governed by the Jesuit Order. It was named after a brilliant and celebrated Oxford scholar, priest and Jesuit martyr. It is situated in the "Golden Triangle" of Liguanea in upper St. Andrew. The school is surrounded by a thriving district with a shopping mall, cinema, and affluent residential areas. This affluent nature of the community is also reflected in the student population as parents are the upper class or "uptown" professional types with tertiary education. The children who attend *Excellence is Our Aim College* are the outstanding achievers and recipients of Government scholarships on the GSAT. They represent the top 5% of high achievers in the island.

There are 1694 students enrolled at *Excellence is Our Aim College*. They boast an impressive 96% attendance rate which is way above the national average (73.6%). There are 104 members of staff. The student-teacher ratio is 22:1.

The school boasts an impressive academic record of achievement, annually, attaining the top CXC passes. In 2002, for example, *Excellence is Our Aim College* achieved a 97% pass rate and 100% in Mathematics. Between 1970 and 2002, *Excellence is Our Aim College* has produced 62 students who have been awarded Jamaican Government scholarships. The school has also produced recipients of the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship. *Excellence is Our Aim College* is the secondary school characterized as high achieving, high income situated in a sub-urban area.

Table 1

Profile of Participating Schools

Participating schools[10]	Level	School type	Level of school performance	Socio-economic background	School region
Stream in the Desert Primary School	Primary	Public	Average	Low SES/inner city in urban area	Kingston St. Andrew
Betta Mus' Come Primary	Primary	Public	Below average	Low SES/rural	Clarendon
GoodwillHigh School	Secondary	Public/newly upgraded	Low performing	Low SES/inner city in urban area	Kingston St. Andrew
Excellence is Our Aim College	Secondary	Public/ traditional	High performing	High SES/urban area	Kingston St. Andrew

The Subjects and Their Selection: Parents, Teachers, School Administrators and Other Key Informants

Three of the four schools were situated in the Kingston & St. Andrew region and one was from a rural community in the parish of Clarendon. The target sample was comprised of 1350 parents, 239 teachers and 4 school administrators from each school. The parent target sample was randomly selected from grade lists provided by the schools' administration; while the full complement of teachers and school administrators were included in the study. A confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 0.05% for categorical data with a response rate of 45% (based on the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler study) were assumed. Other key informants included representatives from the Guidance Counselling Unit, and the Community Relations Education Officer of the Ministry of Education; policy advisors from the Planning Institute of Jamaica; other relevant stakeholders from the Parent-Teachers' Association, Executives from the

[10] The names of schools are pseudonyms.

respective schools; the Coalition for Better Parenting, and the National Parent Teachers' Association of Jamaica.

Instruments: Parent and Teacher Questionnaire Surveys.

Questionnaires were administered to parents/guardians and teachers. The parent/guardian (see Appendix V) and teacher questionnaires (see Appendix W) were adapted from the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) study, *The Social Context of Parental Involvement: A Path to Enhanced Achievement.*

In view of the conceptual framework of the study, the chosen instruments were deemed appropriate to probe into the experience of parental involvement in the education of their children from the perspective of the parent, teacher and the school administration. In doing so, the questionnaires provided insight into: (a) the psychological and social dimensions of parental involvement; (b) the influence of the home and school environment on parental belief and behaviour; (c) the dynamic interaction between the relationship of parents and teachers; (d) their influence on the motivation of parents to become involved in the education of their children; (e) and the nature of the parent involvement behaviour.

Using scale items from Level 1 and Level 2 variables, parents were asked to report on their belief and choice of parental involvement behaviour. Additionally, parents were asked to report on their socio-demographic status.

Teachers play a critical role in the parent-teacher relationship. They are key facilitators of meaningful parental involvement. Therefore, understanding the belief and behaviour of teachers towards parental involvement is necessary as it can help policy makers, school administrators, teachers and parents to better appreciate the external factors that motivate parental involvement,

the nature and quality of parental involvement in schools and the adequacy of parental involvement practice within our schools. The teacher questionnaire, therefore, corresponded with variable 2 of Level 1 of the Hoover-Dempsey model which speaks to parent's perception of invitation for involvement from others. "Other" refers to general school invitation, and specific teachers and child demand for involvement from parents. In order operationalize the construct, teachers were also asked to report on their belief about parental involvement, their efficacy for teaching, their belief about the parent's efficacy to help their children succeed in school, and their belief about the importance of parental involvement practices. Additional, the teachers were asked to report on parental involvement and, more specifically, their invitation of parental involvement. The teacher's self report of their socio-demographic status was also solicited.

The general school environment can also promote or hinder parental involvement. Therefore, exploring the nature and quality of parental involvement programmes can give insight into the attitude of the school towards parental involvement and the overall value it places on the involvement of parents or the home-school relationship. Furthermore, the school's environment establishes the tone and, therefore, influences how teachers and parents view and interact with each other. Unfortunately, given the very small sample size for the school administrators, the school administrator questionnaires were not administered. However, they were interviewed.

Table 2 illustrates the points of convergence of the three instruments in the specific areas of parent and teacher motivational belief and practice of parental involvement.

Table 2

Level 1 and 2 Variables as Operationalized in the Three Questionnaires and Points of Convergence

Variables	Parent questionnaire	Teacher questionnaire
		Teachers efficacy for teaching
Parents' motivational beliefs	Parental role construction Parent efficacy	Teachers' beliefs about parental Involvement Teacher beliefs about parent efficacy for helping children succeed in school Teachers beliefs about the importance of parental involvement practices
Parents' perceptions of invitation for involvement from others	General school invites Specific teacher demand Specific child demand	Teacher's report of parental involvement Teacher report of invitation of parental involvement
Perceived life context	Knowledge and skill Time and energy	
Parental involvement behaviours	Home-based behaviour School-based behaviour	

The Dependent and Independent Variables

As stated earlier, one of the aims of this study was to explore, through hierarchical regression analysis, which of the variables at Level 1 was a higher predictor of parental involvement behaviour at Level 2. In order to accomplish this, Level 1 variables, namely,

parental motivational beliefs, parents' perceived invitation from others for involvement - school, teacher and child, and the parents' perceived life context were considered as the independent or predictor variables; while the variable at Level 2, the parental involvement behaviour which can either have been in the form of home-based, school-based or total involvement, was the dependent or the criterion variable. The following table is a summary of the parent questionnaire highlighting important aspects of the questionnaire necessary for statistical analysis.

Scale Development

The primary purpose of scale development is to create valid measures of a construct by focusing on the sub-variables and items that make up the construct. In the case of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) model, there are three main constructs namely, parental motivational beliefs, parents' perceptions of invitation from others and parents' perceived life context. The variables were broken down into eight scales and 56 items. A 5-point Likert scale ranging in responses from, 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree, was used as the response format. Table 3 provides a breakdown of parent questionnaire into scales, items, corresponding response format and scale reliability. The reliabilities were also satisfactory, with the exception of the scale "child invitation." As a result, the "child invitation" scale will be dropped from the analysis. However, it is important to note that the necessary revisions to the item is conducted to ensure its validity and cultural relevance. This is because the child's developmental needs may be considered as a strong motivator.

Table 3

Summary of Parent Questionnaire

Component of parent questionnaire	No. of items measured in the questionnaire	Five (√) & six (*) Likert response format	Range of possible scores (from weakest to strongest)[11]	Alpha reliability
1. Parental role construction	10	√	10 to 30	.77
2. Parent efficacy	7	√	7 to 21	.73
3. Valence	6	√	6 to 18	.75
4. General invitation from school	6	√	6 to 18	.60
5. Specific invitation from teacher	6	√	6 to 18	.82
6. Specific invitation from child	6	*	6 to 18	.42
7. Knowledge and skill	9	√	9 to 27	.80
8. Time and energy	6	√	6 to 18	.77
9. Home-based involvement	5	*	5 to 15	.74
10. School-based involvement	5	*	5 to 15	.70
11. Total-based involvement	10	*	10 to 30	.72

[11] For ease of analysis, the range of possible scores was determined by collapsing the response items into 3 points for each item. For example, for the five point Likert response format 1-2 = 1; 3=2; and 4-5 =3. A similar grouping was done for the 6 point Likert response format. The three point score was then multiplied by the number of items. The three point score is used to form the basis of the categories "weak", "undecided" and "strong."

Scales were computed using the mean function in SPSS. Once the re-coding was completed, a basic frequency was conducted to produce the mean average results. Responses were sorted into three categories, for example, "low," "undecided" and "high." Low scores were deemed to be negative responses; while high scores were considered positive responses. The cut off point to classify the responses into assigned categories was determined by comparing scores from the average mean results and sorting them according to the pattern of the 5 point Likert scale. For example, mean averages between 1 and 2.9 would be classified as "low;" the results falling in the range of 3.0 and 3.99 were considered as "undecided;" and mean averages falling between 4-5 were categorized as "high." The method used for the scale development was consistent with the methodology used in the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler study (2005).

Teacher Questionnaire

Similarly, a Likert response format and recoding procedures was also used for the teacher. The second instrument, *Teachers Involving Parents Questionnaire*, measured the perception of the school towards parental involvement by focusing on the belief, skills and strategies of teachers which are related to parental involvement. According to Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2002), the development of the instrument was informed by the notion that a teachers' beliefs about parental involvement influenced: (a) their perception of parent's involvement, (b) their orientation towards inviting parents; (c) and their goals, commitments, and skills related to involving parents. In this regard, six elements were identified as being critical to the development of the teacher's belief system. These elements were: (a) teacher's belief about the parental involvement; (b) teacher's self-efficacy for teaching; (c) teacher's belief about parent efficacy for helping children succeed in school; (d) teacher's belief about the importance of specific involvement practices; (e) teacher's report of invitations for parental involvement;

and (f) teacher's report of parental involvement. They also formed the criteria for this assessment.

The teacher questionnaire is an important complement to the Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler model. While the teacher questionnaire sought to examine the teacher attitude and behavior towards parental involvement, it was also used to compare and contrast with findings emanating from varied experiences of the parents so as to provide insights into the context of involvement at the schools. The questionnaires consisted of six categories of 72 items. The response format consisted of a 5 point Likert scale which ranged from "not very important" to very important" and "never" to "all of the time." The same process to develop the new scales and the revised response format carried out on the parent questionnaire was also performed on the teacher questionnaire. Table 4 illustrates the components of the questionnaire and highlights some other relevant information, including scale reliability. Three of the teacher scales were not reliable: (a) "Teacher's belief about parental involvement;" (b) Teacher's self-efficacy for teaching; and (c) Teacher's belief about parent's efficacy to help their child succeed in school". Nonetheless, the variables will be considered for analysis. Similarly, as in the case of the "child invitation" scale, it is important that items are refined to ensure validity.

Table 4

Summary of Teacher Questionnaire

Component of teacher questionnaire	No. of items measured in the questionnaire	Five (√) & six (*) Likert response format	Range of possible scores (from weakest to strongest)[12]	Reliability
1. Teacher's belief about parental involvement	8	√	8 to 24	.52
2. Teacher's self efficacy for teaching	12	√	12 to 26	.42
3. Teacher's belief about parent efficacy to help their child succeed in school	7	√	7 to 21	.33
4. Teacher's belief about the importance of specific involvement practices	15	√	15 to 45	.92
5. Teacher invitation to parental involvement	17	√	17 to 51	.80
6. Teacher's report of parental involvement	14	*	14 to 42	.93

[12]For ease of analysis, the range of possible scores was determined by collapsing the response items into 3 points for each item. For example, for the five point Likert response format 1-2 = 1; 3 =2; and 4-5 =3. A similar grouping was done for the 6 point Likert response format. The three point scored was then multiplied by the number of item. The three point scores is used to form the basis of the categories "weak," "undecided" and "strong."

Pre-Testing of Questionnaires

The pre-testing of parent, teacher and school administrator questionnaires was completed using approximately eight to ten parents and approximately 10 teachers and school administrators, drawn from a representative sample of those to be studied. This activity was instructive as it provided feedback on the appropriateness and relevance, especially as it related to the format, wording and order, of the questions to be asked. Given that the instrument was developed in North America, minor modifications were made to wording so as to ensure suitability to the Jamaican context. Additionally, the parent/guardian questionnaires were originally developed to be used in a public school setting for grades 1-6. However, in the current study, the schools involved were both primary and secondary. As a consequence, the necessary steps were taken to make the questions regarding parental involvement activities as general as possible so that they could be applied to both primary and secondary school levels.

Data Collection Procedure

Based on the nature of the schools selected, it was highlighted that parents were drawn from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. As a consequence, varying approaches were facilitated depending on the levels of assistance required. Hence, two data collection procedures were used for the parent questionnaire survey in the study. At *Excellence is Our Aim College*, prior sensitization of the research project was conducted during a PTA session. These parents were drawn from a high socio-economic background. As a result, the questionnaires were self-administered based on the determination that these parents would not require much assistance. The parents were randomly selected from a student list from each of the participating grade levels. Assistance in this regard was provided by the school's administration. A package consisting of a questionnaire and consent forms was sent to parents in sealed coded envelopes

with the assistance of their children. The parents were called to inform them that they were selected to participate in the research and also to advise them of what was required of them. The researcher and assistants were on hand to collect the questionnaire packages from the grades.

At "*Streams in the Desert*", "*Betta Mus' Come*" and "*Goodwill High*" schools, the administration of the questions were guided by the knowledge that parents from these schools had a lower level of educational attainment than their counterparts at *Excellence is Our Aim College*. Consequently, the parents from the low income schools were provided with other options. These options are described below. Additionally, in order to ensure that parents had a good grasp of the questionnaire, assistance was provided with completing the questionnaires. During the data collection process at these schools, the challenge for the researcher was to ensure a balance between high quality responses, completed questionnaires and making participants feel comfortable and not singled out. The following procedure was used to maintain a balance.

Parents were advised of the research study through presentations at their respective PTA meetings. Once the parents were selected, parents were contacted via telephone and made aware of their selection for the research project. They were also advised of the purpose of the research and the nature of their involvement. They were advised that, to complete the questionnaires, they could either: (a). fill out the questionnaire on their own or (b) request assistance which would be provided at a special survey session scheduled at a place and time of their convenience. The preference of the parents was noted beside their names and arrangements for the survey were made accordingly. The schools were very accommodating as they provided a venue and assisted with preparing refreshments for the parents.

Option A: The parents opting to fill out the questionnaires on their own received a sealed envelope, which included a thank you letter, outlining the instructions for completing the

questionnaire, a consent form and the questionnaire. The contact information of the researcher and research assistants was also provided to them so as to give them the means of obtaining additional assistance to complete the questionnaire, if required. Once the questionnaires were completed, the parents were instructed to drop off the consent forms and completed questionnaires in sealed envelopes at their child's school.

Option B: For those who requested assistance, arrangements were made for the survey sessions. Parents were notified via a letter and telephone of the dates, time and venue for the sessions. At these sessions, the researcher explained the purpose of the consent forms and elaborated on the format of the questionnaires to parents. Their queries were accommodated at this time. Parents were then asked to sign the consent forms which were collected by the research assistants. Upon the completion of this aspect of the session, the parent questionnaire surveys were handed out to the participants. Parents were invited to fill out the questionnaires by circling the responses that best described their answer. The research assistants were on hand to assist parents. For parents requesting additional assistance, the researcher/research assistants were also available to verbally administer and fill out the questionnaire on their behalf.

However, at the schools identified above, the initial response rate to *Option B* was below expectation. As a consequence, additional steps were taken to achieve the desired quota. For example, we contacted the parents and suggested sending the questionnaires to them and also providing them with assistance. The suggestion was welcomed by the majority of parents. We also targeted parents at PTA meetings. We had an overwhelming response. During both data collection strategies, every effort was made to ensure that parents felt comfortable with the exercise. For those who required additional assistance, research assistants were on hand.

Teacher survey.

Questionnaire packages, consisting of a thank you letter that outlined the instructions for completing the questionnaire, a consent form and the questionnaire, were distributed to a total of two hundred and thirty nine (239) teachers. The respondents were given a week to complete and submit the questionnaires to the vice principal. However, teachers were challenged in completing the questionnaires within the specific time. Efforts were made by the research team to follow-up with the teachers to ensure the timely submission of the questionnaires, secure the required number of questionnaires to guarantee acceptable response rate and also to address any apprehension from the teachers.

Review of secondary data.

Document analysis of available secondary sources was conducted. This included the following: (a) The White Paper on Education (2001); (b) schools' development plans and handbooks from all the four schools; and (c) other relevant documents. It was noted that there is a paucity of documentation on parental involvement activities. For example, the PTAs did not have any recorded minutes of meetings. Hence, the PTA presidents and school administrators were interviewed to obtain their views on this issue. Nevertheless, the document analysis provided insights into the context within which the education system operates and the general ethos that governs the processes and relations in the education system.

Participant observation.

Participant observations were conducted throughout the research project. Parent-teacher consultations/interviews, PTA meetings, classroom sessions and the general school environs were the subject of naturalistic and participant observations. The purpose of the observation was to provide insights into: (a) the general environment of the school and how it facilitated parent-

teacher relationships; (b) the nature, quality and dynamics of the parent-teacher relationship; and (c) possible challenges facing the parent-teacher relationship and opportunities for partnership. For example, the extrinsic factors that influence parent's motivational behaviours - parental role construction, parent's perception of the school, and parent's perceived invitation from others to become involved - was observed and a determination made about the factors within the schools' environment that influenced parental involvement.

There were 4-5 participant-observation sessions per school, lasting about 20 minutes to two hours. Notes were taken of specific activities which are identified below in the following participant-observation strategies for each school:

1. Schools' environs: notice boards, the presence or absence of parent rooms in the school, location of teachers' workrooms, and presence and location of parents in the school building;
2. Parent Teachers' Association (PTA) meetings;
3. Parent-Teacher Conferences;
4. Parent Month Celebration in the month of November;
5. Drop-Off/ Pick Up areas (2 occasions); and
6. Informal meetings between parents and teachers (2 occasions). (Sitting in the main office to observe whether parents show up for meetings and for what reasons).

Data gathered during the observation is being kept in the strictest of confidence and only the research supervisor and researcher will have access to it. The research data, once fully utilized, will be destroyed in the year 2011. In the report, or any articles that may result from this

study, the consent of participants will be sought to quote them and alias will be used to protect their identity and privacy.

Focus group discussions.

A randomly selected subset of the parent and teacher sample participated in the focus group discussions. Building upon data gathered from the other data collection techniques, the focus group discussions provided the researcher with the opportunity to gain clarity and further insights into issues that emerged from the document reviews, questionnaires and non-participant and participant-observation activities, especially from the perspective of teachers and parents. There were 2 sets of focus group sessions per research site, each consisting of 8-10 participants and comprised of parents and teachers. The focus groups were not mixed but rather conducted separately so parents and teachers could speak freely. The sessions were scheduled at a convenient time and place for the participants. Each focus group session lasted two hours.

With the permission of the participants, the focus group discussion sessions were audio-taped and notes taken. Consent forms were also issued to safeguard the confidentiality of the focus group discussion sessions. Finally, upon the completion of the interviews and focus group discussions, a summary, outlining the key issues and suggestions emanating from the discussions, were made available to the participants for review and feedback. See Appendix N for focus group questions

Semi-structured interviews.

Two sets of semi-structured interviews were conducted and each lasted an hour and a half. The first set of interviews was conducted with officials of the Guidance Counselling Unit of the Ministry of Education and Youth. The second set of interviews were conducted with: the school administrators; PTA executives from the participating schools; policy makers from the

Planning Institute of Jamaica; representatives from the Education Transformation Team; the Coalition for Better Parenting; the National Parent Teacher's Association Jamaica; and "Change from Within." The interview process was used to probe the issue of parental involvement from a national and local perspective, particularly, as it relates to the school's perception of parental involvement and issues and concerns affecting the parent-teacher relationship. The information garnered from these sessions was used to discuss policy issues/options with the respondents and suggest possible recommendations. See appendices X-Z for the interview protocols.

Statistical Procedures and Their Selection

A number of statistical procedures were used in this study to test the degree of association between the dependent and independent variables. They include: ANOVA, Spearman rho, T-test and cross-tabulation. The determination of these statistical procedures was based on the nature or characteristics of the data. Multi-variate analysis was also conducted using hierarchical regression. See appendices C-N for the matrices of statistical procedures conducted and their respective results.

Data Analysis: Quantitative and Qualitative

In looking at the experience of parental involvement in Jamaica, a mixed research design was employed to explore the topic. The three objectives of the research were to: (a) use the conceptual framework to identify the context factors and their influence on parental involvement behaviour; (b) examine which of the variables, on their own or together, was a higher predictor of parental involvement behaviour; (c) from a comparative perspective, explore whether the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model of parental involvement was relevant to the Jamaican context. As a consequence, the research employed the similar statistical procedures used in study 1 of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) research project so as to ensure a high level of

comparability of the studies. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized to generate descriptive and inferential analyses. The following is a description of the procedures.

Basic frequency was conducted on the three sources of data to provide a profile of the achieved samples. Additionally, chi-square analyses were also conducted using the independent (Level 1), dependent (Level 2) and status variables. These analyses were guided by the Hoover-Dempsey hypothesis. The results were compared and contrasted across schools and the measure of association noted for statistical significance. Finally, hierarchical regression was conducted on the parent/guardian sample to determine whether the independent variables at *Level 1* – parent's personal motivation, parent's perceived invitation for involvement from others and parent's perceived life context- could reliably predict the *Level 2* dependent variables – parental involvement behaviours which may take the form of home and school-based behaviours. The regression was hierarchical in nature based on logical or theoretical considerations, outlined in the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler hypothesis, which determined the order in which the variables were entered. The results obtained were also compared across school type. Stepwise method was used.

The data derived from field notes, participant observations, semi-structured interviews and focus groups sessions from the three sources were subjected to qualitative analysis. The goal of this undertaking was to make sense of the experience being examined without imposing pre-existing expectations. The data analysis was guided by steps recommended by Bogdan and Taylor (1998). The data was analyzed inductively using three main activities: data analysis, interpretation and presentation. Data analysis involved organizing and describing the data. This was achieved by reducing the volume of information by identifying re-occurring topics and issues related to the research topic and the conceptual framework. A system of codes consisting

of words and phrases that represented the re-occurring topics was noted. The data from all the sources were coded and categorized based on their correspondence with *Level 1 and Level 2* of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model. There were some data that did not fit neatly into the categories of the conceptual framework. These included data garnered from policy makers, representatives from the Ministry of Education and Youth, the President of the National PTA of Jamaica and the Coalition for Better Parenting. While they did not conform to the model, these sources were critical and relevant to the study as they provided insight into the broader context for understanding the importance of parental involvement. Data was coded by date, site, persons and type of social scenes. Data consolidation was done by clustering units of data representing related topics into patterns. These patterns became potential categories and properties. These patterns were interpreted via a logical cross analysis. Using a data display matrix, the data was compared and contrasted with the conceptual framework and across school types.

After the completion of the data analyses, a process of integration of the analyses was undertaken. The conceptual framework provided overall guidance with respect to organizing the analysis and the hypothesis was used to interrogate the findings of the research for consistencies and inconsistencies. In order to ensure trustworthiness, accuracy and consistency and to enrich the research findings, the source of information was checked against one or more different types of data sources through the process of triangulation. Member checks, reflections, peer briefings and audit trails were used to, once again, ensure that the research was reliable, valid and trustworthy.

Limitations of the Study

There were limitations in the research design. There are a number of advantages using questionnaire surveys: low cost, avoidance of potential interviewer bias; less pressure for

immediate response; providing greater feeling of anonymity (Judd, Smith, & Kidder, 1991, p. 215). However, there are also disadvantages. For example, the researcher had difficulty controlling the data collection process in the following areas: (a) the inability to control and predict rate of response; (b) the lack of accuracy and completeness of responses; iii) the inability to control the context of questions answered; (c) the inability of some of the respondents to interpret and answer the questions correctly; and (d) the instances of students filling out questions for parents. Furthermore, the research was concerned about how to establish and safeguard an adequate and representative sample. This was of particular concern seeing that the quality of the research hinges on a sound research design and methodology. Finally, the research was also limited by an inadequate sample size and the high rate of non-responses which, in some instances, impacted the reliability of the results. Hence, the results are suggestive in nature and efforts were made not to go beyond the interpretations based on the reliability of the data obtained. Additionally, the research was heuristic and will require that future studies be conducted to fully understand and appreciate parental involvement in education in Jamaica.

Summary

This chapter elaborated on the methodological parameters governing the study which was to explore the experience of parental involvement in education in Jamaica, with specific focus on the factors that motivate parental involvement. The research design utilized at mixed research method and relied heavily on the research methodology and statistical procedures used in the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) study. The statistical procedures included basic frequency, chi-square and hierarchical regression analyses. Additionally, the chapter also drew attention to the process of school and subject recruitment. It was noted the schools were drawn from the primary and secondary levels of the education, but limited to schools in the public education

system. The schools were chosen based on a specific selection criterion that reflected the variations in the education system and were situated within a context that was consistent with socio-economic reality of the society. A profile of the schools was provided.

Second, the chapter provided a description of the parent, teacher and school administrator questionnaires, highlighting selected aspects of the instruments that were used in the statistical analysis. The data collection procedures were also elaborated on and included both quantitative and qualitative strategies and the menu of options made available to the participants so as to ensure a favourable response rate. The qualitative and quantitative data analysis procedures used in the research were emphasized. Finally, the parameters of the research were highlighted in the limitations of the study section.

Chapter Seven:
Research Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings on parental involvement in education in Jamaica by specifically focusing on the psychological and social context which influences both parent and teacher perceptions. These findings are based on statistical analyses of core parental involvement and demographic variables and qualitative analyses, using NVIVO, a software for analyzing qualitative data. The statistical procedures used were: frequency distribution, cross tabulation, T-test, ANOVA, Spearman's rho and hierarchical regression. Only the statistically significant results were presented, that is results with a p-value of 0.05.

The chapter is divided into three sections. Section I provides the quantitative and qualitative results of bivariate and multivariate analyses of the parent sample by school. In the case of the two primary schools, bivariate analyses had to be carried out on collective data since the sample sizes of each school would have been too small; the rationale behind this decision was to minimize the risk of the results being unreliable. Bivariate analysis has to have a large enough sample size to be worth the undertaking; otherwise, the results are unreliable. The multivariate test of association was conducted to determine which process variable was the best predictor of parental involvement. These results are presented in Appendices D, G, J, K, L, and M.

Section II presents only the descriptive analyses of the teacher sample as the sample size was too small to validate the use of bivariate analyses. Section III summarizes the findings of the

parent and teacher sample using the Hoover-Dempsey Conceptual Framework (1997). Based on the summary, the likelihood of parental involvement is discussed.

Parents

Appendix N provides basic demographic information about the parent sample using selected status variables: age, sex, highest level of education, location, number of children and biological relationship with children. The profile of parental involvement in Jamaica reflected socio-demographic characteristics consistent with urban inner-city communities, which is where the majority of the respondents were drawn. The profile was also supported by demographic data in chapter 2. For example, parents with children attending the low income schools, especially Stream in the Desert had a higher participation of young adult parents (20-29 and 30-39) from single female headed households with 2 or more children. Moreover, the households were characterized by low levels of education, with secondary education highlighted as the highest level of education attained. However, in many cases, the quality of the secondary education attained is called into question as some of these parents were not able to complete high school because of financial constraints and early pregnancy. As a consequence, their employment prospects are limited and this has contributed to, and further reinforced, their low income status. Unfortunately, the study was not able to ascertain sufficient information on the income status of the respondents to confirm this assumption. However, other proxies such as level of education, employment status, and location of the schools were used as indicators.

In contrast, the majority of parents with children attending the affluent Traditional High School were much older (40-59); married; had attained tertiary education (53%); and were employed full time (62%), indicating stable income and/or the potential for higher levels of income. Parents in these households had smaller families - only two children.

Parents with children attending Betta Mus' Come from the rural area also distinguished themselves in a number of the indicators. For example, they recorded the highest level of parents with "less than High School education" (41%); highest rate of unemployment (47%); and the households with the largest number of children – 4 and over (41.7%). Educational and employment status are proxies for the social welfare and well-being of the household. Based on these indicators, the parents from the rural school had a higher level of poverty and vulnerability in their households, when compared with the parents from the urban and inner-city areas.

The socio-demographic profile, when compared to national data introduced in chapter 2, is consistent with the national representative sample in key areas. The sample is, therefore, comparable to the broader school-parent population. In this regard, the profile provides a basis for enhancing our understanding of the sociological factors and possible influences on both the perception and experience of parental involvement in education in Jamaica.

Table 5 is a summary of the distribution of the parent/guardian questionnaires by school and the corresponding rates of response.

Table 5

Summary of Parent Survey Distribution and Corresponding Response Rates

	Total number of students	Total number of questionnaires distributed per school	Questionnaires collected	Rate of response	Number of grades sampled
Stream in the Dessert Primary School	997	333	214	56%	6
Better Mus' Come Primary	459	153	83	54%	6
Goodwill High School	1600	534	172	32%	5
Excellence is Our Aim College	986	329	159	48%	5
Total	4042	1350	628[13]	47%	22

Personal Motivational Beliefs:
Role Construction (Role Belief) and Perceived Sense of Parent Efficacy

The personal motivational belief variable was measured using the sub-variables role belief (*I believe it is my responsibility to help my child*) and parent's perceived self-efficacy (*I have the capacity to help my child succeed*). Using this construct, the research sought to examine the psychological aspect of the parent and its influence on the decision to become involved in the education of their child/ren. Additionally, the category of parental role construct was explored to ascertain whether parents viewed their role in the education of their children as either passive (school-focused) or active (partnership-focused). In order to achieve this analysis, the parental

[13] The total number of respondents in the parent sample is 628; however, there are instances when the total cases shown are below 628. This is due to non-response or missing system.

role activity beliefs and parent's valence towards school were also measured. It is to be noted that parental role construction is used inter-changeably with role belief.

Parental Role Construction

Table 6

Parental Role Construction

	School identification				
Parental role construction	**Excellence is Our Aim College**	**Stream in the Desert Primary**	**Betta Mus' Come Primary**	**Goodwill High School**	**Total**
Weak	0	0	0	1	1
Undecided	7	5	4	11	27
Strong	152	209	79	160	600
Total	159	214	83	172	628

The respondents reported very strong parental motivational belief. This was attributed to very strong parental role belief (600 or 95.5%) and weak sense of parent efficacy (450 or 72%) at both the primary and secondary levels of the system. The latter will be discussed in the following section. There was relatively little difference in the results between the primary and secondary schools as all had very strong parental role belief, ranging from 160 or 93% (Goodwill High) to 209 or 97.6% (Stream in the Desert Primary). The results suggested that, regardless of the school level (Primary and Secondary) and school type (Traditional and Non-traditional), parents felt strongly and believed that it was their responsibility to help their children succeed in school.

The bivariate analysis between parental role construction and the demographic variables revealed no statistical significance. This study is, therefore, hypothesizing that parental role

belief (*I believe it is my responsibility to be involved in the education of my child*) may not be a function of the parent's social class background but rather attributable to other more powerful determinants within their social and psychological contexts, such as their life context and social expectation, among others. This finding is consistent with Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's work (1995, 1997, 2005).

Parental Role Construction: A Powerful Motivation for Parental Involvement

The insights from the focus groups substantiate the descriptive analysis and highlight some of the factors that influence parental role belief formation. The analysis revealed that parent's role belief, depending on the social class orientation, was motivated by: (a) their life experience; (b) a very high social regard for education and its role in facilitating social mobility or a better life; and (c) the need to maintain the status quo. The life experience of the parents emerged as an important theme. Regardless of social background, the parents emphasized the need to provide their children with the life that they (the parents) did not have. However, their motivation was driven from two different realities. For the parents from the low income background, there was the need to get out of the deprivation and instability that has characterized their lives, such that they emphasized that they may be "poor but ambitious" and desirous of changing their circumstance so that their children can have a better future. Parents from the more affluent backgrounds wanted to "maintain the status" of the family. The parents viewed their involvement in their children's education as an important means of securing their children's success and this "better life."

Additionally, parents expressed having the experience of "re-living their childhood aspirations through their children – a rebirth." What was evident is the parents' need for self-

actualization was also being transmitted through their children, reflecting transference of Maslow's pyramid of needs from parent to child.

At Streams in the Desert, this particular theme was evident in observations of a number of class situations. There is an unwritten policy at the school which allows parents to participate in the teaching and learning experience of their children. Parents were allowed to sit with their children in classes. This opportunity took parental involvement in the education of their children to a whole new level. This type of involvement gave parents the chance to experience school again through their children's experience, resulting in a unique bond with the school. The opportunity built trust between these parents and their children's teachers. Moreover, the parents were gaining important knowledge about the general operations of the school and, more specifically, the school's and class expectations for their child's learning. For the parents at Streams in the Desert, participating in this way in the schooling of their children was a major motivator. It made them feel important. This was a consistent message from the school administration to the parents.

This experience of parental involvement at Stream in the Desert is a good example of Hoover-Dempsey's (2005) assertion of important function of role theory in defining behaviour and expectations. In this regard, it is believed to have a strong influence on parental motivational belief. Role theory is defined as a socially constructed set of expectations which influences individuals to act in prescribed ways. In this case, the school's definition and expectation of parental involvement has helped to define parental involvement at the school. Stream in the Desert has made a concerted effort to make parental involvement a critical component of its teaching and learning support. This policy and practice has resulted in the overwhelming support of parents at the PTA and other school-based activities.

In contrast, at the other schools, the nature and quality of parental involvement that was encouraged and practiced at Stream in the Desert was not evident. In the case of Betta Mus' Come Primary, this may be attributed to the fact that the opportunities for this type of parental involvement were not in place due to limited resources at the school. Also, Stream in the Desert has benefited from a number of school improvement projects which focused on parenting interventions, such as parenting skills development workshops, volunteering and adult education programmes, as key points of improving student achievement. Unfortunately, Betta Mus Come has not been a recipient of any such government intervention. Finally, Stream in the Desert has been equipped with a school leadership that has placed emphasis on parental involvement as a critical school support. As a consequence, the school has facilitated meaningful parental involvement in the life of the school. The Guidance Counsellor plays an important role in developing and delivering an effective parental involvement programme, which has strengthened the quality of the parental involvement relationship and has increased the incidence of parental involvement at the school. Unfortunately, for Betta Mus Come, the limited resources and the absence of an effective parental involvement programme has resulted in the evident disparity in the nature and quality of parental involvement that exists there, when compared with Stream in the Desert.

The type of parental involvement observed at Stream in the Desert was not evident at the high schools. This may also be a function of the difference in the: (a) primary and secondary levels of education; (b) developmental stage of the students which demands a different type of parental involvement and (c) how parental involvement is defined at the high school level.

Parent's Perceived Sense of Efficacy to Help Their Children Succeed in School

Table 7

Parent's Perceived Sense of Parent Efficacy

	School identification				
Efficacy	**Excellence is Our Aim College**	**Stream in the Desert Primary**	**Betta Mus' Come Primary**	**Goodwill High School**	**Total**
Weak	127	169	52	102	450
Undecided	25	41	30	61	157
Strong	7	3	1	9	20
Total	159	213	83	172	627

The strong belief in parental role construction/belief (95.5%) did not translate into a similar result for the measurement of the construct parent's perceived sense of efficacy to help their children succeed in school (*I have the capacity to help my child succeed*). The data revealed that, across the schools levels parents identified themselves as having a weak sense of perceived parent efficacy to help their children succeed in school. Approximately 450 or 72% of the total number of parents sampled (650) reported weak perceived sense of efficacy. Additionally, it was noted that a considerable number of parents 157 or 23%, almost a quarter of the sampled parents, reported being "undecided" about their perceived sense of efficacy. When the results were compared across schools, variations were noted by school type. School type, in this instance, refers to the social class background of the institutions.

Parents with children attending the low achieving, low income schools at the primary and secondary levels - Betta Mus' Come (52 or 62%) and Goodwill High (102 or 59%) - reported

fewer parents with a weak sense of efficacy when compared to parents with children attending Stream in the Desert (169 or 79%), the average performing, low income school and the high achieving, high income school, Excellence Is Our Aim College (127 or 79%). However, it is noted that these same schools with fewer parents reporting a weaker perceived sense of efficacy- Stream in the Desert (36%) and Goodwill High schools (36%)- also had a higher proportion of their parents reporting being "undecided" about the perceived sense of efficacy. This result is indicating a lack of variability and indecision or uncertainty in the response of the parents. The results suggest that, despite the alpha reliability of .73, the validity of the item is questionable within a cross-culture context such as Jamaican context. The reliability may be masking problems with the validity of the item. The qualitative analysis will need to be engaged to gain insight into the varied experiences of the participants. There is also the need for further investigation to ensure the cultural relevance of the item, but also to ensure the internal validity of the item.

Bivariate Analysis: Parent Efficacy and Level of Education and Biological Parents

At the primary level, the bivariate analysis of parent efficacy and the demographic variables revealed statistically significant associations between parent efficacy level of education and biological parent. See Appendix E 1.1-1.2 for the respective results. The test of association between parent efficacy and level of education variable revealed a negative or inverse relationship (-.183). That is, as the level of educational attainment of the parent increases, the level of parent efficacy decreases. The coefficient of determination indicated that only 3.3% of the variance in the parent efficacy is attributed to educational level.

The finding is suggesting that the schools with parents who had the lowest level of educational attainment had fewer parents reporting a low level of perceived sense of efficacy to

help their children succeed in schools. This correlation analysis is consistent with the descriptive analysis and was further supported by the parent profile. At the primary schools, when the levels of educational attainment of the parents were compared for the "highest level of education attained", 41 per cent of parents at Betta Mus' Come reported that they had attained only "less than high school education" when compared to 29 % of parents at Stream in the Desert in the same category.

This finding is also counter-intuitive but may be explained by the hypothesis that education and income level of the parent may not be a strong influence on parental efficacy. The findings are making the point that within the psychological and social context of involvement, there are other factors that have a more direct influence on the level of parental efficacy. The social location of the parents and the factors that define their social destinies may also provide evidence of this seeming anomaly. Further investigation in this area is warranted to explore the nature of these other factors.

Second, the T-test revealed that biological parents (2.1315) had a stronger sense of efficacy when compared to their non-biological counterparts (1.8304). Non-biological refers to guardians, step-parents and grandparents. The association was statistically significant (p-value < 0.05); however, it was weak (.133) with only 1.7% of the variance in parent efficacy attributed to biological parents. This finding may be attributed to the small number of "non-biological parents". Additional, the findings may also be explained by other demographic variables and attributes that influence the level of efficacy of biological parents. These other attributes may include age, gender, level of education, experience and also how these parents interact with the school and the child's teacher. Further studies are warranted to examine the influence of biological status of parents on the level the parent's sense of efficacy.

The qualitative data was quite instructive as it highlighted factors that may be contributing to: (i) the weak sense of perceived parent efficacy; (ii) the "undecided" responses; and (iii) the counter-intuitive finding of parent efficacy and the level of educational attainment of low SES parents.

First, parents from both the affluent and low SES background reported weak perceived sense of parent efficacy to help their children succeed. Both parents agreed that they did not feel equipped to help their children succeed because they were not aware of the specific or developmentally appropriate ways to help their children succeed. They also suggested that because of the ad hoc nature of their involvement, they could not really measure the nature and quality of their parental involvement behaviour. The parents from the low SES suggested that because they "don't have the education", they sometimes doubted their capacity to effectively advocate on behalf of their children. This doubt was also fuelled by their insecurity which was a product of how they were sometimes treated by teachers. Some parents recalled that "because they were not well "educated" that they were treated like "fools". The parents were adamant that, while they may not be "educated", they know what they want for their children: "better than what they (the parents) have achieved". As a consequence, they were not going to allow their socio-economic status prevent them from being involved in the education of their children.

Second, the parents from Betta Mus Come, Goodwill High School and Stream in the Desert had more parents reporting being "undecided" about their perceived sense of parent efficacy than their counterparts. This result underscores that there item was not able to solicit adequate variability from the parents. This suggests that the construct is unreliable within the cross-cultural context. The focus group provided some insight from the perspective of one of the schools as to a possible factor contributing to their ambivalence.

Given the exposure of parents at Stream in the Desert to on-going parental involvement programmes, it was expected that that the parents from this school would have reported a much stronger perceived sense of efficacy than the other schools. However, to the contrary many of the parents had low efficacy or were undecided. This result is suggesting that there may be some level of cognitive dissonance in the minds of the parents caused by doubt in their abilities and the challenging circumstances they face such as the relative levels of deprivation that surrounds their lives. Unlike their rural counter-parts who aspire to go to "city" where all the opportunities exist and where dreams are fulfilled, the parents from the inner city seem trapped in such deprivation. Many of these inner city parents are children of rural folk who have realized that the "dream" of city for them is really a "nightmare". They have become so "hopeless" for themselves but at the same time hoping that their children will have a better life. Unfortunately, these findings are suggestive in nature and must be further investigated.

Self-efficacy seems to be a product of the psychological and social context of the parent. The research is also highlighting the dual function of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in the process of self-efficacy development. In the case of the parents at Stream in the Desert, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation was not mutually exclusive; but were functioning separate and apart from each other, resulting in parents having doubts or being ambivalent about their capacity to help their children succeed. Based on the Hoover-Dempsey hypothesis, the role of invitation from others, specifically from the teachers, in the regard when self-efficacy is weak, can play a critical role in building parent efficacy through more direct interaction with the parents. Teachers can provide specific guidance to the parents and encouragement on how to best help them. This would result in high likelihood of positive parental involvement. The question then arises: (a) what is the role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in defining the perception and behaviour of

parents towards their involvement in the education of their children?; and (b) how can the school benefit from this knowledge so as to improve the likelihood of positive and sustained parental involvement? The exploration of these questions are beyond the purview of this paper; however, they are important enough to warrant further studies so as to have a better understanding of their function and influence on parental involvement behaviour .

While the test of association indicated no statistically significant associations between parent efficacy and the demographic variables at the secondary level, the qualitative data provides insights that give a better understanding of the psychological and social context of involvement at the secondary level and underscores the importance of doing further studies to explore the dynamics between the variables. This information is instructive because it illustrates the varied context of involvement and its influence on the perception and behaviour of parents at the primary and secondary levels. The parents at *Excellence is Our Aim High* provided insight into some of the factors contributing to their levels of parent efficacy. The parents stated that the high achieving nature of the school and its competitive environment made them feel frustrated and inadequate in helping their children maintain the academic standards. Some of the frustration and inadequacy may also be attributed to the fact that, at high school, children are not only learning. They are also going through a potentially turbulent stage of adolescent development which can be a challenging time for them, as well as, for their parents, as they negotiate their identity. Parents have to respond to these developmental challenges in their children, so the factors that militate against parent efficacy at the high school level are the school and the child/ adolescent.

Parents also doubted their knowledge content in terms of helping children and did not feel as if they were doing enough to help their children. Unfortunately, the opportunities for

parents to interact with the school, build their awareness of the school's expectations and the developmentally appropriate ways of parental involvement were limited. This has created an untenable situation at the school where, on one hand, the school is well-favoured by parents as it is seen as a sure way of securing their children's future; however, the parents did not always feel "welcomed" at the school. They felt as though they were interfering with the schooling process.

Categories of Parental Involvement: Role Belief and Valence

Table 8

Role Activity Belief

	School identification				
Role activity belief	**Excellence is Our Aim College**	**Stream in the Desert Primary**	**Betta Mus' Come Primary**	**Goodwill High School**	**Total**
Weak	0	0	0	1	1
Undecided	7	5	4	11	27
Strong	152	209	79	160	600
Total	159	214	83	172	628

Table 9

Valence Scale

	School identification				
Valence	**Excellence is Our Aim College**	**Stream in the Desert Primary**	**Betta Mus' Come Primary**	**Goodwill High School**	**Total**
Negative	4	7	0	4	15
Undecided	19	14	2	18	53
Positive	136	192	81	150	559
Total	159	213	83	172	627

The role belief and valence of parents were assessed to determine the category of parental involvement practiced across the schools. That is, parents were asked to identify whether they believed in active or passive involvement in the education of their children. The descriptive analysis, across the schools, revealed high scores in parental role belief (600, 96%) and valence towards school (559, 89%). The positive response rates may imply that parents support the active role of parents in a partnership-focused approach to parental involvement. This approach emphasizes the critical role of the parent and teachers assisting each other to support student development and learning.

However, in terms of the valence scores, a difference was noted in the responses between the primary and secondary schools, with the primary schools - Betta Mus' Come (81 or 97%) and Stream in the Desert (192, 90%) - accounting for higher scores than the secondary schools - Goodwill High School (150, 87%) and Excellence is Our Aim College (136, 86%). The difference between the primary schools is interesting and illustrates how the variables interact

and inform each other. This association will be discussed further. There was relatively no difference between the high schools.

Bivariate Analyses: Valence, Age Group, Biological Parents and Gender

The test of associations revealed statistically significant results between valence and age group, biological parents, employment and gender at the primary and secondary levels. At the primary school levels, statistically significant associations were revealed between valence, age group and biological parent. See Appendix E 2.1-2.2 for the respective results. Two statistical procedures were used in this analysis, namely ANOVA and T-test. The ANOVA results revealed a difference in the mean of valence and age-group. Parents in the 40-59 age cohort had a more positive disposition towards schooling than their counter-parts in the 20-29 (.32805) and 30-39 (.25571) age groups. The strength of association was, however, weak (.115). The co-efficient of determination indicated that only 1.3% of the variance in the parent's valence was attributed to age.

However, the T-test results showed that biological parents (4.4866) were likely to have a negative attitude towards schooling when compared to non-biological parents (4.6719). The strength of association was weak (0.105). The coefficient of determination revealed that only 1.1% of the variance in parent valence was attributed to the biological status of the parent.

At the Traditional (Excellence is Our Aim College), the T-test analysis indicated notable associations between valence and gender. See Appendix H 2.1. The result between valence and gender revealed notable associations. Male parents (4.5729) had a stronger valence or disposition towards schooling than their female counterparts (4.2653). The association was significant (p-value < 0.05); however it was weak (0.09). The coefficient of determination indicated that only

0.81% of the variance in valence can be attributed to gender. This finding is interesting given the notion that female parents are perceived to be more involved in the education of their children. This implies that there may be more powerful influences on valence that exist in the psychological and social context of involvement shaping the male parent's disposition towards school. Additionally, the variance in the gender response suggests that even though fathers are perceived to be "absent" from the parenting landscape, the father is very present making a positive contribution to the education of their children. This positive contribution may be influenced by the high social regard for education, his positive experience of schooling and also his current relationship with his child's school. The female parent, on the other hand, may have had a "bad" experience with her own schooling. She may also be facing other challenges in her current relationship with the child's schooling, such as competing responsibilities. Further studies are warranted to explore these issues.

Parents' Perceived Invitation from Others: School, Teacher and Child

Table 10

General Invitation From the School

General school invitation	Excellence is Our Aim College	Stream in the Desert Primary	Betta Mus' Come Primary	Goodwill High School
Infrequent	5	1	0	6
Undecided	40	13	6	42
Frequent	114	199	77	124
Total	159	213	83	172

General Invitation From the School

The variable parents' perceived invitation from others was used to determine the level of demand and opportunity for parental involvement from the school and, specifically, the teacher and child. However, the variable, specific invitation from child, was dropped from the analysis as it was not reliable. Overall, the results revealed a moderate perception of invitation from others. This was attributed to a confluence of the two constructs – frequent general invitation from the school (514, 82%) and infrequent specific invitation from the teacher (305, 49%). Variation in the results was noted across school levels.

The results of the general invitation from the school indicated that parents with children attending *Stream in the Desert* (199, 93 %) and *Betta Mus' Come* (77, 93 %) had more frequent invitations for involvement from the school when compared to *Excellence is Our Aim College* (114, 72%) and *Goodwill High School* (124, 72%). The results across the school levels revealed that the primary schools had far more invitation for involvement than their counter-parts. However, between schools, there was no variation. Across the schools, the test of association revealed no statistically significant associations. The qualitative analysis was, however, instructive and provided insights into the variations at the primary and secondary levels. Given the importance of the variable as defined in the conceptual framework of the study, further research will be necessary to provide empirical evidence of the dynamics and influence on the general invitation of the school on the motivation of parents to become involved in the education of their children.

The qualitative analysis suggested that the differentiation observed in the general invitation from the school at the primary level was attributed to three main factors. First, given the developmental stage of the child, the school's demand and opportunity for parental

involvement was evident. This was reflected in the welcoming environment for involvement and the constant invitation from school administrators and teachers. Second, there was consistent demand and opportunity for involvement from teachers and the school's administrators. The parents stated that they felt pleased that they were supported and valued. They were also pleased that the teachers had shown a genuine interest in their children. Third, the positive response of the school to parental involvement was an important motivator. The fact that these parents were involved in the education of their children, for example, coming to PTA meetings or volunteering at their child's school, made it more likely that the teachers would encourage these parents as opposed to those parents who were less involved.

However, at the secondary level, the parents reported that their level of involvement at the High school declined when compared to the primary level. It is suggested that the same factors that influenced parental involvement at the primary school level - (a) developmental stage of the child; (b) the demand and opportunity for involvement; and (c) the school's definition and general response of the school to parents and their involvement – under different conditions resulted in the variation observed between the primary and secondary schools. For example, given the change in the development stage of the child, the high school sees itself as helping to facilitate a level of independence in the student. In this regard, the high school did not encourage the same level of parental involvement as was practiced at the primary levels. Parental involvement, as defined by the high school, was limited to certain activities, such as formal PTA meetings and Parent-Teacher conferences.

Second, the level of demand and opportunity for involvement was infrequent. The school administrator at Excellence is Our Aim College advised that, even though encouraged, many of her staff members did not actively solicit parents to visit their child's class. As a matter of fact,

she emphasized that parent-teacher contact was limited. As a consequence, the demand and opportunity for parental involvement was also limited. It must be emphasized that the limited demand and opportunity for involvement may be a reflection that many of our schools feel that they don't have enough time to complete the curriculum much more to interact with parents in a meaningful way. It is unfortunate but many of our schools, both primary and secondary, are not designed for meaningful and sustained parental involvement.

Third, the school's definition of parental involvement at the high school level is often in conflict with the views of the parents. Many of the parents come to High school with the primary school model of parental involvement as their reference. Third, given the school's restrictive definition of parental involvement, the limited demand and opportunity for involvement, parental involvement and the nature of the school's response to their involvement, it is no wonder why parental involvement at the high school level is in decline. In the final analysis, the general invitation from school for parental involvement seemed to be closely linked to the school's level, the developmental stage of the child and the demand and opportunity for involvement from the school.

Specific Demand from the Teacher

Table 11

Specific Invitation from the Teacher

	School identification				
Specific teacher invitation	**Excellence is Our Aim College**	**Stream in the Desert Primary**	**Betta Mus' Come Primary**	**Goodwill High School**	**Total**
Infrequent	131	70	18	86	305
Undecided	18	55	29	33	135
Frequent	10	89	36	51	186
Total	159	214	83	170	626

Across the school levels and types, the results revealed that there was more infrequent demand for parental involvement from the teacher (305 or 49%). This is in addition to 135 parents (22%) who were "undecided." This would contribute to a high level of moderate or infrequent invitation reported by (440, 71%), comparable to frequent invitation from the school (186, 29%). Infrequent demand for involvement from teachers was in stark contrast to the general invitation from the school which was reported as 514 or 82% of all parents reported frequent invitation from the school. Infrequent invitation from the teacher as reported by parents varied across and between school levels. The high schools (Excellence is Our Aim, 131 or 82%) and (Goodwill High, 86 or 50%) reported more infrequent demand for involvement when compared to their counter-parts at the primary level (Stream in the Desert, 70 or 32%) and (Betta Mus' Come, 18 or 21%). However between schools, the teachers at Goodwill High and Betta Mus' Come were more likely to invite parents than their counterparts at Excellence is Our Aim

and Stream in the Desert. These findings are counter-intuitive given the profile of Goodwill High and Betta Mus Come.

It can be hypothesized that the nature and quality of parental involvement behaviour, especially at the high school level, may have influenced by the teacher's perception and response to parental involvement. For example at *Excellence is Our Aim College* (the high achieving, high income secondary school), the parents reported that the school encouraged parental involvement, for example, fund-raising efforts and parent-teacher conferences etc; however in other instances, the school encouraged a sense of independence among the students. This resulted in parental involvement being restrained. Parents also described a sense of ambivalence or contradiction which has contributed to a level of "frustration." Moreover, parents suggested that teachers did not invite parents because that was like "inviting trouble." This response was quite understandable given the fact that violence again teachers and parents "giving teachers a hard time" were not an uncommon occurrence. Teachers were inclined to protect themselves and their space.

The teachers were of a different view. They believed that parents, at this level of the child' development, were already knowledgeable about their parental role. Consequently, the teachers did not feel it was their role to demand involvement and, therefore, there was no consistent effort by the teachers to carry out this task. Paradoxically, when parents did not adequately participate, teachers viewed their level of involvement as a "lack of interest."

At the primary level, it was noted that parental involvement is given higher regard when compared to the secondary level. Notwithstanding, the descriptive analysis revealed that the parents at Stream in the Desert reported infrequent specific teacher demand for parental involvement. The answer to this discrepancy may lie in the fact that teachers were finding it

challenging to actualize parental involvement practices because of competing responsibilities and the structure of the school's agenda. From the parent's perspective, the inconsistency between general and specific invitation for involvement was not necessarily only due to insufficient invitation from teachers. The parents advised that they selected "never" on the survey because they did not want to give the impression that a teacher had to tell them to do what they considered their primary responsibility-become involved in their child's education. As a matter of fact, if a teacher had to tell a parent to participate in the education of their children, it was suggesting that the parent was not living up to their responsibility. This would be "shameful" and an "embarrassment." It is acknowledged that there was also a flaw noted in the instrument as the instrument did not measure what was intended. The questions in this section of the questionnaire were misinterpreted by the parents, resulting in "untrue" responses. The scale, within the Jamaican context, was not valid. Given the flaw in the instrument, the analysis is subject to challenge. Further research is warranted to fully explore this experience.

This increased awareness and high regard for their parental role was a direct result of parenting education and skills development and family support programmes which have been instituted by the school with the support of the business community. These same programmes were also linked to the strong sense of parental role construction. As a result, the teacher's demand for involvement has been made redundant; however, it must be noted that a ripple effect of this decision is that the quality of parental involvement may be compromised because the invitation for parental involvement does not only refer to just a demand for involvement, it also refers to opportunities for parent-teacher engagement into discussion about the child and the provision of specific information on the school's expectations, instruction and guidance on

developmentally-appropriate involvement strategies to support the child's development and learning.

While parents' reports of specific teacher invitation for parental involvement was low, the data also revealed that Goodwill High and Betta Mus' Come, schools defined as low-achieving and low income, reported more frequent invitation for involvement. This situation underscores a critical feature of the Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler model. That is, the decision of parents to become involved in the education of their children is the product of a dynamic and interactive link between process and context variables, resulting in possible variations in parental involvement behaviour. In this case, there is an obvious link between the general invitation from the school and specific invitation from the teacher and the other process and context variables. Additionally, the dynamic and interactive nature of the model is also highlighted in the findings of the high schools. For example, the results of the general invitation from schools revealed that Excellence is Our Aim and Goodwill had the same level of infrequent invitation. But when this finding is compared to the finding of specific teacher demand, it is revealed that Excellence Is Our Aim and Goodwill High had variations. Excellence is Our Aim had more infrequent demand. Low teacher invitation for involvement has resulted in the inadequacy of specific guidance and instruction from teachers concerning developmentally-appropriate parental involvement strategies and the sustainability of parental involvement, especially at the secondary level. Based on the conceptual framework, parental involvement is likely to decline within this environment because invitation from others has the strongest effect on parental involvement decision-making when parental role construction is strong and perceived sense of parent efficacy is moderate or low. As we have observed, the secondary level already has two strikes against it: moderate perceived sense of parent efficacy and low or infrequent teacher invitation for

involvement. Hence, the decline in parental involvement at the secondary level is not surprising. This finding underscored the dynamic nature of the Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler hypothesis, the link between the process variables and the broader context of involvement that is specific to the schools.

The school creates the context that defines how teachers behave towards parents. The school administrators and teachers are important determinants of the parental involvement behaviour, which may include a wide range of home or school and home & school based involvement (total involvement). In this case, they promote a culture in the schools that may encourage positive parental involvement. Additionally, the parents described their relationship with the school as a "family" that was supporting of their parenting knowledge and skills development. This statement can be substantiated from the observations of the PTA meeting. At the lower-achieving schools, there was a "familial bond" between the school and the parents. It was not uncommon to see the principal and parents hugging. The school was also viewed as giving their children a "proper future". At the affluent high, a different bond was observed best described as "transactional". It almost seemed that there was a line between the parents and the school. They were very "professional" with each other. It is suggested that the tone of the parent-teacher relationship at the affluent school may have had a profound impact on the nature and quality of the parent-teacher relationship which has influenced the attitude of parents and teachers towards each other. In the final analysis, there needs to be a concerted effort to re-define our schools to become more welcoming of parental involvement. This may be one of the factors needed to increase the incidence of parental involvement, especially at the secondary level.

Bivariate Analysis: Specific Teacher Demand, Gender and Union Status

Tests of association were conducted and revealed statistically significant outcomes at the primary and secondary levels. See Appendix E 3.1 and H 3.1 for the respective tests of associations. At the primary level, the bivariate analysis, using chi-square, revealed an association between specific teacher demand and gender. Female parents (108, 43%) were more likely to receive frequent demand for involvement from the teachers; while, conversely, the male parents (17, 40%) were more likely to receive infrequent invitation for parental involvement from the teacher. The association was significant (p-value < 0.05); however, the association was very weak (0.86). The coefficient of determination revealed that only 0.8% of the variance in specific teacher demand at the primary level was attributed to gender. The finding reiterates a gender bias towards female parents which is informed by the notion of the feminization of parenting resulting in the infrequent demand and opportunity for involvement by male parents.

The paper acknowledges the involvement of fathers in this study. Even though small in number, there were some dedicated fathers who broke the stereotype of the "worthless father" to play active roles in the education of their children. During the focus group discussions with fathers from *Stream in the Desert and Betta Mus' Come*, the stereotypical non-involved father was acknowledged but the point was made that not all males are disinterested in playing active roles in their children's education. One male parent who described himself as "Faithful Forsythe" expressed that at first, he felt like he was a minority because women are more visibly involved in the education of their children than the fathers. He stated: "come to our monthly PTA meetings and you can see what I am talking about. Many times the teachers would treat me as though I was representing my wife. But you see I am a single-male raising my three children". I need to be involved (Comments from focus group session, March 15, 2006). The fathers reported that

they had to be very assertive and direct. Once they had established themselves, the teachers were more accommodating. This result points to a speculation that inadequate involvement of fathers in the education of their children may be a function of the defined role and expectation which the teachers are reflecting or facilitating in their relationship with the fathers.

At the Traditional High school (see Appendix H 3.1), the ANOVA result revealed a difference in the mean of specific teacher invitation and union status. The parents in common law relationships were more likely to receive infrequent invitation for involvement than their counterparts in single parent relations (1.39872). The relationship was a statistically significant (p-value< 0.05); however, the association was weak (.193). The coefficient of determination suggests that only 3.73% of the variance in specific teacher demand can be explained by union status. A social class bias may also be evident here. However, further investigation is necessary to test the hypothesis.

Life Context: Knowledge and Skill & Time and Energy

Table 12

Life Context: Knowledge and Skill & Time and Energy

	School identification				
Knowledge & skills	**Excellence is Our Aim College**	**Stream in the Desert Primary**	**Betta Mus' Come Primary**	**Goodwill High School**	**Total**
Weak	6	1	1	8	16
Undecided	37	20	5	47	109
Strong	116	192	77	117	502
Total	159	213	83	172	627

The life context variable was measured by two sub-scales, knowledge and skill, and time and energy, with the aim to explore whether parents thought they had enough time and skill to help their children succeed. The life context variable, when considered with the other process variables, helps the parent to determine the most appropriate and convenient form of parental involvement behaviour.

Knowledge and skill.

In general, parents reported a life context which enabled their involvement in the education of their children; however, variations were noted. Across the school levels, parents with children at the primary levels - Betta Mus' Come (77 or 93%) and Stream in the Desert (192 or 90%) reported having more knowledge and skill to help their children succeed than their counterparts at Excellence is Our Aim College (116 or 72 %) and Goodwill High School (117 or 68%). Betta Mus Come had the higher scores in this category.

This is interesting as the profile shows that Betta Mus' Come had lowest level of educational attainment among all the schools. According to the parent profile, 41% of parents with children attending Betta Mus'Come reported having "less than high school" as the highest level of educational attainment when compared to parents at Stream in the Desert (29%), Goodwill High (33%), Excellence Is Our Aim College (3%). It can be deduced from the analysis that parents at Betta Mus' Come perceive that, despite the educational attainment, they have the capacity to help their children succeed. This finding underscores the dynamic and interactive nature of the Hoover-Dempsey model and hypothesis by illustrating process and context variables that is the parent's perceived capacity *(I have the capacity to help my child succeed)*, the actual reality of their situation (l*evel of education and the perception that the parent's have*

the knowledge and skill to help their children succeed) and the resulting influence on parental involvement behaviour.

The qualitative analysis also reveals that parents of children at the primary level could assist their children regardless of their level of educational attainment. The parent's level of efficacy and the more supportive environment at the school played a role in helping the parents to be better able to assist their children in this regard. This is a good example of the process variables- parental role construction, parent self-efficacy and invitation from others- interacting and informing each other to produce a desired likelihood of positive parental involvement when compared to the other schools. It is also important to emphasize that the process variables themselves are situated within a broader context of the psychological and social context of involvement. Further examination of the above-mentioned relationship is actual is warranted to have a better understanding of this phenomenon.

The bivariate analysis revealed no statistically significant associations between knowledge and skill and status variables at the primary level.

Further analysis revealed that when the high schools were compared, the parents at Excellence is Our Aim (116, 72%) were no more likely to report that they had knowledge and skill to help their child than the parents at Goodwill High School (117, 68%). This finding is also interest when we look at the educational background of the parents at the two high schools. The parents at Excellence is Our Aim, approximately 53%, reported having tertiary level education as their highest level of education.

There were statistical significant associations between knowledge and skill and biological parent, level of education and gender at the high school level.

Bivariate analysis: Knowledge and skill, biological parents, level of education and gender.

Tests of association observed findings of interest at the Traditional (Excellence is Our Aim College) between knowledge and skill, biological parent, level of education and between the knowledge and skill and gender at the Upgraded High schools (Goodwill High School). See Appendices H 4.1-4.2 and K 4.1 for the respective tests of association. At the Traditional High school, in the bivariate analysis of knowledge and skill and biological parent, using T-test, revealed that biological parents (3.8777) had more knowledge and skill to help their children succeed in school than their non-biological counterparts. The association was statistically significant (p-value < 0.05); however, the strength of the association was weak (.221). The coefficient of determination revealed that 5% of the variance in knowledge and skill can be explained by the biological status of the parents. The parent profile substantiates this finding by illustrating that the majority of parents with children attending the Traditional School (90%) were the biological parents who had tertiary education as the highest level of educational attainment. These parents were also gainfully employed. These attributes point to the obvious: the biological parents have the educational capacity to help their children succeed.

Additionally at the Traditional (Excellence is Our Aim), Spearman's rho also revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship between knowledge and skill and education with positive association. The correlation was weak (.165) with only 3% of the variance in knowledge and skill attributable to education. The findings suggest that as the level of education of the parents increases, their knowledge and skill to help their children succeed also increases; however, given the weak association. This finding is inconsistent with the descriptive statistics and counter-intuitive. The results may be attributed to the fact the correlation analysis did not

separate out the demographic characteristics by school. Instead, the statistical analysis only looked overall at the relationship between the characteristics and responses of the participants. This is a limitation of the sample size.

The qualitative data provided a most interesting insight into the perception of parents at the high school level and their adequacy to help their children succeed. While it supports the findings of the descriptive analysis, it is inconsistent with the correlation analysis. Parents at the high school level reported that their level of education did not provide them with adequate knowledge and skill to comprehend the advanced nature of the high school curriculum which, in turn, limited their capacity to help their children succeed in school. At Excellence is Our Aim College, while a large proportion of parents reported having tertiary level education (53%) as the highest level of their educational attainment, the parents bemoaned the fact that they felt unprepared to help their children stay ahead in the competitive school environment. Additionally, parents from Goodwill High School suggested that their low educational attainment (approximately 45% with "less than high school education" being their highest level), made it challenging for them to help their children, especially when their children are preparing for external examinations.

The inadequacy of parent knowledge and skill to help their child succeed may not only be due to the parent's level of education or inability to comprehend the curriculum. Additionally, the limited interaction between parent and teacher, as shown in the low level specific teacher invitation for involvement at both levels of the school system, is denying parents additional information, such as school's responsibilities, expectation of parents and the grade level curriculum, or skills which can be used to help their children in school. It can be hypothesized that the perceived inadequacy of the parents at Excellence is Our Aim may be attributed to their

low level of perceived self-efficacy, coupled with the infrequent demand and opportunity for involvement and the culture of parental involvement which may define the perception and behaviour of teachers and parents. The end result is possibly a low likelihood of positive parental involvement. This finding is illustrates the dynamics interface of the process variables, the context of involvement that is specific to the school and the possible likelihood of positive parental involvement.

The test of association, using T-test at the Upgraded High School, revealed that female parents had more knowledge and skill to help their children succeed in school than their male counterparts. The association was statistically significant (p-value < 0.05). The strength of association was however very weak (0.109). The coefficient of determination indicated that 1.2 % of variance in knowledge and skill was attributed to gender. A number of factors can be used to explain this result: (a) in general, female parents are more involved in the schooling of their children; and therefore because of their interaction with the school, female parents were more knowledgeable about their child's learning goals; (b) the participation of female parents at Goodwill High in the survey was 80%. These parents were mostly unemployed (27.4%) and self-employed (19%) when compared to similar statistics at Excellence is Our Aim College which revealed that 62% of parents from this school were employed full-time. It can be hypothesized that by mere virtue of their number in the sample and the time available due to their employment status, the female parents at Goodwill High School had more opportunities to interact with their child's teacher and are more aware of the school's expectations; and (c) female parents may have a higher level of educational attainment than their male counterparts. In Jamaica, females tend to outperform male students in educational attainment at all levels of system.

Time and Energy

Table 13

Time and Energy

	School identification				
Time & energy	**Excellence is Our Aim College**	**Stream in the Desert Primary**	**Betta Mus' Come Primary**	**Goodwill High School**	**Total**
Infrequent	8	4	2	7	21
Undecided	49	26	16	45	136
Frequent	102	183	65	120	470
Total	159	213	83	172	627

Time and energy variables indicated that the primary level schools, Stream in the Desert (183, 86%) and Betta Mus' Come (65, 78%) had higher scores in this category than their secondary counterparts – Goodwill High School (120, 70%) and Excellence is Our Aim College (102, 62%).

Bivariate analysis: Time and energy and age group.

The ANOVA revealed a difference in mean between time and energy and age group at the primary levels. See Appendix E 4.1. The difference was statistically significant (p-value < 0.05). Parents in the age category 20-29 had more time and energy to help their children succeed than their counterparts in the age category 40-59 (.29977). The strength of association was weak (.128) with only 1.6% of the variance in time and energy attributed to age group. The parent profile indicated that a more than half of all the parents in the age category (20-29) at the primary level (Stream in the Desert) were self-employed (26.1%) and unemployed (25.1%). This availability of time provided the opportunity to be more involved in home and school-based

activities than their secondary level counterparts who were mostly full-time employed. With respect to energy, these younger parents also had youth on their side and would have had one child at this age. In the event that they had more than one child, the older children or the other member of the extended family in these low income families provided their parents with assistance in taking care of their siblings.

Home-Based Involvement

Table 14

Home-Based Involvement

	School identification				
Home-based involvement	**Excellence is Our Aim College**	**Stream in the Desert Primary**	**Betta Mus' Come Primary**	**Goodwill High School**	**Total**
Inadequately involved	21	4	1	14	40
Adequately Involved	77	59	27	66	229
Highy involved	61	150	55	92	358
Total	159	213	83	172	627

Parental involvement behaviour refers to the involvement of parents in the education of children. This involvement can be in the form of home, school and both home and school involvement, otherwise referred to as total involvement. Parents determine the form of parental involvement behaviour based on the interaction of the psychological and social factors discussed in the previous sections. The results revealed that overall parents were more involved in home-based involvement than in school based and total involvement.

Parents from *Stream in the Desert* (150 or 70%), *Betta Mus Come* (55 or 66%) and *Goodwill High* (92, 54%) were more "highly involved" in home-based activities when compared to parents from *Excellence is Our Aim College* (61, 38%). For many parents, especially the low income parents, home-based involvement is more convenient, especially when there are competing responsibilities at home and work which would limit their participation in school-based activities. It is also suggested that parents may feel more comfortable and in control at home, as opposed to the school environment which can be so intimidating to many of the parents who may be illiterate. The nature of the student at the average and low achieving school require greater supervision to ensure success. Therefore, their parents are more likely to be involved in the home-based involvement where they can satisfy the needs of their children. On the other hand, the affluent parents, may not see the need to become involved in home-based activities because their children are highly motivated and don't require so much supervision as their counter-parts at the low achieving schools.

Bivariate analysis: Home-based involvement and number of children.

The test of association revealed a statistically significant association (p-value < 0.05) at the primary level between number of children and home-based involvement. See Appendix E 5.1. However, the association was negative or inverse in nature. In other words, as the number of children increases, parental involvement in home-based involvement decreases. The correlation was, however, weak (-0.159). The correlation of determination indicated that only 2.5% of the variance in home-based involvement was attributed to number of children. It can be hypothesized that the choice of parental involvement behaviour at Stream in the Desert may have been influenced by competing demands at work. The profile highlights that 48% of parents in the school's sample were employed with an average of three children. The type of employment may

also contribute to this situation. The school-community profile of this school indicated that many of these parents were employed as security guards, nurse's aids and hair dressers. As a consequence, parents may still find it challenging to provide quality time and energy to engage in a meaningful way with their children in home-based activities.

The qualitative analysis highlighted that parents with children at Betta Mus Come emphasized the challenge of having limited home-based involvement because of the number of children and competing responsibilities. As a coping mechanism, the parents had to solicit the assistance of their older children, neighbour or extended family members. However, there is a growing trend where parents leave their younger children with older siblings. The consequent effect is that the older sibling becomes burdened with taking care of their younger siblings. Unfortunately, there has been reported incidence where tragedy has occurred due to this practice.

School-Based Involvement

Table 15

School-Based Involvement

School-based involvement	Excellence is Our Aim College	Stream in the Desert Primary	Betta Mus' Come Primary	Goodwill High School	Total
Inadequately involved	154	171	56	166	547
Adequately involved	5	37	24	5	71
Highly involved	0	5	3	1	9
Total	159	213	83	172	627

Eighty-seven percent of parents from across the schools reported that they were "inadequately involved" in school-based activities. Variation in the results was observed with the high schools - Goodwill High (166 or 96%) and Excellence is Our Aim College (154 or 84%) - reporting higher incidences of "inadequate involvement" in school-based activities when compared to parents with children attending and Stream in the Desert (171 or 80 %) and Betta Mus Come (56 or 54%). No statistically significant associations were noted between the dependent and the independent variables.

The qualitative analysis provided some insights into the findings. At both levels, it revealed that the high incidence of inadequate involvement of parents in school based activities was attributed to a number of factors. First, some of the parents in the focus groups discussions stated that the PTA most important school-based involvement activities. However, for many of the parents, the PTA meetings were not very productive. They were a "waste of time". The principal sometimes "spoke down to them" as opposed to speaking "to them". Also PTA meetings are not well organized. In an observation of a meeting at one of the low-income schools, it was obvious that the PTA president was not prepared. The customary protocol of PTA meetings was not observed. Therefore, the parents were not apprised of the objective of the meeting. The meeting was very ad hoc and soon degenerated into a "free for all". A few parents were noted leaving the meeting obviously upset. The parents felt marginalized. They did not feel as though they were a part of the decision-making process regarding things that would affect their children. One parent said:

> I only come to PTA so that they can't say I am not involved in my child's education. But really, I wish that I could have more involvement in really deciding the quality of my child's education (Parent Focus Group Discussion).

Second, some of the parents, especially those from the low income schools expressed the view that the involvement in some school-based activities was too costly and limits their involvement in educational excursions with their children.

Third, the parents also attributed their inadequate involvement in school-based activities to issues related to their life's context (time and energy). For example, the inflexible nature of their work schedule conflicted with the scheduling of school-based activities. For many of the parents, given the nature of their jobs, leaving to go to a PTA is not convenient. Fourth, effective communication between the school and parents can sometimes pose a great challenge to effective and sustained parental involvement.

Finally, in many cases, the inadequate levels of parental involvement described in the aforementioned are of major concern. The reason is that when parents participate in school-based activities, they have the opportunity to become more aware of the school's expectations and the learning goals of the curriculum. This knowledge is important because it promotes greater understanding of the process of education at the child's school and better equips the parent to support the child's learning. The results are also indicating that parents may not be benefiting from these opportunities, especially at the secondary level. Low levels of school-based involvement at the high school level may be a contributory factor to the decline of parental involvement. Therefore, an important step in getting parents more involved in the education of their children resides with the quality of the school-based involvement, for example, the PTA meetings.

Total Involvement Behaviour

Table 16

Total Involvement

	School identification				
Total involvement	**Excellence is Our Aim College**	**Stream in the Desert Primary**	**Betta Mus' Come Primary**	**Goodwill High School**	**Total**
Inadequately involved	61	16	4	166	247
Adequately involved	98	190	75	5	368
Highly involved	0	7	4	1	12
Total	159	213	83	172	627

Approximately 60% of parents sampled from across the schools reported that they were "adequately involved" in total involvement in their child's education. This meant, parents were involved in both home and school-based activities. The parents of Stream in the Desert (190 or 89%) and Betta Mus' Come (75 or 89%) were of the perception that they were more "adequately involved" in total involvement than Excellence is Our Aim College (98 or 55%) and Goodwill High (5 or 3%). Notable variations were observed with parents at the primary school being more involved in this category than their counterparts.

Bivariate analysis: Total involvement, age group and gender.

The bivariate analysis revealed significant associations between total involvement and age group and gender at the secondary level. At the Traditional High School (see Appendix H 7.1-7.2), the results of the bivariate analysis of total involvement behaviour and age group, using

ANOVA, revealed that parents in the 30-39 (.87548) and 40-59 (.87456) were more likely to be adequately involved in both home and school based activities than their counter-parts in the 20-29 age cohort. The older age group, based on the parent profile, are a significant proportion (94%) of the overall parent sample. The association was statistically significant with a (p-value < 0.05). The strength of association was weak (.152). The coefficient of determination indicated that 2.3% of the variance in total involvement could be explained by age.

With respect to the analysis on gender and total involvement (see Appendix 7.2), the test of association indicated that male parents (25, 78%) were more "adequately involved" in total involvement than their female counter-parts (73 or 58%). The association was significant (p-value < 0.05). The strength of the association was however weak (.162). The coefficient of determination indicated that only 2.6% of the variance in total involvement can be explained by gender.

This is an important findings because it suggests that while fathers only made up less than 20 per cent of the entire research sample, they were more "adequately involved" in total involvement behaviour, that is home and school based activities, than their female counterparts. This is an important note because it is suggesting that male parents are not "absent" when it comes to participating in the education of their children and should be consistently encouraged.

Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Hierarchical regression analysis was also conducted on the main constructs to determine which variable is a higher predictor of parental involvement decision-making – home-based, school-based and total involvement. The analyses were run on the Level 1 and Level 2 variables, using the following order of entry. Using the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) model, Level

1, block 1 included parents, motivational beliefs (parental role construction and efficacy); block 2 included parents' perception of invitation for involvement from others (general invitation from the school, specific teacher invitation, and specific child invitation); block 3 included parents' perceived life context (knowledge and skill and time and energy). The tables below summarize the results for the dependent and independent variables. The stepwise method was used. See appendices L, M, & N for the results of the respective analyses.

Table 17

Home-Based Involvement

Model	Adjusted R^2	Beta (Standard Coefficient)	F	Sig
1.Time and energy	.108	.172	76.314	.000
2. Role belief	.131	.145	47.958	.000
3. Specific teacher invitation	.145	.117	36.246	.000
4. Knowledge & skills	.150	.104	28.423	.000

The hierarchical regression analysis revealed that 10.4 % of variance in home-based involvement was accounted for by the model which was significant at the 99% confidence level as the p-values were less than 0.01. The model was significant (F= 28.423, p<0.005). The co-efficient of determination indicates that the predictor variables time and energy (B=.172, p-value< 0.001) was a higher predictor of home-based involvement, followed by parental role belief (B=.145, p-value< 0.001), specific teacher demand (B=.031, p-value< 0.005) and knowledge and skill (B=.104, p-value< 0.005). See Appendix L.

Table 18

School-Based Involvement

Model	Adjusted R^2	Beta (Standard Coefficient)	F	Sig
Knowledge & skills	.091	.201	63.488	.000
General invitation from school	.102	.128	36.486	.000
Specific teacher invitation	.109	.092	26.276	.000

The results for school based involvement indicated that the model accounts for 10.9 % of the variance. The model was significant (F=26.276, p-value< 0.005). The co-efficient of determination revealed that knowledge and skill (B=.201, p-value< 0.001) was a higher predictor of school-based involvement. The other predictor factors were general school invitation (B=.128 p-value< 0.005) and specific teacher invitation (B=0.92, p-value< 0.005). See appendix M.

Table 19

Total Involvement

Model	Adjusted R^2	Beta (Standard Coefficient)	F	Sig
Knowledge & skills	.170	.169	128.215	.000
Time & energy	.199	.164	78.380	.000
Specific teacher invitation	.216	.138	58.379	.000
Role belief	.225	.106	46.232	.000
General school invitation	.229	.090	37.937	.000

The analysis indicated that 22.9% of the variance in total involvement was attributed to the model. The model was significant (F=37.937, p<0.001). The co-efficient of determination indicates that the predictor variable with the strongest influence on the model was specific teacher invitation (B= .138, p<0.001). The other predictor variables contributing to the strength of the model are time and energy (B=.164, p<0.001), knowledge and skill (B=.169, p<0.005), role belief (B=.106, p<0.005) and general school invitation (B=.090, p<0.005). See appendix N.

The results support the hypothesis that the main construct- parental motivational beliefs, perceived invitation from others and life context- can reliably predict parental involvement decision-making. It also revealed that knowledge & skill, time and energy specific invitation from the teacher and parent role belief emerged as the higher predictors of total involvement behaviour. The other predictors of choice of parental involvement behaviours are highlighted in Table 20.

Table 20

Outcomes of Predictor Variables on Parental Involvement Behaviours

Home-based involvement	School-based involvement	Total involvement
Time and energy	Knowledge and skill	Knowledge and skill
Parental role belief	General school invitation	Time and energy
Knowledge and skill	Specific invitation from teacher	Specific invitation from teacher
Specific invitation from teacher		Parental role belief

The results reinforced the perspectives highlighted by the parents and teachers in their reports on parental involvement. Additionally, the study illustrates the power of parental motivation and the invitation from other, specifically the teacher, and the parent's life context as important factors to consider when addressing the experience of parental involvement in education in Jamaica. The study also underscores the critical part the school can play to facilitate effective, engaging and sustained parental involvement. The school has a leadership role to play in this regard.

Profile of Teacher Sample

Table 21 provides a profile of the teacher sample by school and selected status variables. Similar to the parent profile, the information has been drawn from the research analysis to provide a better understanding of the context that may influence teacher belief and behaviour towards parental involvement. Teacher experience across the schools is also notably similar. Attention is drawn to the relatively young age of teachers across the schools, the preponderance of female teachers in the system, the significant number of teachers with degrees at the high

performing, high income school when compared to the high number of untrained teachers and teachers with diplomas at the low performing, low income school.

Table 21

Profile of Teacher Sample

N=100

Schools	Age (%)			Gender (%)		Area	Level of education (%)			Average years of teaching	Average years of teaching at this school
	20-30	31-40	41-50	M	F		Degree	Diploma	Pre-trained		
Stream in the Desert Primary	11.8	33.3	15.2	18.8	68.8	Urban (inner city)	43.8	50.0	6.3	16.0	12.0
Betta Mus' Come Primary	23.5	29.4	23.5	20.0	80.0	Rural	7.7	76.9	15.4	15.1	12.9
Excellence is Our Aim College	27.3	33.3	15.2	31.3	68.8	Urban (inner city)	86.2	6.9	6.9	15.4	12.7
Goodwill High School	12.9	32.7	27.6	22.6	77.4	Urban (inner city)	38.7	51.6	9.7	14.8	10.0

Table 22

Summary of Teacher Responses

Schools	Number of questionnaires distributed	Number of questionnaires collected	Rate of response
Stream in the Desert Primary	60	21	32%
Betta Mus' Come Primary	17	17	100%
Goodwill High School	85	29	34%
Excellence is Our Aim College	77	33	43%
Total	**239**	**100**	**41%**

Findings of the Teacher Analysis

The *Teacher Involving Parent* questionnaire sought to examine the parental involvement in education from the perspectives of the teacher. Specific focus was centered on exploring the belief of teachers about parent involvement and how this perception influences the attitude of teachers towards parental involvement and actual practice of parental involvement by parents and teachers. The analysis was conducted by examining six variables namely (a) teachers' belief about parental involvement, (b) teacher's belief about self-efficacy, (c) teacher's report about parent efficacy to help their children succeed in school, (d) teacher's belief about the importance of parental involvement practice, (e) teacher's report about parental involvement, and (f) teacher's report of invitation to parental involvement. Due to the small sample size, only descriptive analyses were conducted. It is also to be noted that the variables, teacher belief about parental involvement, teacher's belief about self-efficacy, teacher's report about parent efficacy to help their child succeed in school, had low reliabilities scores of .52, .42 and .33, respectively.

A decision was taken not to drop the variables as they make up a critical component of the social context of parental involvement. Additionally, dropping the variables would also create a void in the framework and analysis of the belief system of teachers towards parental involvement. The focus of the analysis is therefore qualitative and will provide an insight into the perception of teachers about parental involvement and its consequent influence actual parental involvement practices. The findings are indicative and included to underscore the need for further analysis into these variables to better understand their dynamics and influence on the decision of parents to become involved in the education of their children.

Table 23

Teacher's Belief About Parental Involvement

	School identification				
Teacher's belief about parental involvement	**Excellence is Our Aim College**	**Stream in the Desert Primary**	**Betta Mus' Come Primary**	**Goodwill High School**	**Total**
Undecided	3	2	2	1	8
Strong	30	17	15	30	92
Total	33	19	17	31	100

Across the schools sampled, the findings indicated that teachers had a strong belief about parental involvement. Goodwill High School (30, 96%) accounted for the highest response. However, there was little variability across the other schools. This may suggest that, regardless of the socio-economic context of the schools, teachers were of the view that parental involvement was an important element of school life because it can contribute to student and overall school success. Additionally, parental involvement can help teachers be "more effective"

with students. Therefore, it is a partnership in which schools have a leading role in helping parents to become more appropriately involved in the education of their children. The teachers were also of the view that parents want to become involved in the education of their children. The teacher's response to this variable is consistent with the parent's response about parental involvement. It suggests a consensus around parental involvement and its role in schooling.

Table 24

Teacher Self-Efficacy for Teaching

	School identification				
Teacher's self-efficacy for teaching	**Excellence is Our Aim College**	**Stream in the Desert Primary**	**Betta Mus' Come Primary**	**Goodwill High School**	**Total**
Weak	2	0	0	0	2
Undecided	30	19	17	31	97
Strong	1	0	0	0	1
Total	33	19	17	31	100

Across the school levels and types, a significant proportion of teachers (97, 97%) reported that they were "undecided" about their perceived sense of efficacy for teaching, with variations in the scores noted by school type. At Stream in the Desert (19), Betta Mus' Come (17) and Goodwill High School (31) - average and low achieving, low income schools, located in the inner-city and rural areas – 100% of the teachers were "undecided;" at Excellence is Our Aim College (30, 90 %) - a high achieving, high income school, situated in the urban area – the percentage who were undecided was lower but not by a great numerical margin (30:33). Based on the results, the survey was not able to derive variations in the responses. This underscores that

the construct was not reliable (.42). Further revision of the "teacher efficacy section" of the instrument is warranted to ensure the reliability of the items. However, the finding is instructive and suggests that the factors influencing teacher's efficacy appear to be different depending on a host of factors that are situated in the varying local conditions of the schools. The discussion below provides further insights into these conditions.

The teachers from Stream in the Desert, Betta Mus' Come and Goodwill High School have acknowledged that their perceived sense of teacher efficacy was being influenced by challenging factors external to the classroom. Teachers had no control over many of these factors. The exigencies included the relative instability of the low-income family environment and its effect on the students' development and schooling; violence; poverty; issues related to their profession such as their perceived inexperience as teachers (based on their age and average years of teaching at the current school); the level of achievement and quality of student outcomes; and the lack of teacher or professional support in their schools. Given the challenging social background of the students attending Stream in the Desert, Betta Mus' Come and Goodwill High School, it is understandable why a teacher in this context may feel "helpless." It is this "helplessness" which may influence the teacher's perceived sense of efficacy and, by extension, student success. These sentiments were also echoed by the representative from the Guidance and Counselling Unit of the Ministry of Education who reiterated that the teachers at the schools in the vulnerable areas are being challenged on a daily basis by large class sizes and the myriad of issues many of these children come to school burdened with. For example, many of these students come from homes with just one parent. Usually, it is a young, single-female family. These households experience significant levels of instability because the environment and conditions to nurture proper child development is not there. Also these students live in

communities that are violence-prone so they come to school traumatized by crime and violence in their communities; some are malnourished; and others need guidance. The teachers, then, have to assume a number of roles for a class of 25 to 37 children. The teachers are challenged but they make the best of their circumstances.

On the other hand, the situation at Excellence is Our Aim College was somehow different because of the different nature of the contextual factors influencing their perceived sense of parent efficacy. For example, the teachers suggested that the lower sense of moderate efficacy was due to the high achieving nature of the school and the outstanding success they were having with their students. The higher level of education of the teachers and the professional support provided by the school for teachers, especially young teachers, have increased their level of confidence and empowered them to deal with the challenges of the classroom. Additionally, the nature of the family situation of the students attending Excellence is Our Aim College was not as volatile as at the other schools. The results are strongly suggesting the influence of external factors. Future research in this area is needed to identify these factors. This is important since it has been deduced that teacher efficacy is an important influence on parental involvement behaviour.

Table 25

Teacher's Belief About Parents' Efficacy to Help Their Children Succeed in School

	School identification				
Teacher's belief about parent's efficacy to help their children succeed in school	**Excellence is Our Aim College**	**Stream in the Desert Primary**	**Betta Mus' Come Primary**	**Goodwill High School**	**Total**
Weak	0	1	2	1	4
Undecided	33	17	14	28	92
Strong	0	1	1	2	4
Total	33	19	17	31	100

The results from across the school level and type revealed that a high number of teachers reported that they were "undecided" about parent efficacy to help their children succeed in school. The survey did not elicit any variations in the responses; thereby confirming that the construct was not reliable (.33). The result of this analysis is similar situation to the results of the parent's report on their perceived sense of efficacy, with the exception that the parent efficacy construct was reliable. This result is indicating that the reliability of the item is questionable within a cross-culture context such as Jamaican context. The qualitative analysis will need to be engaged to gain clues into what the varied experiences of the participants. There is also the need for further investigation to ensure the cultural relevance of the item, but also to ensure the reliability of the item.

Teachers from Excellence is Our Aim College suggested that, despite the wealth and education of the parents, they saw inadequacy in the parenting skills and overall capacity of the parents. The teachers viewed the low level of parental involvement in school-based activities as an indication of a parent's limited capacity to help their children succeed in school. However, in order to ascertain a parent's level of efficacy, the teacher would need to know more about the parent's involvement in home-based involvement. It would also require that a teacher interact or have greater levels of interaction with the parent. But, based on the parent's report of teacher's invitation for involvement, it is clear that this level of interaction and communication was not consistent. Therefore, it is highly likely that it is because of the limited communication and interaction between teachers and parents at Excellence is Our Aim College that teachers didn't know their parents well enough to be able to comment on the parents' capacity to help their children succeed.

On the other hand, the teachers at Betta Mus' Come revealed that, despite the challenges in the lives of the parents, there was a determination to see their children succeed. The parents and teachers also interact and communicate with each other. This may be linked to the nature of the school and the kind of parent-teacher interaction it facilitates. This was also noted at Stream in the Desert and Goodwill High School. This finding may suggest that the school type may influence the levels of interaction between teachers and parents. Also, the research may be indicating a link between teacher communication and interaction with parents and the parents' perceived sense of parent efficacy. This would correspond with Bandura's social cognitive theory where he highlights verbal persuasion (invitation from the teacher) and psychological arousal (the feeling of accomplishing after a task well done) as two of the important sources of self-efficacy.

Table 26

Teacher's Belief About the Importance of Parental Involvement Practices

	School identification				
Teacher's belief about the importance of parental involvement practices	**Excellence is Our Aim College**	**Stream in the Desert Primary**	**Betta Mus' Come Primary**	**Goodwill High School**	**Total**
Weak	1	0	0	0	0
Undecided	19	0	2	5	26
Strong	13	19	15	26	73
Total	33	19	17	31	100

Teachers from *Stream in the Desert* (19), *Betta Mus'Come* (15) and *Goodwill High School* (26) have expressed strong belief about the importance of parental involvement practices while teachers at *Excellence is Our Aim College* (13) were "undecided" about their belief. The results revealed variations in teachers' reports based on school level and type. That is the low income, low and average performing schools – primary and secondary – had higher responses than the high income, high achieving school. A cursory view of the response of the teacher's from *Excellence is Our Aim College* would suggest that the teachers did not believe that parental involvement practices were important. This interpretation would be incorrect as it is not consistent with the teachers' views about parental involvement. Upon further analysis, the teachers stated that, given the nature of the school – a high achieving and highly motivated student population – the parental involvement practices highlighted in the questionnaire were "inappropriate" and more relevant to students at the primary school level. The results suggest

that the importance of parental involvement practice is a function of: (a) the developmentally-appropriate nature of parental involvement practices; (b) the level of the school; (c) it ability to meet the needs of the students. It is apparent that a more suitable instrument needs to be created to conduct further studies at the secondary level.

Table 27

Teacher's Report of Invitation for Parental Involvement

	School identification				
Teacher's report of invitation to parents for parental involvement	**Excellence is Our Aim College**	**Stream in the Desert Primary**	**Betta Mus' Come Primary**	**Goodwill High School**	**Total**
Infrequent	32	4	6	15	57
Undecided	0	11	11	14	36
Frequent	1	4	0	2	7
Total	33	19	17	31	100

Fifty-seven of the teachers reported infrequent invitation of parents. This is coupled with 36 additional teachers who were "undecided." The highest rate of infrequent report of invitation to parents by teachers was at *Excellence is Our Aim College* (32). The overall results were disappointing when compared to the strong positive belief reported in the category of "teacher belief in parental involvement"; however, the results were not surprising based on the report of parents regarding the teacher's invitation for involvement. The parents from all the schools reported that the teachers did not demand or provide opportunities for meaningful involvement in the education of their children. This illustrates the gap between belief and practice of parental

involvement which may be attributed to the fact that schools are designed to involve parents. Additionally, teachers may find it challenging to operationalize parental involvement practices that are appropriate, supportive and not disruptive. This is particular at the secondary levels.

Moreover, the results raise an interesting point: teacher invitation for involvement was seen only as an "invitation". It was not viewed as an opportunity to get to know the child within the context of their family. Neither was it seen as a chance to provide the parents with specific guidance on how to improve their support to their child's learning. This view resonates with some of the parents' views which support the overall findings. For example, the teachers were adamant that they were not responsible for telling the parents to be involved in the education of their children. The teachers were of the view that parental roles and responsibilities were clearly defined and understood by the parents; therefore, parents were expected to act accordingly. Similarly, at *Betta Mus' Come* and *Goodwill High School,* teachers stated that they expected parents to know what to do regarding their involvement in the education of their children; therefore, their invitation was not necessary or warranted. It is obvious from the findings that this is a false perception.

At *Excellence is Our Aim College*, the teachers suggested, once again, that due to the nature of their students, the type of invitation highlighted in the questionnaire was not appropriate. However, some of the teachers at *Stream in the Desert* felt otherwise because they recognized the benefits of the Jamaican adage: "encouragement sweetens labour." As a result, they have made an effort to support the parents by showing them ways to help their children at home. But, as the results suggest, teacher invitation needs to be institutionalized and made more frequent. Also, the results highlighted that while there is an inextricable link between belief and practice, it is important to keep in mind that teacher belief and its influence on practice is not

linear but may be mediated by other factors resulting in the variation noted at *Betta Mus Come, Goodwill High School* and *Excellence is Our Aim College.*

Finally, the results also suggest that invitation from others, specifically, the teachers have the potential to influence positive parental involvement, provided that the invitation and opportunities for are mindful of the life context of the parent and the learning needs of the child. Also, in order to have more parents involved, there needs to be professional development of teachers on the importance of parental involvement so that teachers can fulfill their role as facilitators and motivators of parental involvement. Enhanced communication will play a critical role in this process. Parental involvement must also be developmentally-appropriate or based on the needs of the schools.

Table 28

Teacher's Report of Parental Involvement

	School identification				
Teacher's report of parental involvement	**Excellence is Our Aim College**	**Stream in the Desert Primary**	**Betta Mus' Come Primary**	**Goodwill High School**	**Total**
Infrequent	28	8	15	21	72
Undecided	5	9	2	5	21
Frequent	0	2	0	1	3
Total	33	19	17	27	96

Across the school levels and types, almost three quarters of the teachers reported infrequent involvement of parents. The highest report of infrequent parent involvement was at

the *Betta Mus' Come* (88%); while 42% of teachers at *Stream in the Desert* reported that parental involvement was also infrequent. This result is not consistent with the parents' report. But, it can be explained because the majority of parents reported involvement in home-based activities which the teachers say they can't comment on. However, this is a cause for concern because it suggests that teachers are not communicating with parents. This can result in a disconnect in the relationship between teachers and parents and deny both a mutually beneficial partnership.

Summary: The Psychological and Social Context of Involvement and Parental Involvement Behaviour

Across the schools, the overall findings revealed perceived levels of moderate likelihood of positive parental involvement This is attributed to: (a) strong parental role construction; (b) weak perceived sense of parent efficacy; and (c) moderate or infrequent invitation from the school and teachers for involvement. These process variables, within the psychological and social context of involvement and the specific conditions of the schools, functioned in an additive fashion to produce a likelihood of parental involvement. This was evident in the parent and teacher experience of parental involvement. Also it was observed that parental involvement motivation and behaviour was clearly differentiated along the lines of the school's level which has resulted in disparities in the incidence of parental involvement at the primary and secondary levels. The differentiation of parental involvement was influenced by factors specific to the psychological and social context that shaped the institutional realities of the schools. For example, prescribed social role and expectations along gender lines, the level of the school, that is primary or secondary, and the developmental stage of the child resulted in marked differences between the three schools that were in low income areas and the high achieving high school. In

addition, the model of parental involvement highlighted how the variables that constitute the psychological and social context of involvement interacted and informed each other to effect the differences observed in the nature and quality of parental involvement at the schools.

While a moderate to low likelihood of positive parental involvement has been determined by the model, the weak results of the test of association and corresponding coefficient of determination suggests that there are other more powerful factors within the psychological and social context of involvement that are influencing the model. Moreover, the variations in the experience of parental involvement across the school levels and types underscore one of the basic assumptions of the Hoover-Demspey and Sandler hypothesis (1997): the factors which motivate parents to become involved in the education of their children are socially constructed. Thereby, the process variables are susceptible to change. This is an important finding for the schools, in that, this assumption suggests that schools can influence the motivation and parental involvement behaviour in a positive or negative way. Based on the hierarchical regression, total involvement was predicted by knowledge and skill, time and energy, specific teacher invitation and parental role construction. Therefore, in order to promote total involvement, first, the schools must consider building the knowledge and skills of parents and helping parents to utilize their time and energy wisely in developmentally appropriate parental involvement activities that will support the education of their children. This can be achieved through parenting education and skills development workshops hosted by the PTA. Second, equally important is the building of teacher efficacy so that they are more open to demand and make opportunities available for parental involvement and the provision of specific and developmentally appropriate guidance to parents, especially at the secondary level.. This is also to be supported by parenting skills workshop that can help parents re-organize time and schedule to facilitate meaningful

involvement in the education of their children. Second, equally important is the building of teacher efficacy so that they are more open to demand and make opportunities available for parental involvement and the provision of specific and developmentally appropriate guidance to parents, especially at the secondary level. This will require a paradigm shift for the school, in general, and the teachers, specifically, on how parental involvement is perceived across the school levels. Developmentally-appropriate parental involvement strategies must be emphasized to ensure the critical input of parents at all levels of their children's education. This process could benefit from enhanced communication between parents and teachers. Finally, the two previous suggestions will, in turn, be a part of the effort on supporting parental role construction.

The next chapter discusses the research findings within a broader literature on parental involvement, highlights some keys issues and concerns and implications for parental involvement in education in Jamaica.

Chapter Eight:
Discussion

> It is important for teachers and parents to work together in order to have effective schools. When children see their parents showing interest in their school work, they will be motivated to work harder in school. If parents and teacher collaborate as partners, then the children will also attribute greater meaning to what schooling is about. (Parent Comment, Stream in the Desert)

Introduction

This research was primarily influenced by the findings of the Jamaican Task Force Report on Education (2004). The report concluded that inadequate involvement of parents in the education of their children was one of the factors contributing to the decline in the quality of the Jamaican system of education. The notion that the "inadequacy of parental involvement" is synonymous with a "lack of parental interest" in the education of their children may be true to an extent; however, to use it as a general comment to describe the current state of parental involvement in education in Jamaica, without adequately understanding the context of parental involvement, is misguided and simplistic. This research is suggesting that parents strongly want to be involved in the education of their children; however, their involvement is limited or impeded by a number of factors. This position is supported by the research finding which suggests that the psychological and social context of involvement in education in Jamaica facilitates a moderate likelihood of positive parental involvement. This likelihood was attributed to strong parental role construction (*I believe it is my responsibility to be involved in the education of my child*), weak sense of parent efficacy (*I have the capacity to help my child succeed in school*), moderate or infrequent invitation from others and an enabling life context. However, this moderate likelihood of positive parental involvement was not static or permanent,

but dynamic and susceptible to changes within the psychological and social context of involvement. These changes were noted to be context specific, that is, influenced by the school's level and type which contributed to the variations in the experience of parental involvement. The research is, therefore, suggesting that in order for parental involvement to be engaging, effective and sustained, an enabling and supportive environment needs to be established. The school has a critical role to play in this regard.

This chapter builds on the findings presented in the previous chapter. The research findings are situated within the context of the broader literature on parental involvement, and more specifically within the conceptual framework of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005). But more attention will be paid to underscoring the fact that the school has the capacity to influence the likelihood of positive parental involvement. The implications of these findings on parental involvement in education in Jamaica are also discussed.

Parental Role Construction

The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model has established that a parents' role construction is a major contributor to a parents' positive decision to become involved in the education of their children. According to Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997):

> the examination of psychological and educational research suggested that a parent's construction of parental role is likely to be influenced by general principles guiding their definition of the parental role, their belief about child development and child-rearing, and their beliefs about appropriate parental home-support roles in the education of their children…in general, parental role construction appears important to involvement process primarily because it appears to establish a basic range of activities that parents will construe as important, necessary, and permissible for their own actions with and on behalf of their children. Parental role construction and functioning clearly begin before and extend through the child's years in school, and during those years, influence and are influenced by other domains of the child's life as well. (p. 9)

Moreover, the general principles influencing the formation of parental role construction are primarily shaped by the expectations of individuals and groups important to the parent, such as the school and church and social group. The personal beliefs and expectations are socially constructed because they are created from the "parent's experience over time with individuals and groups related to schooling" (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005, p. 108). The expectations for appropriate parental involvement behaviours may also be varied across the groups to which the parents belong, in which case parents are likely to experience conflict about appropriate role behaviours or, at least, lack of consensus about what the most appropriate parental behaviours are. Such conflicts may occur, for example, when a family or school expects parental involvement activities, but the parent's work place expectations preclude active involvement in conferences (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p. 10).

With respect to parental role construction and parental beliefs about child development and child rearing, investigations have suggested that parental motivational beliefs and expectations function primarily independent of socioeconomic status. Additionally, the affective types of involvement occurred equally at all parental occupational and educational levels (Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski & Apostoleris 1997, p. 546). The authors also add (1997) that:

> the social context of parenting will be a key contributor to the way resources are allocated to the child. There is evidence to suggest that economic hardship undermine parenting in general…it is the parent's inexperienced inadequacy of resources that will be most likely to disrupt involvement. (p. 539)

Grolnick et al., (1997) has also showed that family SES was a high predictor of the parent's involvement in school and cognitive development (p. 546).

Finally, the educational literature and its examination of parents' belief about their role at home in supporting children's education suggested working class parents had a "separated" view

of home and school. In other words, parents had a passive view of their roles. Parents tended to believe that their role was limited to basic preparation of their children for school, for example, getting the children ready for school, making sure the children had good manners and getting the children to school on time. These parents had a high tendency to accept the school's decision about their children because they believed that the school was primarily responsible for decisions related to the educational progress of their children. On the other hand, upper middle class parents took a more active role in the education of their children and saw the relationship between the home and the school in a more "inter-connected" way. These parents saw themselves as integral partners, together with the school, in the education of their children. They also saw themselves as advocates on behalf of their children in the process of educational decision-making. These parents were seen to have more control over the progress of their children's education progress than their counterparts. However, there have been other studies such as (Lareau, 1987, 1989; Clark, 1983; Segal, 1985) who have contradicted these views. The authors suggest that social class influences parents' belief about the home-school roles in the education of their children; but social class variables do not exert significant influence over the parental beliefs. In the final analysis, the varying results on the matter suggest that parental role beliefs may be created in the context of specific personal and family groups even within the limitations imposed by broader social groupings (as cited in Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, pp. 16-17).

The exploration of the experience of parental involvement in education in Jamaica has revealed that parental involvement decision was a direct consequence of the parent's role construction which was influenced by the expectations of the socializing groups to which the parent was exposed. However, parental role construction was not static, but socially-constructed

and, therefore, susceptible to change. These findings were consistent with the broader literature on parental role construction and Hoover-Dempsey's conceptual framework. The findings also contradicted the culture of poverty theory.

The research findings revealed that parental role construct was strong across the school levels, types and social class. The life experience of parents was a powerful factor in facilitating parental role construction. It was motivated by the parents' drive to make every effort to give their children the chance of a better life. However, the nature and quality of involvement varied by social class. For parents from the lower-socio-economic class, the notion of being "poor but ambitious" was an emerging theme that punctuated the discussion on the parents' drive to become involved in the education of their children. Many of these parents were not able to complete their schooling because of early pregnancy, lack of parental support or poverty, and were, therefore, resolute about providing their children with every opportunity to have a good education so that they can break the vicious cycle of poverty. Hence the need to get out of poverty was a powerful motivator for parents to become involved in the education of their children. It is important to note that this finding was in contrast to the culture of poverty theory noted by Lareau's (1987) studywhich suggested that lower and working class parents did not value education as much as their upper class counterparts. This may be attributed to the cultural regard for education as a means of upward mobility. Additionally, emerging from this life experience of the parents, the involvement in the education of their children gave them as sense of "re-birth" – parents' re-living their childhood aspirations through their children's schooling. Parents with children attending *Stream in the Desert* were provided an opportunity to learn alongside their children; this helped to improve their understanding of the schooling process and also strengthened the home-school relationship.

Second, it was noted that parental role construction was situated in and influenced by a social context that emphasized a high regard for education and which expected parents to play a critical role in the rearing and home-school relationship. Seaga (1955), Leo-Rhynie (1993) and Ricketts and Anderson (2005) agree that education plays an integral role as a means of improving opportunities for a better quality of life. Seaga (1955), in his study, Parent-Teacher Relation in a Small Rural Village in Jamaica, has noted: "prestige of education was valued equally to the prestige of wealth and was instrumental in defining social class status and upward mobility" (p. 36). Therefore, the social context has created an environment that facilitates the positive belief and attitude of parents towards their role and responsibility in the education of their children. However, at the school level, we observed a variation in parental role construction based on the school's level and type. It is hypothesized that this experience of parental role construct may be a direct or indirect function of how the school and its institutional realities shape parental role construction. For example, the primary school has created a parental role construct and expectation that was consistent with the development needs of the child.

Third, while there is a high social regard for education and the supportive role that parents need to play, the practice of parental involvement varied based on the institutional realities. Citing work by Biddle (1979, 1986) on stability and change in role construction, Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) have argued, "when teachers offered recommendations about parental help with learning in specific areas, parents' beliefs about the importance of their involvement in those areas increased" (p. 108).

Parent's Perceived Sense of Parent Efficacy

Once parents have constructed their parental roles (*They should be involved in the education of their children*), a determination of whether they have the efficacy (*I can help my*

child succeed in school) to accomplish this task is considered. Parents' perceived sense of parent efficacy is defined as belief in their ability to act in ways that will produce desired outcomes (Bandura, 1986, 1989, as cited in Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005, p. 109). Moreover, Hoover-Dempsey, Walker and Sandler (1997) also have stated that "self-efficacy beliefs are a significant factor in personal decisions about ones goals , the effort one puts into those goals, ones persistence in the face of obstacles, and the accomplishment of goals" (p. 45). According to Bandura (1986, 1989), self-efficacy is grounded in personal experiences in four major domains: (a) personal mastery experiences (success in achieving goals in a given area); (b) vicarious experiences (observing others' similar success in achieving goals in the area); (c) verbal persuasion (encouragement from important others that one is capable of successful performance); and (d) physiological arousal (physical and affective states that individuals process as information about the importance of given goals and personal ability to achieve them (as cited in Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005, pp. 109-112). As it relates to the process of parental involvement in education, Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, and Sandler (1997), have argued that building the parents' perceived sense of efficacy to help their children succeed functions similar to Bandura's observations. For example, a parent's perceived sense of parent efficacy to help their children succeed:

> requires experiences of success in helping the child learn (personal mastery), opportunities to observe similar parents or adults successfully helping their children in school-related tasks (vicarious experience), encouragement from important others (verbal persuasion), and support for the positive feeling that come with success as well as realisitic encouragement from others when doubts emerge (affective arousal). (p. 45)

The self-efficacy theory is therefore positing that a parent's positive involvement decision is "based on parents' beliefs about their general ability to influence their children's developmental and educational outcomes, about their specific effectiveness in influencing the

child's learning, and about their own influence relative to that of their peers and the child's teachers" (Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, & Sandler, 1997, p. 19). Hence, regardless of challenges, parents with a stronger perceived sense of parent efficacy are more likely to take an active role in the education of their children. Additionally, parents with strong efficacy are more likely to persevere until they have achieved their desired result or outcomes. On the other hand, parents with low or weak self-efficacy are likely to do the opposite (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005, p. 109).

Self-efficacy develops as a result of on-going experience. Hence, like parental role construction, self-efficacy is socially-constructed (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005, p. 109). The perceived sense of parent efficacy is also situated within a social context and is influenced by the external environment.

Parents, regardless of their school level and socio-economic background, described their role construction as strong. On the contrary, their perceived sense of parent efficacy was weak. It was also noted that there was a differentiation in the number of parents reporting a low level of perceived parental efficacy. For example, parents with low levels of education and who had children attending the low income, low performing schools in the rural and inner-city (Betta Mus Come & Goodwill High) had fewer parents reporting a weak perceived sense of efficacy. This was in contrast with parents who had a higher level of education attainment and children who were attending the low income, averaging performing school and the high income, high performing school situated in the inner city & urban centre (Stream in the Desert & Excellence is our Aim). This finding, while inconsistent with the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) study, is suggesting that a parent's perceived sense of parent efficacy is not a direct function of educational level. According to Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997):

> a parent's efficacy levels have some linkages to general level of education (e.g. parents with a grade school education had significantly lower efficacy scores than parents with any amount of college education), but the relationship was not completely linear (efficacy levels did not differ significantly between parents with a High School education and those with some college or a college degree); importantly efficacy was not significantly related to income, employment status or marital status. (p. 20).

The data also highlighted that Betta Mus Come Primary and Goodwill High Schools had more parents reported being "undecided" about their perceived sense of parent efficacy. This result is attributed to the lack of internal validity of the item in a cross-cultural context. Further studies will be necessary to address this issue.

Moreover, the finding also underscored the fact that parents' perceived sense of parent efficacy is more a function of their appraisal of their capabilities and the presence or existence of an environment to encourage capacity appraisal. Eccles and Harold (1993) in support of Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, also argue that parent self-efficacy to augment their children's success is more a function of:

1. parents' confidence that they can help their children with school work;
2. parents' competence as their children progress to higher grades; and
3. parents' belief that they can influence the school through school governance, rather than level of education and income.

Additionally, in the case of Betta Mus' Come and Goodwill High School, the parent's life experience, coupled with their positive appraisal of their social environment positively influenced their role construction and capacity, which in turn, may have contributed to their perceived sense of parent efficacy to help their children succeed. The role of the teacher at these schools may have also played an important role in building a level of perceived parent efficacy

that has resulted in the likelihood of positive parental involvement. The survey indicated that teachers at Betta Mus Come (21%) and Goodwill High School (50%) reported less infrequent levels of specific teacher invitation than their counter-part Stream in the Desert (32%) and Excellence is Our Aim College (82%). The research finding is illustrating the interaction between the process variables – parental role construction, self-efficacy and teacher invitation-resulting in a positive likelihood of parental involvement behaviour. This result substantiates the Hoover-Dempsey hypothesis which illustrated that the parent's perception of invitation from other, specifically teacher invitation for parental involvement, had the strongest influence on the likelihood of positive parental involvement, when the other process variables - parental role construction and self-efficacy - was moderate to weak. The multi-variate analysis of the high predictor of likelihood of positive parental involvement also affirmed that specific teacher demand was one of the predictors of all three possible likelihoods of parental involvement decision-making or behaviours i.e., home-based, school-based and total involvement.

In contrast, parents from *Excellence is Our Aim College* expressed "frustration" because they did not feel that they were doing enough to help their children succeed in the highly competitive school environment; hence a lack of "personal mastery." Additionally, these parents felt restrained and there was inadequate "encouragement from important others," for example, insufficient guidance from teachers to help parents assist their children prepare and excel in school. Also the parents expressed the sentiment that when they tried to be more involved, they felt as though they were "interfering." It was also noted that, for many parents, their experience with high school is a stark contrast with that of their previous experience at the preparatory or primary school. This change in school contexts has been a source of concern as parents were not sure how to negotiate themselves and the nature of their involvement at the high school level.

The parents highlighted an inadequacy of "affective arousal or support for positive feelings that come as well as realistic encouragement from others when doubt arises." As a consequence of the inadequacy of the primary sources of self-efficacy, Eccles and Harold (1993) have suggested that lower involvement or non-involvement at the secondary level as opposed to the primary level may be due to a decreased feeling of parent efficacy as children's work gets harder or more advanced (as cited in Hoover-Dempsey, 1997, p. 20). It is important to note the process variables that were instrumental in influencing the positive likelihood of parental involvement at the primary – parental role construction, parent's perceived sense of efficacy and parent's perception of teacher invitation – produced a different result at the secondary level. This was attributed to a different orientation towards the parental involvement by the teachers and institutional realities at the high school level.

At Stream in the Desert, an unexpected observation was made. Even though the parental role construction was strong and the general invitation for involvement was frequent, the parents' perceived sense of parent efficacy to help their children succeed in school was low. This school was noted for its family-centered environment and parent empowerment initiatives. However, despite these activities, the level of parent efficacy was lower than at Betta Mus' Come, a school which did not have any institutionalized parental involvement programme. The variation noted may be attributed to the fact that parents appraise their capacity to help their child succeed at a particular time and for a given task, within a social context, and alongside a menu of other concerns, such as their knowledge and skill and time and energy and social location. As a consequence, even though there is evidence of parents' success with helping their children succeed in their education (vicarious experience), and encouragement from important others (verbal persuasion), some of the parents at Stream in the Desert experienced limited success with

helping their children succeed (personal mastery). As was noted earlier, they possessed inadequate knowledge and skill due to the level and quality of their education and the absence of specific guidance from teachers as to the best strategies to support their children's success. A sense of cognitive dissonance between perceived sense of efficacy and actual ability to help their children succeed in school emerged. Another explanation may also suggest ambiguity between the parents intrinsic and extrinsic motivation giving rise to varying levels of self-doubt. According to Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997), "doubting their own ability to have an impact, they seem much more likely to rely on the child or the school to deal with the problem, and to trust others' intervention or luck to ameliorate difficult situations for their children" (p. 26). This is however, speculation because these issues are beyond the purview of this study. It is therefore important that further studies in this area of self-efficacy on parental involvement decision-making are explored to be better able to explain the difference between parent's sense of efficacy and the school environment at *Betta Mus'Come* and *Stream in the Desert* and the results produced with respect to the level of the parent's sense of efficacy. There will be the need to also focus some attention on factors such as: (a) intrinsic and extrinsic motivation; (b) cognitive dissonance and its influence on self-efficacy; and (c) role of self-doubt and self-determination as motivators.

Finally, when parent's self-efficacy report is compared to the teacher's view of parent efficacy, it is observed that the schools where teacher's report of parent efficacy was high were the schools that had more frequent teacher invitation for involvement. The comparison is suggesting when a teacher perceives an adequate parent efficacy, the teacher is more inclined to demand and provide opportunities for involvement. As a result of this appraisal of the teacher, the demand for parental involvement is more likely going to be directed at female parents, rather

than male parents. The correlation analysis of efficacy and gender and specific invitation by gender substantiated this view by revealing that female parents were more likely to have more efficacy than male parents; and female parents were likely to receive more frequent invitation for involvement than their male counter-parts. This response of the teachers may be attributed to the influence of the gender bias towards parental involvement, the view that fathers lack the efficacy to help their children and because fathers are "absent" from the schooling process. This is not to suggest, that male parents are inadequate when it comes to being involved in the education of their children; but rather, it is the perception of teachers, social expectations and institutional barriers at the schools that hinder the involvement of male parents in the education of their children.

The stimulus behind this reaction is fuelled by two plausible explanations. First, the feminization of parenting phenomenon has prescribed, that, given the division of labour in the family, parenting is the responsibility of the mother; while the male parent is the provider. This apparent gender bias has also influenced the nature and quality of involvement of fathers in the education of their children. As a result, the male parent shrinks into the background when it comes to their involvement in the education of their children. Male parents are not encouraged to access important information that can help them support their children to succeed in school. For example, in the research, male parents accounted for less than 20 % of the total parent sample. However, this is not to suggest that male parents are not interested in the education of their children, but rather, they were not the ones filling out the surveys. Second, in relation to the invisibility of the male parent in the schooling of their children, there has not been adequate and frequent demand and opportunities for involvement from the school and teachers. As a

consequence, the effective interaction between the school and the male parent would help to provide guided instruction to help their children and build their efficacy.

In summary, the research does suggest that parents' perceived sense of parent efficacy, like parental role construction, is an important element in parents' motivation to become involved in the education of their children. Hence, the research is supporting the view that parents' perceived sense of parent efficacy must be supported by a strong parental role construction and frequent invitation from others. This specific combination of these process variables has contributed to the variation of parental involvement at the primary and secondary levels. The level of the parents' education and income was also noted as not being sufficient to influence their perceived sense of parent efficacy. There was no linear relationship between education and income levels and perceived sense of parent efficacy. Based on the co-efficient of determination from the bivariate analysis, it was revealed that there were other variables which had a more consistent effect. It is hypothesized that these variables may be situated within the psychological and social context of involvement. Unfortunately, this paper can't provide any conclusive evidence about the nature of these variables as this is beyond the purview of the paper. However, given the importance of this variable within the model, it is important that further studies be undertaken to identify and better understand the dynamics of this variable and its influence on the decision of parents to become involved in the education of their children. Bandura's thesis on the sources of self-efficacy, namely, personal mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal arousal and physiological arousal, can be considered as a hypothetical possibility for explaining the variations in the results. In addition to these "unknown" variables, the parent's role construction and the school context played had a positive influence motivating

parents to become involved in the education of their children. Finally self-efficacy, like parental role construction, is socially-constructed and subject to change.

Invitation for Involvement for School and Teacher: The Parents' and Teachers' Perspective

So far, we have noted that parental role construction and the parent's perceived sense of parent efficacy are two of the essential factors contributing to the positive likelihood of involvement. The invitation and demand for involvement from "others," those considered to be most influential in parents' decision about involvement – the school, teacher and child- makes this variable an essential factor in influencing active parental involvement. This factor operates within the social context of involvement. According to Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995):

> a parent also becomes involved because they perceive opportunities, invitations, or demands from their children or their children's school to do so. These opportunities, invitations and demands may influence parents' involvement decision because the demand or opportunity characteristics so created tend to elicit and often reward involvement behaviours. These demands and opportunity characteristics-if positive and if vigorous - may be folded into the verbal persuasion source of parental efficacy for helping children succeed in school. (p. 316)

As a consequence, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) have been careful to point out that, while demand and opportunity for involvement is a necessary motivating factor for involvement, it must function in an additive way with the other process variables to produce the desired outcome. For example, in the case where parental role construction is strong and parents' perceived self-efficacy is moderate to high, the perception of general demand and opportunities for involvement has a limited effect. The main reason is that parents with strong role construction and efficacy are more likely to be active in the education of their children, regardless of invitation and demand for involvement from others. Conversely, it has been

observed that where parental role construction and perceived sense of parent efficacy is moderate to weak, that perceived demand and opportunity for involvement from others significantly influences the decision of the parent to become involved in the education of their child. Therefore, this illustration underscores the point that invitation from others, like the other variables – parental role construction and self-efficacy, is influenced by interactions with others in the social context – school, teachers, family and other parents.

There are two sources of invitation which have varying degrees of influence on parental involvement. First, Dauber and Epstein, 1993 have highlighted that the school's invitations, manifested in positive school climate and consistent invitations to be involved in learning at home influence a parents' decisions about becoming involved in elementary, middle school high students' education (as cited in Hoover-Dempsey, Walker & Sandler, 2005, p. 46). The school context is, therefore, a most valuable source of encouragement and support for student learning. In this regard, according to Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005):

> the school environment or climate influences parents' ideas about involvement. Qualities of the school environment including school structure and management structure, may enhance several aspects of parent-school relationships, including parent's knowledge that they are welcomed in the school, that they are well informed about student learning and progress and that the school personnel respect them, their concerns and suggestions. (p. 110)

Overall, parents reported that their perception of invitation from others was infrequent. This was attributed to frequent general invitation from the school that was "weighed down" by infrequent invitation from the teacher. The result indicated that the parent's perception of invitation from others varied only at the school level. A number of factors attributed to this experience. They are discussed below.

General invitation from the school coupled with specific school characteristics were powerful motivators of parents becoming involved in the education of their children. These characteristics included:

1. positive school staff attitude towards students' families and communities;
2. school commitment to communicate effectively with families (engaging parents in meaningful roles; offer substantive, specific, and positive feedback on the importance of parents' contribution;
3. a welcoming and empowering school environment; and
4. the role of the principal in maintaining a fully-welcoming school environment.

In addition, when parents had high expectations of their child's school, felt comfortable and believed that the school could make a difference in the future of their children, the parents were highly motivated to participate in the education of their children (Thompson, 2000, p. 60). Based on the parent's report, the primary school reflected many of these characteristics; and as a consequence, the results indicated a higher rate of invitation than at the secondary school. This may be linked to the school's definition of parental involvement and how it should be operationalized based on the developmental needs of the child. However, parental involvement should not be only seen as an imperative at the primary level; but an important support system for adolescent students at the secondary level.

Second, the attitude of teachers towards parental involvement has been identified as a significant factor in parental involvement decision-making. Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski, & Apostoleris (1997) have argued that the strength of the connection between the families and schools may also be a function of the characteristics of the school institution and its representatives. Teachers are the parents' primary contacts within the school; thus, practices in

the classroom are potential influences on parental involvement. The role of the teacher operates on two important levels to influence the psychological context of involvement that is role construction belief and perceived sense of parent efficacy. Epstein and Dauber (1993) suggest that a teacher's invitation for involvement and the presence of meaningful opportunities for involvement at the schools are high predictors of home and school-based involvement in elementary and middle schools (as cited in Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005, p. 111). Teacher invitation is also powerful because they are responsive to many parents' expressed wishes to know more about how to support children's learning (as cited in Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005, p. 111). In addition, the teacher's invitation enhances the parents' sense of being welcomed to participate in the school processes and knowledge of their children's learning and confidence that their involvement efforts are useful and valued are significantly enhanced (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Teacher invitation also contributes to the development of trust – an important determinant of effective parent-school partnerships. Finally, teacher invitation to involvement is effective in supporting parental involvement across elementary, middle and high school with varied school populations (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005, pp. 111-112). "Teachers are the glue that hold the home/school partnership together" (Keyes, 2002, p. 179).

While the general school invitation from school for parental involvement was frequent, the invitation for involvement by teachers revealed contrasting results. Overall, the results from the parents' and teachers' reports indicated low or infrequent demand and opportunity for parental involvement. The analyses of the specific teacher invitation produced three results: (i) at the primary level, Betta Mus' Come reported more infrequent invitation for involvement than Stream in the Desert. This is despite numerous parental involvement interventions at Stream in the Desert; (ii) female parents were more likely to receive frequent invitation when compared to

male parents; (iii) Goodwill High School was more likely, than Excellence is Our Aim College, to receive frequent demands and opportunities for involvement. This result was interesting since it was expected that Excellence is Our Aim College would receive more invitation because of the profile of the parents at this school.

As stated in the research findings, the decision to become involved in the education of children is direct result of a confluence of process and context variables. Also, the context of involvement, that is specific to the schools, play an important role in shaping parental involvement decision-making and choice of behaviour. The research suggests that there are other factors within context of parental involvement at these schools influencing the counter-intuitive results. For example, the research unearthed that the demand and opportunity for involvement was linked to: (a) the developmental stage of the child; (b) the school's definition and response to parental involvement practices; and (c) the importance accorded to the type of parental involvement. Moreover, the findings also suggest that, the likelihood of positive parental involvement at the primary and secondary levels was a function of the interaction of the parent and teacher process variables. These process variables, were, in turn, situated within a specific psychological and social context at the schools that shaped the perception and behaviour of the parents and teachers towards parental involvement.

As stated earlier, the teachers' and parents' reports of demand and opportunity for parental involvement was low or infrequent. The result was inconsistent with the results of the general invitation for involvement from the school, suggesting adisconnect between the belief and practice of parental involvement at the school and classroom levels. First, teachers had some prescribed notions about socially accepted behaviour when it came to parenting. One such notion was that parents should be aware about parental involvement practices. Therefore, it was not

necessary to tell parents what they should already know. This view is also corroborated by parents with children attending -and was discussed earlier. Despite, the low invitation from teachers, parents at the primary school still were involved to varying the degrees in the education of their children. This was attributed to the fact that parents had strong role construction supported by a low perceived sense of parent efficacy. Based on the hypothesis, teacher invitation would not make any difference because the parents were already aware of roles and responsibility which was nurtured by the school's parental involvement programmes. Stream in the Desert was a good example of positive parental involvement, despite the low invitation from teachers. However, there is a limitation: the teacher's inadequate intervention or invitation may be one of the factors that have contributed to the parent's weak perceived sense of parent efficacy which has denied the parents of specific guidance on effective ways to support their child's development.

Second, the research highlighted that male parents and parents in common law relationships were more likely to receive infrequent demand and opportunity for parental involvement. This result may be influenced by the social expectation that parenting is the responsibility of the female parent and other social class biases. This observation would be consistent with Bourdieu's views about "social class position and class culture becoming a form of cultural capital in the school setting" (as cited in Lareau, 1987: p. 82). The cultural capital shapes the teacher demand and opportunities for involvement. In addition, cultural capital coupled with other factors situated within the psychological and social context of involvement, also influenced the parent's response to the demand for involvement. Therefore, it may stand to reason that the inadequacy of male involvement may not just be as a result of "a lack of parental

interest" but rather because the school and teachers were not conveying to male parents that their involvement is expected and wanted.

Third, the low belief of teachers in the efficacy of parents to help their children succeed in school highlights that teachers do not think that their invitation to the parent would make a difference because the parents were "inherently" incapable of helping their children succeed. This emerged as an issue in discussions with teachers from the rural primary school. This misperception is consistent with the view of Grant (1974) who noted that the attitude of teachers, especially the poor, was "patronizing, viewing the parents as too poor and ignorant" (as cited in Smikle, 2003, pp. 54-65). This perspective has its roots in a broader perspective called the deficit model approach which suggests that the poor parents are beyond help regardless of any assistance or intervention of the teachers. Paradoxically, the teachers complained about the low incidence of parental involvement. The research is revealing the influence of external factors, such as the social conditions of many of the parents and their capacity to help their children, on the views and behaviour of the teachers, especially the level of invitation for involvement.

Also, the teacher's belief about their sense of efficacy was also noted to be a factor contributing to the low or infrequent demand for parental involvement. Keyes (2002) has noted that teachers with strong efficacy were more likely to invite parents. In addition, parents who interact with high-involvement teachers were more positive about school and more aware of teachers' interests in their involvement than parents of low-involvement teachers. She also emphasized that positive parental involvement practices were found to characterize elementary schools more than middle, junior high or senior schools (p. 29). This may be attributed to the changing context of the school structure and organization and also how parental involvement roles were constructed and supported. This observation was consistent with findings regarding

parents' perceived sense of parent efficacy and the teacher invitation at the primary and secondary levels. This has resulted in parents from the varied groups, especially the secondary school level, requesting specific guidance on developmentally appropriate strategies of involvement to assist them to support their children's learning.

There is also an unwillingness to invite parents because of the low level of parent efficacy. There are long term effects of inadequate invitation for parental involvement at other school levels. Epstein (1986) observes:

> Fewer and few teachers involve parents as the student advances through the elementary grades. Thus parents' repertoires of helping skills are not developed or improved over the school years, and they tend to taper off or disappear as the child progresses through school. (p. 291)

Fourth, it was deduced from the discussion with the teachers and school administrators, especially at the secondary schools, that our schools were not designed for parental involvement. There was an ambivalence about the practice which may have been influenced by: (a) a lack of understanding of the importance of parental involvement at this level of the system; (b) inadequate time within the day to manage the curriculum and parents; and (c) teacher attitude and behaviour towards parental involvement at this level of the system. In response, the school administrator and teachers were asked how they were assisting parents to build their efficacy and improve their parental involvement behaviour. Respondents from *Betta Mus' Come* commented that they did not see it as their responsibility to encourage parents. The parents were expected to know what was meant by parental involvement.

Finally, when considered together, the demand and invitation of involvement from others-school and teacher are powerful agents of motivation. Each element is critical because each acts on three levels to:

1. create a welcoming social context that facilitates and encourages involvement through the positive attitudes expressed by staff;
2. provide specific guidance for effective involvement to support student learning; and
3. address a basic need of parents: the development and educational needs of their children.

The likelihood of positive parental involvement is as a result of the confluence of process variables and their interaction with other factors within the psychological and social context of the home and the school. The result of which is disparities in the likelihood of parental involvement in the education of their children. A powerful predictor of the likelihood of parental involvement is specific teacher demand and opportunity for involvement.

Life Context

> But whether parents can perform effectively in the child-rearing roles within the family depends on role demand, stresses and support emanating from other settings. As we shall see, parents' evaluations of their own capacity to function, as well as their child, are related to such external forces as flexibility of job schedules, adequacy of childcare, the presence of friends or neighbours who can help out in large and small emergencies, the quality of health, social services and neighbourhood safety. (Bronfenbrenner, as cited in Keyes, 2002, p. 181)

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) have pointed out that parents' decision whether or not to become involved in the education of their children is a function of the psychological and social context of involvement which includes the following critical factors: (a) parental role construction, (b) perceived sense of parent efficacy, and (c) the demand and opportunity for involvement from others- school, teacher and child. Once a decision of involvement has been made, the parent evaluates how to become involved. There are a number of involvement opportunities. Epstein (1992, 1994) has developed a menu or typology of involvement opportunities consisting of school and home-based activities. They include:

1. assisting parents with child rearing;
2. communicating with families;
3. providing school volunteer opportunities;
4. involving parents in home-based learning;
5. involving parents in decision-making; and
6. involving parents in school-community collaboration.

However, the final determination of the nature and quality of parental involvement is influenced by the life context of the parents and their families. The life context variables for discussion include: the family's socio-economic status, with focus on the feminization of parenting and the involvement of fathers in the education of their children, time and energy, and knowledge and skill. These factors facilitate an environment which enables or disallows parental involvement and the type of involvement.

The research brings into clear focus an important reality: while the psychological and social context of parental involvement in education in Jamaica is favourable, there are factors that mitigate effective and sustained involvement. One such factor is the societal forces at work on the family. Keys (2002), in her observation of this issue highlights that the changing structure and characteristics of the family and the increasing demands and competing responsibilities from external factors, has limited the capacity of the family to perform its responsibilities effectively. Given the demands of the parents' life context, parents reported home-based involvement as the most convenient. The nature and quality of parental involvement in the education of their children is a direct function of the life context of the family and the capacity of the parent to

respond to the various competing demands within this context. The following discussion is centered on the poverty dynamics, feminization of parenting and implication on the nature and quality of parents' involvement in the education of their children and the parent-child relationship.

Family Characteristics:
Poverty, Feminization of Parenting and its Implication on Parental Involvement

The dynamics of poverty has had a profound impact on the Jamaica family. It has resulted in the family's limited capacity to take care of the welfare and provide a quality of life for its members. This was noted from the conversations and observations of parents who sought to participate in the education of their children.

In earlier discussions on the socio-economic profile of the Jamaica family, it was highlighted that, while the incidence of poverty had trended down 14 per centage points over the last 18 years, there was also evidence to suggest that there was a high level of vulnerability. According to the World Bank vulnerability is an important aspect of households' experience of poverty. Many households, while not currently in poverty, recognize that they are vulnerable to events - a bad harvest, a lost job, an illness, an unexpected expense, an economic downturn - that could easily push them into poverty. Vulnerability is a probability. A household is defined as vulnerable if it has 50-50 odds, or worse of falling into poverty. Female headed households in rural and inner-city communities were most at risk. This was attributed to the high levels of poverty, low levels of educational attainment, low income and high unemployment. Additionally, another dimension of poverty experienced by the poor in the parent sample was high levels of consumption inequality. Since 1990, while the incidence of poverty has declined, the social indicators show that the Gini coefficient has remained relatively the same at 0.382. It is

within this context that the feminization of parenting is discussed to illustrate the challenges that the poverty dynamic poses on poor female-headed households and their involvement in the education of their children. However, the discussion on the feminization of parenting will not be limited to the experience of the poor, but will also include insights from the affluent households.

In relation to the subject-matter, the two conclusions were made about the general composition of the parent sample that will set the basis for our discussion. First, there was a high rate of participation of poor households drawn from the rural and inner-cities communities. In the focus group discussions, the parents were very candid about the life circumstance. The sessions were quite emotional at times as parents described the challenges they faced trying to make ends meet for their family. One parent commented:

> To be poor is a crime…we can only afford to send our children to poor people school. The conditions in these schools are really bad. For example, at my child's school, they don't have proper bathroom facilities. One day somebody is going to fall in the pit that they use for a bathroom. The other day, I thought my child had fallen in. I went to school to pick him up. For 45 minutes, we were looking for my baby. When I finally found him, he had messed himself up. He was walking around looking for the bathroom. I was so upset. I cried. If I were not poor I would send my child to a better school where he can be properly cared for and supervised. Because we are poor people, nobody seems to care for our children. Not even the teachers who teach at the poor people schools. I want to send my child to a school where the teacher can care for my children. (Focus Groups Discussion, Betta Mus Come, October 28, 2006)

Another parent commented:

> Being poor, I am unable to adequately provide for my children, especially when they have to go to school and I have to find the lunch money and the bus fare. Most times, I really don't have it. I find it hard to go to the teacher and tell them

> about my situation. I don't want them to say: "look at her, she is young and she does not have any work and I (teacher) have to give her child lunch". I don't like looking. There is only one teacher I will tell about my circumstance. I trust her. (Focus Group Discussion, Stream in the Desert, October 21, 2006)

For many of these families, the inability to meet basic needs is also an everyday reality. Additionally, the crime and violence that pervades the inner-city community also creates another level of instability in home. One parent recalled:

> Sometimes I feel like I can't bother. I just feel like I want to give up. My partner was killed a few years ago. We have not gotten over it, especially the children. He used to take care of everything. The children they say, "if daddy was here I would get this and I would get that...since daddy gone, I don't get those anymore". You see like their birthdays. Daddy would take them out. I can't afford to do those things with them. I am alone. (Focus Group Discussion, Stream in the Desert, October 21, 2006)

These occurrences have given rise to serious development challenges for the poor, especially single-parent and single-female parents to negotiate family life and raise their children. One of the far-reaching effects is that the parent-child interaction, quality development and academic outcomes are negatively affected. This is attributed to the high parental stress associated with this family context. Samms-Vaughan (2004) and Ricketts and Anderson (2005), in their respective studies, have highlighted that, due to the social conditions of poor families, the quality of the child's development and behavioural outcomes is severely compromised. The researchers also concluded that extremely high stress levels stemming from the social context of parents and their families were having a direct impact on the capacity of the parent to function effectively. Samms-Vaughan (2004) highlighted that: (a) family functioning affected behavioural problems and strengths; (b) parental stress affected all outcomes: academic, cognitive and

behavioural; (c) life stressors affected parents' reports of behavioural problems; and (d) parental mental health problems were only associated with parents' report of child behavioural problems. As a consequence, in support of Samms-Vaughan's observation, Ricketts and Anderson (2005) have advocated for:

> social support to improve the economic position of poor families, especially those with children, in view of their greater tendency to feel trapped and controlled by parenting responsibilities, and also to feel stressed, both of which have negatively impacted on their level and quality of interaction with their children. (p. 115)

Samms-Vaughan (2004) has also added that "parenting stress needs to be addressed as an important factor affecting child outcomes" and argues for "the development of a National Parenting Education Programme which would address the prevention, recognition, and management of parental stress" (p. 156). This is a matter of urgency especially given the fact parental stress level directly impact on their ability to interact with their children.

> there is much evidence that high levels of stress negatively influence parenting characteristics such as warmth and responsiveness. Stress events might take time from parents; usurp energy and attention, or both, making parents less psychologically available for or aware of involvement activities. (Grolnick, 1997, p. 539)

In the final analysis, the parent-child interaction is stymied and this may negatively impact quality child development and academic outcomes.

Many of the parents in the focus groups, especially from the low income schools, spoke of the intervention or support of a teacher in their school who became an important part of the coping mechanism. The parents at Stream in the Desert were particularly emphatic about the support mechanisms – the teacher, guidance counselor and breakfast and lunch programmes – that have made a difference to them.

> I was not working at one point and my son had to go on the lunch programme for the whole term. I went there and told them that I was not working and the older one was going to high school. It was difficult for me. Miss Wong, the Guidance Counsellor placed my son on the lunch programme for the entire term. (Parent Focus Group. Stream in the Desert, October 21, 2006)

> When my son was graduating to go to high school, they had a dinner at the Hilton. It cost $J2500. I did not have it. Ms. Pinnock paid for my son. I feel good about that. (Parent Focus Group. Stream in the Desert, October 21, 2006)

> I go the extra mile to support my child's school. My child's teacher put out a lot for him. The school has a breakfast and lunch programme. The teachers expose the children, even when it is hard for us parents to find the money. My child's school is contributing to my child's life. I have to support that. (Parent Focus Group. Stream in the Desert, October 21, 2006)

Parental involvement in the education of their children is complex and influenced by a number of different factors which are powerful enough to determine the nature and quality of involvement. Therefore, if schools are true to their commitment to meaningful parental involvement, they must construct parental involvement within the reality of the lives of the parents and their families.

The profile also highlighted a corresponding high participation of single-female headed households with a relatively low level of educational attainment and low income status. The "single-female headed household" status was determined from a cross-reference of the data on "union status" and other questions related to the "spouse or partners" from the demographic profile. There was a high rate of non response to the "spouse or partners" category. The study therefore assumed that the "spouse or partner" did not live with the respondent and therefore was

not the head of the household. This would not be uncommon for Jamaica. According to the Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions, in 2006, the incidence of single-headed households was approximately 47%. A large proportion of these households were concentrated in the poorest quintile. Emerging from the social statistics is the notion of feminization of parenting. This phenomenon implies that the burden of the household falls on the shoulders of single-females who have limited education and income capacity to secure an acceptable quality of life for their families.

The concept of the "feminization of parenting" is not a new phenomenon. In this discussion, it will be viewed from the perspectives of the gender and class dynamics. Feminization of parenting is a predominant feature of the Jamaican family where, despite union status – married, common-law and single- in all instances, the female assumes the primary responsibility of care-giver. It is often assumed that the feminization of parenting is a low income or working class phenomenon. However, in the discussions with the parents from the affluent and low incomes schools, it was emphasized that the responsibility of nurturing the family was the role of the female parent.

> as far as my husband is concerned, the children are my responsibility. He only gets involved when they need to be disciplined. I want to be more involved where my son is concerned; but I find Jamaican men to be very lazy and expect that you (wife) must do everything for them...My husband can't pour himself a glass of ice water. (Parent Focus Group Session, Excellence is Our Aim College, Nov. 11, 2006)

However, the significant difference is that in the low income household, the father is mostly absent. The female parent must assume the dual role as caregiver and bread-winner. The children depend on her for emotional, psychological, cognitive and financial support. In order to

provide for her family, the mother, more often than not from the lower socio-economic status, has to resort to low-paying jobs which require her to work long hours; and this, therefore, has resulted in her being away from her children. Additionally, for many parents the competing responsibilities of family and employment has posed a challenge to their frequent involvement in school-based activities.

> My mother did attend PTA. I have six so I try to be a mother. As the school summons parents to anything at the school, I am there. However, this year because of the work situation, It is harder now because I am both mother and father to my children. It is not easy and therefore I can't go to every event at the school. (Parent Focus Group Session, Goodwill High School, November 18, 2006)

> Sometimes it's not that you don't want to participate in school activities, but sometimes, I have financial problems and you can't walk from where you are. So even if you find the lunch money to give to the child, you also have to find the fare. Some of us have it hard because it is just us mothers. (Parent Focus Group Session, Betta Mus Come, October 28, 2006)

> No, no father up until this blessed moment. I don't know my father. If I should go outside and see a man and say that he is my father, I would be lying. I only had a mother. She was a teenager which makes her a half mother and no father. (Parent Focus Group Session (Male Parent), Stream in the Desert, October 21, 2006)

The above-mentioned quotations brings into focus the notion that poverty, while it drives or motivates parents to become involved in the education of their children, simultaneously, hinders parents from providing for their families needs and also prevents parents from being involved in the education of their children in a meaningful and sustained way, especially in school based activities. This is substantiated by the data analysis that revealed that parents were

more likely to choose home-based involvement over school-based involvement. The reasons offered were: (a) there was no cost associated with home-based involvement; (b) it was more convenient; (d) parents had greater control over the outcomes of home-based involvement; and (e) parents found that the current nature of the PTA was not meeting their needs. The PTA structure was also described as "dysfunctional". While the above-mentioned are plausible explanations for the low school-based involvement, they are also a source of concern for two reasons. First, the low rate of involvement of parents in school based activities is limiting the opportunity of parents to become more aware of the school's expectation for the child. The absence of such specific information limits the quality of the home-based involvement because parents are operating without fully understanding the grammar of the school and its modus operandi. The quality of the home-based involvement is also compromised.

Second, the PTA is the only means of formal, structure interface between the school and parents. The school is well served by the PTA as it is the mobilizing arm for parent involvement. However, based on what has been described the school stands to lose out if it does not manage, in a structure and co-ordinated way, the wealth of human resource embedded within its PTA bodies. The school needs to create an environment within the school that will result in the transformation of the PTA to become more responsive to the needs of parents and support the parents as they endeavour to assist their children. This would be a sure way to promote increased parental involvement. For example, it was noted that those schools that employed outreach programmes for the parents, empowered them through parenting workshops and provided social support, had an overwhelming support of parents at the PTA meetings and in other areas of school life. In addition, this successful PTA model also operated from the perspective that parents were important partners in education, were well organized, had an effective leadership

and management structure and reflected some of the elements of Epstein's Typology of Involvement, such as encouraging two-way communication of parent to teacher, supporting parents, and including parents in decision-making that affects their children.

Finally, it is agreed that the educational success of the children is the common interest that bridges the gap between the home and the school. In order to achieve quality student outcomes and school success, the schools must be mindful of the life context of parents and families that make up a very large segment of the school community and the challenges it poses to parenting characteristics and functioning. According to Standing (1999):

> parental involvement has been presented as an unproblematic, un-gendered concept, free from class and cultural associations. Texts and policies on parental involvement tend to be written from the vantage point of the schools, assuming that all parents share the objectives and ideologies of the school, and that all parents share equal and identical involvement in their children's schooling. As other studies have demonstrated, parental involvement is gendered - it is women, as mothers (or female carers) who are involved in children's schooling, regardless of family structure or marital status. The denial of the gendered nature of parental involvement works discursively to obscure the work that mothers do in relation to their children's schooling, constructing it as 'natural' and part of the mothering role (Smart, 1989; Griffith & Smith, 1990). It also gives equal emphasis to the role of father as parents, even when the father may not be present, let alone involved. (p. 57)

The author also highlights:

> the universalistic nature of maternal involvement ignores differences between mothers - that not all mothers operate within the same structural, cultural and discursive conditions. The work of maternal involvement required of mothers by schools is difficult to do under conditions of sole supporting mothering and low income, and parental involvement implicitly assumes the existence of two-parent nuclear family. The traditional nuclear family, with stay-at-home wife and mother and breadwinner father best suits the organization of the school (Smith &Griffith, 1990)...Lone mothers involvement and expectations of the school are often different to the normative parental involvement discourse. Lone mothers involvement in the education of their children does not fit neatly into the demands and categories provided by educational policy and discourses of parental involvement, but rather spans a number of complementary and sometimes competing relationships, which are in constant flux. (pp. 57, 71)

While it is not being suggested that the school should take on the full responsibility of addressing the situations that limit the involvement of their parents, especially lower SES families, it is suggested that the school can play a critical role to mobilize assistance for parents. This proposal is made within the context that the family is a critical part of the school community and, at a deeper level, the school's ecology. Bronfenbrenner (1979) underscored this point by highlighting that "a greater appreciation of the ecological embeddedness of child and family functioning…the family's ability to nurture children is connected with the quality of many community resources, including neighbourhood, church, child care, work setting, housing and medical care" (as cited in Mitra, 2006, p. 308). Figure 9 provides further elaboration on the above-mentioned by highlighting the process of complex interactions that influence optimal child development. The central principles of the ecology of child development developed by Bronfenbrenner (1998):

1. place the child at the centre of this model;
2. acknowledges that a child is affected as by the settings in which he/she spends time;
3. re-affirm the importance of the family setting for a young child family, because that is where he spends the most time and because it has the most emotional influence on the child's development. Other important settings may include his extended family, early care and educational programmes, healthcare settings and other community learning sites, such as neighbourhoods, libraries and playgrounds (p. 996).

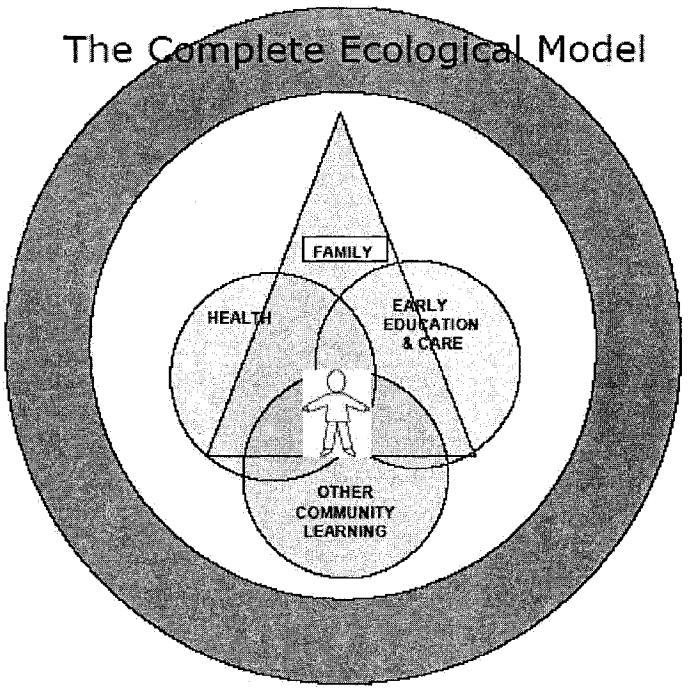

Figure 9. **The complete ecological model.**

The quality of the children's academic performance is directly impacted by the quality of the family's ecological support system. Hence, the school's role in facilitating or assisting in the strengthening of family resources for childrearing is in the best interest of the school community. However, it must be acknowledged that given the high demand on the schools and its limited resources, schools alone cannot fulfill this task. It is, therefore, proposed that a complementary learning framework be established to support schools, families and communities. The PTA can play a supportive role.

The concept of complementary learning builds on the central principles of the ecology of child development developed by Bronfenbrenner and is informed by the view that:

> families are integral and critical component of interventions targeted to improve academic and social outcome; and the establishment of a complementary learning framework occurs when two or more institutions - including the school, families

> and communities - intentionally link with each other to improve learning and developmental outcomes of children and youth. (Caspe & Lopez, 2006, p. 15)

Furthermore, according to Kreider and Bouffard (2006), a system is created which is not only linked but also aligned to strengthen the family and others involved in that capacity to promote positive development. This system is based on a perspective which "positions family involvement as a part of a larger cohesive agenda to improve education, inspire creative strategies to overcome barriers to family involvement practice and helps address development changes in family involvement" (p. 9). A critical element of complementary learning is the family strengthening programmes. In reviewing the impact of family strengthening programmes and their outcomes, Caspe and Lopez (2006) have concluded that family strengthening programmes impact positively on parenting processes. They are:

1. the family environment;
2. parent-child relationship;
3. parenting skills; and
4. family involvement in learning at home and school. In the short term, changes in the quality of the family environment, parent-child relationships, parenting skills and family involvement in learning at home and school were noted, resulting in long term changes for the child.

These changes included improved school readiness and academic outcome and improved social and emotional competence (p. 4). Figure 10 is an illustration of a complementary learning framework.

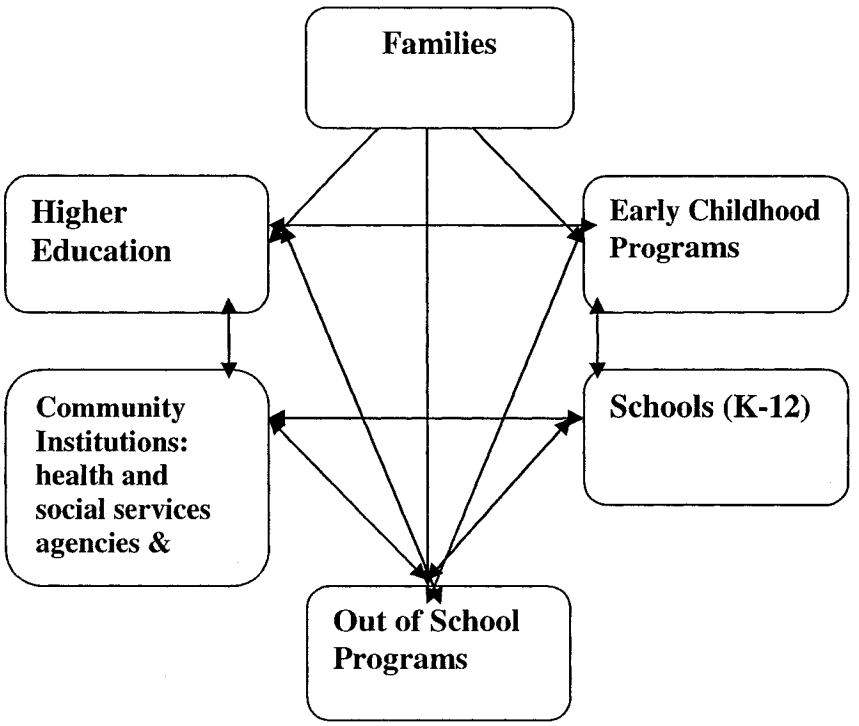

Figure 10. **Complementary learning framework (Harvard Graduate School of Education 2006).**

Family Characteristics: The Role of the Fathers in the Education of Their Children

In Jamaica, there is a widespread view that fathers are seldom involved in the education of their children. Evidence from the parent sample revealed that of the total parents sampled, fathers accounted for less than 20 % of the entire parent sample. However, any sweeping generalizations about the involvement of fathers in the education of their children by this study are cautioned. There are a number of hypotheses that may explain the low rate of fathers in this survey. First, it is possible that the fathers were not as involved in the survey as their counter-part because they were absent at the time that the survey was delivered home by the child.

Second, there is a social expectation that is driven by the feminization of parenting theory which suggests that, while the father may be present at home and involved in other ways in the

student's life i.e paying for school fees, etc, any interaction with the school, like attending PTA, is the mother's responsibility. A clear division of labour is observed within the family. The male parent is relegated to other roles and responsibilities.

Third, there is a high incidence of absenteeism among fathers in the households, especially in the lower SES households. The Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions (2006) corroborates this view by highlighting that approximately 46.7% of the households were female headed - one of the highest in the world. Female-headed households were more likely than male-headed households to have an adult partner absent and they were concentrated in the poorest quintile. The naturalistic observations of PTA meetings and school visits, substantiated this view as it was revealed that female parents were more directly involved in school-based activities than their counter-parts. Furthermore, in focus group discussion across the groups, female parents emphasized that they were more involved in the education of their children than their male counterparts. Some of the parents, especially from the lower incomes schools proffered an explanation for the low rate of involvement of their partners in the education of their children. The participants (male and female) were of the view that the fathers behaved the way they did because it was how they were socialized.

> I believe that when they were (the father) children, they did not receive love from their parents. So they don't know how to love and they treat their children the same way they were treated. (Parent Focus Group Session, Stream in the Desert, October 21, 2006)

Additionally, the parents (male and female) also agreed that a father's involvement in the education of their children was more than just sending the child to school, providing books,

lunch money and paying the school fee. Quality and meaningful father involvement is also about positive communication and interaction with the child.

> When I was growing up with my father, he was there for me, but only with money. He never told me he loved me or hugged me. He never told me that he cared for me. What I think happen to these men is that they did not grow up with any kind of love. They men think that just providing the money to send the child to school is love. (Parent Focus Group Session (Male Parent), Stream in the Desert, October 21, 2006)

Feminization of parenting and its consequent effect on the socialization of the Jamaican males, at its best, is masking the reality that some fathers are directly involved in the education of their children. The male parents in the focus group were adamant that, despite the limited involvement of their fathers in their education, they were not going to make their children experience the void that they did with their fathers. As a consequence, they were directly involved at the school and in providing for their children.

Cumulatively, there is not enough evidence in this deliberation to support the view that fathers are not involved in the education of their children. Therefore, further studies are warranted to arrive at empirical evidence to confirm or disapprove the hypothesis.

The involvement of fathers in the education and socialization of their children is of critical importance. There is a growing body of research suggesting that children who live away from their biological fathers are more likely to experience a greater risk of adverse child and adolescent outcomes, regardless of race, education, or mothers' remarriages. The strongest effects have been associated with behavioural problems; such children are more likely to be

suspended or expelled from school, to engage in delinquent activities, and more likely to experience depression and anxiety (as cited in Carlson, 2006, p. 137). When fathers are absent and mothers have to shoulder the dual roles of father and mother, the children are the ones who suffer most, particularly, as it relates to their holistic development - the cognitive, social, emotional and behavioural outcomes. We should not be surprised, then, at the current situation of our boys and young men, but rather acknowledge this social challenge as a direct consequence of the dysfunctional nature of the family and the "absence" of fathers.

The gender roles and expectations described emerge directly out of the social context of the Jamaican family described in the previous section. To reiterate, while the society recognizes that fathers and mothers are important to the holistic development of the child, a dysfunctional family pattern dominates which relegates the role of the father to a "marginalized" position and promotes the role of bearing and rearing of the child as the exclusive domain of the female. In other words, this social perception has given rise to socially constructed gender roles which, on one hand, promote the "feminization of parenting;" while, on the other hand, "endorsing" the "marginalization of the male and the absentee father."

As a mirror of the wider society, the school has played a role in reinforcing the feminization of parenting which has "seen many women struggle with the ambivalence of overtly seeking paternal involvement, but covertly experiencing an encroachment on their domain of perceived power and expertise" (Caddell, 1996, p. 7). In the research, it was revealed that, while female parents dominated the sample, male parents were involved in the education of their children. However, as a result of the notion of the feminization of parenting, male parents were "invisible", resulting in male parents being: (a) more likely to report a lower perceived sense of efficacy; (b) more likely to have less knowledge and skill to help their children succeed

in school; and (c) more likely to receive infrequent demand and opportunity for involvement. However, the data also revealed that male parents, when compared to their female counter-parts, were more adequately involved in total parental involvement. This is an important finding illustrating that fathers want to and are involved in the education of their children. It also highlights that the school has control of the process variables to change perception and behaviour by first beginning with transforming the perception and attitude of teachers towards male involvement in the education of their children.

The research is strongly suggesting that the lack of involvement of the male parent in the education of their children not be reduced to a "lack of interest"; but rather view their level of involvement as a function of the psychological and social context of involvement that defines the reality of the male parent. Anderson (2005), in her research, provides remarkable insight on how Jamaican men perceive themselves and construct their male identities and roles. She concludes that the Jamaican male experiences a sense of ambivalence and paradox where "culture demands certain expectations, however, economics, social structures and psyche constrains and resists" (research in press).

The school has a unique opportunity to become an agent of change by taking affirmative action to promote more engaging involvement of fathers in the education of their children. Also by responding to this issue, schools can significantly address the negative effects, such as parental stress, associated with single-parenthood by encouraging fathers to support their children through meaningful interaction with their mothers.

Parent's Personal Knowledge and Skill

> I would welcome the opportunity to get a better understanding of my child's curriculum, what is expected of her at each grade level and how I can assist in making her School years meaningful. Education is the path to her growth and development. I would really like to partner with her teachers in doing this and look forward to participating in whatever way possible (Parent Comments, *Excellence is Our Aim Colle*ge, Questionnaire)

According to Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995), "while the full mix of a parent's personal skills, knowledge, and ability contributes to his or her efficacy for helping the child succeed in school, his or her specific skills and areas of knowledge will influence the choice of specific involvement forms" (p. 317). For example, if parents feel knowledgeable enough about a particular subject, they will assist the child in the subject area where they are more likely to be successful as opposed to one where their knowledge level is low. Additionally, Hoover-Dempsey, Green, and Shephard (2006) in their presentation, *We're Way Beyond Reading Together: Why and How Does Parental Involvement Make Sense to Adolescents?* have highlighted that parents feel inadequate because of:

1. developmental changes in the child – the child becoming more focused on personal autonomy, personal competence, and peers (less time and day to day dependence on family) and parents often respond with increased "space" for development;

2. changes in the school structure and expectations – schools and classes are larger and more structured, teaching is more focused on student responsibility, often fewer choices, lower personal support for students;

3. teachers are less focused on parents as their involvement may interfere with student learning and responsibility;

4. time constraint;

5. changes in parents' perspective on personal ability to support student learning - parents respond to adolescent pressure for independence and declining school's expectation for involvement; and

6. complexity of learning content and processes may cause parents to doubt the likely effectiveness of their involvement. (pp. 3-6)

The experience of parents at Excellence is Our Aim College and Goodwill School, was consistent with the experience described above. The parents of children attending Excellence is Our Aim College are highly educated; conversely, the parents of children attending Goodwill School have "high school" as their highest level of educational attainment. Despite the difference, the parents share a common experience: a sense of "inadequacy" to help their children succeed at the high school level. The sense of inadequacy and frustration was primarily due to the lack of parental knowledge and repertoire of skills needed to support their children's development and learning. The experience of the parents was also specific to the nature of the school environment. For example, in the case of Excellence is Our Aim College, a high achieving school with 5% of the country's top performing students, the child's success was defined as staying ahead in the competitive school environment. On the other hand, at Goodwill School, a low achieving school, success was seen simply in making sure the children stayed in school and "come out to something." A certificate was a symbol of this achievement. Parents from *Excellence is Our Aim College* expressed the need to be made more knowledgeable about their child's curriculum and the school's expectation so that as parents they can align themselves to support the school and the child's learning at home.

Within this context: (a) limited knowledge and skill; (b) perceived sense of parent efficacy (personal mastery); and (c) the absence of specific teacher invitation (social persuasion), parents are not likely to be motivated to become involved in their children's education. In the long run, this has contributed to a decline in parental involvement at the school level as parents perceive that they do not possess the perceived sense of parent efficacy and personal knowledge and skill to support the child's learning. Kreider and Bouffard (2006) have also added that institutional barriers and few interventions informed by research and evaluation have also contributed to the decline of parental involvement at the high school level.

There is the need to promote parental involvement at the school because there is sufficient research linking parental involvement and future student success. According to Epstein (1984), students whose parents remained involved throughout school were much more likely to complete college and three times more likely to complete a bachelor's degree than children of parents who were not involved in school. Furthermore, parental involvement at the school level is important because it continues to have positive school outcomes such as attributes, behaviour and attitudes associated with student achievement. In addition, adolescents continue to want and value parental involvement in specific activities, i.e., help with homework, attending special events and discussing school projects (Hoover-Dempsey, Green & Shepherd, 2006, p.5). At the high school level, parental involvement should be viewed as a continuous source of support for the teachers and student development.

Parent's Perceived Sense of Time and Energy

The parent's perceived sense of time and energy is the other dimension of the life context variable. These two variables are among the menu of variables used to determine nature and quality of the parental involvement behaviour. The research revealed that parents with children

attending the primary schools - Betta Mus Come and Stream in the Dessert- had more parents reporting a higher perceived sense of time and energy to help their children when contrasted with their high school counter-parts. Upon closer analysis, it was the youngest parents in the 20-29 age group at the primary school who reported a higher perceived sense of time and energy to help their children succeed in school. The parents in this 20-29 age cohort had more opportunity for involvement because they were mostly self-employed and unemployed. However, this finding is in contrast to the teacher's report of involvement by parents in school based involvement. Teachers reported that there was high incidence of inadequate involvement at both levels. The factors attributing to this experience may include, but not limited to: (i) parent's perceived sense of efficacy; (ii) infrequent specific teacher demand and opportunity for involvement; and (iii) the nature of the school-based involvement activities.

Additionally, the parent's perception of time and energy also contrasted with the teacher's view of the parents parenting capacity. This contrast may be attributed to the teacher's view that a parent's involvement in school based activities is a barometer of a parent's interest in their child and their capacity to parent. This is a view that is also held by the wider society. As a result, parents who are unable to attend school-based activities are labelled as "lacking parental interest" in the education of their children. However, it has been demonstrated that parental involvement consists of both home and school-based activities. Furthermore, a parent's involvement or the lack thereof may be influenced by a host of mitigating.

A parent's life context is a powerful motivator of parental involvement decision-making. Given the nature of the parent's life context, the nature and quality of parental involvement behaviour is determined. The observation was made that, like the other process variables, a parent's life context is situated within a social context and is defined by the family's socio-

economic status. In the case of the majority of the parents, the psychological and social context of involvement has facilitated a moderate likelihood of positive parental involvement; however, the quality of the involvement has been stymied. This is as a result of the challenging life context of the parents interacting with the other process variables. In the case of the parent from the affluent school, limited time and energy and knowledge and skill is also a challenge to their quality involvement. These challenges, though, are attributed to work schedules which have limited their involvement in school-based activities.

Moreover, a parent's self-perceived knowledge and skill and time and energy factored heavily into their decision about the kind of involvement, especially as their child progresses through primary to secondary school. It is the changes in this life context situation that resulted in the variation of parental involvement based on school level and type. Parents from the primary school reported a positive life context to help their children succeed. This was attributed to their adequacy of time and energy and knowledge and skill when confronted with demands from the teacher and children to help their children succeed. This was not the same experience for the parents of students from the high school level.

Summary

The experience of parental involvement in education in Jamaica was explored with specific focus on the factors that influence the decision of parents to become involved in the education of their children. The research findings were discussed specifically with reference to the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model and, generally, within the broader literature on the parental involvement discourse.

The chapter has highlighted that parents want to become involved in the education of their children; however, there were factors that limited their meaningful and sustained involvement in the education of their children. This finding was based on a psychological and social context of involvement that facilitated a moderate to low likelihood of positive parental involvement. This was influence by: (a) a strong parental role construction (*I believe it is my responsibility to be involved in the education of my child*); (b) weak sense of efficacy (*I can help my child succeed in school*); and (c) moderate or infrequent invitation from others. However, the experience of parental involvement was not homogenous across the school types and levels, but disparities were noted based on these features. These disparities were attributed to the psychological and social context of involvement at these schools and also the dynamic and interactive nature of the process variables resulted in specific combinations and outcomes of parental involvement based on the school type and level. The noted process variables contributing to the variations were parent's perceived sense of efficacy, specific teacher, parent's knowledge and skill and time and energy. The psychological and social context of parental involvement was influenced by a wider sociological framework of the Jamaica society, namely, the predominant nature of the Jamaican family, poverty and its impact on family functioning. Overall, the findings are suggesting that "inadequate parental involvement" was not an indication of a "lack of parental interest". Rather it was noted that impediments at the home and school level were limiting the effective and sustained involvement of parents in the education of their children.

Chapter Nine:
Conclusions

The goal of the "Education for All" Global Conference in Jomtein, Thailand, was to draw the world's attention to the issue of quality basic education. Since 1990, more than a decade and a half ago, nations have been engaged in education reform to address the quality of education and other related issues, such as improving access and equity. In many countries, tremendous effort has been made to improve access to educational opportunities, especially at the primary level. However, in many of these same countries, the issues of quality and equity continue to be a challenge. Jamaica is no exception.

Recently, Jamaica embarked on a process of education transformation aimed at addressing the issue of equity and quality so as to elevate the system to world class standards. A Task Force on Education Reform was established to make recommendations to facilitate the ambitious transformation. In its situational analysis, the Task Force identified four critical areas that were contributing to the decline of the education system. Among the factors identified was the inadequate involvement of parents in the education of their children.

This research is set within this context of education transformation as it was undertaken to: examine the experience of parental involvement in the education, with the view of exploring the factors that motivate the involvement of parents in the education of their children; and provide a basis for offering recommendations as to how the current model of parental involvement in education needs to be transformed. The objectives of the study were to: (a) examine the context and factors that influence parental involvement decisions; (b) identify issues and concerns impacting parental involvement in education in Jamaica; (c) identify solutions that can assist schools and parents to improve the practice of parental involvement in education in

Jamaica; and (d) provide the basis for further studies on the influence of the selected variables on parental involvement decision-making and the implications of the nature and dynamics of parental involvement in education in Jamaica on students' outcomes.

A five-level theoretical model of parental involvement in education developed by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) was employed to provide insight and understanding of the psychological and social context of parental involvement in education in Jamaica, their dynamic interaction, and consequent influence on parental involvement behaviour. However, given the specific focus of this study, which is the motivating factors of parental involvement at the psychological and social levels, only the variables at *Level 1* and *Level 2* of the model were used. The *Level 1* variables were: (a) parents' personal motivators; (b) parents' perceptions of invitation for involvement from others; and (c) parents' perceived life context. Additionally, *Level 2* variables included parents' involvement behaviour which may take the form of home-based and school based behaviours. Moreover, the research also investigated the association between the principal dependent variable (parent decision to become involved in the education of their children) and the independent/predictor factors (parental motivational beliefs, parents' perception of invitation for involvement from others; and parents' perceived life context) and revealed which of the factors was more likely to influence the decision of parents to become involved in the education of their children.

A mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods was used to conduct the study. The participants were drawn from primary and secondary schools in the public education system. The schools were chosen because they were consistent with the variations of schools within the education system. The schools also reflected the socio-economic disparities of the communities

they served. Hence, the schools were situated in the urban and inner city communities of the Kingston Metropolitan Area and a rural community in Clarendon.

First, the research provided evidence to suggest that the current state of parental involvement in education in Jamaica was not primarily due to a "lack of parental interest". There was strong evidence illustrating that parents across the school levels want to become involved in the education of their children. Parents from across the schools reported high levels of motivation and aspiration. However, their involvement was limited by factors that impeded the realization of an engaging and sustained parental involvement. In the end, these mediating factors resulted in unequal levels and quality of parental involvement across the school levels. More specifically, the research findings also highlighted that the Jamaican experience of parental involvement was shaped by the psychological and social context of parental involvement specific to the school levels and types. This context has facilitated a moderate to low likelihood of positive parental involvement which is driven by: (a) strong belief in their active role and shared partnership with the school to achieve quality student outcomes; (b) a weak perceived sense of parent efficacy to help their children succeed; and (c) moderate or infrequent invitation for involvement from others . The results also supported Hoover-Dempsey's assumptions and illustrated the dynamic and interactive nature of the variables to create the likelihood of positive parental involvement decision.

It was also illustrated that the parents sampled had a reached an important consensus: the parents *want to* become involved in the education of their children; however, with respect to *how* parental involvement was defined and realized at the schools, there were significant variations in parental involvement based at the school levels (Primary/Secondary) and by school types (Traditional/Non-traditional). These variations were attributed to the specific nature of the

psychological and social context at the schools investigated which were, in turn, linked to a broader sociological framework that shaped how parental involvement was defined and operationalized by parents and teachers within school systems. These findings were consistent with the broader literature on parental involvement proffered by Lareau (1987), Desimone (2001) and deCarvalho (2001). The authors in their respective studies have highlighted that the variations noted in parental involvement were generally linked to: (a) social class difference in family-school relationships; (b) a culture of poverty thesis; (c) institutional realities; and d) the role of teachers. These mediating factors functioned to shape the nature, quality and outcomes of parental involvement in education. In the case of Jamaica, these mediating factors included institutional barriers based on social class differences and expectations of how parental involvement should be defined, the role of the teacher as facilitator, family structure and organization and poverty. However, it is important to also emphasize that, while poverty was an impediment to effective and sustained parental involvement, it was also a powerful motivator for parents with children attending the schools with low income background in the rural and inner-city communities. This finding was in contrast to the culture of poverty thesis that stated that lower and working class parents did not value parenting as much as their counterparts.

Furthermore, poverty was an important motivator of parental involvement which was facilitated by the parent's life experience. The sense of "being poor, but ambitious," resulted in high levels of motivation and aspiration of the low SES parents. This attribute, coupled with their strong sense of parental role construction was also instrumental in providing the drive needed to participate in the education of their children, despite the low levels of teacher invitation. Paradoxically, poverty, when examined within the context of the parent's life context,

specifically family functioning, was a major impediment as low income parents could not afford to maintain their children at school.

It is important that this finding is understood appreciating the variations in parental involvement based on school level and the sociological context that we will be able to improve the incidence of parental involvement, the nature and quality of involvement, and by extension, benefits of parental involvement on student achievement and quality outcomes, "a one size fits all" approach will be inadequate. This underscores the perspective of Standing (1999) and Powell (1991), as schools seek to support families, they must be mindful of the changing demographics and characteristics of the family. It is this knowledge that must be used to guide the development of policy and programmatic responses aimed at involving parents in the education of their children in a sustained and meaningful manner.

Within the Jamaican context, the model was able to reliably predict the conditions and factors influencing the decision of parents to become involved in the education of their children. The results implied that in order to promote positive parental involvement decision-making and total involvement, in both home and school-based activities, schools must focus their energies on: improving the parent's knowledge and skill and specific teacher invitation which refers, not only to the demand to become involved in the education of their children, but also provide specific guidance and instruction on developmentally appropriate parental involvement strategies and opportunities for parents to be engaged in meaningful parental involvement relationships. As was noted in the analysis, school-based involvement was low. Based on the hierarchical regression analysis, in order to increase parental involvement in school-based involvement, the school may need to pay more attention to its general invitation to parents. This includes creating a welcoming, family-friendly school environment that supports the involvement of parents in the

education of their children. In comparison to the Hoover-Dempsey study, while the specific predictors were different, generally, the studies had similar conclusions: the school had a critical leadership role to play to: create the enabling environment for engaging and sustained parental involvement; and to facilitate mutually beneficial parent-teacher interactions to support the learning and development of the child.

Second, while there was moderate likelihood of positive parental involvement decision-making, the research highlighted that there are a number of factors impeding the quality involvement of parents in the education of their children. These factors included: (a) weak sense of parent efficacy; (b) infrequent invitation from teacher for involvement of parents; (c) and parents' life context, especially for parents at the high school level.

Third, the research has highlighted that the life context, especially given the levels of poverty of the parents pose a formidable challenge to the quality and effectiveness of parental involvement at both the primary and secondary levels. It is, therefore, important that schools, through the development of complementary learning frameworks or non-school support, help build the capacity of families to support their children's development and academic success. This can be achieved by the schools mobilizing support for families through targeted interventions, which already exist, which focus on strengthening families through family education and parenting skills development. These programmes can be incorporated through structured PTA. The PTA also has a critical role to play in enhancing the involvement of parents. However, in order to be effective, the PTA must transform itself from its traditionally defined roles to become more relevant to the needs of the parents, teachers and students. The newly formed National Parent Teacher's Association Jamaica (NPTAJA) has an opportunity to assist local PTAs in this endeavour.

Fourth, in order to promote sustainable and effective parental involvement practices, and given the implications of parental involvement on children's learning and development outcomes, parental involvement must be treated as a critical developmental issue and, therefore, encouraged from birth to adolescence. According to Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP, 2006), the surest way to guarantee that children benefit from their school experience is to ensure their readiness for school. This task can't be achieved only by the school; hence, parental involvement must be encouraged to facilitate children's learning and socio-emotional development (p. 2). In addition, parental involvement at the early childhood level is important because it promotes healthy child development; it is also an opportunity for parents to build their awareness and capacity in developmentally-appropriate parenting skills.

In a review of successful parenting programmes, the HFRP highlighted three main characteristics. The programmes were strong in promoting: (a) parenting centered on parent-child interaction and participation in child-centered activities; home-school relationships which include communication and participation in schooling; and (b) responsibilities for learning outcomes defined as including reading in the home and parent-child conversations. It was noted that quality child outcomes were evident and included social competence, cognitive development, communication skills, literacy development, vocabulary growth, expressive language, comprehension skills and positive engagement with peers, and adult learning (HFR, 2006, p. 2). Efforts should, therefore, target the strengthening of the linkages between the home, early childhood settings and school so as to enhance consistent learning and developmental outcomes for our children which is a necessary precursor to ensuring quality adolescence.

Finally, education involves partnership which seeks, above all, to support the learning and development of children. Schools, therefore, need to create the optimal environment through

appropriate polices and engaging home-school partnership frameworks that will lead to the enhanced achievement of our children.

The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of Parental Involvement in Education in a Cross-Cultural Context

The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of Parental Involvement (1995, 1997, 2005) was developed with the view of establishing a conceptual framework that identifies the factors that motivate parents to become involved in the education of their children. The model was applied to the Jamaican context and the following were observed: (a) the model was adaptable and relevant; (b) achieved its objectives by identifying the psychological and social context of involvement that was specific to the schools in the Jamaican context; (c) the model's hypothesis was confirmed in that it illustrated the additive fashion in which the variables interacted and informed each other to produce a likelihood of parental involvement; (d) while the model produced results that were not consistent with Hoover-Dempsey's research (2005), it goes to illustrate that the model is flexible and takes into account the cultural nuances that influences perception, expectation and behaviour; and (e) the model has made a significant contribution to understanding the factors that motivate parental involvement and also provide suggestion that can dramatically improve the parent-teacher relationship and also increase the incidence of parental involvement in education in Jamaica.

Notwithstanding the contribution of the Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler Model in providing insight into the process and context variables that motive parents to become involved in the education of their children, the model had a number of limitations. First, the model experienced some methodological problems as the instrument in a number of instances – parent perceived sense of efficacy, teacher's report of self-efficacy for teaching and the teacher's report of parent

efficacy to help their children succeed – did not elicit the surveyed respondents. This raises questions as to the validity of the survey items and the intended measure of the core variables when applied in the Jamaican context. In addition, the instrument may not have accurately measured what was intended in the case of the parent's report of specific teacher invitation for involvement. In short, the cross-cultural reliability of the variables may be subject to challenge due to problems with the validity of the survey items within the Jamaican context. Future use of this instrument in Jamaica would benefit from more rigorous psychometric testing and perhaps modification of the survey items in order to strengthen the validity and reliability as measures of the core variables of the Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler Model in this context. Second, given that the model focused on parental and teacher perceptions of parental involvement, use of the model for research purposes could have been significantly enhanced with more comprehensive measures of actual behaviour. Third, future studies with the model and instrument in a cross cultural context would be necessary to make ensure that the instrument, and by extension the model, is culturally relevant. In turn, this would contribute to the further refinement of the model.

Recommendation for Future Studies

One of the objectives of this research was to provide baseline data on the experience of parental involvement in education in Jamaica. The research has provided knowledge that has given us insights into the psychological and social factors that motivate parental involvement in education across the school levels and type. Parental involvement in education in Jamaica has a promising future because parents, regardless of social class background, want to become involved in the education of their children. However, there are factors impeding the engaging and sustained involvement of parents.

The study was limited by sample size and therefore the some of the results were not significant or they had weak association. The findings were however interesting because of their counter-intuitive nature. The investigation was therefore heuristic. It provide a guide for further investigation of the model, specially the influence of the process, context variables and the broader context of involvement that is specific to the school and local context. Furthermore, further analysis will be necessary to address the areas identified as impediments; and also to build more awareness of what other factors constitute quality parental involvement and have the capacity to create the environment and relationships that engender this type of involvement. The areas for further investigation include:

1. Based on Bandura's theory of social cognition, explore the role of the sources of efficacy as in the school and their influence on the decision of parents to become involved in the education of their children;
2. how changes across student development, school type and grade levels impact on parental involvement;
3. the level of teacher preparation at both the pre-service and in-service levels to effect meaningful and engaging parent, family and community involvement;
4. what are some of the innovative ways to increase the involvement of fathers in the education of their children;
5. how schools can best offer and encourage forms of parental involvement that are consistent with family circumstances; and
6. the role of school leadership in creating the enabling environment that supports and encourages effective parental involvement.

Parental involvement in education in Jamaica has a promising future, especially, within the context of education transformation now underway. An extraordinary opportunity is before us.

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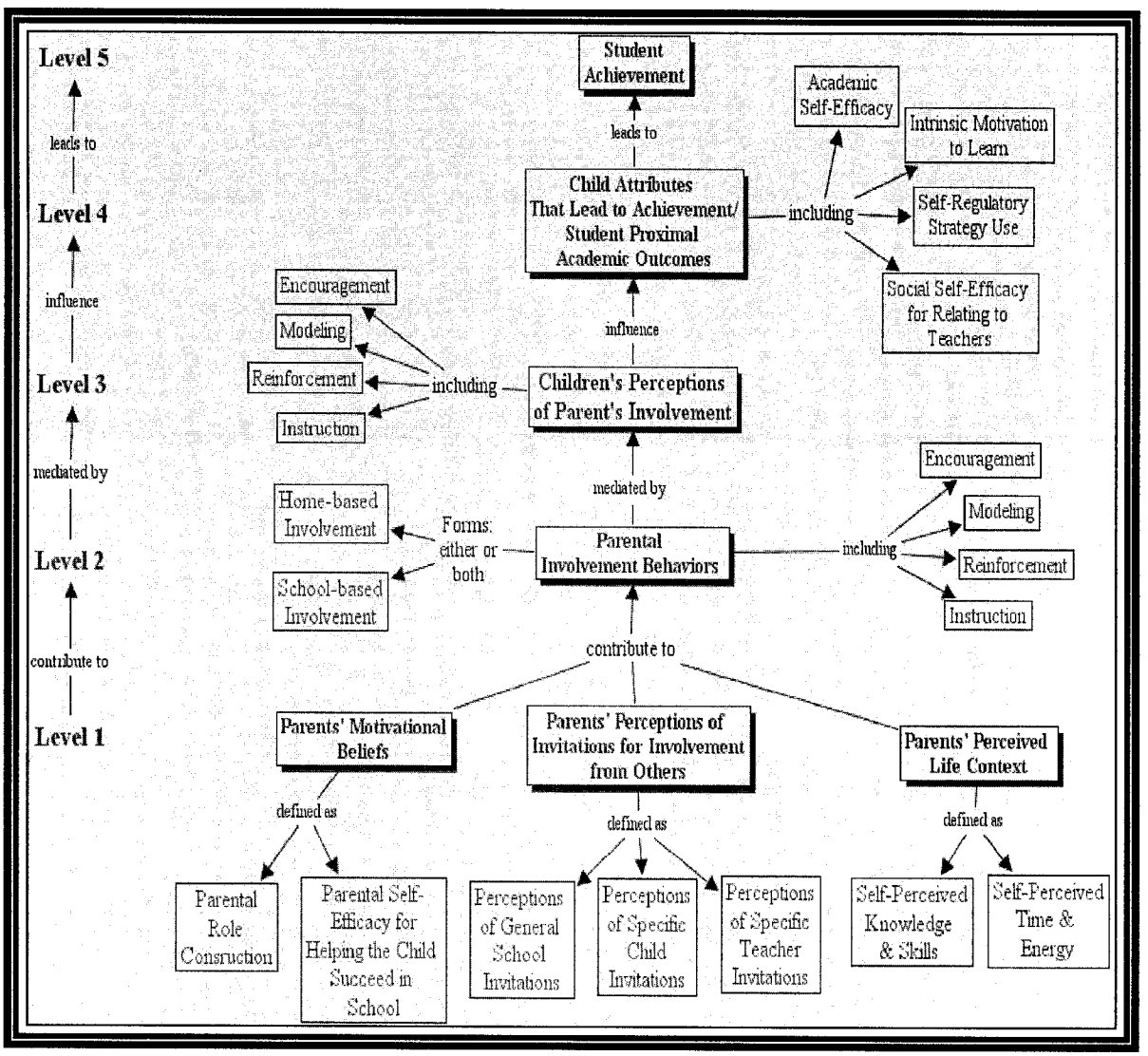
Appendix A

Revised Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005)

Model of the Parental Involvement Decision-Making Process



Appendix B

Matrix of Bivariate Analysis by School Type

Primary Level

Dependent Variables

DEPENDENT VARIABLES	Gender		Age Group		Union		Employ		Education Level		# Of Child		Locale		Biological Parents	
Valency	Chi Sq / t-test	X	Chi Sq/ Anova	X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2)	X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	ChiSq	X	Chi Sq / T-test	X
		X		√		X							T-test	X		√
Parent Efficacy	Chi Sq / t-test	X	Chi Sq/ Anova	X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2)	X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	√	Spearman	X	Chi Sq	X	Chi Sq / T-test	X
		X		X		X							T-test	X		√
General School Invitation	Chi Sq / t-test	X	Chi Sq/ Anova	X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2)	X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	Chi Sq	X	Chi Sq	X
		X		X		X							T-Test	X	T-test	X
Role beliefs	Chi Sq / t-test	X	Chi Sq/ Anova	X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2)	X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	Chi Sq	X	Chi Sq / t-test	X
		X		X		X							T-Test	X		X
Knowledge & skills	Chi Sq / t-test	X	Chi Sq/ Anova	X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2)	X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	ChiSq	X	Chi Sq / t-test	X
		√		X		X							T-Test	X		X
Time & Energy	Chi Sq / t-test	X	Chi Sq/ Anova	X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2)	X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	Chi Sq	X	Chi Sq / t-test	X
		X		√		X							T-Test	X		X

DEPENDENT VARIABLES	Gender		Age Group		Union		Employ		Education Level		# Of Child		Locale		Biological Parents	
Specific Teacher Demand	Chi Sq / t-test	√	Chi Sq/ Anova	X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2)	X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	ChiSq	X	Chi Sq / t-test	
		X		X		X							T-Test	X		X

√ - Statistically significant and reliable
X – Not statistically significant

Appendix C

Matrix of Bivariate Analysis by School Type

Primary Level

Independent Variables

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	Gender		Age Group		Union Status		Employment		Level of Education		# of Child		Biological Parents	
PIB (normal)	Chi Sq / t-test	X	Chi Sq/ Anova	X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2)	X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	Chi Sq / t-test	X
		X		X		X								X
HBPIB (skewed)	Chi Sq /	X	Chi Sq/	X	Chi Sq/	X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	√	Chi Sq /	X
		X		X		X								X
SBPIB (skewed)	Chi Sq /	X	Chi Sq/	X	Chi Sq/	X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	Chi Sq /	X
		X		X		X								X

√ - Statistically significant and reliable
X – Not statistically significant

Appendix D

Results of Bivariate Analyses by School Type

Primary School

1.1 Parent efficacy and Education
Spearman rho

Correlations

			Highest level of education of parent	Valency grouped	Parent Efficacy grouped	General School invites grouped	Role Belifs grouped	Knowledge and Skills grouped	Time and Energy grouped	Specific Teacher Demands grouped
Spearman's rl	Highest level of educ of parent	Correlation Coeffic	1.000	.047	-.183**	.008	-.050	.012	-.049	-.024
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.437	.002	.891	.406	.843	.422	.694
		N	274	273	273	273	274	273	273	274
	Valency grouped	Correlation Coeffic	.047	1.000	-.063	.024	.020	.042	.044	-.043
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.437	.	.279	.686	.727	.469	.447	.460
		N	273	296	296	296	296	296	296	296
	Parent Efficacy grouf	Correlation Coeffic	-.183**	-.063	1.000	-.195**	.014	-.257**	-.025	.100
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.279	.	.001	.812	.000	.674	.085
		N	273	296	296	296	296	296	296	296
	General School invite grouped	Correlation Coeffic	.008	.024	-.195**	1.000	.109	.432**	.143*	.116*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.891	.686	.001	.	.062	.000	.014	.046
		N	273	296	296	296	296	296	296	296
	Role Belifs grouped	Correlation Coeffic	-.050	.020	.014	.109	1.000	.147*	.131*	-.040
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.406	.727	.812	.062	.	.011	.024	.487
		N	274	296	296	296	297	296	296	297
	Knowledge and Skills grouped	Correlation Coeffic	.012	.042	-.257**	.432**	.147*	1.000	.251**	.122*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.843	.469	.000	.000	.011	.	.000	.036
		N	273	296	296	296	296	296	296	296
	Time and Energy gro	Correlation Coeffic	-.049	.044	-.025	.143*	.131*	.251**	1.000	.153**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.422	.447	.674	.014	.024	.000	.	.008
		N	273	296	296	296	296	296	296	296
	Specific Teacher Demands grouped	Correlation Coeffic	-.024	-.043	.100	.116*	-.040	.122*	.153**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.694	.460	.085	.046	.487	.036	.008	.
		N	274	296	296	296	297	296	296	297

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

T-test

1.2 Parent Efficacy and Biological Parent

Group Statistics

	Biological parent	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Parent Efficacy	Yes	192	2.1315	.65384	.04719
	No	32	1.8304	.63208	.11174

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Parent Efficacy	Equal variances assumed	1.085	.299	2.424	222	.016	.30119	.12427	.05629	.54610
	Equal variances not assumed			2.483	42.822	.017	.30119	.12129	.05655	.54583

Strength of Association

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Biological parent * Parent Efficacy grouped	224	75.4%	73	24.6%	297	100.0%

Directional Measures

			Value
Nominal by Interval	Eta	Biological parent Dependent	.133
		Parent Efficacy grouped Dependent	.080

2.1 Valency & Age Group Status
ANOVA

Descriptives

Valency

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval fo Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
20 - 29	64	4.3490	.82761	.10345	4.1422	4.5557	1.00	5.00
30 - 39	133	4.4213	.64061	.05555	4.3114	4.5312	1.50	5.00
40 - 59	87	4.6770	.52014	.05577	4.5662	4.7879	2.17	5.00
60 and ove	4	4.2917	.47871	.23936	3.5299	5.0534	4.00	5.00
Total	288	4.4807	.66351	.03910	4.4037	4.5576	1.00	5.00

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Valency

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
3.372	3	284	.019

ANOVA

Valency

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.076	3	1.692	3.962	.009
Within Groups	121.276	284	.427		
Total	126.351	287			

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Valency

Tukey HSD

(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
20 - 29	30 - 39	-.07234	.09941	.886	-.3293	.1846
	40 - 59	-.32805*	.10761	.013	-.6062	-.0499
	60 and over	.05729	.33679	.998	-.8131	.9277
30 - 39	20 - 29	.07234	.09941	.886	-.1846	.3293
	40 - 59	-.25571*	.09011	.025	-.4886	-.0228
	60 and over	.12964	.33161	.980	-.7274	.9866
40 - 59	20 - 29	.32805*	.10761	.013	.0499	.6062
	30 - 39	.25571*	.09011	.025	.0228	.4886
	60 and over	.38534	.33416	.657	-.4782	1.2489
60 and over	20 - 29	-.05729	.33679	.998	-.9277	.8131
	30 - 39	-.12964	.33161	.980	-.9866	.7274
	40 - 59	-.38534	.33416	.657	-1.2489	.4782

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Valency

Tukey HSD[a,b]

Age	N	Subset for alpha = .05
		1
60 and over	4	4.2917
20 - 29	64	4.3490
30 - 39	133	4.4213
40 - 59	87	4.6770
Sig.		.401

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 14.053.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

2.2 Valence & Biological Status

T-test

Group Statistics

	Biological parent	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Valency	Yes	192	4.4866	.64553	.04659
	No	32	4.6719	.33730	.05963

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for quality of Variance		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Valency	Equal variances assumed	6.208	.013	-1.586	222	.114	-.18524	.11683	-.41549	.04500
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.448	75.814	.017	-.18524	.07567	-.33596	-.03453

Strength of Association

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Age * Valency grouped	288	97.0%	9	3.0%	297	100.0%

Directional Measures

			Value
Nominal by Interval	Eta	Age Dependent	.130
		Valency grouped Dependent	.115

3.1 Specific Teacher Demand and Gender
Chi-Square

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Specific Teacher Demands grouped * Gender	293	98.7%	4	1.3%	297	100.0%

Specific Teacher Demands grouped * Gender Crosstabulation

			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
Specific Teacher Demands grouped	infrequent	Count	19	67	86
		% within Gender	44.2%	26.8%	29.4%
	undecided	Count	7	75	82
		% within Gender	16.3%	30.0%	28.0%
	frequent	Count	17	108	125
		% within Gender	39.5%	43.2%	42.7%
Total		Count	43	250	293
		% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.362[a]	2	.042
Likelihood Ratio	6.312	2	.043
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.307	1	.129
N of Valid Cases	293		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 12.03.

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Contingency Coefficient	.146	.042
N of Valid Cases		293	

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

4.1 Time and Energy and Age Group
ANOVA

Descriptives

Time and Energy

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
20 - 29	64	4.3281	.54754	.06844	4.1914	4.4649	2.50	5.00
30 - 39	133	4.1115	.58188	.05046	4.0117	4.2113	2.00	5.00
40 - 59	87	4.0284	.63514	.06809	3.8930	4.1637	2.00	5.00
60 and ove	4	4.6250	.43833	.21916	3.9275	5.3225	4.17	5.00
Total	288	4.1417	.59979	.03534	4.0721	4.2112	2.00	5.00

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Time and Energy

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.314	3	284	.816

ANOVA

Time and Energy

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.397	3	1.466	4.211	.006
Within Groups	98.849	284	.348		
Total	103.247	287			

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Time and Energy
Tukey HSD

(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
20 - 29	30 - 39	.21660	.08975	.077	-.0154	.4485
	40 - 59	.29977*	.09716	.012	.0487	.5509
	60 and over	-.29688	.30406	.763	-1.0827	.4889
30 - 39	20 - 29	-.21660	.08975	.077	-.4485	.0154
	40 - 59	.08318	.08135	.736	-.1271	.2934
	60 and over	-.51347	.29939	.318	-1.2872	.2602
40 - 59	20 - 29	-.29977*	.09716	.012	-.5509	-.0487
	30 - 39	-.08318	.08135	.736	-.2934	.1271
	60 and over	-.59665	.30169	.199	-1.3763	.1830
60 and over	20 - 29	.29688	.30406	.763	-.4889	1.0827
	30 - 39	.51347	.29939	.318	-.2602	1.2872
	40 - 59	.59665	.30169	.199	-.1830	1.3763

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Time and Energy

Tukey HSD[a,b]

Age	N	Subset for alpha = .05	
		1	2
40 - 59	87	4.0284	
30 - 39	133	4.1115	4.1115
20 - 29	64	4.3281	4.3281
60 and over	4		4.6250
Sig.		.534	.099

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 14.053.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

Strength of Association

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Time and Energy grouped * Age	288	97.0%	9	3.0%	297	100.0%

Directional Measures

			Value
Nominal by Interval	Eta	Time and Energy grouped Dependent	.128
		Age Dependent	.100

Home-based Involvement

5.1 Home-based Involvement & Number of Children Spearman rho

Correlations

			Number of children living in home	Home Based Parental Involvement Behaviour	School Based Parental Involvement Behaviour	Total Parental Involvement
Spearman's rho	Number of children living in home	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.159*	-.060	-.131
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.017	.370	.051
		N	225	224	224	224
	Home Based Parental Involvement Behaviour	Correlation Coefficient	-.159*	1.000	.015	.634**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.017	.	.793	.000
		N	224	296	296	296
	School Based Parental Involvement Behaviour	Correlation Coefficient	-.060	.015	1.000	.708**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.370	.793	.	.000
		N	224	296	296	296
	Total Parental Involvement	Correlation Coefficient	-.131	.634**	.708**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.051	.000	.000	.
		N	224	296	296	296

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix E

Bivariate Analysis by School Type

Traditional High School

Dependent Variables

DEPENDENT VARIABLE	Gender		Age Group		Union Status		Employment		Education Level		# of Child		Biological Parents	
Valence	Chi Sq / t-test	X √	Chi Sq/ Anova	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2)	X X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	Chi Sq / t-test	X X
Parent Efficacy	Chi Sq / t-test	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2)	X X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	Chi Sq / t-test	X X
General School Invitation	Chi Sq / t-test	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2)	X X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	Chi Sq / t-test	X X
Role beliefs	Chi Sq / t-test	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2)	X X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	Chi Sq / t-test	X X
Knowledge & skills	Chi Sq / t-test	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2)	X X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	√	Spearman	X	Chi Sq / t-test	X √
Time & Energy	Chi Sq / t-test	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2)	X X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	Chi Sq / t-test	X X
Specific Teacher Demand	Chi Sq / t-test	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2)	X √	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	Chi Sq / t-test	X X

√ - Statistically significant and reliable
X – Not statistically significant

Appendix F

Bivariate Analysis by School Type

Traditional School

Independent Variable

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	Gender		Age Group		Union Status		Employment		Level of Education		# of Child		Biological Parents	
PIB (normal)	Chi Sq / t-test	√	Chi Sq/ Anova	X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2)	X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	Chi Sq / t-test	X
HBPIB (skewed)	Chi Sq /	X	Chi Sq/	√	Chi Sq/	X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	Chi Sq /	X
SBPIB (skewed)	Chi Sq /	X	Chi Sq/	X	Chi Sq/	X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	Chi Sq /	X

√ - Statistically significant
X – Not statistically significant

Appendix G

Results of Bivariate Analyses by School Type

Traditional School

2.1 Valence and Gender

T-Test

Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Valency	Male	32	4.5729	.48070	.08498
	Female	125	4.2653	.76876	.06876

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Valency	Equal variances assumed	6.109	.015	2.155	155	.033	.30758	.14273	.02564	.58952
	Equal variances not assumed			2.814	76.668	.006	.30758	.10931	.08990	.52526

Directional Measures

			Value
Nominal by Interval	Eta	Valency grouped Dependent	.090
		Age Dependent	.084

3.1 Specific Teacher Demand and Union Status
ANOVA

Descriptives

Specific Teacher Demands

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Married	101	1.7287	.95910	.09543	1.5394	1.9181	1.00	5.00
Common Law	3	2.9333	.61101	.35277	1.4155	4.4512	2.40	3.60
Single	39	1.5346	.80289	.12856	1.2743	1.7949	1.00	4.00
Total	143	1.7010	.93048	.07781	1.5472	1.8549	1.00	5.00

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Specific Teacher Demands

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.030	2	140	.360

ANOVA

Specific Teacher Demands

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.713	2	2.857	3.411	.036
Within Groups	117.229	140	.837		
Total	122.942	142			

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Specific Teacher Demands

Tukey HSD

(I) Union Status	(J) Union Status	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Married	Common Law	-1.20462	.53610	.067	-2.4746	.0654
	Single	.19410	.17251	.500	-.2146	.6028
Common Law	Married	1.20462	.53610	.067	-.0654	2.4746
	Single	1.39872*	.54826	.031	.0999	2.6975
Single	Married	-.19410	.17251	.500	-.6028	.2146
	Common Law	-1.39872*	.54826	.031	-2.6975	-.0999

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Specific Teacher Demands

Tukey HSD[a,b]

Union Status	N	Subset for alpha = .05	
		1	2
Single	39	1.5346	
Married	101	1.7287	
Common Law	3		2.9333
Sig.		.904	1.000

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 8.133.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

Strength of Association- Eta Function

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Specific Teacher Demands grouped * Union Status	143	89.9%	16	10.1%	159	100.0%

Directional Measures

			Value
Nominal by Interval	Eta	Specific Teacher Demands grouped Dependent	.193
		Union Status Dependent	.037

4.1 Knowledge and skill and Biological Parent

T-test

Group Statistics

	Biological parent	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Knowledge and Skills	Yes	139	3.8777	.59989	.05088
	No	15	3.3332	.57063	.14734

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Knowledge and Sk	Equal variance assumed	.092	.763	3.355	152	.001	.54450	.16232	.22381	.86519
	Equal variance not assumed			3.493	17.513	.003	.54450	.15587	.21636	.87263

Strength of Association – Eta Function

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Knowledge and Skills grouped * Biological parent	154	96.9%	5	3.1%	159	100.0%

Directional Measures

			Value
Nominal by Interval	Eta	Knowledge and Skills grouped Dependent	.221
		Biological parent Dependent	.251

4.2 Knowledge & skill and Education
Spearman rho

Correlations

			Highest level of education of parent	Valency grouped	Parent Efficacy grouped	General School invites grouped	Role Belifs grouped	Knowledge and Skills grouped	Time and Energy grouped	Specific Teacher Demands grouped
Spearman's rho	Highest level of education of parent	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.059	-.147	.028	.102	.165*	.111	-.004
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.476	.072	.735	.212	.043	.176	.962
		N	151	151	151	151	151	151	151	151
	Valency grouped	Correlation Coefficient	.059	1.000	-.326**	.310**	.264**	.250**	.276**	-.005
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.476	.	.000	.000	.001	.001	.000	.950
		N	151	159	159	159	159	159	159	159
	Parent Efficacy grouped	Correlation Coefficient	-.147	-.326**	1.000	-.273**	-.184*	-.387**	-.283**	.056
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.072	.000	.	.000	.020	.000	.000	.485
		N	151	159	159	159	159	159	159	159
	General School invites grouped	Correlation Coefficient	.028	.310**	-.273**	1.000	.194*	.414**	.310**	.143
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.735	.000	.000	.	.014	.000	.000	.071
		N	151	159	159	159	159	159	159	159
	Role Belifs grouped	Correlation Coefficient	.102	.264**	-.184*	.194*	1.000	.171*	.209**	.099
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.212	.001	.020	.014	.	.031	.008	.215
		N	151	159	159	159	159	159	159	159
	Knowledge and Skills grouped	Correlation Coefficient	.165*	.250**	-.387**	.414**	.171*	1.000	.361**	.052
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.043	.001	.000	.000	.031	.	.000	.519
		N	151	159	159	159	159	159	159	159
	Time and Energy grouped	Correlation Coefficient	.111	.276**	-.283**	.310**	.209**	.361**	1.000	.033
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.176	.000	.000	.000	.008	.000	.	.684
		N	151	159	159	159	159	159	159	159
	Specific Teacher Demands grouped	Correlation Coefficient	-.004	-.005	.056	.143	.099	.052	.033	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.962	.950	.485	.071	.215	.519	.684	.
		N	151	159	159	159	159	159	159	159

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

7.1 Total Involvement & Age

Oneway

Descriptives

Total Parental Involvement

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
20 - 29	6	2.1963	.54291	.22164	1.6265	2.7660	1.60	2.90
30 - 39	37	3.0718	.67342	.11071	2.8472	3.2963	1.40	3.90
40 - 59	111	3.0709	.61762	.05862	2.9547	3.1870	1.20	4.43
60 and over	3	3.2333	.81445	.47022	1.2101	5.2565	2.30	3.80
Total	157	3.0408	.64853	.05176	2.9385	3.1430	1.20	4.43

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Total Parental Involvement

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.279	3	153	.841

ANOVA

Total Parental Involvement

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.526	3	1.509	3.779	.012
Within Groups	61.087	153	.399		
Total	65.613	156			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Total Parental Involvement
Tukey HSD

(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval Upper Bound
20 - 29	30 - 39	-.87548*	.27809	.011	-1.5978	-.1531
	40 - 59	-.87456*	.26484	.006	-1.5625	-.1866
	60 and over	-1.03704	.44680	.098	-2.1976	.1235
30 - 39	20 - 29	.87548*	.27809	.011	.1531	1.5978
	40 - 59	.00092	.11995	1.000	-.3106	.3125
	60 and over	-.16156	.37931	.974	-1.1468	.8237
40 - 59	20 - 29	.87456*	.26484	.006	.1866	1.5625
	30 - 39	-.00092	.11995	1.000	-.3125	.3106
	60 and over	-.16248	.36971	.972	-1.1228	.7978
60 and over	20 - 29	1.03704	.44680	.098	-.1235	2.1976
	30 - 39	.16156	.37931	.974	-.8237	1.1468
	40 - 59	.16248	.36971	.972	-.7978	1.1228

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Homogeneous Subsets

Total Parental Involvement

Tukey HSD[a,b]

Age	N	Subset for alpha = .05 1	Subset for alpha = .05 2
20 - 29	6	2.1963	
40 - 59	111		3.0709
30 - 39	37		3.0718
60 and over	3		3.2333
Sig.		1.000	.960

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 7.462.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

Strength of Association

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Age * Recoded Total Parental Involvement	611	97.1%	18	2.9%	629	100.0%

Directional Measures

			Value
Nominal by Interval	Eta	Age Dependent	.152
		Recoded Total Parental Involvement Dependent	.127

7.2 Total Involvement & Gender Crosstabs

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Recoded Total Parental Involvement * Gender	157	98.7%	2	1.3%	159	100.0%

Recoded Total Parental Involvement * Gender Crosstabulation

			Gender		
			Male	Female	Total
Recoded Total Parental Involvement	Inadequately involved	Count	7	52	59
		% within Gender	21.9%	41.6%	37.6%
	Adequately involved	Count	25	73	98
		% within Gender	78.1%	58.4%	62.4%
Total		Count	32	125	157
		% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.226[b]	1	.040		
Continuity Correction[a]	3.427	1	.064		
Likelihood Ratio	4.496	1	.034		
Fisher's Exact Test				.043	.030
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.199	1	.040		
N of Valid Cases	157				

a. Computed only for a 2x2 table

b. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 12.03.

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Contingency Coefficient	.162	.040
N of Valid Cases		157	

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Appendix H

Matrix of Bivariate Analysis by School-Type

Upgraded High School

Dependent

DEPENDENT VARIABLES	Gender		Age Group		Union		Employment Status		Education Level		# of Child		Biological Parents	
Valence	Chi Sq / t-test	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2)	X X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	Chi Sq / t-test	X X
Parent Efficacy	Chi Sq / t-test	√ X	Chi Sq/ Anova	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2)	X X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	Chi Sq / t-test	X X
General School Invitation	Chi Sq / t-test	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2)	X X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	Chi Sq / t-test	X X
Role beliefs	Chi Sq / t-test	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2)	X X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	Chi Sq / t-test	X X
Knowledge & skills	Chi Sq / t-test	X √	Chi Sq/ Anova	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2)	X X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	Chi Sq / t-test	X X
Time & Energy	Chi Sq / t-test	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2)	X X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	Chi Sq / t-test	X X
Specific Teacher Demand	Chi Sq / t-test	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova	X X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2)	X X	Chi Sq	X	Spearman	X	Spearman	X	Chi Sq / t-test	X X

√ - Statistically significant and reliable **X – Not statistically significant**

Appendix I

Matrix of Bivariate Analysis by School Type

Upgraded High School

Independent Variables

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	Gender	Age Group	Union Status	Employment	Level of Education	# of Child	Biological Parents
PIB (normal)	Chi Sq / t-test X X	Chi Sq/ Anova X X	Chi Sq/ Anova (2) X X	Chi Sq X	Spearman X	Spearman	Chi Sq / t-test X X
HBPIB (skewed)	Chi Sq / X X	Chi Sq/ X X	Chi Sq/ X X	Chi Sq X	Spearman X	Spearman	Chi Sq / X X
SBPIB (skewed)	Chi Sq / X X	Chi Sq/ X X	Chi Sq/ X	Chi Sq X	Spearman X	Spearman	Chi Sq / X

√ - Statistically significant and reliable
X – Not statistically significant

Appendix J

Results of Bivariate Analysis by Upgraded School Type

4.1 Knowledge and Skill and Gender
T-test

Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Knowledge and Skills	Male	33	3.4949	.66614	.11596
	Female	137	3.7778	.58849	.05028

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Knowledge and Sk	Equal variance assumed	.346	.557	-2.415	168	.017	-.28285	.11713	-.51409	-.05161
	Equal variance not assumed			-2.238	44.790	.030	-.28285	.12639	-.53745	-.02825

Strength of Association

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Knowledge and Skills grouped * Gender	170	98.8%	2	1.2%	172	100.0%

Directional Measures

			Value
Nominal by Interval	Eta	Knowledge and Skills grouped Dependent	.109
		Gender Dependent	.172

Appendix K

Multivariate Analyses

Home-Based Involvement Behaviour

Regression

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Home Based Parental Involvement Behaviour	4.7925	.97731	624
Parent Efficacy	2.1068	.69430	624
Role Beliefs	4.3394	.44437	624
General School Invites	4.1147	.62237	624
Specific Teacher Demands	2.5606	1.23926	624
Knowledge and Skills	3.9698	.59741	624
Time and Energy	3.9615	.64969	624

Correlations

		Home Based Parental Involvement Behaviour	Parent Efficacy	Role Beliefs	General School Invites	Specific Teacher Demands	Knowledge and Skills	Time and Energy
Pearson Correlation	Home Based Parental Involvement Behaviour	1.000	-.143	.285	.243	.209	.311	.331
	Parent Efficacy	-.143	1.000	-.218	-.198	.076	-.354	-.269
	Role Beliefs	.285	-.218	1.000	.388	.128	.482	.438
	General School Invites	.243	-.198	.388	1.000	.260	.613	.461
	Specific Teacher Demands	.209	.076	.128	.260	1.000	.272	.265
	Knowledge and Skills	.311	-.354	.482	.613	.272	1.000	.615
	Time and Energy	.331	-.269	.438	.461	.265	.615	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Home Based Parental Involvement Behaviour	.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Parent Efficacy	.000	.	.000	.000	.028	.000	.000
	Role Beliefs	.000	.000	.	.000	.001	.000	.000
	General School Invites	.000	.000	.000	.	.000	.000	.000
	Specific Teacher Demands	.000	.028	.001	.000	.	.000	.000
	Knowledge and Skills	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.	.000
	Time and Energy	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.
N	Home Based Parental Involvement Behaviour	624	624	624	624	624	624	624
	Parent Efficacy	624	624	624	624	624	624	624
	Role Beliefs	624	624	624	624	624	624	624
	General School Invites	624	624	624	624	624	624	624
	Specific Teacher Demands	624	624	624	624	624	624	624
	Knowledge and Skills	624	624	624	624	624	624	624
	Time and Energy	624	624	624	624	624	624	624

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Time and Energy	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
2	Role Beliefs	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
3	Specific Teacher Demands	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
4	Knowledge and Skills	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).

a. Dependent Variable: Home Based Parental Involvement Behaviour

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.331[a]	.109	.108	.92310
2	.366[b]	.134	.131	.91105
3	.386[c]	.149	.145	.90363
4	.394[d]	.155	.150	.90119

a. Predictors: (Constant), Time and Energy

b. Predictors: (Constant), Time and Energy, Role Beliefs

c. Predictors: (Constant), Time and Energy, Role Beliefs, Specific Teacher Demands

d. Predictors: (Constant), Time and Energy, Role Beliefs, Specific Teacher Demands, Knowledge and Skills

ANOVA[e]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	65.029	1	65.029	76.314	.000[a]
	Residual	530.018	622	.852		
	Total	595.047	623			
2	Regression	79.611	2	39.806	47.958	.000[b]
	Residual	515.436	621	.830		
	Total	595.047	623			
3	Regression	88.789	3	29.596	36.246	.000[c]
	Residual	506.258	620	.817		
	Total	595.047	623			
4	Regression	92.335	4	23.084	28.423	.000[d]
	Residual	502.713	619	.812		
	Total	595.047	623			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Time and Energy

b. Predictors: (Constant), Time and Energy, Role Beliefs

c. Predictors: (Constant), Time and Energy, Role Beliefs, Specific Teacher Demands

d. Predictors: (Constant), Time and Energy, Role Beliefs, Specific Teacher Demands, Knowledge and Skills

e. Dependent Variable: Home Based Parental Involvement Behaviour

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2.823	.229		12.352	.000		
	Time and Energy	.497	.057	.331	8.736	.000	1.000	1.000
2	(Constant)	1.615	.366		4.414	.000		
	Time and Energy	.383	.062	.254	6.124	.000	.808	1.237
	Role Beliefs	.383	.091	.174	4.192	.000	.808	1.237
3	(Constant)	1.572	.363		4.328	.000		
	Time and Energy	.332	.064	.221	5.215	.000	.764	1.309
	Role Beliefs	.379	.091	.172	4.180	.000	.808	1.237
	Specific Teacher Demands	.102	.030	.129	3.353	.001	.929	1.076
4	(Constant)	1.472	.365		4.029	.000		
	Time and Energy	.259	.073	.172	3.567	.000	.585	1.709
	Role Beliefs	.319	.095	.145	3.365	.001	.735	1.361
	Specific Teacher Demands	.092	.031	.117	3.022	.003	.910	1.099
	Knowledge and Skills	.170	.081	.104	2.089	.037	.554	1.807

a. Dependent Variable: Home Based Parental Involvement Behaviour

Excluded Variables[e]

Model		Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics		
						Tolerance	VIF	Minimum Tolerance
1	Parent Efficacy	-.058[a]	-1.471	.142	-.059	.927	1.078	.927
	Role Beliefs	.174[a]	4.192	.000	.166	.808	1.237	.808
	General School Invites	.115[a]	2.714	.007	.108	.787	1.270	.787
	Specific Teacher Demands	.131[a]	3.366	.001	.134	.930	1.076	.930
	Knowledge and Skills	.174[a]	3.659	.000	.145	.622	1.609	.622
2	Parent Efficacy	-.039[b]	-1.011	.312	-.041	.915	1.093	.777
	General School Invites	.078[b]	1.813	.070	.073	.744	1.343	.708
	Specific Teacher Demands	.129[b]	3.353	.001	.133	.929	1.076	.764
	Knowledge and Skills	.126[b]	2.540	.011	.101	.566	1.768	.566
3	Parent Efficacy	-.062[c]	-1.585	.114	-.064	.891	1.122	.723
	General School Invites	.057[c]	1.300	.194	.052	.725	1.379	.688
	Knowledge and Skills	.104[c]	2.089	.037	.084	.554	1.807	.554
4	Parent Efficacy	-.044[d]	-1.091	.276	-.044	.833	1.200	.518
	General School Invites	.023[d]	.471	.638	.019	.598	1.672	.457

a. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Time and Energy

b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Time and Energy, Role Beliefs

c. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Time and Energy, Role Beliefs, Specific Teacher Demands

d. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Time and Energy, Role Beliefs, Specific Teacher Demands, Knowledge and Skills

e. Dependent Variable: Home Based Parental Involvement Behaviour

Collinearity Diagnostics[a]

Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions				
				(Constant)	Time and Energy	Role Beliefs	Specific Teacher Demands	Knowledge and Skills
1	1	1.987	1.000	.01	.01			
	2	.013	12.286	.99	.99			
2	1	2.980	1.000	.00	.00	.00		
	2	.015	14.296	.17	.95	.06		
	3	.005	24.317	.83	.05	.94		
3	1	3.841	1.000	.00	.00	.00	.01	
	2	.140	5.247	.01	.01	.01	.97	
	3	.014	16.395	.16	.95	.05	.02	
	4	.005	27.613	.83	.05	.94	.00	
4	1	4.825	1.000	.00	.00	.00	.01	.00
	2	.146	5.756	.00	.00	.00	.97	.00
	3	.015	17.867	.21	.44	.07	.02	.08
	4	.009	23.157	.04	.55	.00	.00	.87
	5	.005	31.248	.75	.00	.93	.00	.04

a. Dependent Variable: Home Based Parental Involvement Behaviour

Appendix L

Mutlivariate Analysis

School Based Involvement Behaviour

Regression

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
School Based Parental Involvement Behaviour	1.9517	.85737	624
Parent Efficacy	2.1068	.69430	624
Role Beliefs	4.3394	.44437	624
General School Invites	4.1147	.62237	624
Specific Teacher Demands	2.5606	1.23926	624
Knowledge and Skills	3.9698	.59741	624
Time and Energy	3.9615	.64969	624

Correlations

		School Based Parental Involvement Behaviour	Parent Efficacy	Role Beliefs	General School Invites	Specific Teacher Demands	Knowledge and Skills	Time and Energy
Pearson Correlation	School Based Parental Involvement Behaviour	1.000	-.065	.171	.275	.179	.304	.242
	Parent Efficacy	-.065	1.000	-.218	-.198	.076	-.354	-.269
	Role Beliefs	.171	-.218	1.000	.388	.128	.482	.438
	General School Invites	.275	-.198	.388	1.000	.260	.613	.461
	Specific Teacher Demands	.179	.076	.128	.260	1.000	.272	.265
	Knowledge and Skills	.304	-.354	.482	.613	.272	1.000	.615
	Time and Energy	.242	-.269	.438	.461	.265	.615	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	School Based Parental Involvement Behaviour	.	.053	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Parent Efficacy	.053	.	.000	.000	.028	.000	.000
	Role Beliefs	.000	.000	.	.000	.001	.000	.000
	General School Invites	.000	.000	.000	.	.000	.000	.000
	Specific Teacher Demands	.000	.028	.001	.000	.	.000	.000
	Knowledge and Skills	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.	.000
	Time and Energy	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.
N	School Based Parental Involvement Behaviour	624	624	624	624	624	624	624
	Parent Efficacy	624	624	624	624	624	624	624
	Role Beliefs	624	624	624	624	624	624	624
	General School Invites	624	624	624	624	624	624	624
	Specific Teacher Demands	624	624	624	624	624	624	624
	Knowledge and Skills	624	624	624	624	624	624	624
	Time and Energy	624	624	624	624	624	624	624

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Knowledge and Skills	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
2	General School Invites	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
3	Specific Teacher Demands	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).

a. Dependent Variable: School Based Parental Involvement Behaviour

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.304[a]	.093	.091	.81736
2	.324[b]	.105	.102	.81235
3	.336[c]	.113	.109	.80952

a. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills

b. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills, General School Invites

c. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills, General School Invites, Specific Teacher Demands

ANOVA[d]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	42.415	1	42.415	63.488	.000[a]
	Residual	415.544	622	.668		
	Total	457.958	623			
2	Regression	48.155	2	24.077	36.486	.000[b]
	Residual	409.803	621	.660		
	Total	457.958	623			
3	Regression	51.657	3	17.219	26.276	.000[c]
	Residual	406.301	620	.655		
	Total	457.958	623			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills

b. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills, General School Invites

c. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills, General School Invites, Specific Teacher Demands

d. Dependent Variable: School Based Parental Involvement Behaviour

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.218	.220		.990	.322	-.214	.650		
	Knowledge and Skills	.437	.055	.304	7.968	.000	.329	.544	1.000	1.000
2	(Constant)	-.090	.242		-.373	.709	-.566	.386		
	Knowledge and Skills	.312	.069	.217	4.526	.000	.177	.448	.624	1.602
	General School Invites	.195	.066	.142	2.949	.003	.065	.325	.624	1.602
3	(Constant)	-.081	.242		-.336	.737	-.556	.393		
	Knowledge and Skills	.288	.069	.201	4.152	.000	.152	.425	.611	1.638
	General School Invites	.176	.066	.128	2.654	.008	.046	.307	.615	1.626
	Specific Teacher Demands	.063	.027	.092	2.312	.021	.010	.117	.912	1.096

a. Dependent Variable: School Based Parental Involvement Behaviour

Excluded Variables[d]

Model		Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics		
						Tolerance	VIF	Minimum Tolerance
1	Parent Efficacy	.049[a]	1.207	.228	.048	.875	1.143	.875
	Role Beliefs	.032[a]	.735	.463	.029	.767	1.303	.767
	General School Invites	.142[a]	2.949	.003	.118	.624	1.602	.624
	Specific Teacher Demands	.104[a]	2.644	.008	.106	.926	1.080	.926
	Time and Energy	.089[a]	1.836	.067	.073	.622	1.609	.622
2	Parent Efficacy	.046[b]	1.139	.255	.046	.874	1.144	.568
	Role Beliefs	.015[b]	.350	.726	.014	.754	1.326	.554
	Specific Teacher Demands	.092[b]	2.312	.021	.092	.912	1.096	.611
	Time and Energy	.071[b]	1.459	.145	.058	.610	1.639	.484
3	Parent Efficacy	.030[c]	.716	.474	.029	.842	1.187	.545
	Role Beliefs	.017[c]	.399	.690	.016	.754	1.327	.542
	Time and Energy	.059[c]	1.206	.228	.048	.602	1.660	.481

a. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills

b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills, General School Invites

c. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills, General School Invites, Specific Teacher Demands

d. Dependent Variable: School Based Parental Involvement Behaviour

Collinearity Diagnostics[a]

Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions			
				(Constant)	Knowledge and Skills	General School Invites	Specific Teacher Demands
1	1	1.989	1.000	.01	.01		
	2	.011	13.375	.99	.99		
2	1	2.979	1.000	.00	.00	.00	
	2	.012	15.736	1.00	.18	.21	
	3	.009	18.614	.00	.82	.79	
3	1	3.844	1.000	.00	.00	.00	.01
	2	.136	5.316	.01	.01	.01	.97
	3	.012	18.001	.99	.18	.22	.02
	4	.009	21.145	.00	.81	.77	.00

a. Dependent Variable: School Based Parental Involvement Behaviour

Appendix M

Mutlivariate Analysis

Total Involvement Behaviour

Regression

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Parental Involvement Behaviour	3.3728	.69020	624
Parent Efficacy	2.1068	.69430	624
Role Beliefs	4.3394	.44437	624
General School Invites	4.1147	.62237	624
Specific Teacher Demands	2.5606	1.23926	624
Knowledge and Skills	3.9698	.59741	624
Time and Energy	3.9615	.64969	624

Correlations

		Parental Involvement Behaviour	Parent Efficacy	Role Beliefs	General School Invites	Specific Teacher Demands	Knowledge and Skills	Time and Energy
Pearson Correlation	Parental Involvement Behaviour	1.000	-.143	.312	.346	.265	.413	.392
	Parent Efficacy	-.143	1.000	-.218	-.198	.076	-.354	-.269
	Role Beliefs	.312	-.218	1.000	.388	.128	.482	.438
	General School Invites	.346	-.198	.388	1.000	.260	.613	.461
	Specific Teacher Demands	.265	.076	.128	.260	1.000	.272	.265
	Knowledge and Skills	.413	-.354	.482	.613	.272	1.000	.615
	Time and Energy	.392	-.269	.438	.461	.265	.615	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Parental Involvement Behaviour	.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Parent Efficacy	.000	.	.000	.000	.028	.000	.000
	Role Beliefs	.000	.000	.	.000	.001	.000	.000
	General School Invites	.000	.000	.000	.	.000	.000	.000
	Specific Teacher Demands	.000	.028	.001	.000	.	.000	.000
	Knowledge and Skills	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.	.000
	Time and Energy	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.
N	Parental Involvement Behaviour	624	624	624	624	624	624	624
	Parent Efficacy	624	624	624	624	624	624	624
	Role Beliefs	624	624	624	624	624	624	624
	General School Invites	624	624	624	624	624	624	624
	Specific Teacher Demands	624	624	624	624	624	624	624
	Knowledge and Skills	624	624	624	624	624	624	624
	Time and Energy	624	624	624	624	624	624	624

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Knowledge and Skills	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
2	Time and Energy	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
3	Specific Teacher Demands	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
4	Role Beliefs	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).
5	General School Invites	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .100).

a. Dependent Variable: Parental Involvement Behaviour

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.413[a]	.171	.170	.62897
2	.449[b]	.202	.199	.61773
3	.469[c]	.220	.216	.61094
4	.480[d]	.230	.225	.60759
5	.485[e]	.235	.229	.60618

a. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills

b. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills, Time and Energy

c. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills, Time and Energy, Specific Teacher Demands

d. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills, Time and Energy, Specific Teacher Demands, Role Beliefs

e. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills, Time and Energy, Specific Teacher Demands, Role Beliefs, General School Invites

ANOVA[f]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	50.722	1	50.722	128.215	.000[a]
	Residual	246.064	622	.396		
	Total	296.786	623			
2	Regression	59.818	2	29.909	78.380	.000[b]
	Residual	236.968	621	.382		
	Total	296.786	623			
3	Regression	65.370	3	21.790	58.379	.000[c]
	Residual	231.416	620	.373		
	Total	296.786	623			
4	Regression	68.270	4	17.067	46.232	.000[d]
	Residual	228.516	619	.369		
	Total	296.786	623			
5	Regression	69.701	5	13.940	37.937	.000[e]
	Residual	227.085	618	.367		
	Total	296.786	623			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills

b. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills, Time and Energy

c. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills, Time and Energy, Specific Teacher Demands

d. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills, Time and Energy, Specific Teacher Demands, Role Beliefs

e. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills, Time and Energy, Specific Teacher Demands, Role Beliefs, General School Invites

f. Dependent Variable: Parental Involvement Behaviour

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.477	.169		8.721	.000		
	Knowledge and Skills	.478	.042	.413	11.323	.000	1.000	1.000
2	(Constant)	1.169	.178		6.570	.000		
	Knowledge and Skills	.320	.053	.277	6.087	.000	.622	1.609
	Time and Energy	.236	.048	.222	4.882	.000	.622	1.609
3	(Constant)	1.174	.176		6.675	.000		
	Knowledge and Skills	.291	.053	.252	5.541	.000	.609	1.642
	Time and Energy	.212	.048	.199	4.397	.000	.611	1.636
	Specific Teacher Demands	.080	.021	.143	3.857	.000	.911	1.098
4	(Constant)	.688	.246		2.796	.005		
	Knowledge and Skills	.245	.055	.212	4.466	.000	.554	1.807
	Time and Energy	.184	.049	.173	3.747	.000	.585	1.709
	Specific Teacher Demands	.082	.021	.147	3.963	.000	.910	1.099
	Role Beliefs	.179	.064	.115	2.803	.005	.735	1.361
5	(Constant)	.586	.251		2.336	.020		
	Knowledge and Skills	.195	.060	.169	3.241	.001	.457	2.190
	Time and Energy	.174	.049	.164	3.548	.000	.580	1.725
	Specific Teacher Demands	.077	.021	.138	3.728	.000	.899	1.113
	Role Beliefs	.165	.064	.106	2.569	.010	.725	1.379
	General School Invites	.100	.050	.090	1.973	.049	.598	1.672

a. Dependent Variable: Parental Involvement Behaviour

Excluded Variables[f]

Model		Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics		
						Tolerance	VIF	Minimum Tolerance
1	Parent Efficacy	.004[a]	.094	.925	.004	.875	1.143	.875
	Role Beliefs	.146[a]	3.547	.000	.141	.767	1.303	.767
	General School Invites	.148[a]	3.232	.001	.129	.624	1.602	.624
	Specific Teacher Demands	.164[a]	4.398	.000	.174	.926	1.080	.926
	Time and Energy	.222[a]	4.882	.000	.192	.622	1.609	.622
2	Parent Efficacy	.017[b]	.438	.662	.018	.870	1.149	.583
	Role Beliefs	.110[b]	2.650	.008	.106	.735	1.360	.566
	General School Invites	.120[b]	2.642	.008	.106	.613	1.632	.484
	Specific Teacher Demands	.143[b]	3.857	.000	.153	.911	1.098	.609
3	Parent Efficacy	-.013[c]	-.347	.729	-.014	.834	1.199	.562
	Role Beliefs	.115[c]	2.803	.005	.112	.735	1.361	.554
	General School Invites	.103[c]	2.267	.024	.091	.606	1.651	.481
4	Parent Efficacy	-.009[d]	-.240	.810	-.010	.833	1.200	.518
	General School Invites	.090[d]	1.973	.049	.079	.598	1.672	.457
5	Parent Efficacy	-.011[e]	-.278	.781	-.011	.833	1.201	.430

a. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills

b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills, Time and Energy

c. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills, Time and Energy, Specific Teacher Demands

d. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills, Time and Energy, Specific Teacher Demands, Role Beliefs

e. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Knowledge and Skills, Time and Energy, Specific Teacher Demands, Role Beliefs, General School Invites

f. Dependent Variable: Parental Involvement Behaviour

Collinearity Diagnostics[a]

Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions					
				(Constant)	Knowledge and Skills	Time and Energy	Specific Teacher Demands	Role Beliefs	General School Invites
1	1	1.989	1.000	.01	.01				
	2	.011	13.375	.99	.99				
2	1	2.978	1.000	.00	.00	.00			
	2	.013	14.899	.89	.04	.42			
	3	.009	18.190	.11	.96	.58			
3	1	3.842	1.000	.00	.00	.00	.01		
	2	.136	5.324	.01	.01	.01	.97		
	3	.013	17.023	.87	.04	.44	.01		
	4	.009	20.680	.12	.95	.55	.00		
4	1	4.825	1.000	.00	.00	.00	.01	.00	
	2	.146	5.756	.00	.00	.00	.97	.00	
	3	.015	17.867	.21	.08	.44	.02	.07	
	4	.009	23.157	.04	.87	.55	.00	.00	
	5	.005	31.248	.75	.04	.00	.00	.93	
5	1	5.810	1.000	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
	2	.150	6.232	.00	.00	.00	.96	.00	.00
	3	.015	19.594	.21	.07	.39	.03	.07	.00
	4	.013	21.309	.03	.03	.33	.00	.03	.61
	5	.008	27.568	.01	.82	.27	.00	.02	.36
	6	.005	34.421	.74	.07	.00	.00	.88	.02

a. Dependent Variable: Parental Involvement Behaviour

Appendix N

Parent Profile

N=628

	Age (%)				Gender (%)		Union Status (%)				Highest Level of Education (%)				Employment Status (%)				#. Of children in household (%)				# Biological parent	
Schools	20-29	30-39	40-59	60+	M	F	Married	Common Law	Visiting	Single	<High school	High School	Tertiary	Other	F/T	P/T	S/E	U/E	1	2	3	4+	Y	N
Stream in the Desert	21.7	52	26	.5	16	84	28	23	10	37	29	45	1	26	36	13	26	25	26	29	26	14	86	14
Betta Mus' Come	23.2	33	40	4	12	88	38	16	3	43	41	33	1	24	8	7	37	47	10	27	20	42	85	15
Goodwill High School	7.8	46	45	2	19	81	22	13	2	54	34	44	1	22	38	16	19	27	22	31	22.	20	85	16
Excellence is Our Aim College	4	24	72	2	20	80	65	2	2	25	3	17	53	27	62	7	19	12	37	42	12	7	90	10

Legend M-Male F - Female F/T - Full Time S/E - Self-Employed U/E - Unemployed

Appendix O

Teacher Profile

N=100

Schools	Age (%)			Gender (%)		Area	Level of Education (%)			Average years of teaching	Average years of teaching at this school
	20-30	31-40	41-50	M	F		Degree	Diploma	Untrained		
Stream in the Desert Primary	11.8	33.3	15.2	18.8	68.8	Urban (inner city)	43.8	50.0	6.3	16.0	12.0
Betta Mus' Come Primary	23.5	29.4	23.5	20.0	80.0	Rural	7.7	76.9	15.4	15.1	12.9
Excellence is Our Aim College	27.3	33.3	15.2	31.3	68.8	Urban (inner city)	86.2	6.9	6.9	15.4	12.7
Goodwill School	12.9	32.7	27.6	22.6	77.4	Urban (inner city)	38.7	51.6	9.7	14.8	10.0

Appendix P

Summary of Predictor Variables from Hoover-Demspey & Sandler (2005) & Munroe (2006) Studies

	Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler study (2005)	Munroe study (2006)
Home-based Involvement	Role activity beliefs (ß=.05))	Time and energy (ß = .175)
	Parent's self-efficacy (ß =.22)	Role activity beliefs (ß = .145)
	Specific invitation from child (ß=.51)	Knowledge and skill (ß = .109)
	Time and energy (ß=.15)	Specific invitation from teacher (ß = .094)
School-based Involvement	Role Activity Beliefs (ß =-.06)	Knowledge and skill (ß = .205)
	Parent's self-efficacy (ß =-.06)	General school invitation (ß = .128)
	Specific teacher invitation (ß=.37)	Specific teacher invitation (ß = .081)
	Specific child invitation (ß =.31)	
	Time and energy (ß=.19)	
Total involvement	Role activity belief (ß =.08)	Knowledge and skill (ß = .218)
	Specific invitation from child (ß =.46)	Time and energy (ß = .175)
	Specific invitation from teacher(ß=.17)	Specific teacher invitation (ß = .125)
	Knowledge and skill (ß =.12)	Role activity beliefs (ß = .116)
	Time and energy= (ß=.17)	

Appendix Q

Letter of Recruitment

Dear Principal:

Re: Participation in Research Project on Parent's Involvement in the Education of Their Children

Researchers, educators and policy makers agree that the involvement of parents in the education of their children has significant benefits for students, schools and parents. However, according to the Taskforce Report on Education Reform in Jamaica (2004) "parental involvement is inadequate with only a minority of parents being fully involved in their children's education or the life of the school..."(64) and recommends the need for "much greater involvement of parents..."(7) .

Why do parents become involved in the education of their children in Jamaica? This research will examine the experience of parental involvement, with the intention of identifying the factors that influence the decision of parents to become involved in the education of their children. The objective of the study will be to: (i) provide a general profile of parental involvement in Jamaica; (ii) afford a better understanding of the context and factors that influence parental involvement decisions; and (iii) make recommendations for meaning interventions that can be employed by the schools and parents to improve the practice of parental involvement in education and the parent-teacher relationship.

I am inviting you to participate in this study so as to obtain your opinion on some of the issues and concerns affecting the involvement of parents in the education of their children and how this important activity can be improved. First, I wish to request access to data that will provide some background information on the school and specifically, the activities that involve parents. These documents would include your school development plan, school academic records, PTA minutes and if at all possible, proceedings from your board meetings. Second, your consent is being requested to participate in a questionnaire survey and a small group discussion with other staff members which, with your permission, will be audio-taped and notes taken. Third, your permission is also being requested to observe and take notes of parent-teacher interviews and Parent/Teacher's Association meetings of which you might be involved.

I would like to emphasize that your participation in this study would be voluntary and it will be kept in the strictest of confidence. You also have the right to decline this invitation if you feel so inclined.

However, given that this topic is the point of much social debate, I hope you will accept this invitation. Please indicate below your consent by signing and returning the enclosed copy of this letter.

Yours sincerely

_____
Grace Camille Munroe B.A, M.A, Ph.D (forthcoming)

++
I have read and understand the conditions under which I which my school will participate in this study. I hereby give consent for _____ to participate in this research project.

_____
Signature of Principal

_____
Date

Appendix R

Letter of Informed Consent Parent

Dear Parent:

Re: Your Participation in the Parental Involvement in Education Study

My name is Grace Camille Munroe. I am a graduate student from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. I am currently conducting research on the topic of the involvement of parents in the education of their children in Jamaica.

It is agreed by many that the involvement of parents in the education of their children is an important responsibility and has far-reaching benefits for the students, parents and teachers. However, in a recent report The Taskforce on Education Reform in Jamaica has identified inadequate stakeholder participation as one of the factors negatively impacting the system of education. According to the Taskforce Report on Education Reform (2004) "parental involvement is inadequate with only a minority of parents being fully involved in their children's education or the life of the school..."(64) and recommends that need for "much greater involvement of parents..."(7)

This research will examine the experience of parental involvement in education in Jamaica, with the intention of looking at the factors that influence the decision of parents to become involved in the education of their children. The objective of the study will be to: ((i) develop a model of parental involvement in education in Jamaica; (ii) examine the context and factors that influence parental involvement decisions; (iii) identify solutions that can assist schools and parents to improve the practice of parental involvement in education in Jamaica; and (iv) provide the basis for further studies on parental involvement in education and its relations to student outcomes.

I am inviting you to participate in this study so as to obtain your view on the factors that influence your decision to be involved in the education of your child. All the parents selected for participation will be required to fill out a questionnaire which will be distributed with the assistance of your child's school. Parents will have the option of having the questionnaires self-administered or administered with the assistance of the researcher and research assistants. You will be contacted to obtain your preference. Another way of gaining insights into this subject matter will be through a small group discussion with parents. However, it must be noted that only a small number of parents will be randomly selected for this exercise. In the event that you are chosen, with your permission, this session will be audio-taped and notes taken. Your consent also is being requested for the researcher to observe and take notes of parent-teacher interviews and Parent/Teacher's Association meetings of which you might be involved.

Your participation in this study is voluntary which will be kept in the strictest of confidence. You have the right at any time not to answer any questions and/or withdraw your participation if you see it necessary.

The benefit of your involvement in this project will provide the researcher with a better understanding of the issues and concerns affecting parental involvement in education in Jamaica, and possibly provide insight into ways and means of improving this practice. No potential risk is anticipated for your participation in this project. Please be advised that no compensation will be offered for involvement in this study.

In the report or any articles that may result from this study, nick names will be used to protect your identity and privacy. My supervisor and I will be the only ones who have access to the material gathered from this research. The research data, once fully utilized, will be destroyed in the year 2011.

Upon the completion of the research project, a special PTA meeting will be convened to provide you with the opportunity to review and make comments on the research findings. Once the research project has been published, a copy of the thesis will be made available to your school. Finally, in addition to a thesis, the research may be published and presentations made based on the research findings.

Please feel free to forward any questions or comments to my attention at telephone (876) 868-8898 or e-mail address gmunroe@pioj.gov.jm

Be advised that you are required to retain a copy of the consent form.

Yours sincerely,

Grace Camille Munroe
Principal Researcher

++

Research Consent

I have read and understand the conditions under which I will participate in this study and give my consent to be a participant.

Signature of Parent

Appendix S

Letter of Informed Consent School Administrators

Dear Principal:

My name is Grace Camille Munroe. I am a graduate student from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. I am currently conducting research on the topic of the involvement of parents in the education of their children in Jamaica.

Researchers, educators and policy makers agree that the involvement of parents in the education of their children has significant benefits for students, schools and parents. For example, the benefits for students include improved academic and affective outcomes. They are more likely to complete secondary school and to continue on to postsecondary education. At the school level, the teacher-parent relationship is improved. Teachers feel supported and their morale enhanced. Finally, parents develop more confidence in their child's school, themselves and are more empowered (Henderson and Berla 1994: 10). However, despite the aforementioned, The Taskforce on Education Reform in Jamaica14, has identified inadequate stakeholder participation as one of the factors negatively impacting the system of education. According to the Taskforce Report on Education Reform (2004) "parental involvement is inadequate with only a minority of parents being fully involved in their children's education or the life of the school..."(64) and recommends that need for "much greater involvement of parents..."(7) .

This research will examine the experience of parental involvement in education in Jamaica, with the intention of looking at the factors that influence the decision of parents to become involved in the education of their children. The objective of the study will be to: (i) examine the factors that influence the decision of parents to become involved in the education of their children; and (ii) make recommendations that can be used by the schools and parents to improve the practice of parental involvement in education in Jamaica.

I am inviting you to participate in this study so as to obtain your opinion on some of the issues and concerns affecting the involvement of parents in the education of their children and how this important activity can be improved. First, I wish to request access to data that will provide some background information on the school and specifically, the activities that involve parents. These documents would include your school development plan, school academic records, PTA minutes and if at all possible, proceedings from your board meetings. Second, your consent is being requested to participate in a questionnaire survey and a small group discussion with other staff members which, with your permission, will be audio-taped and notes taken. Third, your permission is also being requested to observe and take notes of parent-teacher interviews and Parent/Teacher's Association meetings of which you might be involved.

Your participation in this study is voluntary which will be kept in the strictest of confidence. You have the right at any time not to answer any questions and/or withdraw your participation if you see it necessary.

The benefit of your involvement in this project will provide the researcher with a better understanding of the issues and concerns affecting parental involvement in education in Jamaica, and possibly provide insight into ways and means of improving this practice. No potential risk is anticipated for your participation in this project. Please be advised that no compensation will be offered for involvement in this study.

In the report or any articles that may result from this study, nick names will be used to protect your identity and privacy. My supervisor and I will be the only ones who have access to the material gathered from this research. The research data, once fully utilized, will be destroyed in the year 2011.

Upon the completion of the research project, a staff meeting will be convened to provide you with the opportunity to review and make comments on the research findings. Once the research project has been published, a copy of the thesis will be made available to your school. Finally, in addition to a thesis, the research may be published and presentations made based on the research findings.

Please feel free to forward any questions or comments to my attention at telephone (876) 868-8898 or e-mail address gmunroe@pioj.gov.jm.

Please be advised that you are required to retain a copy of the consent form.

Yours sincerely,

Grace Camille Munroe

Appendix T

Letter of Informed Consent Teacher

Dear Teacher:

My name is Grace Camille Munroe. I am a graduate student from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. I am currently conducting research on the topic of the involvement of parents in the education of their children in Jamaica.

It is agreed by many that the involvement of parents in the education of their children is an important responsibility and has far-reaching benefits for the students, parents and teachers. However, in a recent report The Taskforce on Education Reform in Jamaica has identified inadequate stakeholder participation as one of the factors negatively impacting the system of education. According to the Taskforce Report on Education Reform (2004) "parental involvement is inadequate with only a minority of parents being fully involved in their children's education or the life of the school..."(64) and recommends that need for "much greater involvement of parents..."(7)

This research will examine the experience of parental involvement in education in Jamaica, with the intention of looking at the factors that influence the decision of parents to become involved in the education of their children. The objective of the study will be to: (i) develop a model of parental involvement in education in Jamaica; (ii) examine the context and factors that influence parental involvement decisions; (iii) identify solutions that can assist schools and parents to improve the practice of parental involvement in education in Jamaica; and (iv) provide the basis for further studies on parental involvement in education and its relations to student outcomes.

I am inviting you to participate in this study so as to obtain your view on some of the issues and concerns affecting the involvement of parents in the education of their children at your school. One of the means of participation is by filling out a self-administered teacher questionnaire which will be distributed to you with the assistance of the school's administration. While another means of participation will be through a small group discussion with other members of staff. However, please note that only 8-10 teachers will be randomly selected for this exercise. In the event that you are chosen, with your permission, this focus group session will be audio-taped and notes taken. Your consent also is being requested for the researcher to observe and take notes of parent-teacher interviews and Parent/Teacher's Association meetings of which you might be involved.

Your participation in this study is voluntary which will be kept in the strictest of confidence. You have the right at any time not to answer any questions and/or withdraw your participation if you see it necessary.

The benefit of your involvement in this project will provide the researcher with a better understanding of the issues and concerns affecting parental involvement in education in Jamaica,

and possibly provide insight into ways and means of improving this practice. No potential risk is anticipated for your participation in this project. Please be advised that no compensation will be offered for involvement in this study.

In the report or any articles that may result from this study, nick names will be used to protect your identity and privacy. My supervisor and I will be the only ones who have access to the material gathered from this research. The research data, once fully utilized, will be destroyed in the year 2011.

Upon the completion of the research project, a staff meeting will be convened to provide you with the opportunity to review and make comments on the research findings. Once the research project has been published, a copy of the thesis will be made available to your school. Finally, in addition to a thesis, the research may be published and presentations made based on the research findings.

Please feel free to forward any questions or comments to my attention at telephone (876) 868-8898 or e-mail address gmunroe@pioj.gov.jm or my research supervisor at Dr. Joe Farrell, at 416-923-6641 ext. or e-mail jfarrell@oise.utoronto.ca.

Yours sincerely,

Grace Camille Munroe
Principal Researcher

Appendix U

Parent / Guardian Questionnaire (Part A)

Parental Involvement in Education in Jamaica: Exploring the Factors that Influence the Decision of Parents to Become Involved in the Education of their Children.

Parent/Guardian Questionnaire (Part A)

Name of Institution:_____ Date: _____/_____/_____

Please indicate how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with each of the following statements. Please think about the current school year as you consider each statement.

I believe it is my responsibility to…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Volunteer at my child's school.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Communicate with my child's teacher regularly.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Help my child with homework.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Make sure my child's school has what it needs to function effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Support decisions made by my child's teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Be informed about things at my child's school.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Explain tough assignments to my child.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Talk with other parents from my child's school.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Make my child's school better.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Talk with my child about the school day.	1	2	3	4	5

Please circle the number on each line below that best describes your feelings about your school experiences when you were a student. The scale describes a range of feelings from the most negative (1) to the most positive (5).

11. My school	disliked 1	2	3	4	liked 5
12. My teachers	were mean 1	2	3	4	were nice 5
13. My teachers	ignored me 1	2	3	4	cared about me 5
14. My school experience	bad 1	2	3	4	good 5
15. I felt like	an outsider 1	2	3	4	I belonged 5
16. My overall experience	failure 1	2	3	4	success 5

Please indicate how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with each of the following statements. Please think about the current school year as you consider each statement.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
17. I know how to help my child do well in school.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I don't know if I'm getting through to my child.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I don't know how to help my child make good grades in school.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I feel successful about my efforts to help my child learn.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Other children have more influence on my child's grades than I do.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I don't know how to help my child learn.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I make a significant difference in my child's school performance	1	2	3	4	5
24. Teachers at this school are interested and cooperative when they discuss my child.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I feel welcomed at this school.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Parent activities are scheduled at this school so that I can attend.	1	2	3	4	5
27. This school lets me know about meetings and special school events.	1	2	3	4	5
28. This school's staff contacts me promptly about any problems involving my child.	1	2	3	4	5
29. The teachers at this school keep me informed about my child's progress in school.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I know about volunteering opportunities at my child's school.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I know about special events at my child's school.	1	2	3	4	5

Please indicate how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with each of the following statements with regard to the current school year.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
32. I know effective ways to contact my child's teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
33. I know how to communicate effectively with my child about the school day.	1	2	3	4	5
34. I know how to explain things to my child about his or her homework.	1	2	3	4	5
35. I know enough about the subjects of my child's homework to help him or her.	1	2	3	4	5
36. I know how to communicate effectively with my child's teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
37. I know how to supervise my child's homework.	1	2	3	4	5
38. I have the skills to help out at my child's school.	1	2	3	4	5
Please respond to the following. I have enough time and energy to...					
39. communicate effectively with my child about the school day.	1	2	3	4	5
40. help out at my child's school.	1	2	3	4	5
41. communicate effectively with my child's teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
42. attend special events at school.	1	2	3	4	5
43. help my child with homework.	1	2	3	4	5
44. supervise my child's homework.					

Please indicate HOW OFTEN the following have happened SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THIS SCHOOL YEAR	Never	1 or 2 times this year	4 or 5 times this year	Once a week	A few times a week
45. My child's teacher asked me or expected me to help my child with homework.	1	2	3	4	5
46. My child's teacher asked me or expected me to supervise my child's homework.	1	2	3	4	5
47. My child's teacher asked me to talk with my child about the school day.	1	2	3	4	5
48. My child's teacher asked me to attend a special event at school.	1	2	3	4	5
49. My child's teacher asked me to help out at the school.	1	2	3	4	5
50. My child's teacher contacted me (for example, sent a note, phoned, e-mailed).					

Please indicate HOW OFTEN the following have happened SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THIS SCHOOL YEAR	Never	1 or 2 times	4 or 5 times	Once a week	A few times a week	Daily
51.My child asked me to help explain something about his or her homework.	1	2	3	4	5	6
52. My child asked me to supervise his or her home or homework.	1	2	3	4	5	6
53. My child talked with me about the school day.	1	2	3	4	5	6
54. My child asked me to attend a special event at school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
55. My child asked me to help out at school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
56. My child asked me to talk with his or her teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	6

57. **Gender** Male __ Female __

58. **Age** 20-29 __ 30-39 __ 40-59 __ 60 and over __

59. **Union Status** Married __ Common Law __ Visiting __ Single __
Other (specify) _____

60. **Employment Status** Employed Fulltime __ Employed Part-time __
Self-employed __ Unemployed __

61. What is your occupation? _____

62. During the week of January 9-13, on an average, how many hours did you work?
0-15 __ 33-40 __ 16- 32 __ 41 or more __

63. What is your level of education (please check highest level completed)

__ less than high school
__ high school/vocational
__ community college
__ HEART Training
__ bachelor's degree
__ master's degree
__ doctoral degree
__ other

64. What is your approximate income from all employment? ($J)
Weekly:

___ Less than 1,000
___ 1,000-1,499
___ 1,500- 5,999
___ 6,000-9,999
___ 10,000-19,999
___ 20,000-29,999
___ 30,000- 59,999
___ 60,000-over

OR

Monthly:

___ Less than 3,500
___ 3,500-5999
___ 6,000-24,999
___ 25,000-39,999
___ 40,000-79,999
___ 80,000-129,999
___ 130,000-249,999
___ 250,000-over

OR

Yearly:

___ Less than 40,000
___ 40,000-79,999
___ 80,000-299,999
___ 300,000-499,999
___ 500,000-999,999
___ 1,000,000-1,499,999
___ 1,500,000-2,999,999
___ 3,000,000-over

If you are a single parent, please go to question 69

65. What is the occupation of your spouse or partner? _____

66. What is the level of education of your spouse or partner? (please check highest level completed)

___ less than high school
___ high school/vocational
___ community college
____ HEART Training
___ bachelor's degree
___ master's degree
___ doctoral degree
___ other

67. During the week of January 9-13, on an average, how many hours did your spouse or partner work?

0-15 ___ 33-40____ 16- 32___ 41 or more____

68. What is the approximate income from all employment for your spouse / partner? ($J)

Weekly:

___ Less than 1,000
___ 1,000-1,499
___ 1,500- 5,999
___ 6,000-9,999
___ 10,000-19,999
___ 20,000-29,999
___ 30,000- 59,999
___ 60,000-over

OR

Monthly:

___ Less than 3,500
___ 3,500-5999
___ 6,000-24,999
___ 25,000-39,999
___ 40,000-79,999
___ 80,000-129,999
___ 130,000-249,999
___ 250,000-over

OR

Yearly:

___ Less than 40,000
___ 40,000-79,999
___ 80,000-299,999
___ 300,000-499,999
___ 500,000-999,999
___ 1,000,000-1,499,999
___ 1,500,000-2,999,999
___ 3,000,000-over

69. How many children (under the age of 18) live in your home?_____

70. Are you the biological parent of the child? Yes ___ No __

71. Do you live near to your child's school? Yes ___ No ___

72. What is your means of transportation? Bus ___ Taxi ___ Private ___ Other ___

Comments

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Invitation to Participate in Small Group Discussion

Thank you for participating in this questionnaire survey. You are now invited to participate in a small group discussion to further share your thoughts on issues and concerns pertaining to your involvement in the education of your child.

Please be advised that only 10 participants will be chosen for this session.

If you accept this invitation, please provide us with the following information so that we can contact you.

Name: _____
Telephone: _____(hm)_____(mobile)
E-mail Address: _____

References

• Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., & Sandler, H.M. (2005). Final Performance Report for OERI Grant # R305T010673: The Social Context of Parental Involvement: A Path to Enhanced Achievement. Presented to Project Monitor, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, March 22, 2005

•Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., Bassler, O. C., & Brissie, J. S. (1992). Explorations in parent-school relations. Journal of Educational Research, 85 (5), 287-294.

•Planning Institute of Jamaica 2002 Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions.

•Walker, J. M. T., Wilkins, A. S., Dallaire, J. P., Sandler, H. M., & Hoover-Dempsey, K. V. (in press [expected November 2005]). Parental involvement: Model revision through scale development. Elementary School Journal.

Appendix V

Parent / Guardian Questionnaire (Part B)

Parental Involvement in Education in Jamaica: Exploring the Factors that Influence the Decision of Parents to Become Involved in the Education of their Children.

Parent/Guardian Questionnaire (Part B)

Since the beginning of the school year, has anyone done the following:

	Someone in this family...		never	1 or 2 times this year	4 or 5 times this year	once a week	a few times a week	daily
1	...talked with this child about the school day.		1	2	3	4	5	6
2	...supervised this child's homework.		1	2	3	4	5	6
3	...helped out at this child's school.		1	2	3	4	5	6
4	...attended special events at school.		1	2	3	4	5	6
5	...helped this child study for tests.		1	2	3	4	5	6
6	...volunteered to go on class field trips.		1	2	3	4	5	6
7	...attended PTA meetings.		1	2	3	4	5	6
8	...practiced spelling, math or other skills with this child.		1	2	3	4	5	6
9	...read with this child.		1	2	3	4	5	6
10	...went to the school's open-house.		1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix W

Teacher Questionnaire

Parental Involvement in Education in Jamaica: Exploring the Factors that Influence the Decision of Parents to Become Involved in the Education of their Children.

Teacher Questionnaire

Name of Institution:_____ Date: ___/___/___

I Teacher Beliefs about Parental Involvement Scale Please indicate HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE with each of the statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Parent involvement is important for a good school.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Most parents know how to help their children with school work at home.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Every family has some strengths that can be tapped to increase student success in school.	1	2	3	4	5
4. All parents could learn ways to help their children with schoolwork at home, if shown how.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Parent involvement can help teachers be more effective with more students.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Parents of children at this school want to be involved more than they are.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Parents involvement is important for student success in school.	1	2	3	4	5
8. This school views parents as important partners.	1	2	3	4	5
II Teacher Self-Efficacy for Teaching Please indicate HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE with each of the statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
9. I feel that I am making a significant educational difference in the lives of my students.	1	2	3	4	5
10. If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult and unmotivated students.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Children are so private and complex, I never know if I am getting through to them.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I usually know how to get through to students.	1	2	3	4	5

1

II Teacher Self-Efficacy for Teaching Cont'd. Please indicate HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE with each of the statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
13.Most of a student's school motivation depends on the home environment, so I have limited influence.	1	2	3	4	5
14.There is a limited amount that I can do to raise the basic performance level of students.	1	2	3	4	5
15.I am successful with the students in my class.	1	2	3	4	5
16.I am uncertain how to teach some of my students.	1	2	3	4	5
17.I feel as though some of my students are not making any academic progress.	1	2	3	4	5
18. My students' peers influence their motivation more than I do.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Most of a student's performance depends on the home environment, so I have limited influence.	1	2	3	4	5
20.My students' peers influence their academic performance more than I do.	1	2	3	4	5

III Teacher Beliefs about Parents' Efficacy for Helping Children Succeed in School Please indicate HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE with each of the statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
21.My students' parents help their children learn.	1	2	3	4	5
22.My students' parents have little influence on their children's motivation to do well in school.	1	2	3	4	5
23.If my students' parents try really hard, they can help their children learn even when the children are unmotivated.	1	2	3	4	5
24.My students' parents feel successful about helping their children learn.	1	2	3	4	5
25.My students' parents don't know how to help their children make educational progress.	1	2	3	4	5

III Teacher Beliefs about Parents' Efficacy for Helping Children Succeed in School Cont'd. Please indicate HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE with each of the statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
26.My students' parents help their children with school work at home.	1	2	3	4	5
27.My students' parents make a significant, positive educational difference in their children's lives.	1	2	3	4	5
IV Teacher Beliefs about the Importance of Parent Involvement Practices Please indicate HOW IMPORTANT you believe each of the following is in your own teaching and parent-involvement practices.	Not very important	Not important	Undecided	Important	Very Important
28.Having a conference with each of my students' parents at least once a year.	1	2	3	4	5
29.Contacting parents about their children's problems or failures.	1	2	3	4	5
30.Contacting parents when their children do something well or improve.	1	2	3	4	5
31.Involving parents as volunteers in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
32.Telling parents about the skills their children must learn in each subject I teach.	1	2	3	4	5
33.Providing specific activities for parents to do with their children in order to improve their grades.	1	2	3	4	5
34 Giving parents ideas about discussing specific TV shows with their children.	1	2	3	4	5
35.Assigning homework that requires parents to interact with their children.	1	2	3	4	5
36.Suggesting ways to practice spelling or other skills at home before a test.	1	2	3	4	5
37.Asking parents to listen to their children read.	1	2	3	4	5
38.Asking my students' parents to help the child with homework.	1	2	3	4	5

IV Teacher Beliefs about the Importance of Parent Involvement Practices Cont'd. Please indicate HOW IMPORTANT you believe each of the following is in your own teaching and parent-involvement practices.	Not very important	Not important	Undecided	Important	Very Important
39. Asking my students' parents to ask the child about the school day.	1	2	3	4	5
40. Inviting my students' parents to visit my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
41. Giving parents ideas to help them become effective advocates for their children.	1	2	3	4	5
42. Sending home 'letters' telling parents what the children have been learning and doing in class	1	2	3	4	5

V Teacher reports of parent involvement. Please indicate HOW MANY OF YOUR STUDENTS' PARENTS have participated in the following activities this year. Please record your best estimate for each item, and then respond to the 'overall confidence rating' at the end of this section.	None	10-25%	30-45%	55-70%	75-90%	All
43. Attend scheduled parent-teacher conferences.	1	2	3	4	5	6
44. Attend meetings or workshops at school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
45. Contact me when their children are having a problem with learning.	1	2	3	4	5	6
46. Contact me when they have something really good to report about their child's learning.	1	2	3	4	5	6
47. Volunteer in my classroom or in the school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
48. Ask me for specific activities they can do at home with the child.	1	2	3	4	5	6
49. Discuss TV programs with the child.	1	2	3	4	5	6
50. Help the child with homework.	1	2	3	4	5	6
51. Listen to the child read.	1	2	3	4	5	6
52. Give me information about the child's needs, interests, or talents.	1	2	3	4	5	6

V Teacher reports of parent involvement Cont'd. Please indicate HOW MANY OF YOUR STUDENTS' PARENTS have participated in the following activities this year. Please record your best estimate for each item, and then respond to the 'overall confidence rating' at the end of this section.	None	10-25%	30-45%	55-70%	75-90%	All
53. Talk to the child about the school day.	1	2	3	4	5	6
54. Visit my classroom at school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
55. Take the child to the library or community events.	1	2	3	4	5	6
56. Attend children's performances at school.	1	2	3	4	5	6

In general, how much confidence do you have in the accuracy of your estimates on the items above?
(Please circle the response that's most appropriate for you)

I am completely confident I am pretty confident I am just somewhat confident I am not very confident

VI Teacher Report of Invitations to Parental Involvement Please indicate HOW OFTEN YOU have done each of the following this year.	None	10-25%	30-45%	55-70%	75-90%	All
57.Have a conference with a parent.	1	2	3	4	5	6
58.Contact a parent if the child has problems or experiences failure.	1	2	3	4	5	6
59.Contact a parent if the child does something well or improves.	1	2	3	4	5	6
60.Involve a parent as a volunteer in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5	6
61.Tell a parent about the skills the child must learn in each subject I teach.	1	2	3	4	5	6
62.Provide specific activities for a parent to do with the child in order to improve the child's grades.	1	2	3	4	5	6
63.Give a parent ideas about discussing specific TV shows with the children.	1	2	3	4	5	6
64. Assign homework that requires a parent to interact	1	2	3	4	5	6

OISE UT

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

VI Teacher Report of Invitations to Parental Involvement Cont'd. Please indicate HOW OFTEN YOU have done each of the following this year.	None	10-25%	30-45%	55-70%	75-90%	All
65.Suggest ways to practice spelling or other skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
66.Ask a parent to listen to the child read.	1	2	3	4	5	6
67.Ask a parent to help the child with homework.	1	2	3	4	5	6
68.Encourage a parent to ask the child about the school day.	1	2	3	4	5	6
69.Ask a parent to visit my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5	6
70.Ask a parent to take the child to the library or community events.	1	2	3	4	5	6
71.Give a parent ideas to help him or her become an effective advocate for the child.	1	2	3	4	5	6
72.Send home 'letters' telling parents what the children have been learning and doing in class.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Sex **Male** ___ **Female** ___
Age **20-30** ___ **31-40** ___ **41-50** ___ **51and over** ___
Sex **Degree** ___ **Diploma** ___ **Untrianed** ___

I have been a teacher for _____ **years.**
I have taught at this school for _____ **years.**

Comments

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Invitation to Participate in Small Group Discussion

Thank you for participating in this questionnaire survey. You are now invited to participate in a small group discussion to further share your thoughts on issues and concerns pertaining to the involvement of parents in the education of their children at your school.

Please be advised that only 10 participants will be chosen for this session.

If you accept this invitation, please provide us with the following information so that we can contact you.

Name:
Telephone: (hm) (mobile)
E-mail Address:

References

Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., & Sandler, H.M. (2005). Final Performance Report for OERI Grant # R305T010673: The Social Context of Parental Involvement: A Path to Enhanced Achievement. Presented to Project Monitor, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, March 22, 2005.

Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., Bassler, O. C., & Brissie, J. S. (1992). Explorations in parent-school relations. Journal of Educational Research, 85 (5), 287-294.

Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., Walker, J.M.T., Jones, K.P., & Reed, R.P. (2002). Teachers Involving Parents (TIP): An in-service teacher education program for enhancing parental involvement. Teaching and Teacher Education, 18 (7), 843-467.

Appendix X

Parent Focus Group Questions

I Parent's Perception of Child's School

1. How would you describe your child's school?
   - quality of education
   - leadership and management
   - teacher
   - student relationship

2. Describe the level of expectation you have of the school?

3. Do you think the school makes a difference in your child's academic life? (meeting the needs of your child)

4. How does your child school compare with the others around? Describe

5. Do you feel welcomed, valued and are your opinions respected?

6. What is your role in the life of your child's school?

II Parent Motivators

1. How would you define parental involvement in the education of their child?

2. Do you think parents' involvement in the education of their child is important. Why?

3. Why are you involved in your child's education?

4. What are the specific activities that you are engaged in at home/school to support your child's education?

III Parent's Perception of invitation from others

1. Describe the parent-teacher relationship at child's school?

2. How does the school motivate parents' involvement and the parent-teacher relationship?

3. To what extent do you believe the school and home should work together to support the success of your child?

4. Specify the type of communication you have with (i) your child's school; (ii) your child's teacher (iii) how often do they take place ?

5. Since the beginning of the term how often has:

   (i) your child teacher encouraged you to help your child with home-work or participate in activities at home to support child's education;

   (2) your child's teacher provided specific information as to how you can help child succeed (3) contact you about your child?

6. How often does your child ask you to help to do homework or come to PTA meetings?

7. Are you satisfied with the nature and quality of the parent-teacher relationship?

What can the school do to improve the parent-teacher relationship and your involvement?

IV Parent's Perceived Life Context

1. How would you rate your current involvement? (on a scale 1-5)

2. Are you satisfied with that rating?

3. If you could improve your involvement, what specific changes would you make to achieve better involvement?

4. What are some of the hindrances to your participation in the education of your child?

5. If you could improve your level of involvement, what changes would you make?

6. What can the school do to assist you in this endeavour?

7. What do you think would be the benefits of your child's school having a policy on (define) on parental involvement?

8. Would you endorse a Parental Involvement Policy at your child's school?

Appendix Y

Teacher and School Administrator Focus Group Questions

1. What is your vision for the school within the next five years?
2. What do you think is the role of the parents, teacher and school administration in achieving this vision?
3. Define parental involvement?
4. How would you describe the parent-teacher relationship in your school?
5. What do you think are strengthens and weaknesses to parent-teacher relationship at your school?
6. Describe some of the ways you try to involve parents in the education of their children?
7. What kind of parental involvement do you as a teacher find most valuable?
8. How much of your success as a teacher do you attribute to parent support?
9. Do you think the involvement of parents in the education of their children is important? Why?
10. To what extent do you think that parents/guardians should be involved in their child's education? Ex. The determination of school policy?
11. What is the school's policy on the involvement of parents in the education of their children?
12. What are the concrete strategies and activities employed by the school to promote the involvement of parents in the education of their children?
13. Has the school undertaken an assessment of its parent-teacher relationship and parental involvement activities to determine their quality and effectiveness?
14. What were the results of your assessment?
15. What can the school do to improve parental involvement levels and strengthen the parent-teacher relationship?
16. What are some of the specified actions that you as a teacher can take to encourage the parent of your student to be more involved in the child's schooling?

Appendix Z

Interview Schedule for Semi-Structured Interviews

I President, National Parent Teachers Association (NPTAJA)

1. What is the vision of the NPTA?
2. What is the role and responsibility of the NPTA?
3. What is your opinion of the national consultation on education?
4. What were some of the issues and concerns highlighted?
5. How does the NPTA intend on addressing the issues and concerns highlighted?
6. What is the NPTA definition of parental involvement in education?
7. What is the role of parents and teachers in ensuring quality student outcomes?
8. What is the perception of the school towards the PTA?
9. How does the NPTA intend on building partnership between the parents and teachers?
10. How does the NPTA intend on promote capacity building of the PTA?
11. Why is parental involvement in the education of their children so important?
12. How does the NPTA intend on changing the perception of parents and teachers towards the importance of the PTA?
13. What is your view on the current nature and quality of the parent-teacher relationship in Jamaica?
14. What are the objectives of the NPTA?
15. How do you intend on implementing the objectives of the NPTA?
16. How do you intend on strengthening the strategic significance of the PTA within the management of the school system?
17. When a parent hears the NPTA slogan **"Involved Parents=Better Students"**, what is the message you want to convey to parents?
18. What is your vision for the Jamaican system of education?
19. What is the role of the NPTA in realizing this vision?
20. Why should parents be involved in the education of their children?

II Policy-maker, Planning Institute of Jamaica

1. Provide a situational analysis of the Jamaican family?
   -Nature
   - Structure
   - Function
   -Future Trends

2. What are the issues challenging the family and how have they impacted the ability of the family to function effectively?

3. How does this relate to the home-school relationship?

4. What policy & strategies can schools employ to strengthen participation and also empower families?

5. What is the significance of having national policy on parental involvement in education?

6. Would you endorse this endeavour?

III Representative from Coalition for Better Parenting

1. Provide a situational analysis of the Jamaican family?
   - -Nature
   - Structure
   - Function
   - Trends
2. What are the issues challenging the family and how have they impacted the ability of the family to function effectively?

3. What is the role of the Coalition in promoting better parenting?

4. How does this relate to the home-school relationship?

5. What policy & strategies can schools employ to strengthen participation and also empower families?

6. What is the significance of having national policy on parental involvement in education?

7. Would you endorse this endeavour?

IV Representative from the Guidance & Counseling Unit, Ministry of Education

1. What is the role and responsibility of the Guidance and Counselling Unit?
2. What are some of the issues addressed by the Unit?
3. What is your vision for the Jamaican education system?
4. What is the role of parents and teachers towards achieving this vision?
5. Why should parents be involved in the education of their children?
6. Describe the current nature and quality of the parent-teacher relationship?
7. How can the home-school relationship be strengthened and enhanced?
8. What are some of the efforts undertaken by the MOY to strengthen the home-school relationship and increase the involvement of parents? For example the effort to revitalize the PTA.
9. How successful has those efforts been? What else needs to be done?
10. What is the significance of the newly established National Parent-Teachers Associate?
11. At the school level, what can they do to strengthen participation and also empower families?
12. What is the significance of having National Policy on Parental Involvement in Education?
13. Would you endorse this endeavour?

V. Representative, Education Transformation Team (ETT)

1. You recently hosted a national consultation on education to formulate a national shared vision on education, what is your opinion of the national consultations?
2. Emerging from these consultations was the shared vision on education and a philosophy that emphasized: "Every child can learn; every child must". What does this mean for the education system? What should each stakeholder, especially parents and teachers understand from the philosophy?
3. What is the role of the ETT in facilitating the environment that will result in the achievement of the desired outcome?
4. What were some of the issues and concerns highlighted?
5. How does the ETT intend on addressing the issues and concerns highlighted?

6. What is the goal and objective of the ETT?

7. What are the strategic priorities of the ETT?
    1. # of areas were identified, why was parental involvement identified as of critical importance?

8. How would you define "parental involvement"?

9. How does the ETT intend on strengthening and enhancing the parent-teacher relationship and parental involvement?

10. How does the ETT intend on addressing these issues at the school level affecting parental involvement?

    a. parent-teacher relationship
    b. nature and quality of parental involvement
    c. attitude and perception
    d. institutional reality
    e. capacity of the local PTA

11. Would the ETT endorse the development of a national policy on parental involvement in education?

12. What would be the purpose of such a policy?

Appendix AA

Parental Involvement in Education Template of Policy Document

Draft 12-02-04

Model Parent/Family Involvement Policy

The Board of Education recognizes that a child's education is a responsibility shared by the school and family during the entire period the child spends in school. To support the goal of the school district to educate all students effectively, the schools and parents must work as knowledgeable partners.

Although parents are diverse in culture, language, and needs, they share the school's commitment to the educational success of their children. This school district and the schools within its boundaries, in collaboration with parents, shall establish programs and practices that enhance parent involvement and reflect the specific needs of students and their families.
To this end, the Board supports the development, implementation, and regular evaluation of a parent involvement program in each school, which will involve parents at all grade levels in a variety of roles. The parent involvement programs will be comprehensive and coordinated in nature. They will include, but not be limited to, the following components of successful parent involvement programs:

- Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.
- Responsible parenting is promoted and supported.
- Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.
- Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.
- Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.
- Community resources are made available to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning.

The Board of Education supports professional development opportunities for staff members to enhance understanding of effective parent involvement strategies. The Board also recognizes the importance of administrative leadership in setting expectations and creating a climate conducive to parental participation.

In addition to programs at the school level, the Board of Education supports the development, implementation, and regular evaluation of a program to involve parents in the decisions and practices of the school district, using to the degree possible, the components listed above. Engaging parents is essential to improved student achievement. This school district shall foster and support active parent involvement.

Source: This sample policy is based, in part, on the Parent Involvement Policy adopted by the California State Board of Education.

Appendix BB

Teacher Compact

Sample Compact
TEACHER

School-Parent-Community Partnerships

1. I will encourage all of my students to do their best in school and help both my students and their parents in order for my students to achieve needed skills.

2. I will acknowledge the important role that parents maintain in the life of their child and reinforce that role with my students.

3. I will work to communicate with all parents consistently so that all parents are aware of classroom activities, their child's involvement, and how they can participate.

4. I will ensure that all parents are aware of the educational standards for the subject and/or grade that I am teaching, that parents have a copy of the curriculum outline, and that they are aware of subject matter and project time lines.

5. I will ensure that all parents know how to contact me or the school, emphasize that communication is important in helping their child succeed, and conduct face-to-face conferences with parents.

6. I will know the parents of my students in order that they may contribute to the class or school functions. I will know the parents of my students in order to provide information or assistance for community needs that they may have.

7. I will ensure that if problems arise, I will communicate immediately with parents and include the positive activities in which the student is engaged.

8. I will ensure that parents are fully informed of school policies and opportunities for parent involvement beyond my classroom.

Signature: _____
Teacher

Date: _____

Appendix CC

Sample of Parent Compact

Sample Compact
PARENT

School-Parent-Community Partnerships

1. I will encourage my child to do well in school and be a good citizen in the classroom, respecting teachers, school staff, and other students.

2. I will maintain an environment and schedule at home that fosters learning and ensures that my child will attend school regularly, with the ability to learn and actively participate in school activities.

3. I will monitor out of school activities to ensure my child's well-being and safety and provide enough time for parent-child learning time together.

4. I will read all correspondence from the school and promptly respond to a request from a teacher or staff member concerning the well-being and educational activities of my child.

5. I will seek ways to assist my child in learning by reinforcing lessons from school and other community learning opportunities.

6. I will communicate to my child's teacher any circumstances that would directly affect my child's ability to learn.

7. I will make myself knowledgeable concerning the education standards set forth for the grade and subject matter for my child and be continually aware of the current status of my child's work.

8. I will volunteer personal time to my child's class and /or to the school to ensure that the school is meeting the educational needs of the community.

Signature: _____
Parent

Date: _____

Appendix DD

Sample of Student Compact

Sample Compact
STUDENT

School-Parent-Community Partnerships

1. I will try to work hard in school and do my very best on all assigned learning activities.
2. I will show respect for my teacher, other school staff, and other students. I will understand school regulations and follow school rules.
3. I will make sure that any messages between my teachers and parents are given to them as soon as possible.
4. I will go to parent-teacher conferences and be a part of the meeting in order to make sure that I am learning the skills that are necessary for my success.
5. I will complete and discuss my homework with my parents so that they can see the new things that I am learning and be part of my education.
6. I will encourage my parents to become actively involved in my education by spending some time in my classroom and being involved in general school activities.
7. I will welcome visitors to my school and class and thank them for their work with students.
8. I will contribute my individual talents to making my school community better.

Signature: _____
Student

Date: _____

Appendix EE

National Standards on Parental and Family Involvement Programmes

National Standards for Parent and Family Involvement Programs

Standards identified by the National PTA build on six types of parent involvement identified by Joyce L. Epstein of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University (1995). Each standard produces unique gains for students, contributes to effective programs, and fosters school success. Gains for students are greatest when parents participate in activities in each of the six standard areas. (National PTA, 1997).

- Standard I: Communicating - Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.
- Standard II: Parenting - Parenting skills are promoted and supported.
- Standard III: Student Learning - Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.
- Standard IV: Volunteering - Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.
- Standard V: School Decision Making and Advocacy - Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.
- Standard VI: Collaborating with Community - Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

Practice
Quality Indicators - The following quality indicators are what the research shows as contributing to effective programs and fostering success. For more specific examples of practical application ideas see the booklet of National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs (National PTA, 1997) or their web site at: http://www.pta.org/programs/pubstndid.htm

Standard I - Communicating
Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.

Communication is the foundation of a solid partnership. When parents and educators communicate effectively, positive relationships develop, problems are more easily solved, and students make greater progress.

Too often school or program communication is one-way without the chance to exchange ideas and share perceptions. Effective home-school communication is the two-way sharing of information vital to student success. Even parent-teacher conferences can be one-way if the goal is merely reporting student progress. Partnering requires give-and-take conversation, goal setting for the future, and regular follow-up interactions.

Quality Indicators of Successful Programs

1. Use a variety of communication tools on a regular basis, seeking to facilitate two-way interaction through each type of medium.

2. Establish opportunities for parents and educators to share partnering information such as student strengths and learning preferences.

3. Provide clear information regarding course expectations and offerings, student placement, school activities, student services, and optional programs.

National Standards for Parent and Family Involvement Programs

Standards identified by the National PTA build on six types of parent involvement identified by Joyce L. Epstein of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University (1995). Each standard produces unique gains for students, contributes to effective programs, and fosters school success. Gains for students are greatest when parents participate in activities in each of the six standard areas. (National PTA, 1997).

- Standard I: Communicating - Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.
- Standard II: Parenting - Parenting skills are promoted and supported.
- Standard III: Student Learning - Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.
- Standard IV: Volunteering - Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.
- Standard V: School Decision Making and Advocacy - Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.
- Standard VI: Collaborating with Community - Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

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Quality Indicators - The following quality indicators are what the research shows as contributing to effective programs and fostering success. For more specific examples of practical application ideas see the booklet of National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs (National PTA, 1997) or their web site at: http://www.pta.org/programs/pubstndid.htm

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Quality Indicators of Successful Programs

1. Use a variety of communication tools on a regular basis, seeking to facilitate two-way interaction through each type of medium.

2. Establish opportunities for parents and educators to share partnering information such as student strengths and learning preferences.

3. Provide clear information regarding course expectations and offerings, student placement, school activities, student services, and optional programs.

4. Mail report cards and regular progress reports to parents. Provide support services and follow-up conferences as needed.

5. Disseminate information on school reforms, policies, discipline procedures, assessment tools, and school goals, and include parents in any related decision-making process.

6. Conduct conferences with parents at least twice a year, with follow-up as needed. These should accommodate the varied schedules of parents, language barriers, and the need for child care.

7. Encourage immediate contact between parents and teachers when concerns arise.

8. Distribute student work for parental comment and review on a regular basis.

9. Translate communications to assist non-English-speaking parents.

10. Communicate with parents regarding positive student behavior and achievement, not just regarding misbehavior or failure.

11. Provide opportunities for parents to communicate with principals and other administrative staff.

12. Promote informal activities at which parents, staff, and community members can interact.

13. Provide staff development regarding effective communication techniques and the importance of regular two-way communication between the school and the family.

Standard II - Parenting
Parenting skills are promoted and supported.

Parents are a child's life support system. Consequently, the most important support a child can receive comes from the home.

School personnel and program staff support positive parenting by respecting and affirming the strengths and skills needed by parents to fulfill their role. From making sure that students arrive at school rested, fed, and ready to learn, to setting high learning expectations and nurturing self-esteem, parents sustain their children's learning.

When staff members recognize parent roles and responsibilities, ask parents what supports they need, and work to find ways to meet those needs, they communicate a clear message to parents: "We value you and need your input" in order to maintain a high-quality program.

Quality Indicators of Successful Programs

1. Communicate the importance of positive relationships between parents and their children.

2. Link parents to programs and resources within the community that provide support services to families.

3. Reach out to all families, not just those who attend parent meetings.

4. Establish policies that support and respect family responsibilities, recognizing the variety of parenting traditions and practices within the community's cultural and religious diversity.

5. Provide an accessible parent/family information and resource center to support parents and families with training, resources, and other services.

6. Encourage staff members to demonstrate respect for families and the family's primary role in the rearing of children to become responsible adults.

Standard III - Student Learning
Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.

Student learning increases when parents are invited into the process by helping at home. Enlisting parents' involvement provides educators and administrators with a valuable support system-creating a team that is working for each child's success.

The vast majority of parents are willing to assist their students in learning, but many times are not sure what assistance is most helpful and appropriate. Helping parents connect to their children's learning enables parents to communicate in powerful ways that they value what their children achieve. Whether it's working together on a computer, displaying student work at home, or responding to a particular class assignment, parents' actions communicate to their children that education is important.

Quality Indicators of Successful Programs

1. Seek and encourage parental participation in decision-making that affects students.

2. Inform parents of the expectations for students in each subject at each grade level.

3. Provide information regarding how parents can foster learning at home, give appropriate assistance, monitor homework, and give feedback to teachers.

4. Regularly assign interactive homework that will require students to discuss and interact with their parents about what they are learning in class.

5. Sponsor workshops or distribute information to assist parents in understanding how students can improve skills, get help when needed, meet class expectations, and perform well on assessments.

6. Involve parents in setting student goals each year and in planning for post-secondary education and careers. Encourage the development of a personalized education plan for each student, where parents are full partners.

7. Provide opportunities for staff members to learn and share successful approaches to engaging parents in their child's education.

Standard IV - Volunteering

Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.

When parents volunteer, both families and schools reap benefits that come in few other ways. Literally millions of dollars of volunteer services are performed by parents and family members each year in the public schools. Studies have concluded that volunteers express greater confidence in the schools where they have opportunities to participate regularly. In addition, assisting in school or program events/activities communicates to a child, "I care about what you do here."

In order for parents to feel appreciated and welcome, volunteer work must be meaningful and valuable to them. Capitalizing on the expertise and skills of parents and family members provides much needed support to educators and administrators already taxed in their attempts to meet academic goals and student needs.

Although there are many parents for whom volunteering during school hours is not possible, creative solutions like before- or after-school "drop-in" programs or "at home" support activities provide opportunities for parents to offer their assistance as well.

Quality Indicators of Successful Programs

1. Ensure that office staff greetings, signage near the entrances, and any other interaction with parents create a climate in which parents feel valued and welcome.

2. Survey parents regarding their interests, talents, and availability, then coordinate the parent resources with those that exist within the school and among the faculty.

3. Ensure that parents who are unable to volunteer in the school building are given the options for helping in other ways, at home or place of employment.

4. Organize an easy, accessible program for utilizing parent volunteers, providing ample training on volunteer procedures and school protocol.

5. Develop a system for contacting all parents to assist as the year progresses.

6. Design opportunities for those with limited time and resources to participate by addressing child care, transportation, work schedule needs, and so forth.

7. Show appreciation for parents' participation, and value their diverse contributions.

8. Educate and assist staff members in creating an inviting climate and effectively utilizing volunteer resources.

9. Ensure that volunteer activities are meaningful and built on volunteer interests and abilities.

Standard V – School Decision-Making and Advocacy
Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.

Studies have shown that schools where parents are involved in decision making and advocacy have higher levels of student achievement and greater public support.
Effective partnerships develop when each partner is respected and empowered to fully participate in the decision-making process. Schools and programs that actively enlist parent participation and input communicate that parents are valued as full partners in the educating of their children.

Parents and educators depend on shared authority in decision-making systems to foster parental trust, public confidence, and mutual support of each other's efforts in helping students succeed. The involvement of parents, as individuals or as representative of others, is crucial in collaborative decision-making processes on issues from curriculum and course selection, to discipline policies and over-all school reform measures.

Quality Indicators of Successful Programs

1. Provide understandable, accessible, and well-publicized processes for influencing decisions, raising issues or concerns, appealing decisions, and resolving problems.

2. Encourage the formation of PTAs or other parent groups to identify and respond to issues of interest to parents.

3. Include parents on all decision-making and advisory committees, and ensure adequate training for such areas as policy, curriculum, budget, school reform initiatives, safety, and personnel. Where site governance bodies exist, give equal representation to parents.

4. Provide parents with current information regarding school policies, practices, and both student and school performance data.

5. Enable parents to participate as partners when setting school goals, developing or evaluating programs and policies, or responding to performance data.

6. Encourage and facilitate active parent participation in the decisions that affect students, such as student placement, course selection, and individual personalized education plans.

7. Treat parental concerns with respect and demonstrate genuine interest in developing solutions.

8. Promote parent participation on school district, state, and national committees and issues.

9. Provide training for staff and parents on collaborative partnering and shared decision making.

Standard VI - Collaborating with Community
Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

As part of the larger community, schools and other programs fulfill important community goals. In like fashion, communities offer a wide array of resources valuable to schools and the families they serve.

When schools and communities work together, both are strengthened in synergistic ways and make gains that outpace what either entity could accomplish on its own:

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When schools and communities work together, both are strengthened in synergistic ways and make gains that outpace what either entity could accomplish on its own:

- Families access community resources more easily;
- Businesses connect education programs with the realities of the workplace;
- Seniors contribute wisdom and gain a greater sense of purpose; and ultimately,
- Students serve and learn beyond their school involvement.

The best partnerships are mutually beneficial and structured to connect individuals, not just institutions or groups. This connection enables the power of community partnerships to be unleashed.

Quality Indicators of Successful Programs

1. Distribute information regarding cultural, recreational, academic, health, social, and other resources that serve families within the community.
2. Develop partnerships with local business and service groups to advance student learning and assist schools and families.
3. Encourage employers to adopt policies and practices that promote and support adult participation in children's education.
4. Foster student participation in community service.
5. Involve community members in school volunteer programs.
6. Disseminate information to the school community, including those without school-age children, regarding school programs and performance.
7. Collaborate with community agencies to provide family support services and adult learning opportunities, enabling parents to more fully participate in activities that support education.
8. Inform staff members of the resources available in the community and strategies for utilizing those resources.

Source: National PTA

Appendix FF

Valuable Sources on Parental Involvement

http://www.pta.org (highly recommended)

Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk
http://www.csos.jhu.edu/crespar/

Center for Social Organization of Schools
http://www.csos.jhu.edu/default/

Center on School, Family and Community Partnership
http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/

Disney Learning Partnership
http://disney.go.com/Disneylearning

Empowered Learning Inc
http://pages.prodigy.com/empower.com

National Network of Partnership Schools (highly recommended)
http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/

Family Education Network
http://www.handinhand.org

Institute for Responsive Education: Reconnecting School and Community
http://res-ed.org

National Parent Information Network
http://npin.org

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
http://www.nwrel.org

Pathways to School Improvement/North Central Regional Educational Laboratory
http://www.ncrel.org/pathways.htm

United States Department of Education
http://www.ed.gov

Family Involvement Partnership for Learning
http://www.pfie.ed.gov

The National School-to-Work Learning and Information Center
http://www.stw.ed.gov

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education
http://www.stw.ed.gov

National Education Association
http://nea.org

National Education Research and Development Centre

Centre for Research on the Education of Student Placed at Risk
John's Hopkins University, CSOS
3505 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
(410) 516-8800

National Network of Partnership Schools at John's Hopkins University
John's Hopkins University
3003 North Charles Street
Suite 200
Baltimore MD
21218

Enhancing Young Children's Development and Learning
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Franporter Graham Child Development Centre
CB#4100 Chapel Hill
NC 27599-4100
(919) 966-4250

Improving Postsecondary Education
National Centre for Postsecondary Improvement
Stanford Institute for Higher Education Research
508 Ceras Buil;ding
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305-4125
(415) 723 7727

Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE)
Graduate School of Education
University of Pennsylvania
3440 Market Street, Suite 560
Philadelphia, PA 19104-3325
(215) 573-0700, ext 224

III Regional Education Laboratories

Regional laboratories help schools and districts in their region find solution to problems. They also offer technical assistance and are a resource of information, particularly in their specialty areas. Indicated below are family involvement resources and publications available labs.

Mid-Atlantic Laboratory for Student Success (LSS)
Margaret Wang, Director
Temple University, 933 Ritter Annex
13th Street and Cecil B. Moore Avenue
Philadelphia, PA. 19122
Phone: (212) 204 5130
e-mail: Iss@vm.temple.edu/departments/LSS
Specialty: Families and Communities in Education

Southeastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE)
Roy H. Forbes
Post Office Box 5367
Greebsboro,NC 27435
Phone (910) 334-3268
Email: info@SERVE.org
url http://www.serve.org
Specialty: Early Childhood Education

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL)
Jeri Nowakowski, director
1900 Spring Road, Suite 300
Pak Brook, IL 60521-1480
Phone: (630) 751-4600
Fax (630) 571-4716
Email: info@ncrel.org
url http://www.ncrel.org
Specialty: Parental Involvement in Education