

THE ATTITUDES OF JAMAICAN PARENTS
TOWARDS PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

By

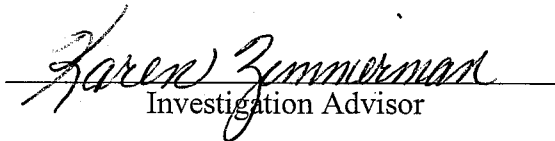
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ABSTRACT

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Attitudes of Jamaican Parents Towards Parent Involvement With Their Child's

Education at High School

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This study examined the attitudes of Jamaican parents towards parent involvement at high school. The objectives were to: 1) Determine the attitudes of parents toward involvement and the high school their child attends, 2) Determine what schools are presently doing to involve parents and how parents think schools can improve, 3) Determine parental involvement at home, at school and in the community, and the amount of time parents spend helping their high school child with homework, and 4) Examine the differences in parent attitudes, parent involvement, and parent assistance with homework based on parental educational level.

The subjects in this study were parents with children in selected high schools in St. Catherine, Jamaica. Parents were asked to volunteer as participants in the study. The survey instrument was revised based upon the results of the pilot study, and administered in the fall 2001. The survey instrument consisted of five parts: demographic information, attitudes, school involvement, how parents were involved in the education of their child

at home, at school and in the community, time spent helping with homework, subjects and topics parents would like to learn more about so that they can help their child, and parent concerns.

Two hundred and twenty parents responded to the survey. Data was analyzed based on frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation.

The study found that parents agreed or strongly agreed to 45% of the attitude statements (nine statements). Parents felt that schools did well or could do better at over 58% of the involvement practices. Over 50% of parents in all instances felt that the school did not do well at asking them to volunteer, did not explain how they should check homework, did not include them in vital decisions for school improvement and did not provide information on community services that help children and families. Fifty-seven percent of parents said the school did not contact them if their child did something well or improved at school.

When parents were asked to indicate the areas where schools need to improve more than 50% would like to see improvement in attendance at P.T.A. meetings, parent volunteering, parent communication with teachers, the amount of guidance given to parents by teachers, time available for parents to talk to teachers and principals and the school's effort to contact them when their child is doing well or needs extra help. The study also found that more parents were involved in the education of their children at home than at school or in the community. Over 80.6% of parents said they talked to their children about school many times 88.8% talked to children about how important school is, 82.4% talked with children about the future, career and work. Regarding homework, 60.5% of parents said their children spent 1-2 hours doing homework on schooldays. All

parents indicated that they were willing to spend more time helping children with homework if the teacher showed them how to help.

Parents indicated that they needed help with Mathematics (75.3%), Computer Studies (53.3%), and English Language (49.9%). Parents also requested workshops in how to discipline teens, how to help teens choose careers, study and take tests. They also wanted to learn more about community services such as family counseling, job and skill training.

The study also found that there are significant differences on parent attitude, parent involvement, parent assistance with homework, based on parent level of education.

Findings of this study can be of great benefit to all stakeholders in education in Jamaica. The results will therefore be made available in the Education Offices in the Ministry of Education, school principals and teachers as a first step. It is recommended that school begin to view parent involvement as a major component in their three-year development plans and begin to formulate action teams for planning and implementing activities to improve parental involvement at high school.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The issue of parent involvement continues to be of interest to researchers, educators, and school administrators. Professionals in various disciplines with interest in children, families, schools and communities are doing studies to determine the effects of partnerships on the educational development of children (Turbiville, Umberger & Guthrie, 2000; Pelco, Rover, Jacobson & Melka, 2000; Bauch & Goldring, 2000; Ramirez, 2001). Parent involvement has also become the focus of attention among many who must make policies regarding school family and society, but what is parent involvement really? Parent involvement is the practice of any activity that empowers parents or families to participate in the educational process at home, at school or in any other program setting (Rockwell, Andre & Hawley, 1995).

The definition of parent involvement has gone through many changes both in name and focus over the years, however each is based upon a philosophy of child- adult and adult- adult interactions that assigns roles to both the parent and the educator. It is therefore a general consensus that regardless of the term used to describe this process the end result is that parent involvement allows for the working of parents, educators and other individuals together in promoting the best educational interest of the child.

The concept of parent involvement is no longer a new one. Over the past decades it has gone through transition from parents helping children with education at home to a partnership between school (teacher) and home (parent) to emerge as the collaborative effort of schools, families and communities to provide or improve the education of children. The demand for schools to work with families and for communities to become

involved in the education of children is well recognized and accepted by all. The question is no longer whether there is a need for collaborating or whether schools and parents should cooperate with each other, but, what is the most effective way of working together and how it should be accomplished (Berger, 2000).

Early federal legislations in parent involvement in the 1960's started with the passage of Head Start, and later Title one of the Elementary and Secondary School Act followed by several other legislations continues to pave the way for more involvement of parents. Federal support for promoting a "partnership that will increase parent involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional and academic growth of children"(Pryor, 1995, p. 410) was obtained with the passing of PL203-277, the Goals 2000: Educate America Act (H.R. 1804) on March 31, 1994. This act allows for continued involvement of parents. Most educators are optimistic that parents can be successfully involved.

There is a growing concern among educators, policy makers in education, and researchers to determine the effects of parent involvement on students' academic performance. There is also concern about the attitudes of teachers and parents towards involvement and what can be done to improve this school-family partnership. The attitudes of teachers and parents are determining factors in how effective a program of parent involvement can be. It is out of this concern that the decision was made to investigate the attitude of Jamaican parents towards involvement in the education of their high school children, to find out how parent involvement can benefit parents, teachers and schools and to find answers to what strategies may be employed to improve and strengthen the partnership between school and home, parents and teacher, at the high

school level. It is hoped that this study will add to the body of knowledge on parent involvement and that I will be more informed on the topic so that I can influence more parent involvement in Jamaican schools especially at the high school level where it is most lacking.

The general feeling among advocates for parent involvement in education is that there are numerous benefits to students, parents and teachers. A well-structured program of parent involvement can improve the attitudes of parents, students, teachers and school administrators towards this partnership. Gains in student's academic achievement are among the highly ranked benefits. More positive parental involvement in education through the school system and at home may be the strongest single factor to promote students success (Botrie & Wagner, 1992). Several researchers have tried to determine the effects of parent involvement on student's academic achievement (Pena, 2000; Feuerstein, 2000; Pryor, 1995; McGrath & Kuriloff, 1999) have reported relationships between parent involvement and students performance. Findings of a study done by US Department of Education cited by (Turbiville, Umbarger & Guthrie, 2000) also revealed that children whose parents were active in school activities were more likely to score A's on assignments, participate in extra curricular activities and enjoy school. They were also less likely to repeat grades, be expelled or suspended or exhibit violent behavior in school. Pape (1999) in an article "Involving parents lets students and teachers win" reported findings of a recent study by (Henderson & Berla, 1995) that found that in programs that are designed to involve parents in full partnership, disadvantaged students' achievement not only improves, but can reach levels that are standards for middle class children, and that junior and senior high school students whose parents remained

involved made better transitions, maintained the quality of their work, and made realistic plans for their future. Students whose parents are not involved are more prone to drop out of school. Schools that work well with families have improved teacher morale and have higher ratings of teachers by parents.

Benefits to Parents

It is important to involve parents in the education of their children. Both students and parents can derive benefits from this process. Students learn more when parents and teachers work together. Rockwell, Andre and Hawley (1996) state that parent involvement in education raises the academic achievement of students, improves the attitudes and performance of students in school, increases self esteem and motivation, reduces behavioral problems and lowers students dropout rates, helps parents understand the work of the school and builds school-community relationships in an on-going, problem preventing way. Further when parents are involved they understand more about the education process, change their behavior at home and are more supportive of their child, and show more appreciation for teachers' efforts. By being involved parents also feel a sense of accomplishment knowing that they have contributed to the academic achievement of their children. Parents can help in establishing goals and directions towards decisions concerning their children, and enjoy more power in influencing the education process for their children.

It is unfortunate that many parents are not as involved as they should be in the education of their children. Some educators view this as unwillingness on the part of parents. However, researchers have found that parents feel estranged from the process of involvement for many reasons. Findings of studies (Brown, 1989; Galinsky, 1988; Honig,

1975; Miller & McDowell, 1993 & Rich, 1987) cited in Rockwell, Andre and Hawley (1995) have identified some family, professional and programmatic challenges to parent involvement that educators should know.

The family challenges include lack of time, inflexible work hours, scheduling of activities that may be jeopardized by the competing demands of home and family, medical problems, stress related problems. Personal safety issues in some communities, securing adequate childcare, transportation, finance, intrapersonal or interpersonal difficulties, being overwhelmed by professional expectations real or imagined, and low self-confidence are also challenges for some families. Some parents may have had poor experiences with school and are reluctant to attend programs being held at school. These programs may make some parents feel uncomfortable as though they are still in the student role. Parents may also view teachers as professional figures and therefore may be inclined to keep a respectful distance.

A study by Pena (2000) also found language barriers, parent cliques, parent education, and attitude of school staff, cultural influences and family issues as influencing factors in parent involvement. Limited parent involvement appears to be a matter of international concern, with some influencing factors that are common to all societies. While there is less diversity in language in Jamaica, there are communication barriers for parents who speak the local dialect predominantly. Family issues and level of education for some parents also influence parent involvement. Family finance is also a major issue.

Most parents depend on expensive public transportation to get to and from work and to attend parent involvement activities. Some parents reside long distances from

school and cannot afford, or do not have access to transportation. Parents who have not benefited from education beyond the elementary level may feel intimidated and choose not to attend. Parent involvement activities planned by schools are not always based on the needs or interest of parents.

Lack of, or low parent involvement in education in Jamaica is also related to migration. Many students reside with grandparents; older siblings, distance relatives or friends while parents migrate to find employment in the United Kingdom or United States. These substitute parents with children and problems of their own are not always available for parent involvement activities. "Love in a Barrel: Absentee parents- deprived children "by Hazel Salmon (2001) says that it seems pertinent to ask whether teachers should assume the role of surrogate parents in light of deteriorating family, economic and social conditions that separate some parents from their children.

According to McConkey (1985), both parents and teachers recognize the need for more parent involvement. A large number of mothers and fathers say they would like to help but has not been asked, or their offer has not been taken up. Macleod (1989, p.152) in *Politics of Parent Involvement* states that

"Teachers are forced to speak with a forked tongue: they know that parental involvement is desirable but they also know that this implies a shift in the balance of power between parents and teachers, so many teachers find excuses for taking no immediate action while uttering the appropriate rhetoric" but teachers also have their story. Many teachers have not done much by way of fostering parent involvement because they are not sure how to do so. They did not benefit from

training in this field and administrators do not always plan in-service programs to satisfy this need (Lazar, Broderick, Mastrilli & Slostad, 1999).

Parent involvement decreases as students progressively move up the grades in high school. It has been documented (Stephenson & Baker, 1987) cited in Crosnoe (2001) that parents tend to become less involved in their children's educational career, over time, especially after middle school. This decline could be the result of parents giving their children more autonomy, as the children grow older, or because parents feel less knowledgeable about more complex materials. In the typical high school setting, students are faced with a variety of problems caused by the transition from one type of school or grade into another, changes in teachers and school environment, and an increase in the academic expectations from parents, teachers and society. Students need additional help from parents, teachers and the community if they are to do well in school; unfortunately it is at this time that parents become less involved.

The level of disengagement in the involvement in education by Jamaican parents is at most mind boggling to educators, since parents usually show a high level of involvement at the primary level. A noticeable pattern is that once students are placed in high schools and parent manage to get them settled in at grade seven, involvement drops to an all time low and again increase at grades ten or eleven when students prepare for final examinations. The increased involvement at this level is still below the level of involvement at Grade seven and is more related to financing of examinations, which will prepare students for college or employment.

It is the responsibility of schools to enable parents to provide the skills and knowledge needed to help their children at all age levels (Epstein, 2001). It is also the

responsibility of the school to plan programs that will make parents want to be involved. It is the responsibility of teachers to facilitate parents when they want to be involved as well as being understanding when parents have good reasons for not being involved at all times.

Schools

Parents, teachers, and school administrators all have different perceptions of what parent involvement in education should include. The atmosphere of the school is usually influenced by the leadership style of the administrator. The leadership style will ultimately influence the school parent interaction. It is the role of the principal to build staff moral that will facilitate positive interaction with students and parents, plan and implement educational programs that will reflect the recognition of the importance of the family, school community relations, and the development of an effective principal-parent relationship.

In addition it is the principal's responsibility to establish and maintain an open-door policy with parents, provide the necessary resources and programs that will support parent involvement and coordinate parent involvement efforts by teachers and the development of site-based management committees to sustain parent involvement efforts (Berger, 2000). The teacher is central to parent involvement in the education process, and includes being facilitator, teacher, counselor communicator, program director, interpreter, resource developer and friend (Berger, 2000). Teachers and administrators often complain that they are expected to do more than they originally bargained for, however, educators more than any other group are aware that schools more than any other organization is influenced by societal changes and should be willing to move beyond the

traditional role of teaching academic subjects only. In order to facilitate the students cognitive, social and emotional development educators must become partners with parents. Parents and teachers need to have a common understanding of what parent involvement entails. Too often parents and teachers have different perceptions of what is expected.

Studies done on parent involvement found that teachers wanted more parent involvement, particularly in academic areas, and felt that more administrative support for parent involvement efforts is needed. Parents wanted to be involved in meaningful ways, not just called in when their children were in trouble (Pryor, 1995). Fathers seem to appreciate being asked personally to take a role and being invited to participate. They also like to know that their efforts are appreciated by teachers and others (Turbiville, Umbarger & Guthrie, 2000). Schools also need to ensure that they take notice of the changing family structures in society and that parent involvement is not perceived to be and limited only to families that fit the traditional profile of nuclear family household. In addition to two parent families (birth parents) today's households are also headed by single parents, cohabiting parents, gay parents, blended families and families headed by grandparents. It is important to consider all forms when discussing or planning for parent involvement in schools. If schools understand the families they serve, including the demands placed on them by their structures and income levels, they will be better able to work with them (Procidano & Fisher, 1992).

All parents, wherever they reside or send their children to school, have dreams and aspirations for their children, dreams that they would like educators and schools to help them realize. This common dream is to see their children do well in school so that

children can be successful individuals and citizens of society. Schools should therefore help students and families in achieving their educational goal, regardless of the characteristics and situations of students' families, and the communities in which they live or operate. "However configured, however constraint families come with their children to school. Even when they do not come in person they come in children's minds, hearts, hopes and dreams. Without exceptions teachers and administrators have explicit and implicit contact with students' families daily" (Epstein, 2001, p. 4). Without the bonding and development of a partnership with parents, schools are at risk of dissecting children into "home child" and "school child" instead of focusing on the child as a whole person. This is a dangerous way of packaging students and could reduce the guidance, support and encouragement for children to learn from parents, relatives, religious leaders and other community persons, and peers.

Studies on the views of parents have found that they recognize the importance of their involvement to the educational development of their children, however there are gaps in the way parents view involvement and how schools expect parents to be involved. Parents raise children according to how they were raised or through trial and error. With all the rapid changes in society and by extension the family, and with all the technological changes being experienced in this century, it is important for parents to constantly change or upgrade parenting skills. They need help in doing this, and since parents and teachers share a common interest in students, then school is a good place to begin (McEwan, 1998; Procidano, & Fisher, 1992; Wolfendale, 1993).

Parent Involvement Program at High School

As the field of school, family and community partnership continues to grow and improve, policy leaders, educators and researchers from a wide cross section of academic disciplines and professional boundaries arrive at new theories, studies, policies and practices and pathways to the achieving of important goals. New issues about grade-level, school and teacher changes are emerging. The issue of transition into high school, and effective ways of planning and implementing programs of family school partnerships to facilitate this transition is being researched (Epstein, 2001). At high school, students' new teachers may have different definitions of success. Parents need to know what is necessary for students to succeed in these classrooms. Teachers also need to know how to collect information about their students at the beginning of each school year and periodically during the year.

According to Baker and Stephenson (1986) cited in Epstein (2001), dramatic declines in parent involvement are noted at the transition points from elementary to middle and middle to high school. However if high schools conduct strong transitional activities such as orientating parents about the school while students are still at middle school this pattern of decline can be reversed. More research is needed in how families can be included in the many transitional processes and how programs can be planned to assist parents to help their children.

Jamaican High Schools

Very little research is done on parent involvement in the education of their children in Jamaican high schools. However from personal observation and experience in working and supervising high schools, there is much more that can be done to get parents

involved. Parent involvement programs and activities are limited to a few types and administrators and teachers have not benefited from formal training or workshops on how to involve parents. Educators therefore are not confident in planning and implementing effective parent involvement programs. Many of the problems being experienced by schools presently could be corrected or reduced by effective parent involvement programs. Transition problems, low academic performance in some subjects, disruptive students, absenteeism, lateness, skipping of classes, school violence, insubordination to teachers, suspensions and expulsions can be addressed by effective parent involvement programs. Existing programs can be strengthened and new ones introduced and delivered to parents in locations where they have easy access. Good communication techniques and strategies can be employed to reach parents who are unable to attend, instead of using attendance as the only means of disseminating information.

Although this topic has enjoyed years of attention through the many studies already done, there is still much more to be done to teach parents, about the invaluable benefits that can be derived from being involved in the education of their children, and to help schools in providing this information to parents. It is hoped that this study will add to the body of knowledge in this area, especially at the high school level, and provide valuable guide in the introduction or expansion of existing programs of parent involvement in Jamaican schools.

Statement of Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine the *attitudes* of Jamaican parents towards parent involvement in the education of their children at high school. The study was also to identify the types of parent involvement activities that schools provided for

parents and how parents would like to see schools improve, how involved parents were with their children's education at home, school and in the community, what help parents would like and whether there were significant differences between parent attitude, parent involvement, parent assistance with homework and parent education level.

Research Objectives

1. To determine the attitude of Jamaican parents towards parent involvement in education and the high school their child attends.
2. To determine what schools are presently doing to involve parents and how parents would like to see schools improve their involvement practices.
3. To determine parent involvement at home, at school and in the community, the amount of time parents spend helping their high school children with homework and what help parents would need in order to be of more help to children.
4. To determine whether there are significant differences between parent education level, parent attitude, parent involvement and parent assistance with homework.

Survey questions were developed and administered to parents with children in high schools in St. Catherine, Jamaica during the Fall 2001 semester. The survey instruments were sent to Home Economic teachers in schools to be delivered to students who should take them to parents to be completed. Parents were asked to return the completed document to the school by their children.

Definition of Terms

For clarity of understanding the following terms need to be defined.

Parent involvement: Researchers have utilized different definitions and models of parent involvement. According to (Epstein, Coates, Saunders & Simon , 1997), the term

parent involvement has been clarified and recast during the past decade from parent involvement (left up to parents) to school, family, and community partnership to emphasize the concept of shared responsibility for children across context, with the main goal of developing and conducting better communications with families to assist students in succeeding in school.

For this study parent involvement is any activity organized by parents, teachers and school administrators individually or collectively to improve communication and participation of parents in the education of their children.

Parent: Any adult, male, female, birth parents, or guardian who signs the official school document as the person responsible to the school for the child.

Parent attitude: The feelings or opinion of a parent towards involvement in the education of their child

High School: Educational institutions involved in the education of children in grades seven to eleven or age thirteen to seventeen.

Parent's Level of Education: The level of schooling received by parents.

Assumptions

It is assumed that that parents will want to participate in a survey if they think the outcome will help them to help their child in high school. It is also assumed that teachers will issue survey to students and students will take them home to parents and return them when completed. It is also assumed that parents will understand the instructions given for completing the survey and answer the questions honestly so that the study will enjoy a high degree of validity,

Although gender is not an issue in this study, the investigator is assuming based on past experiences in attending P.T.A. meetings in Jamaica, that most parents who participate in the survey will be mothers. The investigator is also assuming that some parents may not complete and return the documents on time to meet the deadline set.

Limitations

The limitations of this study may be the inability or high cost for the investigator to contact Jamaican parents for the speedy return of survey instruments. Events of September 11, 2001 affected the delivery of the survey. The excessive flooding in Jamaica that resulted in the destruction of roads and bridges affected the survey return rate. Information on specific aspects of parent involvement in Jamaican high schools may not be available in literature and may be heavily reliant on investigators experience in working in and supervising programs in these schools. This study will not cover all aspects of parent involvement in education in Jamaican high schools.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

This chapter will review the literature on the early beginning and growth of the parent involvement movement, parent involvement models and types, attitudes towards parent involvement, (parents, teachers, school administrators and community populace), and what high schools can do to improve existing levels of parent involvement.

Parent involvement has been in the spotlight among educators, administrators, researchers and policy makers for decades. The quantity of research being done on the topic has created an emerging field of study with changes of names and focus over the years. In the early years of research on the topic studies were conducted on the topics of family, school and community. These contexts were treated separately (Epstein, 2001).

After heated debates among researchers in the 1960-1970 about which was more important researchers agreed that the three contexts of family, school and community are all important. Partnership among these entities will more effectively accomplish the task of educating, socializing and preparing children for life. All three entities simultaneously influence children's development (Epstein, 2001).

In 1990 the movement of the effective school attracted the attention of educators and researchers. Although parent involvement was not one of the original elements of the effective school it was quickly added to the expanding components that were identified by researchers and practitioners as vital for school improvement and student success. In 1983 the report "A Nation at Risk" by the National Commission on Excellence in Education started to focus on the need to improve all schools. In the 1980's studies began to clarify the terms parent involvement, school and family partnerships and school family

and community partnership to emphasize the shared responsibility for children across the three contexts.

In 1990 growth in the field of study was assisted by the creation of the National Center on Family, Community School and Children Learning, by the Federal Government to conduct active research development, evaluation and policy studies to focus on students and families from birth to ten years and the years of early and late adolescence, age eleven to nineteen. The research in family school and community partnerships has now made great progress and has blended across boundary and disciplines. Researchers in sociology, psychology, social work, anthropology, education home and family studies are all building on the work done by one another to contribute new findings that can direct decisions, policies and practices (Epstein, 2001).

According to Henderson and Berla (1995), the evidence is beyond dispute, that when schools work along with families to support learning children tend to succeed in school and throughout life, Furthermore, the most accurate predictor of a students' achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which their families are able to create home environments that encourage learning. When schools and families work together to support learning parents tend to set high but realistic expectations for their children's future and career development. Parents also become more involved in the education of their children at school and in the community. When parents become involved in these ways students usually progress to higher grades in school, gain good scores on tests, improve in school and class attendance, and complete more homework. Students are also less likely to be placed in special education, display more positive attitudes, behave well in school, are more likely to graduate and enroll in post secondary

education programs. Families also benefit by developing more confidence in their children's school, and are viewed more positively by their children's teachers. Teachers also develop higher expectations of the children whose families work with them. When families work with teachers in the education of their children, families develop more confidence in helping their children to learn at home. Parents also develop more confidence in themselves as parents and usually enroll in classes to improve their own education (Henderson & Berla, 1995).

Schools and communities that work with families profit from improved teacher morale, higher ratings of teachers by parents, more support from families, higher student achievement, and better reputation in the community. Therefore when parents are involved in their children's education at home, their children do better at school. When parents are involved at school, their children go further in school, and the schools they attend also improve.

High School Education in Jamaica

The dreams and aspirations of Jamaican parents are similar to those of parents worldwide, regarding their children. Parents hope that their children will like school; work hard; improve academically as they progress throughout the grades from primary to high school to university; complete training without contributing to the statistics on school or college dropouts; gain meaningful employment and become productive members of society. The process or pathway for getting to the point of completing training and gaining employment may vary among countries based on the model of the education system and the societal expectations. For Jamaican parents it is a long struggle because of the limited number of high schools.

To achieve a place in high school in Jamaica is a great accomplishment for students, their parents and the teachers who teach these students. When examination results are published in May of each year, both parents and teachers are happy celebrate their children's accomplishments. These high school places are awarded based on scores received in the Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT), an examination administered by the Ministry of Education to tests students' performance across the primary curriculum at age twelve. This test is necessary since the country does not possess enough high schools to allow for the free flow of students from the primary level on to the secondary level. According to the Guidelines for GSAT Placement, Ministry of Education, Jamaica (2000) the use of parental choice, student performance and location of school (distance from home) are the main criteria for placement (GSAT Placement, 2000).

Parents are not always happy with these placements. According to a parent in an open letter to The Minister of Education, (Jamaica Daily Gleaner, July 11, 2001), "I am totally perplexed as to how children who sat the GSAT examination are placed in high schools". Despite the assurance given by the Ministry of Education yearly, parents have their own preconceived ideas about schools that are good and placements that appear to be in violation of these guidelines. Parents are usually very involved in the education of their children at the primary level to ensure that they achieve a place in high school. The involvement starts as early as when children enter school since parents have preconceived ideas of schools that are "good" and will prepare their children well, for the GSAT examination. Parents also pay extra money to have their children get additional academic training before and after regular school hours, starting from as early as grade one to ensure that children will perform well in this examination. Parents have also been known

to use inappropriate means like a false home address, or a change of school close to the time when children sit the examination, to increase the chances of their children getting into a school of their choice. According to (The Jamaica National Survey of Living Conditions, 2000), 16.7% of the 15-6 age cohort were not enrolled in any school for the 1999 school year. The limited number of high schools has contributed to this situation. Parents are aware that if students are not placed at age twelve, there is a strong possibility that their child may eventually form a part of this statistic. There was also an increase in the number of primary age students enrolled in secondary schools (JNSOLC, 2000). Some parents may be placing their children in high schools before the recommended age. This could be parents effort to ensure a place early.

When examination results are published yearly, some parents again spend extra time and money traveling to schools, and to the Ministry of Education, to lobby for a change of school, if they are unhappy with the placement of their children in schools. Many parents are unsuccessful in obtaining a transfer since placements are based on examination scores, distance from home to school and the number that the schools can accommodate. Some parents are unable to access places for their children. However, if government targets (Green Paper on Education, 2004) are met, this problem will be somewhat alleviated.

Gaining acceptance in a tertiary institution, or finding gainful employment after school, also requires high performance at the high school level. The number of subjects students achieve in internally or externally set examinations determines the type of tertiary institutions into which students are accepted. Passes in at least four subjects including English Language will qualify students for some tertiary institutions while as

many as eight subjects including English Language and Mathematics are required for others (JBTE, 1980). Students are also accepted based on how well the subjects acquired, relate to the program to be studied at the tertiary level. This along with the high cost of education makes parent involvement a vital component in the educational achievement of students.

Unfortunately after such hard work on the part of students with the support of their parents to access places in high schools, the dreams or goals of parents and their children are not always realized. Some Jamaican students do not perform as well as is expected when they enter high school. According to Epstein (2001) in order to address questions about goals, questions about roles must also be addressed. All stakeholders in education, and researchers in this field, readily acknowledge the roles of parents, educators and school administrators in building and sustaining partnerships that will help children in achieving their educational goals. Jamaican parents recognize that they need to be more involved in the education of their children, this is confirmed by their involvement up to the entry of the children into high school. Why does the level of involvement fall when these children enter high school? Could it be that parents are uncertain about the role they should play at this level? Why does parent involvement again peak between grades ten and eleven when students are again getting ready to sit school leaving and final examinations? Parents are also very involved for high school graduation. They spend large sums of money to finance gowns, caps, rings, expensive outfits for the graduation ball at expensive hotels and other locations. Do parents feel that the best help they are capable of offering is help in terms of finances?

School administrators and teachers need to do more to educate parents about their roles in the education of their children at high school, to identify the help parents need and to plan parent involvement programs that will satisfy these needs. Teachers also need to recognize the social problems that sometimes inhibit the level of involvement expected and accept that not all parents will be involved in all planned activities at all times. However, if enough activities are planned at various times parents will get involved.

Teachers must begin to address this problem from the point of strengths identified in parents. Since parents show interest in students performing well in examinations, teachers can help parents help their children perform better academically and expand the parent involvement program from that point into other areas.

More research needs to be done in the Jamaican context to determine the factors that influence and can improve parent involvement at the high school level. "Love in a barrel: Absentee parents-deprived children" a study done by Hazel M. Salmon (2001) published on the website of the National Council on Education states that it is pertinent to ask at this point whether teachers should assume the role of surrogate parents when natural parents migrate to other countries. However it should also be recognized that many parents who are not the victims of migration are not playing their expected roles and are in need of help in doing so. Further, Salmon makes reference to the efforts of a School Community Outreach Program for Education which initiates the collaboration of home, school and community in undertaking the task involved in nurturing children to acquire the skills, attitudes and values necessary for successful functioning in the society. Indeed this program needs to be expanded so that it touches the lives of all families and assist all schools in the expansion of this needed partnership.

Models of Parent Involvement

No other topic about school improvement has stirred more interest in the past decade, as has parent involvement in the education of their children. The various forms by which parent involvement may be introduced to obtain maximum benefits for students, parents, teachers and society at large make studying and researching of the topic even more interesting. Up until recently the focus was placed on only a few overworked methods of parent involvement which did not sustain lasting interest among those concerned. This section will review the literature on various types/ models of parent involvement.

Studies done on parent involvement have provided invaluable amounts of information that can be beneficial to policy makers, teachers, and school administrators about how parent involvement may be introduced. According to Pelco, Roger, Jacobson, and Melka (2000), this growing body of research supports the basic premise that positive connections between families and schools influence a variety of outcomes. Pelco, Roger, Jacobson, and Melka (2000) further explained that parent involvement is a multi-dimension construct that relates to a variety of student, parent, school administrator, and teacher behaviors, outcomes, and effects. Further it has been difficult to generalize across studies because researchers have utilized different definitions and models of parent involvement. Pelco, Roger, Jacobson and Melka (2000) also cited work done by Anderson, Bickley, Keith, Trivette and Sing (1995) that identified several sources from which four major categories under which most major categories of parent involvement have been classified. These categories are: parent academic aspirations and expectations

for children, participation in school activities and programs, home variables that support learning and communication with children about school.

Researchers have suggested a variety of parent involvement models, many of which are in practice in many schools. According to Swap, (1993, p. 27) “Models may be formal or informal, explicit or implicit, recognized or unrecognized, but they provide a consistent pattern of assumptions, goals, attitudes, behavior and strategies that help us to understand parent-educator relationships in the school.” It is against this background that she suggested one model in 1987 (Swap, 1987) which she later expanded on in 1993. Recognizing that there are a variety of models, all with strengths and challenges, will allow educators to debate and carefully examine models before choosing. This examination will help to avoid the random “scattershot” programming in parent involvement which now exist in many schools.

Swap (1987) recognizing that parents have different interests and should not be made to feel that they must attend all activities, suggests seven options for parent involvement with the goal of involving parents in some form of activity during the year. These options are:

- Parent as audience e.g. curriculum fairs, school open days, music, drama, or sports events
- Parents as advocates (attending parent/ teachers conferences or participating in the development of their child’s education plan)
- Parents as helpers (chaperones, fund raisers, volunteers.)
- Parents as learners (attending parent seminars workshops and discussion groups)

- Parents as partners (school board members, committee members, problem solving groups).
- Parents as experts (leading workshop training in areas of expertise, consulting to schools in areas of skills, resource persons in curriculum areas).
- Parents as just people (participating in activities like school suppers or hobby groups).

After further research on models Swap (1993) suggested other models of home school relationships: The protective model, the school to home transmission model and the curriculum enrichment model. The protective model is to reduce conflicts between parent and educators through the separation of functions. It aims to protect the school from interference by parents and is driven by assumptions that parents delegate the responsibility of educating their children to the school, holds school personnel accountable for results and educators accept this responsibility. When this model is used it would be inappropriate to expect parent involvement in decision-making or any form of collaborative problem solving. Parent involvement would be viewed as interfering with the educator's job. In this model ritualized formats are dominant and the opportunity for authentic dialogue is restricted.

The protective model of parent involvement is limited to one advantage, that of protecting the school against parental intrusion. The challenges are that it increases conflicts between home and school by providing no opportunity for preventative problem solving, ignores the opportunity for collaboration between school and home which is already established as vital for student achievement, and rejects vital resources for school enrichment and support from families and community members (Swap, 1993).

The school-to-home transmission model enlists parents in supporting the objectives of the school. Children's achievement is fostered by continuity of expectations and values between home and school. School personnel should identify the values and practices outside of the school that contribute to the school's success. Parents should endorse the importance of schooling and support this by providing a home environment to ensure that minimum academic and the child meets social requirements (Swap, 1993). Parents have responsibilities to help children succeed within the guidelines of the school. Many schools depend on parents to contribute to the enrichment of the curriculum by being present and supporting activities. Within this model, the school personnel define the goals and programs with the understanding that parents will support the school's objectives.

In the school-to-home transmission model, (Swap, 1993), school personnel appreciate that parents are not always successful in preparing their children to learn in school, as the schools would want. Educators accept this limitation or help parents by offering training to them or to the children or both. Training of parents is a core component in this model. However, when parents do not participate educators often feel that parents lack interest in the process of involvement which is not always the case. Strategies that are recommended to support this model can generate vital connections in communications, support for parents, parents support for school and home learning.

The curriculum enrichment model is to expand and enrich the school curriculum by including the contributions of families. This model assumes that parents have important expertise and that the interactions between school personnel and parents and the implementation of the revised curriculum will enhance the educational objectives of

the school. The rationale supporting this approach is that the school curriculum will more accurately reflect the views, values, history and learning styles of the families that it serves (Swap, 1993). Therefore encouraging continuity of learning between home and school is critical to encouraging children's learning. The inclusion of values and cultural histories will support continuity between home and school and encourage motivational status and achievement and a more accurate curriculum with more comprehensive understanding of events and achievements and a perpetuation of positive beliefs and attitudes about immigrant and oppressed minorities.

Another reason for parents to be involved in curriculum enrichment is to allow schools to draw on special expertise that parents may have to share by virtue of their education. In both cases the important assumption is that the interaction of parents and teachers will enrich curriculum objectives and content and improve relationships between home and school based on mutual respect for their expertise and resources in the process of educational discovery.

Wolfendale (1985) suggests a model that uses a system of taxonomy as a starting framework for generating school-parent-partnership policies. This taxonomy should have two domains: parents into schools and school to home. The parent into school domain would include areas of involvement by parents within the school context with the main types of involvements listed against each area and particular focus of involvement against each type. In this domain the perspective and responsibilities of the school are paramount.

Area	Type	Focus
Concrete and Practical	Basic help with learning fundraising and support: practical skills: social meetings	Classroom and school
Pedagogical and Problem-Solving	Syllabus design and planning, co-tutoring of school and home-based learning (general ed. remedial, special ed.) school based discussion of progress	Curriculum
Policy and Governing	Educational decision-making; parents as governors	School as institution
Communal	Groups for parents and children school to home	Community
Area	Type	Focus
Information	Verbal, written communications, letters, reports, newsletters check and recording systems	Home and parents
Support	Home visiting (enquiry, counseling relations-fostering) imparting information, discussion of child's progress	Home and family
Instructions	Educational home visitor teaching briefs (handicap, special ed.)	Home and family
Representation	Input by schools into community (resource sharing, resource loan local meeting places focal places for cooperative learning)	Home and community

(Wolfendale, 1985, p. 184)

Figure 1. Parent Into Schools

The principle of reciprocity rests with both parents and school in this model allowing for mutual involvement, mutual accountability, mutual gain and should include the processes of the evolution of agreed aims; a statement of the means by which the contributions of parents and professionals can be met, and consensus regarding the criteria for failure or success of the effort (Wolfendale, 1985).

Epstein, Coates, Saunders and Simon (1997) emphasized that the term parent involvement has been classified and recast during the past decade from parent involvement (left up to parents) to school, family, and community partnerships to emphasize the concept of shared responsibility for children across context. She views the main goal of these partnerships as developing and conducting better communications with families across the grades to assist students in succeeding in school.

Epstein, Coates, Saunders and Simon (1997) also identified some important patterns relating to partnerships that have emerged from interviews with teachers, parents, and students at elementary, middle, and high school levels. These patterns are: a decline in involvement across the grades **unless** schools and teachers work to develop and implement appropriate practices of partnership at each grade level. More positive involvement was reported in affluent communities **unless** schools and teachers in economically depressed communities work to develop positive partnership with families. Schools in economically depressed communities contact families more about students' problems **unless** schools work hard at programs to contact parents about positive achievements. Single parents employed outside the home, parents who live far from school and fathers are less involved at the school **unless** the school organized activities or opportunities at various times in various places to improve involvement. These patterns

identified by Epstein are really indications of how vital it is to design deliberate action plans in schools across grades with maximum input from parents and teachers, to arrive at an effective parent involvement program. Based on her research and observations her model.

Epstein (1997) further identified six types of parent involvement, each of which is capable of inducing many different actions and challenges that must be met in order to have maximum family involvement and recast the meaning of parent involvement. These six types of involvement provide schools with a variety of choices about the combination they will adopt to achieve set goals. The six types of parent involvement identified are: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision- making and collaborating with the community.

Parenting. This is supporting the nurturing and rearing children. This type of involvement should help all families to establish a learner friendly environment at home to support children in their roles as students at each grade level. The home environment that will support parenting could include workshops, video tapes, computerized phone messages on parenting and child rearing for each age and grade level, parent education and other courses or training for parents (e.g., literacy classes and skill training), family support programs to assist with health, nutrition and wellness, elder care and home visits especially at the point of transition to high school: community meetings to help family and school understand one another (Epstein, 2001).

This type of involvement will improve students awareness of family supervision, help students to be more respecting of parents, and develop positive personal qualities,

values and attitudes as taught by their parents. It will also help them to balance time for home chores, other activities and homework, improve attendance at school and classes and develop an awareness of the importance of school.

There are benefits to be accrued by parents involved in this type of involvement. They will be more understanding of and confidence about parenting children at the different stages of development and the changes that are necessary in the home environment as students mature and proceed through school. Parents will also be more aware of the challenges of parenting and develop a feeling of support from school community and other parents (Epstein, 2001).

Parenting will also result in teachers being more understanding of the family backgrounds, cultures, concerns, goals, and respect for family strengths and weaknesses, as well as their own abilities to share information on child development with parents. Most educators will agree that this method of involvement will make a difference. However according to Lazar, Broderick, Mastrilli and Slostad (1999), the failure to address parent involvement in both university and professional development contexts sends a message that it is unimportant. They believe that this gap in teacher education has left teachers wanting in knowledge to support and carry out parent involvement initiatives.

Communicating as a type of involvement is to design effective communication from school to home and from home to school about school programs and activities as well as students progress. This includes a variety of practices like one-to-one conferences with parents at least once yearly with follow up as needed, arrangements for language translators to help parents where necessary, sending students work home for parents to

review and make comments, on weekly or monthly, parent–student pick up of reports and conferencing on how to improve grades, regular schedule of notices news letters, telephone calls or other forms of communication to keep school and parents informed clear information about choosing courses and examination board requirements, guidelines for the performance of school based assessment exercises, and clear information about all school policies programs and reforms (Epstein, 2001).

Good communication can result in students being more aware of their own progress and the necessary actions needed to maintain or improve grades, clearer understanding of school policies on behavior, attendance at school and at classes, dress code, rules regarding the initiation of new students, school hours departure and arrival, to make informed decisions about courses and programs, and an awareness of the importance of their own role in the partnership serving as a messenger in the communication process.

Parents can benefit from this type of involvement through a better understanding of the school policies, more effective monitoring of student's progress, responding effectively and appropriately to student's problems, and better interactions and ease of communications with the teacher and school (Procidano & Fisher, 1992) This type of involvement will also result in benefit for the teacher. There will be an increase in the diversity and use of communication skills with families and an awareness of teacher's own ability to communicate clearly and effectively. The teacher will develop an appreciation for, and use of parent network for communications and an increased ability to elicit and understand family views about students and school's programs and progress (Epstein, 2001). In a study done by Pena (2000), language was identified as one of the

barriers to parent involvement. It was found that some parents are unable to communicate in English, and enough effort is not always made by school personnel to bridge this gap. In some cases according to Pena, parents are intimidated by educational jargon, which impedes communication between them and teachers.

Volunteering, as a type of involvement, is the recruiting and organizing of parent help and support. It is probably the most popular type used by schools and the most disliked by parents. Some of the practices associated with volunteering are school and classroom volunteer programs to help teachers, students, administrators and parents. Parent room or family centers, homework centers, meetings, resources for families, annual events to identify talents among parents, and to identify willing volunteers, class telephone and address directory of parents or other structures to help families with needed information, are all ways of recruiting and organizing the help and support of parents. Parent involvement in fund raising events special sports program and other activities to aid the safety and operation of school programs are also good examples of volunteering (Epstein,1997; Morrison,1978).

Students can benefit from a number of positive results of volunteering. They gain skill in communicating with adults, increase learning in areas where volunteer tutoring is done, and become more aware of the many skills, talents, occupations and contributions of parents and other volunteers

Parents can benefit from volunteering. They usually become more understanding of teacher's job, develop more comfort in the school environment and more comfort in the transfer of school activities at home Parents usually develop more self-confidence in working in school and with children or to take steps to improve their own education. Also

they become more aware that they are welcomed at school and may develop specific skills in volunteer work (Berger, 2000).

Volunteering results in teachers being more ready to involve parents in new ways including parents who do not participate at school. Teachers become more aware of parents' talents and interests in school and children and are able to give more individual attention to students with the help from volunteers. Parents are usually willing to participate in volunteering if they have an input into the types of activities planned. Care should be taken not to lock parents into traditional roles of volunteering as some parents really resent this. Both mothers and fathers should be encouraged to volunteer. Bauch, Chavkin, Kerbow, Bernhardt, Moles, and Scot-Jones cited in Pena (2000) found that working class and minority parents, if included in school activities, have tended to be included mostly in the traditional roles of fundraisers and chaperones.

Learning at home is the type of involvement that provides information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related planning, activities and decisions. Information is provided to families on the skills required by students in all subjects at each grade, homework policies and how to monitor and discuss school-work at home, how to assist students to improve skills on various class, school or exam based assessments, regular schedule of homework that requires student-parent interactions, calendar of activities for parents and students to do at home or in the community together such as doing a project in the community or visiting the library together (Scot-Jones,1995). This type of involvement also includes family activities at school such as math, science reading, summer learning activities, and family participation in setting students goals each year and planning for college or work.

Learning at home helps students to gain skills, abilities. Test scores linked to homework and class-work, encourage students to complete homework, and develop positive attitudes towards school work. Students view parents and home as being more similar to teachers and school, and develop a more positive self concept in their ability as a learner (Epstein, 2001; Scot-Jones, 1995). Parents learn how to support, encourage and help students at home. They will be able to discuss schoolwork and home work, develop a better understanding of what children are learning each year, develop appreciation for teaching skills and become more aware of the child as a learner.

Learning at home can result in teachers spending more time to design homework that will provide more information to family members about how to help children at home. Teachers also develop more respect for family time, and recognition of the help that can be derived from all types of families in motivating and reinforcing student learning. Teachers will also be more satisfied with parent's help and support (Scott-Jones 1995; Epstein, 2001) discusses four levels of involvement of parents and students in homework: valuing, monitoring, assisting and doing. Families should be provided with good information in order to convey to their children the importance of homework as an essential task. It is a general agreement that parents should **not** do their children's homework. Therefore applications have been designed, developed and tested to help educators to systematically, equitably and productively involve families at home and in school to improve student learning. Epstein (2001) provides guidelines for how Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS), and acknowledges that this type of involvement requires every teacher to understand the connections between class lesson, student learners, and family as influential partners for children's learning.

Decision-making used as a type of parent involvement includes the involvement of parents as vital participants in important school decisions and governance, and the developing of parent leaders and representatives. Some practices involved in decision making include active parent- teacher associations, advisory councils or committees, inclusion of parents on school boards, forming of independent advocacy groups to lobby and work for school reform and improvements, community councils and committees for family and community involvement, information on schools, and selection of school representatives such as principals or members of the school board, and an effective networking system to link all parents with these representatives (Epstein, 2001; Henderson & Berla, 1995).

Decision making involvement will result in students being more aware of the representation of families in school decisions. There is also a general understanding that students' rights are protected. Students also experience benefits linked to policies enacted by parents' organizations. This type of involvement will also result in more input from parents into policies that affect their children's education. Parents feel a sense of ownership of the school, and awareness that they have a voice in major school decisions. Parents are also afforded the opportunity to share experiences and connections with other families, and are more informed of school, regional and national policies regarding education (Botrie & Wenger, 1992; Berger, 2000).

Decision making involvement can also accrue benefits for the teacher. The teacher will be more aware of the perspectives of parents as a factor in policy development and decision-making and views of equal status of family representatives on committees and leadership roles. Epstein (2001) discusses participation and leadership in

decision making and identifies the task of having parent representatives to reflect the diverse population of students, parents and communities served by schools as one of the main challenges facing this method of involvement. Schools may meet this challenge by creating leadership positions for community representatives to reach out to groups that are traditionally unrepresented, to ensure that all parents have a voice in school decisions, by getting involved. Epstein (2001) also found that getting parents involved in decision making is difficult since most families do not want to serve on committees or in leadership roles. However, most families want parents' voices represented in school decisions. This is therefore an area of great challenge for all educators. Deliberate effort has to be formulated to develop decision-making skills and strategies.

Collaborating with the community is the identification and integration of resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices and student learning and development. This type of involvement includes information for parents and students on community health, culture, recreation, social support; and other programs or services. Information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents such as summer programs for students is beneficial for student development. Service integration through partnerships involving schools, civic organizations, other agencies and businesses, to assist with counseling, cultural, health, recreational and other activities are also examples of resources and services that can strengthen school programs and be of benefit to students. Services offered to the community by students, families, and schools, and participation of alumni in school programs for students are also vital practices in collaborating with the community (Wolfendale, 1983).

Collaborating with the community will result in increased skills and talents for students through enriched curricular and co-curricular experiences. Students also become more informed about careers and options for future education and work benefits when there is a link between school and community program, services and resources.

With school-community collaboration parents will develop knowledge and make use of local resources to increase their skills and talents or to obtain needed services. Parents also get an opportunity to interact with other families in community activities, and develop an awareness of the school's role in the community, and the community's contribution to the school.

School-community collaboration will also result in teachers becoming more aware of community resources to enrich curriculum and instructions. Teachers become more open and develop more skill in using mentors, business partners, community volunteers, and others to assist students and enhance teaching practices. Teachers will also be better able to make knowledgeable helpful referrals of students and families to needed services.

All schools are located in communities. However many schools are isolated from the community businesses, agencies, senior citizens, cultural centers and other facilities that can be of benefit to schools and students. The tendency, especially in the Jamaican context, to call upon these agencies chiefly for financial assistance could weaken the effects of this method. There are many more benefits to be derived from this method. Some schools also benefit from being located in areas where they serve a wide cross section of communities with a variety of opportunities. Schools also have an obligation to serve the communities in which they are located to develop a true partnership.

According to Epstein (2001), schools have choices in their approach to involving families in their children's education. One approach emphasizes conflicts and views the school and school personnel as adversaries trying to prevent their children from getting the best out of school. The conditions and relationship in this type of environment encourages poor relations between the two entities that should be working together in the interest of students. The opposite approach emphasizes partnership between these two entities and views the school as an extension of home. This environment invites sharing and mutual respect and allows for the sharing of energies within both groups to foster activities that will enhance students' progress in all directions. When conflicts arises in this type of environment, the relationships that have developed by working together will allow for quick resolution and the restoration of peace and the continued working together among partners.

Attitudes Towards Parent Involvement

More progress in parent involvement can be achieved if all stakeholders in this venture recognize their attitudes and the attitudes of others in the effort to educate, plan, and implement programs. Strategic action must be planned to encourage positive attitudes and change negative ones (Epstein, 2001; Henderson & Berla, 1994). Since it has been established by all, that parent involvement is vital for students success, and is one of the all marks of the effective school, with benefits for schools, families and communities, the investigator is assuming that attitudes towards parent involvement is one of the reasons why the practice is minimal in many schools. This section will examine the attitudes of those who would be regarded as the main players- parents, teachers, school administrators and community populous.

Parents Attitude

All parents want the best for their children. "There is no evidence that today's parents are less committed or less caring. Parents have not changed, but the loss of community, the increased fragmentation of family life the competing and often conflicting pressures affect their ability to provide the family life that children so desperately need" Boyer (1991) cited in Berger (2000, p.). All parents would like their children to do better in school than they did. "Parents do not consciously or unconsciously neglect their children. When they do things that some of us consider undesirable it is not from a lack of desire to teach properly but often because of their life circumstances and the order of priority they face" (Gordon & Breivogel, 1976, p.76). Parents want to be involved and will be when there is variety in approaches and activities of parent involvement, and when they are treated as equal partners.

Many parents would like to be involved but are not sure how to do so. Parents need to develop and gain experience, and need help in doing so. Some parents stay away from school, not because they do not want to be involved but because they may have had bad experiences with school and are uncomfortable when they attend parent activities at school. Parents also stay away from involvement activities because they feel that they are not welcomed at the school building or by the teacher of their children. In a study –The National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS: 88) conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) published by (Ryan, Adams, Golotta, Weissberg & Hampton, 1995), parents with students in middle grades were asked how often schools contacted them about different types of involvement. About 60% of parents reported that school never contacted them for information about the student or the family, for school

records. Only 5% of parents reported three or more of such contacts. On communications about school programs and student's progress, 65%, of parents said the school never contacted them about their child's academic program, 45% were never contacted about their child's academic performance, and 69% had no contact about student's behavior. Most parents were never asked to volunteer, 60% reported no contact for curriculum options, and 59% were never asked to participate in fundraising (Ryan, Adams, Gullotta, Weissberg & Hampton, 1995). Since parents already feel unwelcome they should be invited to school. Many parents feel incapable of helping their children when they are at the high school level because they may not have benefited from that level of education and feel incompetent in assisting their children. These parents would be willing to help if teachers showed them how. Parents are also busy with other family, financial and personal problems such as finding money to send the children to school. Many parents have to work a double shift to be able to afford the cost of schooling and would help children more if they are taught how to do this at home, instead of incurring the extra cost of visiting school (Swap, 1997, 1983; McConkey, 1985).

Finally many parents are intimidated by the way they are treated when they take time out to visit school. They would rather be spoken to in regular language that they understand and in a kind encouraging way. Parents also do not have long hours to spend at school and would rather have short meetings than long drawn out ones. Parents feel that there is little need to be involved with high school students who are doing well academically and need to be reminded that these students also need their involvement if not for academic for other needs and moral support.

Teachers Attitude

It is now the feeling that teachers and parents have become natural enemies instead of natural allies on the issue of the application of parent involvement. This seems to be confirmed by the evidence seen in the difficulty of parents and teachers working together to achieve more parental involvement in education. In theory the two groups seem to agree on the importance of the venture, however that is also where “seeing eye to eye” ends. A poll taken by the National Education Association found that 90% of teachers across United States thought that more parent-school interaction would be beneficial (Swap, 1993), yet studies after studies reveal that teachers are not always positive about certain types of parent involvement. Some teachers are not enthusiastic about sharing the process of decision making with parents at school. (Swap, 1993; Henderson & Berla, 1995; Pryor, 1995; Feuerstein, 2000; Pena, 2000; and Ramirez, 2001).

Swap (1993, p.46-47) reported the comments made by some teachers, about involving parents in decision making.

“Parents may not recognize my expertise and training. Why should parents have an equal voice in curriculum decisions? I have had many years of training to prepare me for what I do. Why is teachers’ expertise given so little respect? Do patients have an equal voice with physicians in deciding on their medical treatment?”

“Parents will negotiate for the needs of their children, not for the needs of all children. Some parents can be cruel in the way they talk to us and about us when they disagree with what we are doing.”

“Parents contribution to educational decisions may be influenced not by academic arguments but by religion or political beliefs. This school cannot be an arena for evangelizing or politicking.”

“The parents who usually get involved in decision making represent only one sub-group of the school. Why should these activists be given more power than other parents”?

According to Swap (1993), powerful barriers are preventing teachers from reaching out to parents. These barriers include demographics, school norms that do not support partnership, limited resources to support partnership and lack of information on how to establish partnership programs. “Demography has created revolutions changes in the family, that are affecting students achievement. Until there are parent reforms, school reform cannot be realized” (Beacon, 1990, cited in Swap, 1993). Educators who are of this opinion feel that since it is parents who are failing to meet their obligation to children, it is not the school’s responsibility to reach out to parents in new ways. This is commonly observed when parents fail to respond to traditional forms at activities planned by schools and educators assume that parents are uncaring.

Teachers in their effort to involve parents constantly forget or deliberately omit fathers. Parent involvement has become or is expected to be mother involvement and this could be one of the reasons for low parent involvement in education of their children. “The importance of mother-child relationship has been so stressed in recent years that it almost seem fathers need merely to provide material things for their offspring. The work with handicapped children has shown how mistaken this view is. Where fathers show responsibility for upbringing and care there is a much better chance of the child triumphing over his disabilities than if the mother is left to cope by herself” (Mia

Kellmer-Pringle, 1975, cited in McConkley, 1985). This holds true for other children also. Parent involvement rates would be much higher if schools make an effort to involve fathers. Fathers also head many single parent households and non-custodial fathers are many times anxious to participate if they are given the chance. The recent national household education survey published by the National Center for Education Statistics on Fathers' and Mothers' involvement in their children's school by family type and resident status (2001), showed that the level of father involvement is similar to that of mothers in families headed by single parents. Being given the opportunity to be involved is an entitlement for fathers and educators should not deliberately or unintentionally rob them of this opportunity.

Teachers are sometimes overwhelmed, because teaching like parenting is a difficult job, and the demographic changes that are affecting parents are also affecting them. It is difficult for teachers to make themselves available for activities before and after school hours and on weekends when time is not compensated and special arrangements have to be made for childcare and transportation. Teachers cannot fully understand why, after making sacrifices to be available, parents cannot make similar sacrifices to be present. Expectations for higher teacher performance have been increased despite complex teacher environment and declining community support (Swap 1993).

Increase in the diversity of children has outweighed the number of by lingual or multi-lingual teachers, in the profession, making communication with students and parents more difficult. Many schools are known to have students who speak several different languages other than English and the nation is presently experiencing a critical shortage of bilingual teachers. Cultural differences make it difficult for some teachers to

work with some parents According to (Swap, 1993) one female teacher that he spoke to mentioned the emotional turmoil she was experiencing with a male student of Middle Eastern decent whose cultural orientation taught him not to accept the authority of a woman over his behavior or learning.

Communication in a supportive work environment also affects the attitudes of teachers. Some teachers are unaware of what other teachers or school administrators are doing to plan programs of parent involvement. Many teachers communicate with parents only when students are doing poorly or when there are problems with students' behavior. Teachers explain that with large classes to teach and all the other duties they are expected to do at school, it is not humanly possible to call parents on other occasions. Teachers are also concerned that they lack formal or I training on how to involve parents and more should be done by school administrators to prepare them, Lazar, Broderick, Mastrilli and Slostad (1999) in their article "Educating teachers for parent involvement" suggest that teachers be provided with the knowledge, time, resources and recognition necessary to involve parents in education, and suggest that professional development facilitators be mindful of teachers needs in this area, and that they solicit teachers' ideas about the kind of parent involvement workshops they need.

It is clear that teachers and parents appear not to be working well together because each group seems to be unaware of the factors that are impacting on the attitudes of the other. Unless both groups make an effort to understanding the other's situation and agree to meet each other part way schools will continue to "Resemble a football field where teachers and parents play against one another while the ball (the child) is thrown back and forth with both sides fighting for control, and after a play has been called each side

argues with the referee (principal) to step in and recall the play in their favor” (Wallat & Goldman, 1979, p. 32). It is time for meaningful dialogue to occur in striving for the common goal of student achievement.

Attitude of School Administrators

It is the responsibility of the school administrator to take the lead in creating an organizational context that will encourage parent involvement. Bauch and Goldring (2000) discuss teacher work context that influence parent involvement. A supportive school environment, a caring atmosphere, and requiring parent to volunteer, are identified as important aspects of the work context. A supportive school environment has the greatest influence on a school’s provision of information to parents. A school that can maintain administrative support for teachers in a way that allows them to attend to their primary teaching tasks may have fewer difficulties in organizing and maintaining communication with parent (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990, cited in Bauch, 2000).

There are school norms that do not support partnership between administrators and teachers, teachers and teachers, administrators and parents, and teachers and parents. Adult collaboration is rare in schools “The traditional approach for managing schools emphasizes hierarchy, individualism and technology rather than dialogue, relationship, and reciprocity (Swap, 1993, p.17). This tendency of individualism practiced in schools is not supportive of home school relationships. Therefore administrators need to start breaking down this barrier and create a thriving environment for parent involvement. The natural tendency of parents and schools to be in conflict is downplayed by school administrators by making a deliberate attempt to avoid instead of confronting and resolving. As a result of this, “Schools organize public ritualistic occasions that do not

allow for real contact, negotiation, criticism between parents and teachers. Rather they are institutionalized ways of establishing boundaries between insiders (teachers) and interlopers (parents) under the guise of polite conversation and mature cooperation. Parent-Teachers Association meetings and open house rituals at the beginning of the school year are contrived occasions that symbolically affirm and idealize parent-school relationships but rarely provide the chance for authentic interactions” (Lightfoot, 1978, p.27-28; Swap, 1993).

Schools as we know them will not effectively improve the process of parent involvement unless we all begin the process of realistic evaluation and hard collaborative work among all stakeholders in parent involvement. This problem must be attacked “head on” so that programs can be effectively implemented and students our main customer can gain maximum benefits.

Community Benefits

Community settings such as home, church, agencies, youth clubs, health centers, libraries, health centers and civic clubs can be helpful in involving parents. There may be times when parents are uneasy, unwilling or unable to be involved at school but are still interested in the education of their children. There are also times when parents and children can be best served through the collaborative effort of persons and services from several institutions in the community. School personnel, parents and children can benefit from these resources without having them located at the school (Swap, 1993).

When health centers conduct discussions or workshops on issues such as drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, disaster preparedness, students and parents can benefit. Where a school does not have facilities for activities such as competitive sports schools can

benefit from community playing fields. Community centers can be used to accommodate parent –teacher meetings and conferences, family night and homework centers.

Many community agencies and businesses also contribute financial and human resources in the form of knowledge and skills to schools. The school should also give back to the community by offering needed services and teaching parents and students to volunteer their services to help others and build the community.

The end result of parent involvement is for all stakeholders to be involved, contribute and benefit from the partnership that promotes the academic and social growth of children. Schools like to be located in good progressive communities and communities flourish when its citizens succeed.

Aspirations and Expectations of Jamaican Parents

It is the aspiration and expectation of every Jamaican parent, regardless of economic status, to see their children enter and excel academically in high school. This is borne out in the effort parents place on preparing children during the primary years to sit the National Grade Six Achievement Tests which is the qualifying examination for entering high school. Parents begin by searching for what they regard as the “best” primary school to send their children, even if this school is miles away from home, and costs more in transportation and fees. A comparison of the number of students sitting the GSAT in 2001 with the number of high school places (Ministry of Education Digest, 1999-2000) still shows that there are more students to be placed than vacancies existing in high schools.

Parents have been known to conjure up stories about change in family circumstances or change in residence to circumvent the ruling of the Ministry of

Education that students should attend the primary school closest to their homes. Parents again use skillfully crafted means to get their children into the “best” high school when it is time to prepare the application forms that the Ministry of Education will use to determine the placement of children into high schools close to their homes. Many parents are willing to pay extra fees for boarding and transportation to get their children into the schools that they think are academically superior (Ministry of Education Records for transfers, 2001.)

The Jamaica Daily Gleaner (2001, June 28), in an article on the results of the GSAT examination for the academic year 2001-2002 reported that 46,500 students sat the examination and 35, 807 were placed in high schools. The article also highlighted the comments of a proud parent whose son was successful with very high scores. All parents would have liked their children placed in high schools, but because of limited space, this is not possible. Parents anticipate that in the next five years these highly successful students will improve progressively through the grades and complete high school passing enough subjects to gain entry into a university or college, or gain meaningful employment.

In the Jamaican context, there is great concern among school administrators, educators, and parents as to why some students who performed so well in the qualifying examination for high school, experience a decline in academic performance, and why the same level of enthusiasm shown by parents in getting them into high school is not maintained in the levels of parent involvement. In a recent study of parent involvement Turbiville, Gardner, Umbarger, and Guthrie (2000) reported the findings of a study done by the US Department of Education in which it was reconfirmed that parent involvement

plays a role in school achievement. The study further confirmed that students whose parents participated in school were more likely to receive A's on assignments, participate in extracurricular activities, enjoy school and were less likely to repeat a grade or be suspended or expelled. Epstein (2001) suggests that more research is needed on the design and effects of strategies, and activities to help students and their families make the successful transition from middle to high school. Further Epstein suggests that research to determine who should undertake this task, feeder or receiver schools. While this is an issue in the Jamaican context, there are many other factors that contribute to low parent involvement. This study will seek to identify some of these factors.

Summary

This chapter discussed the definition and history of parent involvement, research done on various aspects of the topic over several decades, the benefits of parent involvement to families and school, models of parent involvement, parent involvement in Jamaican high schools, and attitudes of family, teachers, school administrators to parent involvement. Parent involvement has been the focus of much research for decades and has gone through many name changes. Today the focus is on creating a partnership between family, school and community recognizing that partners are equals and that teamwork among partners can accomplish more than individual efforts. Parent involvement has now taken its place among the elements needed for "the effective school" and now receives support from the Federal Government in the United States.

Researchers agree that students, parents educators, schools and community benefit from effective programs of parent involvement, that parents involvement is directly related to student achievement, and that both parents and educators recognize the

need for involvement. Parents are unsure of what their role should be. They have different needs and interests, and are willing to be involved if parents are treated as equal partners. However with the best of intentions parents have a variety of social, emotional, economic and family situations that militate against involvement, and these must be considered in program planning.

Educators and administrators recognize the need for getting parents involved. They now need to take strategic actions to continually educate themselves on the various issues and research findings on the subject and the various models or types of involvement. Educators need to keep open communications with parents in planning programs so as to facilitate parental needs, interest and special situations, take the lead in involvement efforts, use models that are most appropriate to the mission, and vision, of the school, student achievement, and family and community needs.

The concerns regarding parent involvement appear to be the same internationally. More research on the subject is being done in the United States. Parents and teachers wherever they live, have similar aspirations for the children they raise and teach. Students wherever they go to school would like to achieve and need the help of parents and teachers to do so. Parent involvement appears to decline as children progress through the grades in high schools. High school is a critical time for parent involvement because of transitional and physiological changes that puts adolescents at risk when they enter. In Jamaica where high school places are in limited supply, and progress to high school and beyond is linked to success in examinations, every effort should be made to involve parents at all levels in a variety of involvement activities.

Chapter three includes the research methodology, which explains the selection of subjects, instrumentation, procedure, pilot study and data analysis that was done for this research.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used in the present study. A description of the subjects under study and the method used for selecting them is included. In addition, the instrument used for collecting the data will be discussed regarding content and validity. Data collection and the procedure used to analyze the data are also presented. The chapter concludes with the limitations of the chosen methodology.

Selection of Subjects

The subjects for this study were parents with children in high schools in St. Catherine, Jamaica during the 2001-2002 academic years. Two hundred and twenty parents with children in eight high schools in St. Catherine participated in the study. In order to determine the parents who would participate the names of the eight high schools were randomly selected from the total number of high schools in St. Catherine. Survey instruments were placed in envelopes and sent to each of the eight selected schools to be sent by students to parents. The high schools selected were Jonathan Grant, Jose' Marti, Bog Walk, Dinthill, Ewarton, Charlemont, McGrath, and Guys Hill.

Instrumentation

The investigator developed a survey specifically for Jamaican parents using Epstein and Salinas (1993) *School and Family Partnership: Questionnaires for Teachers and Parents* as a guide, and tailored the questions to make them more applicable to the Jamaican High School context. Some items were reworded using terms relevant to the

Jamaican high school system to make them more easily understood by Jamaican the parents.

The instrument consisted of five parts. *Part one* of the instrument included demographic information about the relationship of the person completing the survey, to the child, number of children the parent has attending the school, grade level of the children and age of the parent. Parents were also asked whether or not they have had classes in parenting adolescents, and the highest level of education they obtained.

Part two of the instrument consisted of 20 attitude statements that were assessed using a Likert scale. The responses ranged from “strongly agree” (5) to “strongly disagree” (1) with “undecided” at the midway point. These items were developed to determine how parents feel about the child’s school and being involved in the child’s education.

Part three consisted of 12 items on a three point scale for parents to indicate practices that the school did well, those practices on which the school should do better and those practices that the school never did in the past year. Also in this section parents were asked to identify from a given list, of nine items, all the activities that they would like to see the school improve in.

Part four consisted of 17 items. Eleven of these items were on a four point scale for parents to indicate how they were involved in parent involvement practices at home, at school and in the community. Parents were asked to indicate if they were involved in these practices once, few times, many times or never. Part four also included questions on how well parents thought children were doing at school, how much time children spent doing homework, how often children completed homework, how much help parents gave

with homework and whether or not parents could help on weekends. Parents were also asked to indicate if they could spend more time if teachers showed them how to help children with homework. Parents were also asked to identify from a list of 11 what academic subject areas they would like to know more about in order to help their child. In this section parents were given a list of parenting topics from which to choose the topics they would like to learn more about in workshops. Parents were asked to identify those community services that they would also like to learn more about.

Part five consisted of 3 open-ended questions. In this section parents were asked to indicate their concerns about what is happening with their child at school, what school could do to help them with their child, and what they could do to help the school.

Validity

To improve the degree of validity special measure was taken to clearly indicate directions for responding to each section, so that participants would be clear on how to respond to items. Reading vocabulary and sentence structures were kept simple for parents so that they would fully understand the questions being asked. Every effort was made to avoid ambiguity and confusion. Participants were allowed as much time as was needed to complete the survey. An effort was also made to avoid a systematic method of questioning that would allow participants to respond without giving enough thought to questions.

Data Collection

Four hundred copies of surveys were sent to a contact person in Jamaica who did the distribution to the selected schools. Three hundred and sixty surveys were distributed to the eight selected high schools (45 per school) and 40 were sent to a health facility in

the Township of Linstead where parents with children in these schools receive medical treatment. This was done to increase the response rate and it was felt that since parents had to sit and wait for long hours in this facility before getting medical attention, they would have more time to respond. Care was taken not to duplicate the response of parents. Parents who had already completed an instrument sent home from their child's school were told not to participate again. The surveys were collected from the schools and the health facility on the designated day. A total of two hundred and twenty parents returned surveys to the schools, however parents who visited the health facility during the period said they had already completed surveys sent home from the schools.

Pilot Study

The pilot study of a draft of the instrument was done in August 2001. Ten parents participated in the pilot study. The pilot study provided information on the attitudes of parents towards parent involvement, what the school is doing to get parents involved, what parents are doing to help their children and what additional help parents need. Survey instrument was revised for use in the study based upon results of the pilot study.

Method of Analysis

The University of Wisconsin-Stout Computer User Support Services analyzed the responses of the survey. The demographic section, Part one (demographic information) was calculated for frequency and percent. Part two, Attitudes was calculated for mean and standard deviation. Part three- School Involvement, items one to twelve was computed for mean and standard deviation, and item thirteen for frequency. Part four – Parent Involvement items one to eleven was computed for mean and standard deviation. Subscale of total means was also computed for Part four –parent involvement at home,

items one to six, parent involvement at school, items seven to nine and parent involvement in the community, items ten and eleven. Part four, items 12 a, b, c and d on homework was computed for frequency and percentages. Part four, items thirteen and fourteen were computed for mean and standard deviation and items fifteen, sixteen and seventeen for frequency. Part five (Open-ended questions) 18, 19 and 20 were to determine parent's greatest concern about what is happening with their child at school, what is the best thing that the school could do to help with their child and what they can do to help the school respectively and were computed for frequency and percent.

Limitations

The distance of the participants from the investigator limited this survey. Issuing and collection of surveys had to be delegated to a contact person, teachers and students. Based on past experiences the investigator is aware that the larger the number of persons involved in the process of issuing and collecting the more difficult the task and unlikely the returns. The investigator would have preferred that the instruments be delivered directly to parents at a parent teachers meeting but because of the distance and delay in the postal service due to the September eleventh incident in United States, the package arrived in Jamaica after these PTA meetings were held. Threat of hurricanes and flooding due to these hurricanes also affected the distribution and collection of the survey. All things considered the investigator was happy that two hundred and twenty of the surveys were returned.

Chapter four describes the results of the survey followed by a discussion of the findings. Summary, conclusion and recommendations are also presented in chapter five.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings and Discussions

In this chapter, results of the survey given to parents with children in eight high schools in St. Catherine will be reviewed. The survey consisted of four parts: demographic information, attitudes of parents towards involvement in the education of their children what schools have been doing to involved parents and what improvement parents would like to see at the school, and how are parents involved with their child at home at school and in the community, academic subject areas and parent involvement topics, and homework behavior of parent and child. Survey also included three open-ended questions on: parent concerns, the best thing the school could do to help parents and what parents can do to help the school.

In this section demographic data, results of the survey and significant findings will be reported. A discussion will follow. Two hundred and twenty parents participated in the study.

Results

Table 1

Participating high schools and survey returns

High schools	Frequency	Valid %
Bog Walk High	38	17.3
Charlemont High	32	14.5
Dinthill	13	5.9
Ewarton High	36	16.4
Guys Hill High	32	14.5
Jonathan Grant	26	11.8
Jose Marti	19	8.6
McGrath High	24	10.9

Surveys were sent to eight high schools in St. Catherine to be delivered by students to their parents. Of the eight schools that participated in the survey Bog Walk and Ewarton High had the highest returns of 38 and 36 respectively. Charlemont and Guys Hill High each returned 32. Jonathan Grant High returned 26, Mc Grath 24, and Jose Marti' 19. Dinthill returned of 13 surveys.

Demographic Characteristics

The purpose of the items in Part one was to obtain demographic information on parent. Parents were asked to indicate, "Who is answering"? Number of children the parent had at the school Parent were also asked to indicate the grade level of their child(ren). The age range of the parent, whether or not they have had classes in parenting adolescents and parent's highest level of education was also sought.

Table 2

Respondents

Items	Frequency	Valid %
Mother	159	72.6
Father	29	13.2
Stepmother	2	.9
Stepfather	2	.9
Grandparents	6	2.7
Guardian	13	5.9
Other relative	7	3.2
Other	1	.5

The person who had the most contact with the school about their child was asked to answer the questions (see Table 1). Mothers were the largest group of respondents (159) followed by fathers (29). Thirteen respondents (13) were guardians and one respondent was neither a family member nor a guardian.

Table 3

Number of children

Item	Frequency
One child	177
Two children	38
Three children	4
Four children	1

Participants were asked to comment of the number of children they had attending the school. The largest number of respondents, 177 had one child. Thirty- eight (38) respondents had two children attending. Only one respondent (1) had four children.

Table 4

Grade level of child(ren)

Items	Frequency	
	Yes	No
Grade 7	15	204
Grade 8	31	188
Grade 9	8	211
Grade 10	114	105
Grade 11	87	132
Sixth Form	1	218

Parents were asked to indicate the grade level of their child. Table 4 shows that the largest number of respondents, 114, had children in Grade 10. Eighty-seven (87) respondents had children in Grade 11. One respondent had a child in sixth form.

Table 5

Age category of respondents

Items	Frequency	Valid %
20 – 30 years	10	4.5
31 – 40 years	107	48.6
41 – 50 years	79	35.9
51 and over	23	10.5

Parents were asked to identify the age category that represented their age. The largest group of respondents, 48.6% was in the 31-40 years age range. See Table 5. Seventy-nine(79) respondents or 35.9% were in the 41-50-age range, twenty-three (23) or 10.5% were 51 and over. Ten respondents were in the 20-30-age range. Most respondents were mature individuals.

Table 6

Classes in parenting

Classes on Parenting	Frequency	Valid %
Yes	39	18.2
No	175	81.8

Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they had attended parenting classes on how to understand and care for children. Table six shows that one hundred and seventy five (175) respondents had never had classes in parenting. Thirty-nine (39) respondents have had classes in parenting.

Table 7

Education level of parents

Items	Frequency	Valid %
All Age School	89	41.4
High School Graduate	73	34.0
Some College Training	9	4.2
Vocational School Graduate	20	9.3
College Graduate	15	7
University Degree	9	4.2

Participants were asked to indicate their highest level of education. The largest group of 89 respondents (41.4%) had All Age school education. Seventy-three (73) respondents (34.0%) were high school graduates. The remaining 53 respondents (24.7%) had post high school education.

Table 8

Attitude statements

Items Attitudes	Mean	S.D	RO
This school views parents as important partners in children's education.	4.26	.81	1
Parents should take classes in parent education.	4.15	.97	2
My child likes attending this high school.	4.14	1.04	3
I feel welcome at the high school my child attends.	4.13	.79	4
I talk with teachers when I am concerned about my child's achievement.	4.13	.90	4
High school teachers should give more homework.	4.11	1.00	6
The high school my child attends is very good.	4.06	.81	7
High school teachers show interest in my child.	4.05	.84	8
This high school has an active P.T.A.	4.01	.93	9
Principals and teachers are always available to discuss my child's progress with me.	3.95	1.13	10
This high school is one of the best for parents and students.	3.56	1.03	11
I could help my child with schoolwork if the teachers gave me more guidance.	3.56	1.11	11
Most parents do not get a chance to talk to all the high school teachers who teach their children.	3.47	1.35	13
This high school is good at trying new programs to get parents involved.	3.40	1.11	14
I know many parents who help out at this high school	3.37	1.00	15
The community supports fund-raising activities at this high school	3.31	1.08	16
This high school does not offer much variety in activities for parents.	3.30	1.20	17
The school does not get much help from community members.	3.19	1.19	18
Parents are more involved at school when children are in lower grades	3.19	1.17	19
My child is not learning much at this high school.	1.96	1.09	20

Parents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with 20 attitude statements Table 8 shows the mean, standard deviation and rank order on attitude items. Nine items had mean scores ranging from 4.26 – 4.01: "This school views parents as important partners in children's education", "Parents should take classes in parent education", "My child likes attending this high school", "I feel welcome at the high school my child attend", "I talk with teachers when I am concerned about my child's achievement", "High school teachers should give more homework", "The high school my child attends is very good", "High school teachers show interest in my child" and "This high school has an active P.T.A."

Thus parents agreed or strongly agree with nine items at the 4.26 – 4.01 range. Ten items had mean scores ranging from 3.95 – 3.19 including "Principals and teachers are always available to discuss my child's progress with me", "This high school is one of the best for parents and students", "I could help my child with schoolwork if the teacher gave me more guidance", "Most parents do not get a chance to talk to all the high school teachers who teach their children", "This high school is good at trying new programs to get parents involved", "I know many parents who help out at this high school", "The community supports fund-raising activities at this high school", "This high school does not offer much variety in school activities for parents", "This school does not get much help from community members", "Parents are more involved at school when children are in the lower grades". Parents are somewhat undecided about these items. Parents disagreed with the item "My child is not learning much at this high school"

Table 9

How schools involved parents

This past year the school has:	School never did	School should do better	School did well	X	S.D
Told me how my child is doing	5.0 %	13%	81.1%	2.76	.53
Helped me understand my child's development.	8.6%	25.8%	65.7%	2.57	.65
Sent me letters about school activities	15.8%	13.4%	70.8%	2.55	.75
Explained how grades are earned.	30.4%	23.6%	46.1%	2.16	.86
Told me what skills my child needs to learn.	36%	17.3%	46.7%	2.11	.91
Had meeting with me about my child	41.4%	16.2%	42.4%	2.01	.91
Contacted me when my child is having problems	44%	11.2%	44.4%	2.00	.94
Asked me to help at school	50.8%	14.2%	35%	1.84	.92
Showed me how to check my child's homework.	50%	17.5%	32.5%	1.82	.89
Included parents on budget or curriculum committee	50.3%	22.9%	26.9%	1.77	.85
Informed me about community agencies that help children and families.	55%	19.8%	25%	1.70	.85
Contacted me when my child is doing well	57.1%	18.9%	24%	1.67	.84

Respondents were asked to tell how well the school involved them in activities in the past year. Table 9 shows the percentages of respondents who indicated whether schools never did, could do better or did well on certain activities. The table also shows

the mean and standard deviation for each item. Parents were asked about the past year because they were doing the survey at the beginning of a new academic year. The school “told me how my child is doing”, “sent me letters about school activities” and “helped me understand my child’s development” scored 81.1%, 70.8% and 65.7% respectively.

Therefore schools were strong in these practices. The school “told me what skills my child needs to learn”, “explained how grades are earned”, “contacted me when my child is having problems”, “had a meeting with me about my child”, had between 46.7-42.4 % of respondents indicating that schools involved them in those activities. This indicates that schools are involving parents in these activities but need to do much more.

The school “asked me to help”, “showed me how to check homework”, “included parents on budget and curriculum committees”, “informed me about community agencies that help children and families”, and “explained how to check my child’s homework” all had over 50% of respondents indicating that the school did not involve them in these activities. Over fifty-seven (57.1%) percent of respondents said the school did not contact them when their child was doing well. This indicates that schools need to improve communication with parents about their children’s performance whether the performance is negative or positive.

Table 10

Improvement parents would like to see at school

Improvements	Frequency	
	Yes	No
Attendance at P.T.A.	147	70
Parent volunteering	128	89
Parent communication with teachers about children's problems.	158	59
The amount of time between notices and parent involvement activities.	85	132
The guidance given to parents by teachers on how to help children with homework.	124	93
School facilities where parents can obtain help or volunteer.	106	111
The amount of time made available to parents to talk to teachers or principal about their child.	116	101
The school's efforts to contact me when my child is doing well or needs extra help.	143	74
The way schools involve parents in important decisions like budgeting or curriculum.	104	113

Respondents were asked to indicate what improvement they would like to see at the school. The top three areas where parents would like to see improvement were "parent communication with teachers about children's problems" (158 parents), "attendance at P.T.A. (147 parents), and "the school's effort to contact me when my child is doing well or needs extra help"(143 parents) Parents would also like to see improvement in "parent volunteering", "guidance given to parents by teachers on how to

help children with homework”, and “school facilities where parents can obtain help or volunteer. The least popular response to the improvement parents would like to see at school was “the amount of time between notices and parent involvement activities”. One hundred and thirty two (132) parents said no to improvement in this area. This seems to indicate that schools communicate well with parents in some ways such as in inviting them to school activities but need to improve in other ways such as communicating with parents about student’s progress and how to help students with homework.

Table 11

Parent involvement at home

Items	Mean	S.D.
Talked to my high schoolchild about school	3.70	.71
Helped my child with homework	3.01	1.02
Helped my child in planning and managing time	3.18	1.06
Check to see if my child had done homework	3.39	.93
Talked with my child about the importance of school	3.83	.55
Talked to my child about the future, career and work	3.76	.59

Parents were asked to identify activities that they did with their children at home. “Talked with my child about how important school is”, “talked to my child about the future, career and work” and “Talked to my child about school” were the top three activities with the mean scores ranging from 3.83 – 3.70 that parents were involved in at

home with their children. “Helping my child with homework” ranked the lowest, 3.01, among the activities parents were involved in at home with their children. See Table 11.

Table 12

Parent involvement at school

Items	Mean	S.D.
Talked to my child's Form Teacher in person or by telephone.	2.47	1.07
Attended PTA meeting	3.00	.94
Attended special events at my child's school	2.40	1.09

Table 12 shows that the top item that parents were involved in at school was attending P.T.A meetings. Talking to their child's teacher in person or on the telephone and attending special events at the child's school were done less often.

Table 13

Parent involvement in the community

Items	Mean	S.D.
Accompanied my child to the library	1.43	.87
Attended a community event with my child	2.40	1.14

Table 13 shows that parents are not very involved with their children in the community. Both items in this category had means ranging from 2.40 – 1.43. Parents accompanying children to the library especially on weekends in Jamaica is a valuable

involvement activity since most well equipped libraries miles away from some homes and may require special transportation arrangements.

Table 14

About homework: Child time spent on homework on school days

Item	Frequency	Valid %
None	10	4.7
30 minutes	38	17.7
1-2 hours	130	60.5
3-4 hours	37	17.2

Parents were asked about the amount of time their child spent doing homework on school days. Of the 215 parents who responded to this question (Table 14), 130 parents (60.5%) said their child spent 1–2 hours doing homework. Ten parents (4.7%) said their child spent no time doing homework on school days.

Table 15

Parents time spent on homework

Time Spent	Frequency	Valid %
None	40	18.8
Less than 1 hour	97	45.5
1-2 hours	65	30.5
3-4 hours	11	5.2

Parents were asked how much time they spend helping their child with homework. Of the 213 respondents, 97 spent less than an hour (45.5%) and 65 spent 1-2 hours (30.5%). Forty parents (18.8%) spent no time helping their child with homework.

Table 16

Time parents could spend if teacher showed them how to help

Time	Frequency	Valid %
30 minutes	5	3.8
45 minutes	4	3.0
1 hour	15	11.3
75 minutes	6	4.5
90 minutes	50	37.6
2 hours	19	8.6
180 minutes	5	3.8
210 minutes	20	15.0

Parents were asked to indicate the amount of time they could spend helping their child with homework if the teacher showed them how to help. The top 50 parents, (37.6%) said they could help for ninety minutes. Fifteen parents (15) could help for 1 hour, 19 for 2 hours and 20 for 3-4 hours. Thus more parents are willing to spend time helping their child if they are shown how to do so.

Table 17

Parents who can help on weekends

Items	Frequency	Valid %
Yes	150	69.1
No	61	28.1
Sometimes	6	2.8

Parents were asked if they had time to help with homework on weekends. The top number of 150 parents (69.1%) said they could help on weekends while 61 parents (28.1%) said they could not help. The group of parents who are unable to help is larger than the group that spent no time at all in Table 15. Some of these parents may be working on weekends or are incapable of helping.

Table 18

Child's performance at high school

Item	Mean	S.D.
Top student	20	9.3
Good	89	41.4
Average	64	29.8
Fair	33	15.3
Poor	9	4.2

Parents were asked to indicate how their child was doing at school. Twenty percent (20%) of parents said they had top students. One hundred and fifty-three parents said their children were average or good. Forty-two parents said children were doing fairly or poor (19.5%). See Table 18.

Table 19

How often child completes homework?

Item	Frequency	Valid %
Always	106	48.6
Most of the time	81	37.2
Sometimes	24	11.0
Rarely	7	3.2

Parents were asked how often their high school child completes homework. One hundred and six (106) parents indicated that children always did homework. Eighty one (81) parents indicated that their child did homework most of the time, while 31 parents said their child did homework sometimes or rarely.

Table 20

Subjects parents would like to learn more about

Subjects	Frequency		Valid %	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Agriculture	33	186	15.1	84.9
Business Subjects	54	165	24.7	75.3
Computer Science	116	103	53.0	47.0
English Language	105	114	47.9	52.1
Home Economics	94	125	42.9	57.1
Industrial Education	29	190	13.2	86.8
Math	165	54	75.3	24.7
Resource & Technology	48	171	21.9	78.1
Science Subjects	88	131	40.2	59.8
Social Studies	62	157	28.3	77.1
Study Skills	38	181	17.4	82.6

Parents were asked to indicate what subjects they would like to learn more about so that they can help their child. The top three subjects that parents wanted help with were computer science, English Language and math, 116,105 and165 parents respectively. Some parents to a lesser degree needed help with social studies and science. Fewer parents requested help in the technical vocational subjects such as agriculture, business subjects, home economics, industrial education and resource and technology.

Students usually enjoy these subjects, have less complaints and examination results are usually high. On the other hand English Language and Mathematics are compulsory for further training or employment and examination results in these subjects are usually lower. Parents are echoing the concerns of their children.

Table 21

Parents workshop interest

Topics	Frequency	
	Yes	No
How adolescents develop	48	171
How teens behave	99	120
How to discipline teens	92	127
How to help students choose careers	115	104
Raising children as single parents	71	148
Helping children to study and take tests	136	83
Understanding high school	71	148

Table 18 shows that the top two topics that parents would like to learn about were “helping children to study and take tests”, (136 parents) and “How to help students choose careers”, (115 parents). Parents also showed interest in “How teens behave” (99 parents) and “How to discipline teens”(92 parents). How adolescents develop was the least popular topic among parents. However parents had already indicated that the school was helping them to understand their child’s development.

Parents also indicated their interest in other topics such as sex education, counseling children, and drug abuse.

Table 22

Community services parent would like to know more about

Community Services	Frequency	
	YES	NO
Health care for teens and families	87	132
Family Counseling	114	105
Job training for parents and teens	103	116
Community service teens can do	85	124
Parenting classes	78	141
After school tutoring	64	155
After school clubs and skills training	95	124

Parents were asked to indicate what community services they would like to know more about so that they can help their children. Table 19 shows that parents were most interested in family counseling (114 Parents) and job training for parents and teens (103 parents). There was also interest in after school clubs and skills training and health care for teens and families. Although parents expressed concerns about academic progress of students and Table 18 indicate that there is a need, many parents did not indicate interest in after school tutoring. After school hours is not the concern since parents showed interest in after school clubs and skills training. The investigator may have used a term that was not readily understood by all parents, or parent may have made a choice between the two after school activities suggested.

Open-Ended Questions

The open-ended questions asked parents to explain their greatest concerns about what is happening with their child at school, the best thing that the school could do to help them with their child and one thing that they could do to help the school.

Table 23

Parent greatest concern about what is happening at school

Concerns	Frequency	Valid %
Students academic performance, progress, success	40	27.2
Curriculum variety, availability and quality of instructions.	16	11
School/child security, safety and protection	14	9.5
Student discipline	14	9.5
Students' attitude and interest towards schoolwork	13	8.8
Peer pressure	9	6.1
Equal treatment and individual attention for slow students	7	4.8
School conflicts (student / student, student / teacher)	7	4.8
Economic difficulties (fees, books, traveling, meals.)	6	4.1
Student counseling needs (career, drugs, sexual behavior)	6	4.1
Late school hours	4	2.7
Assigning and correcting of homework	4	2.7
No concerns- children are doing well	4	2.7
How to help child improve grades	3	2

Question eighteen provided parents with an opportunity for them to express ideas about topics in parenting skills and child development that were of concern to them. One hundred and forty seven parents responded to this question and 27.2% (see Table 23) of them were concerned about student academic performance, progress and success. Eleven percent (11%) of parents were concerned about variety in the curriculum, availability and quality of instructions. Fourteen parents expressed concerned about the safety of the school and their children. Student discipline, attitude towards schoolwork and peer pressure were the concerns of 36 parents. Thirteen parents were concerned about school conflicts and the need for more counseling programs. This indicates that parents were aware that low performance is not always as a result of the quality of curriculum instructions. A small percentage (2.7) of parents are quite satisfied with what is happening at school and have no concerns. This indicates that the majority of parents were concerned about the education of their children.

Table 24

Things parents want school to do to help them with their child

Responses	Frequency	Valid %
Improve student performance by assigning and checking homework, offering extra classes, tutoring and improve teacher attendance	34	24
Provide financial assistance by reducing or keeping school fees constant, helping with overseas examination fees, traveling and medical expenses and meals.	19	13.4
Expand curriculum to include more subjects, computer studies for all students, sixth form and community college for students who cannot find jobs or want to study further.	14	10
Provide more counseling and motivational talks: to students on how to behave and improve self-esteem and how to communicate with parents, and for parents on how to council children.	13	9.2
Provide more school and community based activities in parenting and skill development for parents.	11	7.7
Improve quantity of teachers and quality of instructions in compulsory subject areas	8	5.6
Build additional classrooms, and laboratories upgrade teaching facilities and pay teachers more salary.	8	5.6
Improve relationship and communication between teachers and parents by contacting parents about children's progress and behavior.	7	4.9
Provide scholarships, part-time and summer employment, and job placement for students	6	4.2
Provide career education and allow students to choose the vocational area and subjects that they want to do.	6	4.2
Enter students into competitions in national debates, school challenge quiz, speech and drama festivals and sports to improve school's image.	5	3.5
Continue to do well	5	3.5
Increase book supply for rental and recommend only books that students will use.	3	2.1
Adjust shift hours so students can get home early	3	2.1

Question nineteen supplied additional information on practices that parent think schools should add to guide their involvement. These comments were intended to provide examples and perspectives useful in interpreting data collected on other questions on the survey. One hundred and forty two parents responded to this question.

As reflected in Table 24, it is clear that parents (34 respondents) were interested in the academic progress of their children and wanted the school to focus heavily on this area. Nineteen parents needed financial help of some form from the school. Furthermore, one parent expressed concern that her child was doing well academically and would do well in the overseas examination, but she would need financial help in paying the examination fees. Twenty-seven respondents wanted expansion in the curriculum and guidance and counseling programs. The need for curriculum to be expanded to include sixth form or community college, for schools to guide students in career choices yet allowing them to make their final decisions, assist in summer jobs and job placement after graduation were ways that parents felt that the school could continue to contribute to students success. Eleven respondents wanted the school to provide more school-community based activities in parenting and skill development.

Parents recognized that for students to do well teachers must be available, and instructions and learning environment need to be of good quality. Sixteen respondents wanted the school to do more in these areas. Seven respondents wanted the school to improve the relationship between parents and teachers. Twelve respondents wanted the school to provide career education for students and allow students to make their own decisions about the programs and subjects they would like to take.

Five respondents would like the school to involve students in co-curricular activities that would extend their learning and improve the image of the school. Five felt the schools were doing just fine, three were concerned about the availability and cost of books. Three respondents were concerned about school hours and safety of children on the late shift.

Table 25

How parents can help the school

How Parents Can Help	Frequency	Valid %
Show more interest and become actively involved in Parents Teachers Association	55	36.6
Volunteer time, skills and services to improve school premises, buildings, security, help teachers and help with school projects.	21	14.6
Be available to help in whatever way school needs help	17	11.3
Form active parent group to develop school-parent community link, encourage other parents to get involve to improve students discipline, encourage and help teachers, support curriculum activities by helping slow readers and get rid of complacent teachers.	14	9.3
Help with fund raising.	13	8.6
Make monetary contribution to building fund and school bus.	10	6.6
Make material contribution to building projects.	7	4.6
Can do nothing because I have no money.	7	4.6
Visit school more often.	2	1.3
Encourage present students to get more involved in school activities and encourage students when they graduate to join past students association.	2	1.3
Pay school fees promptly.	2	1.3

One hundred and fifty parents responded to question 20. "What is one thing you could do to help this high school" Responses to this question should contribute to the understanding of any of the other questions asked previously based on the content of the comments given. Responses were grouped for easy reporting. The largest group of respondents: 55 parents, see Table 25, overwhelmingly said they could help the school by being more actively involved in parent teachers association meetings and activities. In some cases respondents were apologetic that they were not as involved as they knew they should. Twenty one respondents were willing to help the school by volunteering time and skills to improve the school premises, buildings, assist with projects and assist teachers. Seventeen respondents said they could help in whatever way the school needed help. This indicated that some parents are not exactly sure how they can help the school or what help the school needs. This supports earlier discussion that parents want to be involved but would like the school to take the lead in involvement activities and tell them how they should.

Fourteen respondents were willing to form active parent group to help school in forming school- family- community link, encourage other parents to participate, improve discipline and help teachers. Thirteen were willing to help with fund raising, seventeen with cash or material contribution to help schools with transportation and building projects,

Seven respondents said they could not help because they had no money. It would appear that some parents are under the impression that only monetary help is needed or can be given. These parents need to be helped to understand the many other ways they can work with, and help schools. Two respondents said they could help by visiting school

more often, two would encourage present and past students to be more involved in school activities and two would pay fees more promptly

Although parents were very outright in what they wanted the school to do to improve students performance many of them did not indicate that they were aware that schools finance some programs and projects chiefly from the school fees that are paid, therefore they have an obligation to pay these fees or apply for government assistance in paying them promptly. Schools therefore need to communicate with parents and get them involved and informed about budgetary matters and decision making so that they know how programs are financed.

Table 26

Significant differences in attitudes, parent involvement, homework assistance and education level of parents

Items	AAX	HSX	PSX	df	F	Sig.
Attitudes						
High school teachers show interest in my child.	4.20	3.86	4.04	2,201	3.282	.05
High school does not offer much variety in school activities for parents.	3.15	3.16	3.72	2,190	3.928	.05
Parents should take classes in parent education.	4.38	3.90	4.14	2,197	4.784	.01
Parent Involvement						
Talked with my child about how important school is.	4.00	3.85	3.73	2,198	4.066	.05
How much time does parent spend helping child with homework?	2.13	2.17	2.53	2,205	4.466	.05
How is your child doing at school?	2.47	2.70	2.87	2,208	3.221	.05

Data was further computed to determine if there were significant differences between parent education level, parent attitude, parent involvement and parent assistance with homework. Parents were grouped into three education levels, All Age education (AA), High School education (HS), and Post Secondary education (PS). A One Way ANOVA with a Student Newman-Keuls Multiple Range Test was computed on items 1-

20 (Part 11, Attitudes), items 1-11, (Part IV, Parent involvement) and items 12a, 12b, 13 and 14 (Par IV, Homework), using parent level of education as the independent variable.

Table 26 shows that there were three significant differences in attitudes based on parental education level. With regard to the following attitude statement, "High school teachers show interest in my child" a significant difference was found ($F=3.282$). This statement was significant at the .05 level. Using the Newman-Keuls comparison test it was found that parents who felt that high school teachers showed interest in their child were more likely to have All Age school education ($X=4.200$) than parents with High School education ($X=3.86$). Therefore parents with All Age School education are significantly different from parents with High School education.

On the item "High school does not offer much variety in activities for parents." A significant difference was found ($F=3.928$). This was significant at the .05 level. Using the Student Newman-Keuls comparison test, it was found that parents who felt that the school did not offer much variety in activities for parents were more likely to have had Post Secondary education ($X=3.72$) than High School education ($X=3.16$ or parents with All Age School education ($X=3.15$). On the attitude item, "Parents should take classes in parent education" a significant difference was found ($F=4.784$) significant at the .01 level. Using the Student Newman-Keuls comparison test it was found that participants who felt that parents should take classes in parent education were more likely to have had All Age School education ($X=4.38$) than Post Secondary education ($X=4.14$).

Table 26 also shows that there were significant differences on parent involvement. On the parent involvement statement, "Talked to my child about how important school is," ($F=4.066$) was significant at the .05 level. Using the Student Newman-Keuls

comparison test it was found that parents with Post Secondary education were more likely to talk to their child about the importance of school ($X=4.00$) than parents with High School education ($X=3.85$) or those parents with All Age School education ($X=3.73$).

Table 26 also shows that there were significant differences in “How much time parents spent helping their child”, with regards to homework ($F=4.466$). This was significant at the .05 level. Using the Student Newman-Keuls comparison test it was found that parents with Post Secondary education seemed to have spent more time helping their child with homework ($X=2.53$) than parents with High School education ($X=2.17$) or parents with All Age School education ($X=2.13$).

On the question regarding their child’s progress, a difference was found “How is your child doing in school” ($F=3.221$) significant at the .05 level. Using the Newman-Keuls comparison test, it was found that the children with parents who had Post Secondary education were doing better ($X=2.87$) than children whose parents had High School education ($X=2.70$) or All Age School education ($X=2.47$).

As demonstrated in Table 26 significant differences were found among parents with different educational levels on parent attitudes, parent involvement, amount of help parents gave with homework, and how well children were doing in school.

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to determine the attitude of Jamaican parent towards parent involvement in the education of their high school children. To determine the types of involvement activities that schools provide and the improvement in involvement that parents would like to see at school. To determine parent’s levels of involvement at

school, home, community, helping with homework, and what help parents would need so they can help their children more. The survey was done with parents who have children in eight high schools in St. Catherine Jamaica during the Fall of 2001.

There was a 55% return on this survey. Mothers represented the largest group of 72.6%. The number of parents with one child at school represented 80.5%. The largest group of parents 52.1% had children in Grade 10 followed by 39.7 in Grade 11. The grade levels least represented were Grade 7 with 15 parents (6.8%) and 6th Form represented by 1 parent. The largest group, the 31-40 age category, was represented by 48.9% parents. Parents who had not had a class in parenting represented 81.8%. Parents with All Age School Education was 41.4%, High school 34% and 24.7% for all other categories of post high school education.

Several researchers agree that parent involvement in the education of their children is more effective if there is a partnership between parents, school and community Epstein, 2001; Epstein & Salinas, 1993; Swap, 1987). The partnership is most effective when parents are treated as equal partners, when schools recognize that parents want to be involved, and that parents have different interest and needs. Parents expect teachers to take the lead in planning effective involvement activities that can contribute to the educational and social growth of students. All stakeholders in education, parents, teachers, school administrators and students can benefit from the parent, school community partnership.

Parent attitude in relation to involvement in their child's education was reflected in the attitude statements in Part two of the survey. Parents agreed or strongly agree ranging from a mean of 4.01-4.26 that "The school their child attends is good", "Teachers

show interest in their child,” “They feel welcome at the school”, “The school has active P.T.A”, “Teachers should give more homework”, “Their Child likes attending school”, “Parents should take classes in parent education”, “School views parents as partners in child’s education” and that. “Parents talk with teachers about child’s achievement”.

These scores tend to indicate that parents have a positive attitude towards these items.

Ten other attitude items ranged from a mean of 1.96-3.95. which indicates that parents are somewhat undecided about the items related to volunteering at school, how much their child is learning at the school, the schools effort to try new involvement programs, how good the school is for parents and children, how much parents are able to talk to the teachers who teach their children, the levels at which parents are most involved, the amount of time principals and teachers are available for discussions about children and how much the child is learning at school.

Parents’ opinions about how the schools involved them, indicate that the schools have been doing well at engaging them in activities related to parenting and communicating. However the schools need to do better or start involving parents in learning at home, volunteering, decision-making and collaborating with the community. Over 50% of parents in all instances felt that the school did not ask them to volunteer at school, did not explain how they should check homework, did not include them in vital decisions for school improvement and did not provide information on community services. Fifty-seven (57%) percent of parents said the school did not contact them if their child did something well or improved at school. This seems to indicate that although the schools did well on communicating with parents, schools need to broaden the areas of communication in terms of student performance. Over 40% of parents indicated that

schools did, or did not, contact them if their child was having problems, or have individual parent- teacher conference with them. Schools therefore need to improve in these areas.

More than 50% of parents who participated indicate that they would like to see improvement in the areas of attendance at P.T.A meetings, parent volunteering, parent communication with teachers. Parents also indicated that they would like improvement in the amount of guidance given to parents by teachers, time available for parents to talk to teachers and principals, and the school's effort to contact parents when their child is doing well or need extra help.

In terms of parent involvement, parents were more involved at home than at school or in the community. Parents were also more involved by talking to their children about the importance of school and child's future, career and work. Parents were less involved at school and in the community. This could be as a result of schools not planning activities that interest parents or that are community related. Schools may not be communicating enough with parents about these activities. The personal, family and or work situations of parents may have affected their ability to be involved.

Regarding parent involvement with homework, 40 parents offered no help at all, 97 offered less than an hour and 65 offered 1-2 hours. The amount of time that parents could help if teachers showed them how to, did not increase, which seems to indicate that while parents can encourage their children to do well in school they may not be academically able to help them with schoolwork.

Parents indicated that they would like to learn more about computer science, English Language and mathematics in order to help their child. Fewer parents wanted to

learn more about the Technical Vocational subjects in order to help their child. This could be because students do not always need the technical subjects for entry into university which is priority for parents.

When students fail to be successful in the academics, parental interest in the technical, vocational subjects tends to increase. Parents now realize that students need skills to gain employment or to enter colleges offering technical programs. These colleges also require students to be successful in the English Language examination in order to qualify for entry. Students are also more successful in examinations in the technical subjects. Therefore, parents may be requesting help in areas where students seem to need the help most. Parents also need workshops on how to discipline teens, how to help teens choose careers and how to help children study and take tests.

Parents are concerned about their children's academic progress. Students who cannot take tests well may not be successful in their examinations. Many parents are disturbed when students are unsuccessful in their examinations and tend to feel that students made the wrong career choices. Parents also mentioned their concerns about career choices in the open –ended questions that were asked. Parents felt that teachers should allow students to choose the subjects they want to do. While this is good, school administrators and teachers help in placing students into career groups based on students' performance in the earlier grades, the number of students a particular career area can accommodate, requirements for further training and the availability of jobs in the career areas.

Schools need to involve parents in the process of career choice so that parents become aware of the problems and concerns. In recent years in Jamaica, there is a

tendency for most students and their parents to select careers in the business education field . However this sector is not doing well at this time. Many businesses are closing and students are less successful in subjects like accounts, typing and word processing that are in great demand. As a result of this situation, many students are out of school and are unqualified to enter college or find jobs.

Parents indicated a greater need for community services such as family counseling, and job and skill training. Since 41.4% of the parents who participated in the survey had All Age school Education, it would appear that these parents are in need of skill training that would help them to finance their children's education. Schools need to be aware of the communities in which they operate and help to empower parents through training. In a true partnership schools can help to train parents and parents can give back to the schools in ways that will make the school more effective in catering to the needs of students

The study also indicated that there were significant differences in parent levels of education, parent attitudes to involvement and the school their child attends, parent involvement and assistance with homework. The attitude statements "high school teachers show interest in my child," "High school does not offer much variety in activities for parents" were significant at the .05 level. Parents with All Age school education were more likely to feel that school showed interest than were parents with way High school or Post Secondary education. Parents with Post Secondary education were more likely to feel that the school did not offer much variety in activities for parents than were parents with high school education or All Age school education. Parents should take classes in parent education was significant at the .01 level. Parents with All Age

school education were more likely to feel that they should take classes than parents with Post Secondary education.

Parents who talked to their child about how important school is was significant at the .05 level. Parents with Post Secondary education were more likely to talk to their child than did parents with high school or all age education. The amount of time parents spent helping children with homework was also significant at the .05 level. Parents with Post Secondary education appeared to spend more time helping with homework than did parents with high school or all age school education. Children of parents with Post Secondary education were also doing better at school than children whose parents had high school or all age school education. This item was significant at the .05 level.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

This final chapter contains a review of the study of parent involvement in the education of children in high schools in St. Catherine, Jamaica. The chapter summarizes the statement of the problem, and data analysis. The conclusions based on the findings, recommendations for future research, and educational implications are also included in this chapter.

The purpose of the study was to determine the attitudes of Jamaican parents to parent involvement in the education of their children at high school as measured by a survey of parents with children in high schools in St. Catherine, Jamaica.

The study focused on the following objectives:

1. To determine the attitudes of parents towards involvement and the high school their child attends.
2. To determine what schools are presently doing to involve parents and how parents think schools can improve in their practices to involve them.
3. To determine parental involvement at home, at school and in the community, the amount of time parents spend helping their high school children with homework, and what help parents would need so as to help their children more.
4. To examine differences in parents attitudes, parents involvement and parental assistance with homework based on the educational level of parent.

The participants in the study were parents with children in selected high schools in St. Catherine, Jamaica. Parents were asked to volunteer as participants in the study. A pilot study of a draft of the survey instrument was done in August 2001. The survey

instrument was revised based upon the results of the pilot study, and administered in the fall of 2001. The investigator developed the survey, specifically for Jamaican parents, using Epstein and Salinas (1993) School and family partnership questionnaires for parents as a guide and tailoring the questions to make them more applicable to parents in the Jamaican high school context.

The instrument consisted of five parts. Part 1 requested demographic information on the parent, number of children attending high school, grade level of child, age of parent, whether or not parents had classes in parent education and the educational level of parents. Part II consisted of 20 attitude statements which were responded to using a 1-5 Likert Continuum Scale to determine parental views about the high schools their children attend. Part III examined how schools were doing at involving parents. This part consisted of 12 items for parents to indicate, “what schools are doing well”, “what schools need to improve on” and “what schools have never done” as well as one question for parents to identify areas in which they would like to see the school improve. Part IV sought to determine how parents were involved in the education of their children at home, at school and in the community, amount of time parents spent helping with homework and subjects and topics in parent education that parents would like to learn more about so that they can help their children. Part V consisted of 3 open-ended questions to allow parents to express “their greatest concerns about what is happening at school”, “the best thing the school could do to help them” and “one thing they could do to help the school”. These open ended questions were included to provide parents with the opportunity to express ideas about topics and parenting skills, and practices that schools should add to guide their involvement. The information given by parents to these

questions would also contribute to the understanding of the other question asked previously, based on the content of the comments given.

Two hundred and twenty parents responded to the survey. The Computer Services at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie, Wisconsin, did the tabulation and analysis of the survey. In Part I demographics, frequency count and percentages were computed for all items. In Part II, Attitudes towards parent involvement, was computed for frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation. On Part III, items 1-12 were computed for frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation and item 13 for frequency count and percentages. Part IV, parent involvement, was computed for frequency, percentages, mean, median and standard deviation for the total group of respondents, frequency count and percentages on item 12 (a-b), frequency count, percentages, mean, median and standard deviation on item 12c for total group of respondents, frequency count and percentages for item 12d, frequency count, percentages mean and standard deviation for items 13 and 14, frequency count and percentages for item 15(a-l), 16(a-h) and 17 (a-h). Part V, open-ended questions were compiled and categorized.

The data was further computed to determine if there were significant differences based on parent educational levels, parent attitudes, parent involvement and parent assistance with homework. This was done by grouping parents into three educational levels (All Age Education, High School Education and Post Secondary Education) and computing a One Way ANOVA, with a Student Newman - Keuls Multiple Range Test on Part I, items 1-20, Attitudes, Part IV items 1-11 parent involvement, and items 12a, 12b, 13 and 14, homework, using parent levels of education as the independent variable.

There was a 55% return on this survey. Mothers represented 72.6% of respondents. The number of parents with 1 child at high school represented 80.5%. The largest group of parents 52.1% had children in grades 10 and 11. The 31- 40-age category was represented by 48.9% of parents. Parents who had no classes in parenting were 81.8%. Parents with All Age School Education were 41.4%, High School 34% and all other categories of post Secondary Education were 24.7%.

Research Objective 1: To determine the attitude of Jamaican parents towards parent involvement in education and the high school their child attends.

Parents attitudes in relation to involvement in their children's education was reflected in the attitude statements in Part II. Parents agreed or strongly agreed with 45% of these statements ranging from a mean of 4.01–4.26 “This school views parents as important partners in children's' education (X= 4.26). “Parents should take classes in parent education” (X= 4.15) “My child likes attending this high school”(X = 4.14) I talk with teachers when I am concerned about my child's achievement”(X =4.13) “I feel welcome at the high school my child attends” (X=4.13). “High school teachers should give more homework” (X=4.11). “The high school my child attends is very good” (X=4.06) “High school teachers show interest in my child” (X=4.05) “This high school has an active P.T.A. (X=4.01) These scores tend to indicate that parents had positive attitude towards the school. Fifty percent (50%) of items had means ranging from 3.19- 3.95. This tends to indicate that parents were somewhat undecided about the items related to volunteering at school, how much child is learning at school, the school's effort to try new programs to involve parents, how good the school is for parents and children, the levels at which parents are most involved, the amount of time principals and teachers are

available for discussion with parents about children and how much the child is learning at school. One item “My child is not learning much at this high school” had a mean of 1.96.

Objective 2: To determine what schools are presently doing to involve parents and how parents would like to see schools improve their involvement practices.

Parents were asked to indicate whether the school “never did”, “should do better” or “did well at involving them in given practices on a 3 point scale. Over 58% of items on practices had mean scores ranging from 2.00-2.76. Over 50% of parents felt that the school did not ask them to volunteer at school, did not explain how they should check homework, did not include them in vital decisions for school improvement and did not provide information on community services that help children and families. Fifty-seven percent of parents said the school did not contact them if their child did something well or improved at school or if the child was having problems. This seems to indicate that although the schools did well at communicating with parents, schools need to do better by including information on students when they are doing well. Fifty percent of parents said the school never showed them how to check their child’s homework. Since teachers are usually concerned about large classes and parents are concerned about the amount of homework given and home work not corrected (open-ended questions) then teaching parents how to help and how to check homework will help teachers, parents and students.

Parents were asked to indicate areas where the school needs to improve. More than 50% of parents would like to see improvement in attendance at P.T.A. meetings, parent volunteering, parent communication with teachers, the amount of guidance given to parents by teachers, time available for parents to talk to teachers and principals and the school’s effort to contact them when their child is doing well or need extra help.

Objective 3: To determine parent involvement at home, at school and in the community, the amount of time parents spend helping their high school children with homework and what help parents would need in order to be of more help to children.

Parents were asked to indicate how involved they were in certain practices at home, at school and in the community. Concerning parent involvement at home, 80.6% of parents said they talked to their children about school many times, 61.1% checked many times to see if their children had done homework, 88.8% talked many times with children about how important school is, and 82.4% talked to children many times about future, career and work. Concerning involvement at school, 41.1% talked to teachers few times in person or by telephone about their child, 46.4% attended P.T.A. meetings a few times and 35.5% attended special events at their child's school few times while 30% of parents never attended any events.

In terms of community, (78%) of parents never accompanied their child to the library. Over thirty six percent (36.6) of parents had attended community events with their child while 34.2% never did. Regarding homework, 60.5% of parents said their children spent 1-2 hours doing homework. Over forty five percent (45.5%) of parents spent less than 1 hour, 30.5% spent 1-2 hours, and 18% spent no time at all helping their children with homework. All parents indicated that they were willing to spend some time helping with homework if the teacher showed them how to help. Over seventy nine percent (79.8%) of parents were willing to spend over 1 hour and up to 5 hours helping children with homework. Almost 70% of parents were willing to help on weekends. Twenty parents 9.3% said their children are top students, 41.4% were good students, 29.1% were average, and the remainder fair or poor. Forty eight percent of parents said

their children always completed homework and 37.2% said children completed homework most of the time.

Parents identified subjects that they would like to learn more about. The major subjects identified were Mathematics 75.3%, Computer Studies 53% and English Language 47.9%. Fewer parents wanted to know about the technical Vocational Subjects so they could help their children. Parents requested workshops on how to discipline teens, how to help teens choose careers, study and take tests. Parents are very concerned about the academic progress of their children.

Parents also said they would like to learn more about community services like family counseling and job and skill training. Since 41.4% of parents had only All Age School education, skill training would help them financially to help their children. Schools need to be aware of all the services available in the communities in which they are located and help parents to access these services so that parents can help themselves and help their children.

In the open-ended questions parents provided more insight into their concerns. One hundred and forty seven parents responded to the question about their greatest concern. Concerns were grouped to arrive at a list of 14 ranging from 27.2% -2%. Top of the list were parents concerns about students academic performance, progress and success 27.2%, curriculum variety, availability and quality of instructions 11%, student discipline, 9.5%, school and child security, safety and protection, 9.5%, and students attitudes and interest about schoolwork 8.8%. Also of interest were parents concerns about the need for counseling on career and responsible student behaviors, economic difficulties in meeting students financial needs.

Parents were asked what they would like schools to do to help them with their child. Top among the things parents want schools to do to help them with their child were for schools to improve students performance by assigning and checking homework, offering extra classes, tutoring and improved teacher attendance, (24%), financial assistance through reduction or keeping school fees constant (13.4%), curriculum expansion by adding more subjects, making computer studies compulsory for all students, and the addition of sixth forms or community colleges to schools, for students who cannot find jobs after high school, and would like to continue studying (10%), counseling (.2%).

Parents were also asked to say what they could do to help the school. Top among the groups of things parents said they could do for the school were, to show more interest and become actively involved in P.T.A. association, 36.5%, Volunteer time, skills and services to improve school plant and help teachers, 14.6%, be available to help in whatever way schools want, 11.3% and to form active parent groups to develop school, parent, community link to encourage other parents, improve student discipline, encourage and help teachers and students, 9.3%.

Responses to open ended questions clearly indicate that parents know what they want for their children. They recognize that schools need their support in providing these needs and that they must be willing to cooperate and collaborate with the school to achieve these. It is clear that parents expect the schools to take the lead and tell them how they want them to be involved. Parents recognize that student academic and social growth is linked or affected by other factors such as good discipline, friendly, safe environment

conducive to learning and their involvement in the process of providing these conditions and helping students to achieve

Objective 4: To determine whether there are significant differences between parent education level, parent attitude, parent involvement and parent assistance with homework.

There were significant differences at the .05 and .01 levels between parental education levels and the following attitude statements: “High school teachers show interest in my child” Parents with All Age School education were significantly different from parents with High school education

On the attitude item, “High school does not offer much variety in activities for parents” parents with a Post Secondary education scored higher than parents with High School education or parents with All Age School education. On the attitude item, “Parent should take classes in parent education” a difference was found significant at the .01 level. It was found that participants who felt that this was necessary were more likely to be parents with All Age School education, than parents with Post Secondary education.

There was one significant difference on parent involvement behavior at the .05 level, “Talked with my child about how important school is.” Parents with Post Secondary education were more likely to talk to their children about the importance of school than parents with High School education or All Age School education.

The study also found significant differences in “How much time parents spent helping their child with homework”(F=4.466). This was significant at the .05 level which seems to indicate that parents with Post Secondary education spent more time helping their child with homework than parents with High School education or parents with All

Age School education. "How is your child doing at school" ($F=3.221$), was also significant at the .05 level. This indicated that the children of parents with Post Secondary education were doing better than children whose parents had High School education or children whose parents had All Age School education. Thus, the educational levels of parents influenced their attitudes about school, the type and level of involvement in the education of their high school children, the amount of assistance parents give with homework, and how well students perform academically at school.

Conclusion

Conclusion of this study is generalized to parents with children in High schools in St. Catherine, Jamaica. Parents had positive attitudes about the high schools their children attend, however, parents had concerns about how the schools involved them in the education of their children. There are things that parents would like the school to involve them in that are not presently being done by schools and there are involvement practices that parents are willing to become active in. Parents recognize that they need to do more despite the many problems they experience in getting involved. Parents would like more involvement in volunteering, and decision-making at school and expect schools to take the lead in involving them since a large percentage of them indicated that they were willing to do whatever the school require of them. The educational levels of parents influence their attitudes about school, the type and level of involvement in the education of their high school children, the amount of assistance parents give with homework and how well students perform academically at school.

Educational Implications

This study has implications for education at the high school level in Jamaica. It is well established that good parent involvement programs improve schools; good schools produce socially and academically progressive students, who will improve families, communities and the nation. Therefore, high schools administrators and teachers need to include parent involvement into their School Development Plan and afford it the same level of importance as other factors vital for the effective schools. High schools need to have special action plans and organizing committees to organize parent involvement activities. These Action committees need to audit schools and communities in which the schools exist to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to parent involvement programs. They need to identify persons who are capable, knowledgeable, and willing to serve, identify programs that are already in existence and determine where these need to be strengthened and where new programs are needed.

Schools need to develop in-service training programs to educate administrators, teachers and other school personnel such as Guidance Counselors and School Nurses, about parents attitudes, interests, needs, and how to plan programs to get parents involved. Schools also need to work closely with the community to improve the level of involvement both in what the community can do for the school and what the school can do to develop the community.

Educators need to plan and implement parent involvement programs in teacher training so that teachers will be more prepared to work with parents. If teachers are trained to work with parents at all levels of the education system the task of getting parents involved or sustaining involvement at the high school level will be much easier.

Recommendations for Future Research

Studies should continue to investigate parent involvement at the high school level. The following recommendations are suggested.

1. Identify parent involvement attitudes and practices in high school in other parishes in Jamaica.
2. Determine the attitudes of teachers towards involving parents in curriculum decisions and classroom activities.
3. Determine the attitudes of high school students towards the involvement of their parents in their education.
4. Determine where parent involvement is most effective at the time of transition from Primary to High school.
5. Identify the attitude of the Ministry of Education and the Joint Board of Teacher Education towards compulsory courses and certification of all teachers in Parent/Involvement Education.

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Appendix

SURVEY OF PARENTS WITH CHILDREN IN JAMAICAN HIGH SCHOOLS

The person who has the MOST CONTACT with the school about their child should answer these questions.

Name of high school that your child attends _____

PART 1: DEMOGRAPHICS

Directions: Please place a (✓) CHECK MARK in the blank that best represents your response to the questions.

1. Who is answering the questions?
 _____ a. Mother _____ e. Grandparent
 _____ b. Father _____ f. Guardian
 _____ c. Stepmother _____ g. Other relative
 _____ d. Stepfather _____ h. Other _____
2. How many children do you have attending this high school?
 _____ 1 child _____ 2 children _____ 3 children _____ 4 children
3. What grades are they in? (Check all that apply)
 _____ Grade 7 _____ Grade 9 _____ Grade 11
 _____ Grade 8 _____ Grade 10 _____ 6th Form
4. How old are you?
 _____ 20 – 30 years _____ 41 – 50 years
 _____ 31 – 40 years _____ 51 or older
5. Have you attended any parenting classes on how to understand and care for your children?
 _____ Yes
 If yes, please describe _____
 _____ No
6. What is your highest level of Education?
 _____ a. All Age School _____ d. Vocational school graduate
 _____ b. High school graduate _____ e. College graduate
 _____ c. Some College training _____ f. university degree

Part 2. ATTITUDES

Directions: Please CIRCLE the choice that best represents the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

SD=strongly disagree D= disagree U= undecided A=agree SA=strongly agree

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. The high school my child attends is very good. | SD D U A SA |
| 2. High school teachers show interest in my child | SD D U A SA |
| 3. I feel welcome at the high school my child attend. | SD D U A SA |
| 4. This high school has an active P.T.A. | SD D U A SA |
| 5. High school teachers should give more homework. | SD D U A SA |

SD=strongly disagree D=disagree U=undecided A=agree SA=strongly agree

- | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|---|----|
| 6. I could help my child with schoolwork if the teacher gave me more guidance. | SD | D | U | A | SA |
| 7. The community supports fund-raising activities at this high school. | SD | D | U | A | SA |
| 8. This high school does not offer much variety in school activities for parents. | SD | D | U | A | SA |
| 9. My child likes attending this high school. | SD | D | U | A | SA |
| 10. The school does not get much help from community members. | SD | D | U | A | SA |
| 11. I know many parents who help out at this high school. | SD | D | U | A | SA |
| 12. My child is not learning much at this high school. | SD | D | U | A | SA |
| 13. This high school is good at trying new programs to get parents involved. | SD | D | U | A | SA |
| 14. This high school is one of the best for parents and students. | SD | D | U | A | SA |
| 15. Parents should take classes in parent education. | SD | D | U | A | SA |
| 16. Most parents do not get a chance to talk to all the high school teachers who teach their children. | SD | D | U | A | SA |
| 17. This school views parents as important partners in children's education. | SD | D | U | A | SA |
| 18. Parents are more involved at school when children are in lower grades. | SD | D | U | A | SA |
| 19. I talk with teachers when I am concerned about my child's achievement. | SD | D | U | A | SA |
| 20. Principals and teachers are always available to discuss my child's progress with me. | SD | D | U | A | SA |

Part 3. SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT

Circle one choice to tell how well the school did the following last year
 N=School never did C= School should do better D= School did well

This past year the school has

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 1. helped me understand my child's development. | N | C | D |
| 2. told me how my child is doing. | N | C | D |
| 3. told me what skills my child needs to learn. | N | C | D |
| 4. had a meeting with me about my child. | N | C | D |
| 5. showed me how to check my child's homework. | N | C | D |
| 6. sent me letters about school activities. | N | C | D |
| 7. explained how grades are earned. | N | C | D |
| 8. contacted me when my child is doing well. | N | C | D |
| 9. contacted me when my child is having problems. | N | C | D |
| 10. asked me to help at school. | N | C | D |
| 11. included parents on budget or curriculum committees | N | C | D |
| 12. informed me about community agencies that help children and families. | N | C | D |
| 13. What improvements would you like to see at this school? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY | | | |
| I would like to see improvement in | | | |
| _____ a. attendance at P.T.A. | | | |
| _____ b. parents volunteering. | | | |
| _____ c. parent communication with teachers about children's problems. | | | |
| _____ d. the amount of time between notices and parent involvement activities. | | | |
| _____ e. the guidance given to parents by teachers on how to help children with homework. | | | |
| _____ f. School facilities where parents can obtain help or volunteer. | | | |
| _____ g. the amount of time made available to parents to talk to teachers or principal about their child | | | |
| _____ h. the school's efforts to contact me when my child is doing well or need extra help. | | | |
| _____ i. the way school involves parents in important decisions like budgeting or curriculum. | | | |

Part 4. PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Which of the following did you do at home, school or in the community last year?

N=never O=once F=few times M=many times CIRCLE ONE choice for each item

HOME

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Talked to my high school child about school | N | O | F | M |
| 2. Helped my child with homework | N | O | F | M |
| 3. Helped my child in planning how to manage time | N | O | F | M |
| 4. Checked to see if my child has done homework | N | O | F | M |
| 5. Talked with my child about how important school is | N | O | F | M |
| 6. Talked to my child about the future, career and work | N | O | F | M |

SCHOOL

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 7. Talked to my child's Form Teacher in person or by telephone | N | O | F | M |
| 8. Attended P.T.A. meeting | N | O | F | M |
| 9. Attended special events at my child's school | N | O | F | M |

COMMUNITY

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 10. Accompanied my child to the library | N | O | F | M |
| 11. Attended a community event with my child | N | O | F | M |

12. ABOUT HOMEWORK

a. How much time does your child spend doing homework on school days?

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| _____ none | _____ 1-2 hours |
| _____ 30 minutes | _____ 3-4 hours |

b. How much time do you spend helping your child?

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| _____ none | _____ 1-2 hours |
| _____ less than 1 hour | _____ 3-4 hours |

c. How much time would you spend if teacher showed you how to help? _____

d. Do you have time to help on weekends?

- | | |
|-----------|----------|
| _____ Yes | _____ No |
|-----------|----------|

13. ABOUT YOUR CHILD

How is your child doing in school?

- | | | |
|----------------------|------------------|---------------|
| _____ a. Top student | _____ c. Average | _____ e. Poor |
| _____ b. Good | _____ d. Fair | |

14. How often does your high school child complete homework?

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| _____ a. Always | _____ c. Sometimes | _____ e. Never |
| _____ b. Most of the time | _____ d. Rarely | |

15. What subjects would you like to learn more about in order to help your child?

CHECK ALL that apply

- | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| _____ a. Agriculture | _____ e. Home Economics | _____ i. Science |
| _____ b. Business Subjects | _____ f. Industrial Education | _____ j. Social Studies |
| _____ c. Computer Science | _____ g. Math | _____ k. Study Skills |
| _____ d. English Language | _____ h. Resource and Technology | _____ l. Other _____ |

16. What topics would you like to learn more about at parent workshops? **CHECK all that apply.**
- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. How adolescents develop | <input type="checkbox"/> e. Raising children as single parents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. How teens behave | <input type="checkbox"/> f. Helping children to study and take tests. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. How to discipline teens | <input type="checkbox"/> g. Understanding high school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d. How to help students choose careers | <input type="checkbox"/> h. Other topics you need _____ |
17. What services in the community would you like to learn more about so you can help your high school child? **CHECK ALL THAT APPLY**
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. Health care for teens and families. | <input type="checkbox"/> e. Parenting classes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. Family counseling | <input type="checkbox"/> f. After school tutoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. Job training for parents and teens | <input type="checkbox"/> g. After school clubs or skills training. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d. Community service teens can do | <input type="checkbox"/> h. Other _____ |
18. What is your greatest concern as a parent, about what is happening with your child at school?
19. What is the best thing that this high school could do next year to help you with your child?
20. What is one thing that you could do to help this high school?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.