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Parent Involvement in the Middle School

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Abstract

This action research project investigated the effects of parental involvement on the education of middle school students. Parents and teachers at Sioux Center Middle School were surveyed on how they viewed the potential impact of parental involvement on student achievement. Parents and teachers were also asked about barriers that might prevent involvement and best practices that would capitalize on effective parental involvement. The results of the survey confirmed that teachers and parents see parental involvement as important for student achievement. Few barriers were noted as inhibiting parental involvement. The best practice of parent-teacher conferences was noted as the most effective way for parents and teachers to have effective communication.

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by

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Action Research Report
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
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Abstract

This action research project investigated the effects of parental involvement on the education of middle school students.   Parents and teachers at Sioux Center Middle School were surveyed on how they viewed the potential impact of parental involvement on student achievement. Parents and teachers were also asked about barriers that might prevent involvement and best practices that would capitalize on effective parental involvement. The results of the survey confirmed that teachers and parents see parental involvement as important for student achievement. Few barriers were noted as inhibiting parental involvement. The best practice of parent-teacher conferences was noted as the most effective way for parents and teachers to have effective communication.

Middle school is a transition time for students growing from a child to an adult. Schools recognize this stage and tailor learning to best meet the needs of these students, but it is important to remember that middle school can also be a time of transition for parents as well. Parents are important partners in their child's education. Parent-school relationships involve work to be successful. Many parents start their student's school career being very involved and keep in regular communication with the school and teachers. However, once students reach middle school, parent involvement can decline because students become independent and take ownership of their learning.

Successful parent involvement can be an important key to student achievement, and yet little is done to foster that aspect of education. Good (2008) noted that teachers, students, and parents all benefit from effective parental involvement, which in part leads to improved student achievement. Teachers spend the majority of professional development time working on curriculum, instruction, and assessment, but little time is given to develop parent relationships or to learn effective parent communication strategies.

Attending an open house or a parent-teacher conference may be the first and only time a parent has entered a school building since they left school some twenty or more years earlier. School has changed since parents attended with the increased use of technology and with topics such as the Common Core that were not present when parents of students today attended middle school. Parents' knowledge of how school works is based on their own background which looks very different from what their children are experiencing today. Often parents are not equipped to properly support their children.

Halsey (2005) noted that there are misconceptions by both teachers and parents as to what their roles are in supporting student learning. Overcoming misperceptions about each

other's support and each party's desire for parent involvement as well as obstacles such as defining parents' roles in both academic and extracurricular activities and implementing effective methods of communication need to be addressed. And while open houses and scheduled parent-teacher conferences tend to get the most parents into the school, most schools have not changed the format of conferences for many years and administrators and teachers are left wondering if there could be a more effective way to communicate with parents.

Research Questions

Increasing parent involvement in middle school is critical to improve the educational success of students. The focus of this study is to identify ways that schools can reach their full potential by involving parents. To explore this focus, the following questions will be addressed:

1. What is the potential impact of parental involvement on student achievement for middle school students?

2. What barriers inhibit parents from being involved?

3. What best practices are needed to capitalize on effective parental involvement?

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the researcher provides the following definitions. All definitions are the researcher's unless otherwise noted.

Parent-teacher conference: a meeting between teacher(s) and parent(s) at school on a designated night at a designated time for the purpose of discussing student progress.

Open House: a time, usually a week before school begins, when parents and students visit school to hear information about the upcoming year and to visit the classrooms.

Literature Review

Parents play an important role in the education of their children. The *No Child Left Behind Act* placed emphasis on the importance of parental involvement in education by creating a section highlighting the shared responsibilities between home and school to promote high achievement. NCLB (2001) defined parent involvement as the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities. Parents are a child's first teacher. The relationships children have with their parents are the most fundamental in their lives so, understandably, children are motivated and given a sense of purpose when educational goals are set by parents. There is much evidence to support the fact that parents' involvement in children's education facilitates learning and achievement (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012). Higher levels of parental involvement produce higher test scores, higher graduation rates, less grade retention, and better student attendance. (LaRocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011)

As communication increases between home and school, academic achievement increases (Lam & Ducreux, 2013). Parents show the importance of education, including aspirations, expectations, and attitudes by the value they communicate to their children. When parents are involved in the education of their child, the message communicated to their children is that education is important. Cheung and Pomerantz (2015) found that when parents are involved, children perceive them as placing a high value on school achievement.

However, there are many barriers that can inhibit parents from being involved in their child's education. Christenson (2004) identified many barriers in the school and home relationships. Structural barriers including economic and time constraints as well as child care and transportation issues can keep parents from attending school functions. Psychological

barriers including feelings of inadequacy or suspicions about treatment from educators as well as limited time for communication and meaningful dialogue can pose problems in the family and school relationship. For many parents, the only involvement they have had with their child's school was when there has been a problem with their child (Lam & Ducreux, 2013). Good (2008) noted that parents with an unpleasant personal school history and limited education attainment will not make school communication a priority. Another issue that can negatively impact school-home communication is that parents either do not understand English or do not understand the educational jargon that schools use and therefore feel unable to properly communicate.

At the middle school level, typically, parent involvement drops. This decline may be because students are more independent and more responsible for their own learning at this age. There may be a decline in parental involvement for families of middle schoolers because now communication needs to happen with more than one teacher. Specialization in the middle grades means that teachers have a greater number of students for a smaller amount of time. This limits the amount of contact a teacher can make with parents. Further, parents may feel they can't assist with homework in middle school because the subjects are more challenging than they were in elementary school (Lam & Ducreux, 2013).

Parent-teacher conferences are the most common time for parents and teachers to communicate. And yet, these conferences also provide some communication barriers for parents and teachers. For some teachers, communicating with parents at conference times is stressful. Because of high teacher-to-student ratios, the sheer number of parents with whom to meet can be overwhelming. And, unfortunately, parent-teacher conferences can be frustrating when teachers are unable to meet with the parents of their highest need students. Communication with parents

whose children most need the strong parent-teacher relationships is often limited to only situations involving a crisis. School communication is then viewed negatively by parents and teachers because it is only used to relay negative news.

Parents and teachers can become easily discouraged because of a mismatch of communication methods. Many educators lack training in parent communication, and are given limited time to make contacts (Good, 2008). Doubts in the belief of a partnership orientation to enhance student learning is also a factor. Lawrence-Lightfoot (2003) believed the tensions arise from both parents and teachers because both are territorial. Further, parents and teachers often view their relationship with the student differently.

Parents necessarily speak from a position of intimacy, advocacy, and protections for their child. Teachers, on the other hand, have a "universalistic" relationship with their students, which is more distant and dispassionate. They work hard to find a balance between responding to the needs and capacities of individual students and supporting the development of a classroom community in which children learn to be responsible and accountable to the group. (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003, p. 43)

Effective parental involvement can be possible when schools are proactive and work on improving their practices. Parents and teachers must have a common goal for the students: improving the future quality of life for children (Stevens & Tollafield, 2003). Because parental involvement is proven to benefit students, schools and parents must find a way to bridge the gap. Christenson (2004) argued that education needs to be a shared responsibility between educators and families.

Parents are more likely to become involved when their involvement is perceived as invited and needed by children and teachers (Good, 2008). Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey

and Sandler (2007) noted that even though parental involvement decreases as children age, specific invitations are helpful in increasing parental involvement. Teachers need to welcome parents to assist at school and to ask for input in making decisions with the students. The most beneficial types of involvement at the middle school level are efforts to improve the school climate, in-service training time for parent involvement, and development of in-school resources that support parent involvement (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Trust from parents can be increased through frequent communication, increased focus on listening to and respecting parents, and increased development and use of specific suggestions for parent support of learning at home.

Halsey (2004) shared that the keys to nurturing parental involvement are varied types of contacts outlining what parents can do to help, promoting ownership and pride in the involvement by including parents in decisions, taking time to reflect on parents' progress, and acknowledging parents' contributions. Hong (2012) stressed the importance of parent mentor programs, mutual engagement, relationships and acts of bridging and sharing leadership and power.

Parent education is also needed. Ferlazzo and Hammond (2009) noted that the focus should be on engagement, not just involvement. Good communication should include finding out what goals the parents have for their child. Schools and teachers need to extend invitations to families and also be open to shared decision making. Good communication should ensure that the language used is easily understood and free from jargon (Stevens & Tollafield, 2003).

Conferences are also an important form of communication for parents and teachers. However, they should not be the only time during the year both parties communicate. Parents should experience a pleasant encounter and positive interactions when visiting school.

Effective conferences should include sharing evidence of learning, goal setting, and

should involve students in the process. Conferences should show artifacts, anecdotes and evidence, as well as empower students by having them lead the conference (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Pertinent information needs to be shared as well as making plans for the future. A paper record of shared decisions is helpful at conferences to set goals and make sure goals are revisited later. It is possible that schools may need to rethink the current structure of conferences to make interactions with school personnel more inviting and to ensure shared decision-making with parents.

Summary

Cheung and Pomerantz (2012) reported that while younger students are intrinsically motivated, parent-oriented motivation at adolescence may be needed to promote reasons for learning and maintaining engagement. Frequently, parents step away from involvement at the middle school level, but they are still important in the learning process. A meta-analysis study uncovered the most effective types of parental involvement (Hill & Tyson, 2009). At the top of the list was academic socialization which includes parents communicating their expectations for achievement and value for education. Effective parental involvement also includes fostering educational and occupational aspirations, as well as discussing learning strategies and making plans for the future based on students' interests and goals.

Parental involvement is a key element to student success. Many barriers inhibit parents from being as actively involved as they should be, particularly starting in the middle school years. Schools should recognize these barriers and make efforts to promote parental involvement. Parents are partners in educating their children and can also take steps to positively impact their children's education.

Methods

Participants

This study was conducted with the parents and teachers of students at a rural middle school in northwest Iowa. This middle school is part of a K-12 school system. The current enrollment at the time of the study was 342 students with parent emails going out to 289 households. The ethnic background of the enrolled students included 106 Hispanic-Latino, 59 American Indian-Native American, 7 Asian, 3 African American and 280 Caucasian. There were an equal number of male and female students. Free and reduced lunch was received by 127 students. There were 32 students in the special education program and 25 students in the talented and gifted program. Fifty students were considered English language learners. Teacher participants included 16 classroom teachers and 15 support staff.

Materials

Two online surveys on the role of parental involvement were given to parents and teachers using a popular, free survey platform (See Appendix A). The parent online survey was sent through the school's parent communication email system. The 69 families without computer access were given a hard copy to be filled out and returned. The questions were available in Spanish for those who needed it. A separate online survey was also be emailed to teachers and support staff who worked at the middle school.

Design

This study sought to discover the attitudes of parents and teachers with regard to the role of parental involvement to improve students' education. Surveys are best to use in these situations given feelings and opinions are not easily observed and measured with other research

methods (Nardi, 2003). The surveys used included appropriate demographic questions to aid in data collection. Twenty of the questions used the five-point Likert scale and two questions were open-ended allowing participants to feeling express opinions.

Procedure

Before sending out the formal survey, a pilot survey was given to a small number of teachers and parents who were not participating in the study to check if the statements and response choices were effectively communicated. Three wording adjustments were then made to clarify the meaning intended in the survey statements.

The surveys were emailed by the building principal to parents with email addresses using the school's information system with a request of being completed within ten days. The principal emailed a reminder and posted the information on the school's Facebook page the following week. The researcher directly emailed the survey link to the teachers and support staff after explaining the study at a staff meeting. The school's translator translated the parent questions so that another link could be used for those who needed a Spanish survey. The researcher received a spreadsheet list from the school secretary containing the names of parents who did not have email. A hard copy of the survey containing both English and Spanish translations was distributed to students of parents without email to bring home. A teacher at each grade level collected the hard copy surveys that were returned. Upon receipt of the handwritten and computer surveys, the researcher organized and analyzed the results.

Results

Of the 289 households that received the survey, there was a 30 % return rate on the surveys including 14 handwritten surveys and 74 surveys completed online. Of the 31 teachers that received the online survey, 25 teachers responded for a return rate of 80%.

Research Question One

The first research question investigated the potential impact of parental involvement on student achievement for middle school students. Both parents and teachers were asked whether they believed it was the teacher's primary responsibility to educate the child. Sixty-one percent of parents responded that the education of their child is the teacher's primary responsibility. Eighty-eight percent of teachers' responses were neutral on the responsibility question. The teachers' mean response of "somewhat agree" is statistically significantly lower than parent mean response of "agree," with p-value 0.0006.

Table 1

It is the Teacher's Primary Responsibility to Educate Children

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Parent Response	4.5%	9.1%	25%	31.8%	29.5%
Teacher Response	12%	16%	44%	28%	0%

Parents and teachers were asked about the need for parental involvement regarding their child's education. The statement used to measure this was "I believe that my involvement in my child's education is needed for them to be successful." Both parents and teachers strongly favored the belief that parental involvement is needed, with parents indicating an 83% agreement

and teachers indicating a 96% agreement. There was no statistical significant difference in the

mean responses between parents and teachers. The mean responses for both teachers and parents

were strongly agreeing that there is a need for parental involvement to promote success.

Table 2

The Need for Parental Involvement to Promote Success

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Parent Response	1.1%	3.4%	12.5%	25%	58%
Teacher Response	0%	0%	4%	40%	56%

The survey results showed how much input parents give in the education of their child at

the middle school. Both parents and teachers were asked their perspective on the subject of

input. The majority of both parents and teachers noted that parents give a little input. The parent

mean response was statistically significantly different than the teacher mean response, with a p-

value of 0.042. The parent mean was more toward more input and the teacher mean was more

toward a little input.

Table 3

Amount of Input Parents Have in Education

	A great deal	A lot	A moderate amount	A little	None at all
Parent Response	10.2%	4.5%	29.5%	44.3%	11.4%
Teacher Response	0%	4%	24%	60%	12%

Parents were asked to rate how involved they believe they are in parent groups, parent activities, and at parent-teacher conferences. Most parents responded that they were not very involved in parent groups or activities but almost 80% of the parents noted attending the twice yearly parent-teacher conferences.

Table 4

Parent Involvement in Parent Groups

	Not at all involved	A little involved	Somewhat involved	Quite involved	Extremely involved
Parent Response	39.8%	39.8%	11.4%	8%	1.1%

Table 5

Parent Involvement in Parent Activities

	Almost never	Once or twice per year	Every few months	Monthly	Weekly or more
Parent Response	11.4%	38.6%	34.1%	12.5%	3.4%

Table 6

Parent Involvement at Parent-Teacher Conferences

	Almost never	Once or twice per year	Twice a year
Parent Response	3.4%	17%	79.5%

Research Question Two

The second research question focused on barriers that inhibit parents from being involved at the middle school level. Eight challenges were identified for parents to respond to on a scale ranging from "not at all" preventing them from being involved at school to being a "tremendous amount" of a challenge in being involved a school. Seventy-six percent of parents did not see

these barriers as preventing them from being involved. However, 53 % of parents indicated that

a busy schedule was somewhat of a barrier in parental involvement.

Table 7

Barriers Preventing Parents from Being Involved at School

	Not at all	A little bit	Somewhat	Quite a bit	A tremendous amount
Transportation	81.8%	10.2%	4.5%	3.4%	0%
Inadequate school communication	76.1%	10.2%	5.7%	6.8%	1.1%
Feeling of not belonging	43.2%	25%	26.1%	2.3%	3.4%
Feeling welcome at school	73.9%	12.5%	11.4%	2.3%	0%
Past negative experiences communicating with teachers	71.6%	12.5%	10.2%	4.5%	1.1%
Personal past negative experiences at school	81.8%	11.4%	5.7%	1.1%	0%
Child care needs	76.1%	13.6%	4.5%	4.5%	1.1%
Busy schedule	18.2%	25%	26.1%	26.1%	4.5%

Four challenges were identified for teachers to respond to on a scale ranging from

"strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" in preventing them from communicating with parents.

There were no direct conclusions drawn in any of these areas due to the variety of answers given.

Table 8

Teacher Barriers in Parent Communication

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel overwhelmed by the large number of parents to communicate with	24%	32%	24%	8%	12%
I am given adequate time and training to prepare for parent communication	8%	24%	40%	24%	4%
I view parent interactions negatively due to the amount of added stress on my life	36%	36%	24%	0%	4%
I do not typically communicate with the parents that I really need to communicate with the most	28%	28%	24%	20%	0%

Research Question Three

The third research question asked what best practices are needed to capitalize on effective parental involvement. Both parents and teachers were asked if they believe that the current system for parent-teacher conferences is effective. Fifty-nine percent of parents agreed or strongly agreed that the present system is effective. Eighty-eight percent teachers rated the system neutrally, not giving strong opinions either way as to its effectiveness. There was no statistically significant difference in mean response between parents and teachers.

Table 9

Effectiveness of Current Parent-Teacher Conference System

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Parent Response	4.5%	11.4%	25%	39.8%	19.3%
Teacher Response	4%	28%	24%	36%	8%

Teachers and parents were asked to respond to whether students should play an active role at conferences. Seventy-six percent of the teachers agreed that students should play an active role. Sixty-three percent of the parents also agreed that students should have an active role, but 26% of parents had neutral feelings.   There was no statistically significant difference in mean response between parents and teachers.

Table 10

Role of Students at a Parent-Teacher Conference

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Parent Response	3.4%	8%	26.1%	33%	29.5%
Teacher Response	4%	8%	12%	32%	44%

Parents were asked to rate the amount of time they spend in best educational practices at home with their child. Parents were asked about talking about educational goals, assisting with homework, making sure school work is complete, ensuring a quiet place to complete homework, and engaging in outside educational activities. Seventy-six percent of parents indicated that they

talk about educational goals with their child, ensure a quiet place for homework completion, and make sure homework is completed "quite a bit" or "a tremendous amount" of the time.

Table 11

Frequency of Best Practice by Parents at Home

	Not at all	A little bit	Somewhat	Quite a bit	A tremendous amount
Talking about educational goals	2.3%	4.5%	17%	43.2%	33%
Assistance with homework	4.5%	43.2%	37.5%	12.5%	2.3%
Making sure homework is completed	1.1%	1.1%	13.6%	34.1%	50%
Ensuring a quiet place to complete homework	0%	0%	12.5%	42%	45.5%
Engaging in educational activities outside the home	4.5%	28.4%	33%	25%	9.1%

Teachers were asked to indicate which best practices of parent involvement can best help their children at home. The majority of the teachers shared the opinion that setting educational goals is the most important and that helping with homework completion is the least important.

Table 12

Teachers' Beliefs about Parent Best Practices

Homework assistance	Check that work is complete	Give a quiet environment to work	Set educational goals	Other
28%	52%	44%	76%	16%

The final questions for parents and teachers focused on communication between school and home. Both teachers and parents were asked to rate the comfort level they experience with

regard to talking to each other about problems students are having. Neither parents nor teachers expressed any extreme comfort issues in regard to communicating student problems. There was no statistically significant difference in mean response between parents and teachers. The mean response was being very comfortable discussing problems with students.

Table 13

Comfort Rating of Discussing Problems with Students

	Extremely comfortable	Very comfortable	Moderately comfortable	Slightly comfortable	Not at all comfortable
Parent Response	28.4%	35.2%	20.5%	13.6%	2.3%
Teacher Response	8%	52%	28%	12%	0%

Parents were asked about their frequency of communicating with teachers at school. The majority of the responses ranged from monthly to twice per year. Teachers indicated that they believe they communicate with parents on a weekly to monthly basis.

Table 14

Frequency of Parent Communication with Teachers

	Almost never	Once or twice per year	Every few months	Monthly	Weekly or more
Parent Opinion	8%	34.1%	31.8%	21.6%	4.5%

	Never	Only at conferences	Monthly	Twice a month	On a weekly basis	On a daily basis
Teacher Opinion	0%	16%	28%	16%	36%	4%

Parents were asked to rate how much teachers' use of language and educational jargon kept them from understanding what is going on in school. Over half of the parents responded that this is not a problem at all.

Table 15

Amount that Language and Educational Jargon Inhibit Understanding

A great deal	A lot	A moderate amount	A little	None at all
3.4%	9.1%	12.5%	23.9%	51.1%

Teachers rated whether they agree that the school is doing a good job communicating with the parents. Over half of teachers indicated that they believe the school is doing a good job. In response to whether the majority of information teachers share is negative, teachers did not give a strong opinion either way.

Table 16

Teacher Opinion on Communication

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The school is doing a good job communicating	0%	8%	24%	56%	12%
The majority of information to be shared is negative	12%	36%	36%	16%	0%

Discussion

Parental involvement is linked to student achievement so it should be a priority for both teachers and parents. The survey results in this study indicated that both teachers and parents understand the value of parent involvement because it is linked to student success. However, a large number of parents believe the primary responsibility for education lies with the teacher while teachers believe it should be a partnership. Little time is allocated to nurture this relationship even though it is believed to be a link to success.

Most of the barriers linked with parent involvement in the research literature are not issues at Sioux Center Middle School. Parents indicated that being busy is a problem but did not state any other reasons for not being involved. Half of the parents feel somewhat like they do not belong at the middle school and very few indicate that they are involved in parent groups. However, most parents do attend the conferences held twice a year. Conference time communication seems like the key to communication even though neither teachers nor parents indicate strong feelings against the current system.

Parent-teacher conferences that involve students and goal setting are best practices that need to be enhanced. Almost all parents indicate that they are helping with homework as a best practice even though the research and teachers do not indicate this as important as communicating high expectations and setting goals.

Recommendations

Given the research showing the benefits of parent involvement, school administrators and teachers need to place a stronger emphasis on involving parents. Teachers need to be given time to communicate with parents and need to receive training to learn the most effective ways to

involve parents. Despite the fact that the majority of the teachers believe education is a joint

venture, parents look to the teachers as the authorities and as being responsible to help students

reach goals.

Because of the strong positive opinions about attending parent-teacher conferences, this

researcher recommends that the school focus on that time to communicate ideas for parent

involvement since this is when the majority of parents will be involved.   Additionally, parents

need to be welcomed and encouraged to join parent groups or they will not attend.   Those

parents surveyed did not know of specific ways they could be involved in parent activities at

school. Not only should parents, teachers, and students be setting goals at conferences, but

teachers need to communicate ways that parents can be most helpful in assisting their children.

Even though there were not clear indications of barriers preventing parents from being

involved, the school needs to continue to guard against barriers that negatively impact

communication.   Busyness was a barrier for many parents surveyed. In the narrative section of

the survey, parents indicated an appreciation for web sites, emails, Facebook pages, and the

school's Infinite Campus system as ways to stay up-to-date on what is happening at school. It

was expressed by one parent that families should be directly sent important information, not

made to find it on their own. The school has information on the internet to find, but parents need

to be sent reminders and links directly so they make accessing information a priority.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study is that the survey results received only show the

opinion of 30% of the families at the middle school. Those parents who opted not to complete a

survey could be the ones that would give valuable feedback. On the other hand, a conclusion

also could be reached that parents who did not complete the survey have no complaints with the current system and, therefore, did not give feedback. Of the parental responses, 42% of the parents indicated that they had a bachelor's or graduate degree indicating that many of the parents who responded were highly educated people. The number of responses and the demographics of the respondents may not represent the parent group as a whole.

Another limitation is that the surveys are a limited means for receiving feedback because they show self-reported perceptions where those surveyed may tend to give what is considered a "correct" answer rather than an accurate one. A personal interview may be a better way to uncover true feelings from parents. All but one of the Hispanic surveys were completed on hard copies indicating that this population is not using electronic communication by which the majority of communication is currently shared. In conducting the research for the survey, the researcher discovered that there were 69 families who do not use email. These families are not receiving most of the communication given by the school. Given this survey focused on communication, it could be determined that the school is not effectively reaching this population.

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Appendix A

Parent Involvement Survey

This parent survey is part of an action research project being conducted by Stephanie Walhof for her graduate class. The information received from this survey will assist the Sioux Center Middle School in ways to best meet the needs of students and families.

Esta encuesta para los padres es parte de un proyecto de investigación conducido por Stephanie Walhof para la graduación de la clase. La información recibida de esta encuesta asistirá la escuela de Middle School de Sioux Center en varias maneras para cumplir mejor las necesidades de los estudiantes y familias.

1.   Which race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one.)
    a.   American Indian or Alaskan Native
    b.   Asian/ Pacific Islander
    c.   Black or African American
    d.   Hispanic
    e.   White/ Caucasian
    f.   Multiple ethnicity/Other
1.   ¿Que raza/etnia te describe mejor? (Por favor escoja solo una.)
    a.   American Indio o Nativo de Alaska
    b.   Asiático/ Isla del Pacifico
    c.   Negro o Americano Africano
    d.   Hispano
    e.   Blanco/ Caucásico
    f.   Múltiples Etnias/Otro

2.   What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?
    a.   Less than a high school degree
    b.   High school degree or equivalent
    c.   Some college but no degree
    d.   Associate degree
    e.   Bachelor degree
    f.   Graduate degree
2.   ¿Cuál es el nivel más de alto de escuela que usted ha completado o el más alto grado que usted ha recibido?
    a.   Menos grado que la escuela secundaria
    b.   Grado de secundaria o equivalente
    c.   Algo de universidad pero sin titulo
    d.   Grado de asociado
    e.   Licenciatura
    f.   Posgrado

3. Which description best describes the student(s) you currently have enrolled at the Sioux Center Middle School?
   a. We have multiple children enrolled.
   b. Our oldest child is enrolled.
   c. Our middle child is enrolled.
   d. Our youngest child is enrolled.
   e. Our only child is enrolled.
3. ¿Cuál descripción describe mejor a los estudiante(s) que actualmente están inscritos en Middle School de Sioux Center?
   a. Tenemos múltiples hijos inscritos.
   b. Nuestro hijo más grande está inscrito.
   c. Nuestro hijo de en medio está inscrito.
   d. Nuestro hijo más chico está inscrito.
   e. Nuestro único hijo está inscrito.

4. I believe that it is the teacher's primary responsibility to educate my child.
   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
   | *Strongly disagree* | | | | *Strongly agree* |
4. Creo que es del maestro la responsabilidad primaria para educar a mi hijo.

   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
   | *Muy en desacuerdo* | | | | *Muy de acuerdo* |

5. I believe students should play an active role at parent-teacher conferences.
   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
   | *Strongly disagree* | | | | *Strongly agree* |
5. Creo que los estudiantes deben jugar un papel activo en las conferencias de padres y maestros.

   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
   | *Muy en desacuerdo* | | | | *Muy de acuerdo* |

6. I believe the current parent-teacher conference system is effective.
   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
   | *Strongly disagree* | | | | *Strongly agree* |
6. Creo que el actual sistema de conferencias de padres y maestros es efectivo.

   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

   | *Muy en desacuerdo* | | | | *Muy de acuerdo* |

7. I talk about educational goals with my child.

      1   2   3   4   5

     Never   *Always*

7. Hablo acerca de metas educacionales con mi hijo.

      1   2   3   4   5

     Nunca   *Siempre*

8. I make sure my child has their school work completed.

      1   2   3   4   5

     Never   *Always*

8. Me aseguro de que mi hijo tenga su trabajo de escuela terminado.

      1   2   3   4   5

     Nunca   *Siempre*

9. I make sure my child has a quiet place to complete homework.

      1   2   3   4   5

     Never   *Always*

9. Me aseguro de que mi hijo tenga un lugar tranquilo para terminar su tarea.

      1   2   3   4   5

     Nunca   *Siempre*

10. How often do you communicate with teachers at your child's school? (via phone calls, emails, in person, etc.)

    a. Almost never
    b. Once or twice per year
    c. Every few months
    d. Monthly
    e. Weekly or more

10. ¿Qué tan frecuentemente se comunica con los maestros de sus hijos en la escuela?   (via telefónica, por correos electrónicos, en persona, etc.)

    a. Casi nunca
    b. Una o dos veces por año
    c. Cada pocos meses
    d. Mensualmente
    e. Semanalmente o mas

11. How often do you attend parent-teacher conferences at your child's school?
    a. Almost never
    b. Once or twice per year
    c. Twice a year
11. ¿Qué tan frecuentemente asiste a las conferencias de padres y maestros en la escuela de su hijo?
    a. Casi nunca
    b. Una o dos veces por año
    c. dos veces por año

12. How much does feeling like you don't belong to your child's school community prevent you from becoming involved with your child's current school?
    a. Not at all
    b. A little bit
    c. Somewhat
    d. Quite a bit
    e. A tremendous amount
12. ¿Qué tanto siente que usted no pertenece a la escuela de la comunidad de su hijo que le impide involucrarse con la escuela actual de su hijo?
    a. No en lo absoluto
    b. Un poco
    c. Un tanto
    d. Bastante
    e. Una enorme cantidad

13. I assist my child with homework.
    a. Not at all
    b. A little bit
    c. Somewhat
    d. Quite a bit
    e. A tremendous amount
13. Ayudo a mi hijo con la tarea.
    a. No en lo absoluto
    b. Un poco
    c. Un tanto
    d. Bastante
    e. Una enorme cantidad

14. How much does the school not communicating well with people from your culture prevent you from becoming involved with your child's current school?
   a. Not at all
   b. A little bit
   c. Somewhat
   d. Quite a bit
   e. A tremendous amount

14. ¿Qué tanto la escuela no se comunica bien con las personas de su cultura que impide que se involucre con la escuela actual de su hijo?
   a. No en lo absoluto
   b. Un poco
   c. Un tanto
   d. Bastante
   e. Una enorme cantidad

15. How much do transportation-related challenges prevent you from becoming involved with your child's current school?
   a. Not at all
   b. A little bit
   c. Somewhat
   d. Quite a bit
   e. A tremendous amount

15. ¿Cuánto desafíos relacionados con el transporte impiden que se involucren con la escuela actual de su hijo?
   a. No en lo absoluto
   b. Un poco
   c. Un tanto
   d. Bastante
   e. Una enorme cantidad

16. How much do childcare needs prevent you from becoming involved with your child's current school?
   a. Not at all
   b. A little bit
   c. Somewhat
   d. Quite a bit
   e. A tremendous amount

16. ¿Cuánto es la necesidad del cuidado de los niños impide que se involucre con la escuela actual de su hijo?
   a. No en lo absoluto
   b. Un poco
   c. Un tanto
   d. Bastante
   e. Una enorme cantidad

17. How much does a busy schedule prevent you from becoming involved at Sioux Center Middle School?
    a. Not at all
    b. A little bit
    c. Somewhat
    d. Quite a bit
    e. A tremendous amount

17. ¿Cuánto le impide un horario ocupado que se involucre en la escuela de Middle School de Sioux Center?
    a. No en lo absoluto
    b. Un poco
    c. Un tanto
    d. Bastante
    e. Una enorme cantidad

18. How much do negative memories of your own school experience prevent you from becoming involved at Sioux Center Middle School?
    a. Not at all
    b. A little bit
    c. Somewhat
    d. Quite a bit
    e. A tremendous amount

18. ¿Cuánto los recuerdo negativos de su propia experiencia de la escuela le impiden que se involucre con la escuela de Middle School de Sioux Center?
    a. No en lo absoluto
    b. Un poco
    c. Un tanto
    d. Bastante
    e. Una enorme cantidad

19. How much do past negative experiences with your child communicating with teachers prevent you from becoming involved at Sioux Center Middle School?
    a. Not at all
    b. A little bit
    c. Somewhat
    d. Quite a bit
    e. A tremendous amount

19. ¿Cuánto las experiencias negativas pasadas de comunicación con el maestro de su hijo le impiden que se involucre con la escuela de Middle School de Sioux Center?
    a. No en lo absoluto
    b. Un poco
    c. Un tanto
    d. Bastante
    e. Una enorme cantidad

20. How much does the school not making parents feel welcome prevent you from becoming involved at Sioux Center Middle School?
    a. Not at all
    b. A little bit
    c. Somewhat
    d. Quite a bit
    e. A tremendous amount

20. ¿Cuánto hace que la escuela no haga sentir a los padres bienvenidos a la escuela que le impida que se involucre con la escuela de Middle School de Sioux Center?
    a. No en lo absoluto
    b. Un poco
    c. Un tanto
    d. Bastante
    e. Una enorme cantidad

21. How involved have you been with parent groups at Sioux Center Schools?
    a. Not at all involved
    b. A little involved
    c. Somewhat involved
    d. Quite involved
    e. Extremely involved

21. ¿Que tan involucrado ha estado en los grupos de padres de las escuelas de Sioux Center?
    a. En lo absoluto involucrado
    b. Un poco involucrado
    c. Un tanto involucrado
    d. Muy involucrado
    e. Siempre involucrado

22. How often do you help your child engage in activities which are educational outside the home?
    a. Almost never
    b. Once in a while
    c. Sometimes
    d. Frequently
    e. Almost all the time

22. ¿Qué tan frecuentemente ayuda a que su hijo se involucre en las actividades que son educativas fuera del hogar?
    a. Casi nunca
    b. De vez en cuando
    c. Algunas veces
    d. Frecuentemente
    e. Casi todo el tiempo

23. How much input do you have in your child's education at Sioux Center Middle School?
    a. A great deal
    b. A lot
    c. A moderate amount
    d. A little
    e. None at all

23. ¿Cuánto aporta usted en la educación de su hijo en la escuela de Middle School de Sioux Center?
    a. Muchisimo
    b. Mucho
    c. Una cantidad moderada
    d. Un poco
    e. Nada en lo absoluto

24. How much do teachers using language and educational jargon keep you from understanding what is happening at Sioux Center Middle School?
    a. A great deal
    b. A lot
    c. A moderate amount
    d. A little
    e. None at all

24. ¿Cuánto profesores usan el lenguaje y la jerga educativa que le impiden comprender lo que está sucediendo en Sioux Center Middle School?
    a. Muchisimo
    b. Mucho
    c. Una cantidad moderada
    d. Un poco
    e. Nada en lo absoluto

25. How comfortable do you feel talking to teachers at Sioux Center Middle School about problems your child is having?
    a. Extremely comfortable
    b. Very comfortable
    c. Moderately comfortable
    d. Slightly comfortable
    e. Not at all comfortable

25. ¿Qué tan cómodo se siente hablando con los maestros de Middle School de Sioux Center acerca de problemas que su hijo está teniendo?
    a. Extremadamente cómodo
    b. Muy cómodo
    c. Moderadamente cómodo
    d. Un poco cómodo
    e. Para nada cómodo

26. What input do you have to improve parent and school relations at Sioux Center Middle School?

27. ¿Qué aportaciones tiene para mejorar las relaciones entre los padres y las escuelas de Middle School de Sioux Center?

28. Please elaborate on any answers from the survey.

29. Por favor explique en detalle las respuestas de la encuesta.

Appendix B

Teacher Survey

1. How many years of teaching experience do you have?
    f.   Less than two years
    g. 2-5 years
    h. 6-10 years
    i.   11-20 years
    j.   21+ years

2. What is your teaching role?
    a.   Classroom teacher
    b. Paraprofessional
    c. Administrative
    d. Support staff
    e. Other

3. How much support do the parents with children at your school give to the teaching staff?
    a.   A great deal
    b. A lot
    c. A moderate amount
    d. A little
    e. None at all

4. How comfortable are you talking with parents about problems students are having?
    a.   Extremely comfortable
    b. Very comfortable
    c. Moderately comfortable
    d. Slightly comfortable
    e. Not at all comfortable

5. I believe that parental involvement in a child's education is needed for them to be a successful student.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				*Strongly agree*

6. I believe that the school is primarily responsible for a students' education.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				*Strongly agree*

7. I view parent interactions negatively due to the amount of added stress they put on my life.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				*Strongly agree*

8. I feel overwhelmed by the large number of parents I need to communicate with.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				*Strongly agree*

9. I do not typically communicate with the parents that I really need to communicate with the most.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				*Strongly agree*

10. The majority of information I share about students with parents is negative.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				*Strongly agree*

11. I am given adequate time and training to prepare for parent communication.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				*Strongly agree*

12. I believe students should play an active role at conferences.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				*Strongly agree*

13. Our school is doing a good job communicating with parents.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				*Strongly agree*

14. How do you believe parents can best help their children at home?
Check no more than two answers.
   a. Homework assistance
   b. Check that work is completed
   c. Give a quiet environment to work
   d. Set educational goals with their child
   e. Other

15. I believe the current parent-teacher conference system is effective.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				*Strongly agree*

16. How often do you communicate with parents?
    a. On a daily basis
    b. On a weekly basis
    c. Twice a month
    d. Monthly
    e. Only at conferences
    f. Never

17. How much input do the parents of your students give you about their child's education?
    a. A great deal
    b. A lot
    c. A moderate amount
    d. A little
    e. None at all

18. What input do you have to improve parent and school relations at Sioux Center Middle School?

19. Please elaborate on any of the questions from the survey.