

ABSTRACT

Title: A Study of Parental Involvement in Schools with a Focus on High and Low Achieving Students

The purpose of this study was to examine how parental attitudes and involvement can influence the performance of children in schools. Two sets of data were analyzed. One set was the information that was gathered from parent interviews and the second set of data was the student report cards and Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) scores.

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Is the level of parental involvement in school activities related to the academic achievement of children?
2. Is the socioeconomic status of parents related to the level of parent involvement?
3. Is parent ethnicity related to the level of parent involvement?
4. Is the marital status of parents related to the level of parent involvement?
5. Is the educational level of parents related to the level of parent involvement?

The subjects for this study include a random selection of fourth graders and their parents from the 55 elementary schools in the Pittsburgh City School District.

Findings indicated that parent involvement in school activities seemed to directly relate to academic performance. The data also revealed that the socioeconomic status of parents does relate to a child's academic achievement. When examining the racial makeup of the sample population and the parents' activities at school, the researcher found ethnicity did not appear to be a significant predictor of parent involvement. In analyzing the data to determine if parents' marital status had an influence on the level of parental involvement, data revealed more married people had high levels of involvement compared to single, separated, or divorced parents. The parents' educational level was also found to be a good predictor in the level of parental involvement.

These findings have implications for educators working with students at all grade levels. The findings make a glaring statement about the importance of higher educational levels for the parents and how that transfers over to student achievement. The results point out the importance

of schools reviewing and evaluating current systems, policies, procedures, and tools for promoting two-way communications with parents. Non-responsive parents should be targeted and situations need to be created where they can be involved in some segment of school life. Since the parents' educational level makes a difference in their level of parental involvement, schools need to educate parents regarding the power and importance of parent involvement on their children's academic success. Teachers need to diligently solicit parent involvement in their classrooms. Finally parents need to be a part of decision-making groups that examine the education of their children.