Parent Involvement in the Urban Community for Children with a Diagnosed Disability

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Concordia University–Portland
College of Education
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Parent Involvement in the Urban Community for Children with a Diagnosed Disability

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education
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Jillian Skelton, Ed.D., Faculty Chair Dissertation Committee
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Abstract

Parent involvement within the education system has been identified as a concern, especially in urban schools. Children with disabilities have been suggested to be at a higher risk of not receiving adequate education. In most cases, the way in which parents engage with the child and their school will determine the success of their educational experience. Within the urban community, there are factors that affect parents’ ability to work cooperatively with the school district. Through this multi-case study, the researcher examined the data showed that the administration believed they focused on building relationships and opportunities for parent involvement within the urban community for children with a diagnosed disability. The teachers within the study thought they were all focused on the best interest of the school and the families by building and promoting parent involvement opportunities. The parents in the study all stated they wanted to be there for their children and they wanted them to be successful. The multi-case study detailed this information through the interviews of the participants of the study, which provided a realistic account of the individuals servicing this population of youth. The study indicated there was a significant decline in parent involvement for children with a diagnosed disability.

*Keywords*: children with disabilities, parent involvement, Bourdieu, social capital, Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, urban schools
Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife and son. You both have been there to support this process and I am extremely grateful. Emory, you coming into this world is my greatest accomplishment; through you I was inspired to do this project. I am so proud of the young man you are becoming. Lisa you especially made the way for me to accomplish one of the biggest dreams I have ever had.

Love to you always
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Through life individuals have many opportunities to take different roads in different directions. During my time here, I have been lucky to have numerous family members and friends who have always supported my educational experience. I want to acknowledge my parents Roderick and Tonsie Pope; of course, without you two as the start of me I would not have had the opportunity to complete this project. To my aunts, uncles and late grandparents who were also there to provide when my parents couldn’t. As a result, I have a strong understanding of the necessity of the mantra, “It takes a village.”

I want to especially acknowledge my aunt, Danielle Burton; you were the first person who I mentioned that I wanted this degree. You were always there to listen and support all my life changes no matter how far they were outside of societal norms.

To my staff at CAG, thanks for being a team and supporting my education and lending me the opportunity to get what I needed to get this accomplished.

In addition, I want to acknowledge my faculty advisor, Jillian Skelton Ed.D. and the committee for taking the time to work with me and supporting this project. Lastly, a special shout out to my team mate Marilyn P, you may not know how each and everyone one of your calls or text messages, saved and stressed me out all at the same time. But I truly grateful for each one of them.

To every one of my readers of this dissertation may you walk away feeling the passion I have for this demographic of children. Remember, “It takes a village.”
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

The decline in parent involvement pertaining to schools and home engagement occurs for several reasons. Jeynes (2012) argued since the 1970’s, educators have been increasingly concerned about the degree to which, parents are involved (or uninvolved) in their children's education. While no single explanation can account for parent’s lack of involvement, exploring the reasons behind it is vital, particularly when the child has learning disabilities. Educating children with disabilities is a priority for school districts. Rodriguez, Blatz, and Elbaum (2014) studied parent involvement. Through their research, they found that parent involvement is believed to be essential to the success of students with disabilities. Families in urban communities have different life circumstances that affect school readiness within these school districts. Dotterer, Iruka, and Pungello (2012) argued, “studies have suggested that differences in parenting between socioeconomic groups are in part, responsible for the disparities in children’s development” (p. 658).

For this study, I, as the researcher examined the decline of parent participation in the urban communities in southern New York. The researcher will identify and provide insight into the educational and life experiences associated with families and children with disabilities regarding parent involvement. In Chapter 2, a literature review will include theories and supporting data, to identify the gap, the decline of parent involvement from elementary to middle school for families of children with disabilities. “Parental involvement in school is a key factor in addressing academic and behavioral issues faced by families” (Ferretti, Soto, Voigt, Kofler, & Ganley, 2015, p. 1). The researcher utilized the previous research noted in Chapter 2 to identify the factors that are associated with the decline. Chapter 3 included the methodology of the study.
it detailed the qualitative method with a multi-case design. The researcher identified the research method as an adequate way to understand the phenomenon. The researcher interviewed numerous participants to get actual accounts of experiences of parent involvement. Chapter 4 detailed the data collected during the investigation. This chapter details and describes the data collected in the study. The researcher lays out the results from the surveys, questionnaires, and provides descriptions pertaining to the interviews. This chapter also listed tables and charts of the results. The Chapter 5 provided the reader with a summary of the data and details the researcher’s perspective of the findings. The chapter goes into a discussion of the results detailed in Chapter 4. The researcher exams the results and provides the reader with conclusion drawn from the data collected that identifies the decline in parent involvement in the urban community for children with a diagnosed disability.

**Background, Context, History, and Conceptual Framework**

The urban populations within cities where the socioeconomic status meets or is below the national poverty line live in a world of challenges. The cycle of limited change demonstrated through lack of educational and socioeconomic growth within these communities creates a reliance on the local school district. These communities rely on the school district to be the sole provider of an educational experience to the children with disabilities that they serve. Parents having limited access to quality education themselves, higher stress levels, and limited time and opportunity, increases this withdraw from interaction to continue to fester within these communities.

Researchers such as Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) and Bourdieu (1986) developed models and theories that the researcher of this study used to create the conceptual framework for parent involvement in the urban community for children with a diagnosed
disability. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) developed a model for the parent involvement process which explores the importance of parent involvement. Additionally, Bourdieu (1986) developed the theory of social capital. The theory of social capital is defined as, “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition, or in other words, to membership in a group” (Richardson, 1986, p. 242).

In addition, the researcher of this study combined the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) model with the theory of social capital developed by Bourdieu (1986). This current study provides an understanding that helps to describe parent involvement for children with a diagnosed disability. Children with disabilities such as autism, ADHD, and other emotional concerns are a population with legal protection under The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, also known as IDEA (1997) which was designed to ensure quality education for youth with a diagnosed disability.

**Statement of the Problem**

The problem the researcher examined is the decline of parent involvement in the urban community of disabled children from elementary to secondary education. The researcher examined the factors that work as the catalyst for this drop of parent involvement. The researcher focused on the decrease among parents in a specific economic status to be involved in the education of their disabled children in Title I schools. Title 1 schools were used for this study due to the families they serve. Agoratus (2016) outlined the additional provisions contained in the IDEA for parent involvement in these schools. Additionally, he argued, Title 1 schools, as they “have high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families” (p. 1). The participants for this study was the parents, teachers, and administrators who serve children with
disabilities. The necessity for parent involvement of disabled children in the urban community has been identified throughout research on parent involvement across all age groups. The evidence suggests there is a decrease of parent involvement from elementary school to secondary education.

**Purpose of the Study**

This researcher’s purpose of this study was to understand the reasons, concerns, and implications associated with the decline of parent involvement of disabled children in southern New York urban communities. Also, the study examined the societal norms associated, with families within these communities. Children with disabilities are part of a demographic within society that needs additional support as opposed to children within the same communities who are not classified with a specific disability. Families of disabled children have an increased responsibility and obligation to the child rearing process. Children with a diagnosed disability come with higher needs due to their disability. Also, the researcher utilized the research from other parent involvement qualitative studies to identify the phenomenon and draw conclusions on what could be done to decrease the decline of parent involvement.

**Research Questions**

The researcher detailed the phenomena associated with the gap through a series of questions that highlight parenting, teaching, children with disabilities, and culture in urban community. The sample was a composition of families from urban public schools in different communities in southern New York. Each question focused on the decline of parent involvement in their disabled child’s education. The content of the individual questions supports the building of the conceptual framework associated with the studies done by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler.
(2005), Bourdieu theory of social capital (1986). Both are at the archway for the individual theory and/or model to be associated with this study.

Each question focuses on the facets of the conceptual framework to build a sound explanation for these phenomena. The following are the research questions for this study:

1. What does parent involvement looks like for children with a diagnosed disability?
2. What are the factors that affect parenting while living in the urban community?
3. What are the circumstances that influence the decline of parent involvement in urban community schools, particularly when those parents have children with diagnosed disabilities?

**Rationale**

Qualitative studies create a storyline that assists with understanding the experiences and perceptions associated with a phenomenon. McMillan (2012) identified qualitative studies as collecting information within a natural setting. “It is based on an interpretive on constructivist perspectives” (p. 12). For this study, the researcher used the qualitative methodological approach, this approach supports discovery of the phenomena. The previous research investigated, produced an opportunity for the researcher to use the existing data from there sources to determine the need for further research.

The researcher considered a quantitative methodology for this study but decided against it because the collection procedures would not provide the direct experiences of the sample. To clearly determine the extent of the experiences of the sample in this study there needs to be a picture that depicts the occurrence of the phenomenon. The goal of the study is to understand the decline in parent involvement, the researcher relied on procedures of a phenomenological study, which “is to fully understand the essence of some phenomenon” (McMillan, 2012, p.14). In
addition, the utilization of supportive theories to explain this phenomenon is an acceptable practice within a qualitative study.

**Nature of the Design**

The selected design for this study was a multi-case study. The researcher selected this method to obtain multiple perspectives on parent involvement for disabled children. Yin (2014) provided a twofold definition of a case study, these interpretations compels the researcher to such definitions with the researcher’s goals in this study. According to Yin, a case study is an empirical inquiry that identifies a phenomenon during its real time, real life movement in the world. Yin additionally stated a case study is useful when the lines between phenomenon and context are not evident. The researcher was looking to provide clarity of the phenomenon and establish the circumstances that support the decline of parent involvement for children with disabilities in the urban community.

Throughout the study it is evident to see a decline in parent involvement as a societal whole. The researchers looked at the contributing factors identified in this study such as children with disabilities and socioeconomic status. These factors associated with this study were investigated through a case study. “Data from multi-case study usually will come mostly from the cases studied, but these researchers may gather other data than case data” (Stake, 2006, p. 8). By collecting information from each of the cases as well as supporting cases and additional data allows for a sufficient amount of information to develop conclusions and recommendations.

**Relevance**

The study followed a multicase study design to identify the structure of parent involvement. The researcher in this study reflected on the needs of African American and Latino families that have children with disabilities. The researcher selected a subset within the sites
selected to conduct the research these two ethnicities as the population of the schools selected for this study. These families are part of the urban community who are part of a segment of society that is neglected. The families in these communities often live below the federal poverty level, thus indicating the need for research that could help improve their circumstances. Parish, Rose, and Swaine (2010) confirmed in their study on the financial well-being of parents of children with disabilities that there are “high rates of income poverty among families caring for children with developmental disabilities” (Parish et al., 2010, p. 405). The children within these settings are at risk of being left in a school setting that is not built and equipped to support their needs. As posted on ed.gov (n.d.), federal regulations like the IDEA stipulate different mandates, including funding regulations for districts servicing these students as well as stipulations to include parents in the educational experience.

Communication is part of any system, and a significant part of developing a secure relationship. The results of this study could be the foundation of a communications structure that enhances the school-to-home partnership. This structure is vital because according to Tyler (2016), “the change process is an ongoing event in education effective communication is essential to change. Community-building partnerships such as those between parents and educators strengthen communities and create opportunities for prosperity” (p. 8). The researcher provided research that will allow opportunity to identify the strength of the youth, families, and schools; the goal is to increase opportunity to grow and create stronger systems to support parent involvement.

Multiple solutions exist for any one problem. The results from this study assist in determining the most important points and contributing factors to why low-income parents in urban communities become less involved in their disabled children’s education from elementary
to secondary levels. The study will support rectifying this situation with research that provides insight to develop additional plans of action for parent involvement programs in urban communities for families with children with disabilities.

**Definition of Terms**

Terms that are utilized throughout this study to identify specific, pertinent concepts. The definitions of most terms contained in this study align with the standard definition. Each definition was supported from information provided through the NICHCY (2012) Disability fact sheet #15, Other Health Impairment. An additional resource for definitions was Moore, Bagin, and Gallagher (2012).

**Administrative team.** Individuals who are responsible for following the state and national regulations set for their district and or school. These individuals include principals, counselors, nurses, and any additional personnel who work directly with teaching staff, teachers, families, and children (Moore et al., 2012).

**Attention Deficit Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD, ADHD).** A condition that can make it hard for a student to sit still, focus, and/or manage his or her behavior.

- Additional cues:
  - Inattentive type: where the person cannot seem to get focused or stay focused on a task or activity
  - Hyperactive-impulsive type: where the person is very active and often acts without thinking
    - Combined type: where the person is inattentive, impulsive, and too active (NICHCY, 2012).
Behavior concerns. Children whose academic experience is affected by their behaviors, which causes loss of school hours and adversely affects their academic success in the school setting (NICHCY, 2012).

Children receiving services. Children who have been diagnosed with a specific disability, granting them an Individual Education Plan (IEP). This entails receiving assistance from professional sessions in the areas of speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, applied behavior analysis (ABA), special instruction, and counseling. Children may receive individual services or any combination of therapies (NICHCY, 2012).

Children with disabilities. Individuals who have been diagnosed with a specific disability that grants them an Individualized education plan (IEP) or an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) based on the regulations in the IDEA (1997) to receive preventative and corrective services (NICHCY, 2012).

Emotional disturbances. A condition in which student exhibits one or more of the following characteristics over an extended time and to marked degree that adversely affects his or her educational performance (NICHCY, 2012).

Other Health Impairments (OHI). One of the 14 categories of the disabilities listed under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Children with this classification are impaired by one or more acute health problems, (such as asthma, ADD, ADHD, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette syndrome) that adversely affect the child’s educational experience (NICHCY, 2012).

Teachers. Individuals who work directly with the children by providing curriculum and have direct line of communication with the families (Moore et al., 2012).
**Urban community.** An area that is classified as a city with a dense population of people. For this study, the researcher will choose areas that were largely populated with African American and Hispanics families (Moore et al, 2012).

**Limitations**

Limitations are circumstances that can affect the success of a study but that are beyond the researcher’s control. Within any qualitative study there are factors that can and will impede the completion of the project. In this study, identifying and acquiring information in school districts required approvals to collect data from supporting participants in the study. The researcher collected data from seven schools in three school districts. This required an understanding of each administration’s stipulation which could have limited access to this data. Each of the school districts had approval processes. The researcher contacted each district to determine the approval process. The researcher completed the required documents to gain authorization to access the schools.

During the collection of data people can also place a limitation on a study. The information in the present study is based on the personal accounts of parents, teachers, and administrators and the researcher’s interpretation of this data. The researcher’s conclusions and recommendations derived from the personal accounts of study participants. Therefore, if participants did not provide full, honest answers, the conclusions from this research would be incomplete and potentially inaccurate. The development of data within this case study used data based on the reported and observed responses of the sample selected. Lastly completing the study independently with minimal financial means are additional factors that are affecting the study.
Delimitations

This study was centralized within seven schools in three communities in southern New York. This area consisted of large urban cities that provided the selected demographics needed for this study. Each of the schools are in an urban community and have a large population of students from African American and Latino families that live below the poverty line and have students with disabilities. Socioeconomic status was a predetermined for participation in this study. The researcher focused the study on children with disabilities, including ADHD and other emotional concerns, because these children are at the greatest risk of failing academically in their communities.

The details of the study identified the factors that affected parent involvement within the urban community, specifically the African American and Latino communities. Parental interviews were also a major part of this study as a source to support the overall project, the details from these interviews will account for a larger portion of the data collected. Further, the researcher included teachers and administrators to provide an outlook of the schools.

Summary

Parent involvement is a key part of the educational experience of children and families. The importance of communication within the school setting has been identified and explained in numerous educational laws, such as, the IDEA or ESSA. These legislative examples and others like them provide the framework for how children receive an adequate educational experience. This researcher explored the educational experience of a specific student population, namely children who have received a diagnosis that they have a condition that affects their academic experience.
The researcher established triangulation through the exploration of the theories of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) parent involvement theory, as well as Bourdieu’s (1986) theory of social capital. The study maintained the focus of the study on the perspective of the parents, teachers and administrators allowed for a clear description of the phenomenon. The researcher was able to devise a plan and explore parent involvement in the urban community for children with a diagnosed disability.

This study is an opportunity to gain insight on the concepts associated with parent involvement as well and the growing concerns related to raising children with disabilities. Moreover, including the perspectives of administrators and teachers highlighted the effects these individuals have on parent involvement and their responsibility to build on the opportunities of the families they serve. The researcher intends to lay a foundation for understanding parent involvement in the urban community for children with a diagnosed disability.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Parent involvement has been researched and determined to be the base of a child’s educational experience. Fantuzzo, McWayne, and Perry (2004) argued, “family involvement in education has been identified as beneficial factor in young children’s learning” (p. 467). In the urban community, families lack sufficient resources to provide for their basic needs, including an adequate free education. Yoshikawa, Aber, and Beardslee (2012) focused on the effects of poverty on children within the urban community and the limitations faced by the community, such as poverty, stress, broken families, as well as the need to work excessive hours to provide for their households. “The effects of poverty are cumulative; consequences at one stage in a child’s development can hinder development at a later stage” (Beardslee, 2012, p. 278). Boschma and Brownstein (2016) stated that “in almost all major American cities, most African American and Latino students attend public schools where a majority of their classmates qualify as poor or low-income, a new analysis of federal data shows” (para. 9). Williams and Sanchez (2011) discussed the limited means of parents within the urban community and how circumstances affect their ability to parent. In addition, parents believe they will send their children to their local schools and their child will be educated with the best education possible.

Unfortunately, in some circumstances, parents often lack the educational experience to participate fully in their children’s education. Therefore, those parents must trust their local school to provide their children with academic instruction. Hyun-Joo et al. (2011) discussed school readiness and suggested that children from low-income families are often significantly less ready for school than peers who live above the poverty line. Children with disabilities are at even higher risk to be less successful in school due to their academic limitation based on their
disability, within these communities there is a greater need for the parents of the children to advocate for them from birth throughout secondary education. Especially because “children with developmental challenges and special learning needs constitute a substantial and vulnerable group of individuals in U.S. society” (Benn, Akiva, Arel, & Roeser, 2012, p. 1480).

**Topic**

The following sections contain a literature review designed to highlight the reasons behind a decline in parent involvement within the urban community, namely among parents of children with disabilities. Hoglund, Brown, Jones, and Aber (2015) stated “parent involvement in schooling may be particularly important for low-income children, who are often vulnerable to poor academic and social emotional adjustment” (p. 520). The special education system within public schools was designed for children with disabilities and behaviors that affected their overall learning. Pennell (2011) stated that the purpose of Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) is “to ensure that all students with disabilities have available to them free and appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education” (Pennell, 2011, para. 1). Students who are diagnosed as autistic, having ADD/ADHD, a specific learning disability, and/or emotional concerns are the students who fill the classrooms in urban special education classrooms. Benn et al. (2012) conducted and meta-study and reported 15% of the U.S. population below 18 years of age has been identified as having a physical, emotional, or behavioral disability.

The decline in parent involvement in urban school’s results from stress, lack of education, and/or limited communication and partnerships with the schools, these factors work together to place these parents at a disadvantage compared to their suburban counterparts.
Dotterer et al. (2012) claimed the achievement gap between low-income and high-income families is a national concern in the U.S. As a result, there comes a cycle of decline of parent involvement. Latino and African American families in the urban community, exhibit this decline in involvement. Research has found “the quality of caregiving by parents and special educators is a critical factor for ensuring the well-being and educational success of the special needs population” (Benn et al., 2012, p. 1482). This literature review contains an examination of the reasons, concerns, and theories associated with the decline of parent involvement of children with disabilities in urban schools.

**Context**

The researcher in this study examined the overall causes of the decline in parent involvement as well as the theories that surround parent involvement within urban communities. For example, stress is an indicator of concern of urban parents of children with disabilities. Neece, Green, and Baker (2012) found children with developmental challenges are more likely to have family environments with elevated levels of parenting stress. The effect of the stress of living with limited resources, opportunities, and parenting a child with a disability puts parents in a position to want to escape their reality. Moreover, disabled children’s behaviors affect the levels of parent involvement. Neece et al. (2012) argued that elevated levels of behavior problems and psychopathology are prominent for children with disabilities, which can increase the level of stress on the family providing care.

The academic experience of the youth in schools is important and the educators are at the forefront of providing this service, as well as working with the families. The IDEA (1997) mandated that “assessments and interventions for young children with disabilities attend to families’ capacities for supporting their children’s development and be carried out within
authentic and typical learning experiences” (Chao, Bryan, Burstein, & Ergul, 2006, p. 148).
Legislators established these laws to protect families and ensure they are part of the educational experience of their children. The support of teachers and administrators in theory should provide a school culture that encourages and supports family’s ability to involved.

**Significance**

The strength that backs children’s education is their parents, because parents are children’s first educators. Hornby and Lafaele (2011) argued,

high achieving students in low-income black families, found that what distinguished the parents of these students from others as the school was that they believed that they should be involved in their children’s education, by both supporting their learning at home and interacting constructively at school. (p. 41)

The goal of parents is to ensure that children grow up to be self-sufficient and successful in society. The goal of the education system is to provide youth with a competitive learning experience in which they can grow and exercise their love for knowledge. When children have a collaborative team to provide this structure, they have what they need to succeed. Jeynes (2012) argued, “most teachers and parents have a sense that their engagement in their children’s schooling will ameliorate academic outcomes” (p. 711). However, many parents within the urban community are unaware of this collaboration with their school system because they feel a level of disconnect within the community with teachers, administrators, and education policy makers. Parents who lack education and life experience may feel the school district is beyond their ability to communicate with or affect. Support is needed in these areas where the community lacks the educational and social experiences to successfully navigate the education system. Hartley and
Schultz (2014) discussed the need for connecting parents with educators, establishing respect, and involving parents in the choices for their disabled child’s treatment plans.

**Problem Statement**

The existing issue within urban communities is the failure of parents to remain involved with their children who have an IEP. The parents are inadequately trained to understand and implement what is needed to be part of the educational experience. Smith (2002) discussed “the struggle with being a parent and being a parent with a child with a disability is even more complex” (p. 254). Smith (2002) went on to discuss feelings of parents, “parents often feel guilty because they feel their child’s learning disability, ADHD, and related disorder are somehow their fault” (p. 254). Those parents either are stressed, uneducated, or uninformed of their part and power within the educational experience. Jeynes (2012) stated, “people tend to emphasize the value of parental participation more at the lower grades than at the higher grades” (p. 712). Therefore, the path taken to sustain parents’ advocacy of their children with disabilities and remain invested as their child’s first line of defense in society must be addressed.

Exploring parent involvement for a child with disabilities and the necessity for cooperative parenting is essential. Parents are the core of the child’s educational experience and the factors that play a role in deflecting these responsibilities. However, parenting within the urban community comes with levels of stress that suburban parents often do not face, for example financial stress, mental health issues, or single-parent households that urban parents endure.

**Organization**

The researcher examined the development of parent involvement in an urban school setting. The study included an analysis of the classification of youth with an IEP. The IEP, or
Individual Education Plan, is developed for children whom are classified with a specific
disability under the IDEA. Fernandez (2014) detailed how children under this law are diagnosed
with a learning disability, or medical condition that affects their ability to learn in a general
classroom setting. The IDEA also emphasizes that parents are the child’s communication link
between the school and home; this study contains an exploration of the factors associated with
this involvement. “IDEA provisions regarding parent involvement imply a picture of the family
and school team working together amicably sharing visions and goals, and ultimately making
decisions collectively” (Mueller, 2009, p. 60).

Additionally, the researcher examined the key causes and the ways in which
administrations within urban schools can develop better strategies for encouraging parent
involvement and better IEPs for their disabled students. Jeon et al. (2011) discussed factors
associated with school readiness, which is correlated with parent involvement. “Researchers
have found that maternal education and depression, home environments, home language, family
income, minority status, and early care and education experiences predict children’s
development and school readiness” (Jeon et al., 2011, p. 13).

**Conceptual Framework**

**Personal interest.** The association of parent involvement within school district creates a
dynamic of interaction that warrants continued research. The way in which parents are involved
within schools help to support why and how the children will succeed in their academic career.
Children with disabilities have more limitations than children without disabilities and parents of
disabled children have a duty to advocate for them because most of these students may never be
able to advocate for themselves. Parents are usually involved with their children, but as children
age, parents become less involved in their educational experience.
The reality for many families in poor communities is that stress from life and work places them at a disadvantage to provide the resources necessary for their children. Youth with disabilities may have educational, emotional, and behavioral issues that require interventions to assist with their overall success. Schools may conduct these interventions but, in most cases, parental intervention is also necessary. However, a lack of resources and knowledge may leave parents disconnected from the intervention process.

Youth with disabilities have limitations that can hinder their ability to advocate for themselves. With the sanctions like the IDEA, No Child Left Behind, and Common Core, the U.S. government has been specifically addressing the education of youth with disabilities. The level in which parents are involved determines the success of the educational experience of their children. Collier’s (2015) focus on the importance of parents as key participants in educational decisions for their children has been reinforced by the emphasis that the IDEA places on collaboration between parents and teachers.

**Topical framework.** Researchers have made many arguments about the value of parent involvement within schools. Children with disabilities can be lost in the educational experience because of their individualized needs, due to overcrowding in schools, and behavior issues of the students. Parents are an intricate factor to ensure the experience of their children is adequate to provide them an opportunity for success. However, many students in urban schools come from families in lower socio-economic statuses, thus making parent involvement more difficult and less likely.

Researchers have considered several factors surrounding the phenomenon of parent involvement and the educational experience of youth. Marschall and Shah (2016) argued that parent involvement is at the core of every effective school. This study focused on the effects of
parent involvement and the decline for children with disabilities within urban communities. Additionally, the researcher explored the cultural norms that influence schools within the urban communities, “in the context of schools serving minority populations, minority principles are often more aware of the cultural notes that facilitate trust with co-ethnic parents and understand the social hierarchies and avenues for gaining access to reach and ethnic communities” (p. 26). The communities in question are those in which African American and Latinos comprise most of the students within the school districts.

However, researchers have yet to construct a consistent definition of parent involvement. Hill and Kim (2015) defined parent involvement as, “parent’s interactions with schools and with their children to promote academic success” (p. 927). Jeynes (2011) explored what parent involvement means within schools, and avowed that parent involvement means checking homework, visiting school, and volunteering. Jeynes (2001) provided a powerful description that elevates the need for parents to be a tool for children to learn in the academic setting.

**Theoretical Framework**

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s research (2005) and Bourdieu’s Theory (1986) each align with the questions associated with this study. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) investigated the ideals and factors associated with parents being involved that within the school their children attend. Researchers consider Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s work as seminal because of its simplicity and deep insights into why parents invest in their children. Collier (2015) described this Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model as having shown the relationship between the home and school connection. “Teachers who reach out to parents and encourage participation are more likely to motivate parents to become involved in their children’s education” (para. 18). Bourdieu (1986) discussed the alignment of standards that are associated
with cultural differences that affect society. “Bourdieu’s approach is made from the point of view of actors engaged in struggle in pursuit of their interest” (Siisiainen, 2000, p. 6). Marschall and Shah (2016) noted, “children of the ‘dominant class’ are advantaged in their understanding of the educational environment” (p. 24). Furthermore, in Marschall and Shah’s (2016) case, “a clear continuity exists between the culture of home and that of the school” (p. 24). With the context of Marschall and Shah (2016) the reference to dominant class is in despondence to the middle, upper middle, and upper classes.

In this study, the researcher used Hoover-Dempsey’s and Bourdieu’s work as the foundation for examining parent involvement in urban school districts for children with a diagnosed disability, and why these parents may not be more involved in their children’s education. Ultimately the strength of the children lies within the parent’s involvement because parents are children’s first educator, and the key to their connection between home and school. Ferretti et al. (2015) stated, “parental involvement in school is a key factor in addressing academics and behavioral issues faced by families of children with ADHD” (p. 1).

**Literature Review**

Residents of urban neighborhoods often have many concerns, including violence and poverty, that suburban residents do not have. Burdick-Will (2013) argued that educational outcomes vary in different cities, “students in many large urban districts schools routinely have achievement that lags behind their suburban peers and racial and socio-economic achievement gaps that begin early and often become larger as students proceed through schooling” (p. 343). Further, education is one of the major concerns within urban communities because youth are in environments that are structured to keep them in the same rotation of the life. “The effects of poverty are cumulative; consequences at one stage in a child's development can hinder
development at a later stage” (Yoshikawa et al. 2012, p. 274). Children with disabilities are more likely to struggle socially and academically in the school setting within urban communities. The researcher in this study used the literature review to highlight the factors associated with raising a child diagnosed with autism, specific learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, and other emotional concerns. Additionally, the literature contains a discussion of the effect of parent involvement and its decline from early childhood to middle school in urban communities.

Children with disabilities have protections within school systems. The 1975 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provided youth from age three to 21 years and their families with specific rights, including sufficient access to a free public education. Moreover, parents of children with disabilities also have provisions that protect their rights as guardian and decision maker in school districts. Mueller (2009) discussed the IDEA’s provisions that describe the responsibility of the school district and the individual schools to provide feedback and planning sessions with parents and caregivers to establish a cooperative relationship.

**Types of disabilities.** There are different disabilities that youth are classified with. The researcher in this study focused on youths with autism, and other emotional or health impairments such as attention deficit disorder (ADD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The Center for Disease Control and Prevention, (CDC), attested that ADD, is known to be one of the most common neurodevelopment disorders. In 2011, The American Academy of Pediatric provided these details on ADD or ADHD as a “neurobehavioral disorder of childhood and can profoundly affect the academic achievement, well-being, and social interactions of children” (para. 11). Symptoms that youth with ADD exhibit are struggling to pay attention, and controlling impulsive behavior, and they may also appear to be overly active. The symptoms of
this diagnoses are easily noticed through the behavior exhibited of children. Which is seen through the numerous of children diagnosed with this classification.

American Psychiatric Association (APA) (2017) provided the definition of each of the three different dimensions within this disorder: inattentive, hyperactive-impulsive, and a combined presentation of these conditions. Youth who are indicated as inattentive display an inability to organize and/or finish a task, also seen as “not being able to stay focused” (para. 12). They may also display an inability to follow directions or follow instructions or conversations. Youth who are indicated as hyperactive, often fidget or appear to be talkative, also seen as “excess movements that is not fitting to the setting” (para. 12). They have difficulty sitting still for extended periods. Moreover, they demonstrate impulsiveness by interrupting others, grabbing items from other youth, and speaking at inappropriate times, also seen as, “hasty acts that occur in the moment without thought” (para. 12). Lastly there are youth who present combined symptoms of inattentiveness, and hyperactivity-impulsivity. Some youth are noted to have a combination of any of the three specifications. Which also can be been matched with other classifications.

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) refers to a group of complex neurodevelopment disorders characterized by repetitive, characteristic patterns of behaviors and difficulties with social communication and interactions. The National Institute of Mental Health explained ASD as, “Autism Spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disorder that affects communication and behavior” (para. 2). The 2013 Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, DSM-5, detailed the disorder as the spectrum has evolved since the original establishment of a diagnosis in 1943. Harrop et al. (2015) discussed boys are more likely to be diagnosed with ASD than girls at a ratio of 4:1, currently statistics show that .014% of children have ASD. Autism spectrum
disorder is no longer a simple diagnosis because of the many variations on the continuum. “Autism is known as ‘spectrum’ disorder because there is a wide variation in the type and severity of symptoms people experience” (NIMH, para. 3). Individuals are classified with a wide range a behavior that will place individuals on the spectrum. Through evaluations of psychologist and other trained evaluators youth are diagnosed as early as three years old.

Youth also receive special education services from a category called specific learning disabilities. These are disorders are displayed in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language. The use of language that is spoken or written, can appear to be daunting for a child. In addition, delays manifest themselves in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or complete mathematical calculations correctly. The National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (2012) detailed the following selected learning disabilities that fall under this category:

- **Reading-** Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

- **Writing-** Dysgraphia is an impairment of handwriting ability that is characterized chiefly by very poor or often illegible writing or writing that takes an unusually long time and great effort to complete.
• Speaking- Specific language impairment (SLI) is a language disorder that delays the mastery of language skills in children who have no hearing loss or other developmental delays.

• Math- Dyscalculia is a specific learning disability in math. Kids with dyscalculia may have difficulty understanding number-related concepts or using symbols or functions needed for success in mathematics.

Each of these learning disabilities can be identified in youth, and some youth experience numerous disabilities.

Children with disabilities may also be diagnosed with Other Health Impaired (OHI). The Center for Parent Information Resources (2017) stated, "Other Health Impairment is one of the 14 categories of disability listed in our nations special education law, the Individuals with Disability Act (IDEA)" (Center for Parent information Resources, 2017, para. 18).

The Parent Information Resource Page went on to state: Other Health Impairment means having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment that:

"Is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, Rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, Tourette syndrome (NIMH, para. 22)." These medical concerns have to adversely affect a child’s educational performance in order to be classified with OHI.

This diagnosis is distinguished from others because there is no specific disability necessary for a child to be classified with this title. Many of the youth that receive this diagnosis exhibit
excessive negative behavior, display forms of anxiety, and or PTSD. Within urban schools, there is evidence of youth receiving this classification because of experiences within their community.

**Numbers of students with disabilities.** The United States Census Report contains data on how many students within American schools are diagnosed with a disability. The 2010 Census indicated that five to eight percent of students in American schools have been diagnosed with, autism, intellectual disabilities, ADHD, and or emotional disturbances. (United States Census, 2010). Further, the census numbers indicate that children of African American and Latino decent account for the larger portion of children with disabilities in public schools. Data collected nationally during the 2010 school year, showed African American students as 15% of the population with an IEP, and 12% Latino students have an IEP nationally in public schools. The data indicated Caucasian students comprised 13% of students with an IEP. In terms of gender, the IEP population is 64% male and 34% female. Additionally, 62% of youth with an IEP are in general education classes. Of the minority students, African Americans and Latino children have shown limited success long term, 55% of African American and 58% of Latino are less likely to graduate with a high school diploma as opposed to other racial and ethnic groups. As a result, 19% African American and 18% of Latino students receive some form of an alternative certificate.

**Challenges for students.** Disabilities affect the development of the youth in diverse ways. Growing up with a disability can inspire young people to overcome their challenges but also overwhelm them. The social and emotional strains can be daunting for children with disabilities, especially when those children live in stressful environments. Hoglund et al. (2014) stated, “living in the context of economic hardship has a strong potential to undermine children’s academic and social emotional adjustment, often through the adverse effects of hardship on
parenting behaviors such as their involvement in schooling” (p. 525). Children who undergo this level of stress tend to exhibit behavior concerns. Consequently, youth who are unable to manage their behavior perform less and experience suspensions, relocation of schools, and overall loss of academic time in the classroom.

**Challenges for schools.** Within the communities they serve, urban schools face many challenges, including funding, challenging students, and lack of parent involvement. The research indicates, children with disabilities like autism, ADHD, and other emotional concerns exhibit challenges. Smith (2011) argued, parents of children with disabilities want to be involved but need support due to the challenges they face by having a child with a diagnosed disability. “IDEA and subsequent legislation clearly called for educators to join with parents to work as a team for the common good of students” (Lovett & Cushing, 1999, p. 135). Furthermore, regulations require education officials to provide environments suitable for the children with disabilities that they serve. In addition, these environments are expected to support parental growth.

The research shows the perspective of school professionals, they have argued that many of the youth exhibit behaviors that affect the student’s ability to learn. Tyler (2016) stated that “the principal’s impact is of significance due to the actions that they take to hire teachers, create the school-wide conditions that support student learning, and directly influence teacher effectiveness” (p. 2). Marschall and Shah (2016) argued school leadership plays an especially crucial role in whether and how schools engage parents to be involved in the academic experience of their children with and without disabilities. One of the key factors that affect this engagement is the ability to relate to the social norms associated with the community in which teachers and administrators serve.
Parents experience large levels of stress when working their children who demonstrate problematic behaviors. Ludlow (2012) stated, “it is clear that strong teacher-family relationships are essential to effective educational programs for students with disabilities” (p. 4). Without these relationships, which are difficult at times to establish, the challenges that exist within the classroom setting are not addressed.

**Families of children with disabilities.** Among many of the challenges that exist for parents of the youth with disabilities, stress, lack of education, and poverty are circumstances that affect the decline in involvement for this population. The parent involvement aspect of education creates a connection between home and school that is vital to the student’s success. Lee and Bowen (2006) discussed poverty, low levels parental educational attainment within African American and Latino results in lower academic performances for their children. These families have circumstances and experiences that limit their ability to be who they need to be for their child with a disability.

The literature highlights the relationship of stress to the child rearing experience. Kersh (2006) discussed parents wellbeing, the study determined, “parents of children with disabilities experience similar amounts of stress related to challenges and duties of parenting” (p. 889). Stress is a significant factor explored in the literature surrounding parent involvement, and children with a disability. Stress can cause concerns for one’s overall health. “Many studies have demonstrated that parents of a child with an intellectual disability (ID) are likely to experience significantly higher level of parenting stress than are parents of nondisabled children” (Hassell, Rose, & McDonald, 2005, p. 409). The behaviors of avoidance and being easily agitated are associated with stress levels and can be triggered by the behavior concerns associated with students who have disabilities. “The relationship between child behavior problems and parental
well-being might be problems explained by low parental adjustment contributing to the
development and exacerbation of child behavior problems” (Baker, Blancher, & Olsson, 2005, p. 575).

Rivard (2014) discussed that parents of children with autism spectrum disorder are
known to experience more stress than parents of children with any other condition. The disability
does not cause the stress; rather, the behaviors associated with youth who are diagnosed with
these disabilities result in parent stress. Brophy-Herb et al. (2013) stated, “parental stress is
linked to more punitive and less emotionally supportive parenting and to low-income children's
internalizing and externalizing problems” (p. 326). This negative response to stress imposes
concern for families of children with disabilities in the urban community.

Living in low-income urban communities comes with its own level of stress and factors
that contribute to hardships of parents of children with disabilities. “It was indicated that parents
living in low income neighborhoods do not have access to the same financial and educational
resources as their middle-class counterparts” (Williams & Sanchez, 2011, p. 61). The cost of this
dynamic affects families, thus requiring parents to balance working to provide food and shelter
versus spending time with their families. The overwhelming cost of living does not allow room
for families to provide both in most cases.

**Parent involvement.** Researchers have constantly argued the need for parent
involvement. The lack of time spent at home as well as the pressure families of children with
disabilities experience causes their involvement level to decline. Children with disabilities
display systematic behaviors that cause parents to have negative behaviors caused by increased
stress. As a result, parents are less involved in their children’s schools. Feeling overwhelmed
may compel parents to distance themselves from these experiences with the school.
Parent involvement encourages the student to be successful within their educational experiences. Research suggests that the contributions of the school, but more importantly the contributions of the parents, determines student success. Children with disabilities need their parents to advocate for their success more than their counterparts without a disability. Children within the urban community are at an even greater risk due to the experiences of living within the urban community and its effect on members of the community.

Parents in urban communities have been noted to be disconnected from their children’s school. Archer-Bank et al. (2008) stated, “collaboration between parents and schools has become increasingly more important as society has recognized that schools alone cannot educate students” (p. 143). Elementary school parents show more concerns for the academics of their children. Lee and Bowen (2006) argued that parents within urban communities with lower levels of education may be less involved in schools. As students begin to get older, there is evidence that these efforts become less consistent. Different researchers have attempted to explain this decline, from parents not having time, financial concerns, lack of parental education, or the belief that support in no longer needed. Lovitt and Cushing’s (1999) findings stated, barriers of parent communication with teachers and other staff in our study included language and economics. In some cases, students did not want their parents to be involved in school. Froiland and Davison (2014) stated, “although certain forms of parent involvement are more effective at different ages and parent school-based involvement generally declines as students get older, there is evidence that parent expectations and positive parent-school relationships are beneficial throughout the schooling years” (p. 15).

One of the leading reasons for the decline of parent involvement is the connection between parental stress and involvement. Williams and Sanchez (2011) suggested that parents
who lacked the resources to assist their children are more likely not to become involved in the child’s academics. As stated previously, the behavior concerns associated with youth affects the contributions parents can provide. Combining heightened stress levels associated with youth receiving services, and parents who are at their own personal limits, could lead to parent’s resistance to want to be involved.

Decline in involvement. The decline in parent involvement from early years to middle school entails various factors. Within the early childhood setting, children with disabilities are part of two different teams: one team is comprised of parents who are willing and able to advocate for their child and the other team has parents who are not. In many cases, children do not receive the services they need, and some parents do not want to acknowledge there is an existing issue. These parents are unaware that their child has a disability or the impact on the child’s development from not receiving services.

Furthermore, the negative stigma associated with having a child with a disability often means parents in the urban community do not want to admit their concerns and refuse to engage with the schools. This level of fear of being ostracized for having a child without a disability that exists in the urban community needs to be addressed. The level of inferiority parents feel because of their own lack of education allows such negative opinions to flourish.

Without acknowledgement of the decline of parent involvement, many families are left to handle and support their child’s educational experience without proper guidance. Throughout society there are plenty of service centers for families of children with disabilities to seek assistance. Unfortunately, there are many cases where families do not seek these resources and rely on the school district as their sole provider. Even though the IDEA has mandates for school districts to be the support entity for these families, the school may not be equipped to handle
each family on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, many families are plagued with additional stressors that incapacitate their ability to be an active participant in their child’s education.

Parents are the child's first teacher and advocate. When parents are adequately prepared to be the advocate, they will continue throughout the child’s lifetime. Dotterer et al. (2012) discussed the home environment not being important to the educational experience. They stated, “consideration of the home environment, however, children’s first learning context, is critical when exploring strategies to address achievement the gap” (p. 656). Parents who lack the education to be engaged associated with this decline in parent involvement. Dotterer et al. (2012) stated “children with more educated mothers had higher average reading proficiency and print familiarity than children from less educated homes” (p. 657).

**Methodological issues.** The researcher in this study conducted research that focused on examining how parents in the urban community, engage with their children with disabilities from elementary school to middle school. The researcher utilized a qualitative approach for this study, the use of a multi-case study was utilized to examine parent involvement from the perspective of the parents, teachers, and administrators. According to McMillian (2012), the quantitative research method focuses on gaining a position based on the perception of the subjects. The qualitative method, “emphasizes natural settings, understanding, verbal narratives, and flexible designs” (p. 12). Additionally, McMillan (2012) stated the quantitative method is the most used in research, the quantitative method, “emphasizes numbers, measurements, deductive logic, control, and experiments” (p. 11). The researcher used a qualitative method as it is the appropriate strategy when looking to identify some form of a phenomena. Yin (2014) discussed case study as a research method when he states, “as a research method, the case study is used in many situations, to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social,
political, and related phenomena” (p. 4). The use of surveys was utilized in the study for each of the participants to support a clear analysis of the collected data and investigate findings.

The researcher’s analysis of available literature pertinent to the topic of the study indicates an equal amount of qualitative and quantitative research studies. From these studies, there is evidence of the use of primary and secondary sources. The studies within this literature review has provided the researcher with an outline of qualitative and quantitative research methods, as well as mixed methods, cross-sectional studies, and longitudinal studies. Selecting an accurate method should be based on which method will facilitate the collection of sufficient data.

Obtaining an accurate picture of the different forms of parent involvement can be accomplished in several ways. The researcher believes interviews and surveys will be best for gathering data on families, teachers, and administrators in the communities in which this study took place. McMillan (2012) avowed triangulation will occur during the research using the various sources. Such was accomplished through use of a multi-case study that focused on the perspective of parents, teachers, and administrators.

The researchers who authored the studies contained in the literature review used various methods to collect their data. Most researchers relied on the process of tracking families for a significant period to show connections with the data collected. McMillian (2012) identified this process of data collection as longitudinal, meaning the same or similar subjects were surveyed over time. Such a method can demonstrate or prove the validity of results from following a group of participants. This study did not allow an opportunity to track families over time as a result the researcher relied on individual interviews. Interviewing participants provides researchers the opportunity to gain direct accounts of their participants’ positions, and for the participants to tell
their story to support their perspectives. Within research perceptions and personal experience can affect the collected data. McMillan (2012) described this phenomenon as contamination where, “knowledge of the research influences observer or interviewer” (p. 166).

Contamination can affect the flow of data; thus interviews can help avoid that circumstance. Building a relationship with the participant assists with the interview process. “By establishing a proper rapport with the subject, a skilled interviewer can enhance motivation and obtain information that might otherwise have been offered” (McMillan, 2012, p. 167). For this study, interviews were used because this method provides an opportunity for the subject and interviewer to get to know each other, which results in additional trust earned by the interviewer. Effective interviewing shall provide insight on participants’ experiences and help the researcher develop an understanding of how parent involvement, children with disability, parental stress and all other topics are related within this study. Relying on fundamental principles was an additional resource for the researcher in the literature review in their process of collecting data. The relevant models mentioned were Bourdieu (1986) as well as Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005).

Prior studies relied on the contributions of the parents as well as the educators who shared their experiences. Archer-Banks et al. (2008), Hornby and Lafaele (2011), and Tyler (2016) each use qualitative method to explore their research. These researchers have taken these experiences into account and utilize them at times to support their research. In addition, they used surveys and questionnaires to collect data from their participants, which aligned with parent involvement within the educational setting. Anonymous surveys have proven to have more validity as many are more prone to being honest within their statements.
The researcher in this study used surveys and interviews to collect the experiences and perceptions of educators and parents, these accounts provided examples of the experience as well and the expanded thoughts of the parents as well as educators. Over the course of the research, there was a selection of seven schools in three communities to provide substantial evidence of parent involvement within southern New York state. The data was collected from parents, teachers, and administrators to provide multiple positions on the subject matter.

Within this study, the researcher compared the data that was collected, and used thematic analysis to synthesize the data. The synthesize of prior studies were utilized in the literature review as a base for building the investigation. The continued research supported the findings and identified what additional research would be needed to develop this individual study further.

**Synthesis.** The research within this literature review exposed the storyline of the parent involvement within urban communities for students with a diagnosed disability. Children with disabilities have more challenges, than their counterparts. Ludlow (2012) stated, “today's schools realize that some families, such as those whose children are in high-needs schools or have disabilities, may need to be more extensively involved in many aspects of their children's program to achieve desired education outcomes” (p. 4). Families within urban community can struggle to supply an adequate educational experience to children with disabilities, based on the factors that affect their ability to parent adequately.

Various aspects of life can work together to either positively or negatively influence an individuals’ life and behavior. Yoshikawa et al. (2012) acknowledged the effects of poverty on the educational experience of children. “The effects of poverty are cumulative; consequences at one stage in a child’s development can hinder development at a later stage” (Yoshikawa, 2012, p.
Additionally, other researchers have discovered factors that can contribute to a decline of parent involvement from the early years to secondary school experiences.

Dotterer and Pungello (2006) discussed the achievement gap as a national concern; low-income and ethnic minority children perform at levels below those children from higher income families and European American children. Individuals of lower socio-economic status are presented with challenges; there is a general knowledge of the lack of opportunities of these ethnicities. The struggle to move past these challenges which has existed for decades, continues to be a struggle within urban communities, thus leading to the creation of a system that keeps producing the same results. Children who are undereducated become unequipped parents. This exist in some cases, because of the parents' limited access and understanding of the world around them. Parents with limited education causes stress on the family unit, they are unable to navigate the school system adequately, in addition to gain adequate employment.

The growing struggles of affordable housing and underpaid wages, place parents in a position that one income can no longer support a household. Jeynes (2012) stated, “many educators and sociologists have argued that in modern society parental involvement may be especially salient due to elevated family dissolution rates, numerous two parent working families, and unique sociological pressures on children” (p. 712). As a result, in many households, the single parent or both parents must work to sustain their family. According to Dotterer, Iruka, and Pungello (2012), when parents have limited income or resources, they are more likely to feel stress related to this lack of income, to feel stress related to this lack of revenue, which in turn hinders their ability to be responsive to their child’s needs. Parents who work often have no time to become involved in their children’s school, and they place all control
and power into the schools. The parents are in no position to be there as they need to put so much energy into basic survival.

Moreover, parents of children with disabilities face even greater challenges. Youth diagnosed with a disability or delay that affects their ability to learn require parents and teachers to support their needs which can demand excessive time. Stress associated with being a parent of a child with a disability, is one of the most significant factors of parents in the school district. African American and Latino families of children with a disability undergo an even larger amount of pressure. Torres-Burgo, Reyes-Watson, and Brusca-Vega (1999) described this condition as the “triple threat” that focused on the obstacles faced by children and youth with disabilities from CLD backgrounds, they have a disability, limited English, and low socioeconomic status. Youth faced with these limitations account for young people within the urban community.

Stress in parents in the urban setting is evident based on socioeconomic status and the related behaviors associated with children and disabilities. Baker, Blacher, and Olsson (2005) declared that children with intellectual disabilities are at heightened risk for behavior problems, and these are known to increase parenting stress. Hassall, Rose, and McDonald (2005) agreed and stated, “many studies have demonstrated that parents of a child with an intellectual disability are likely to experience significantly higher levels of parenting stress than are parents of nondisabled children” (p. 411). With this weight comes a challenge of coping with financial inadequacy and stress, which may lead to depression with a lasting result. Parents avoiding interactions with school officials.

Families of children with disabilities who already have socioeconomic disadvantages are a challenged community. “Early investigations assumed anguish and sorrow for parents raising a
child with a developmental disability” (Kersh, Hedvat, Hauser-Cram, & Warfield, 2006, p. 890). With the combination of life’s stresses and the pressures of raising a child with disabilities comes limited energy for interactions with the school. Karande and Kuril (2011) identified the association between chronic stress and leading to negative parenting practices as well as the effect on parent-child relationships and outcomes. Consequently, this lack of time, energy, and inability to focus due to stress and workload places most families in a position to rely solely on the schools as the primary education vehicle for their child’s education.

Also, researchers have found the decline in parent involvement increases as children arrive in secondary school rather than in elementary school. Hirano, Garbacz, Shanley, and Rowe (2016) argued, “effectively promoting parent involvement in high school can be particularly challenging as parent involvement for students in both general and special education tends to decrease as students get older” (p. 3541) Williams and Sanchez (2011) discussed the importance of parent involvement and the struggle to gain parents whom remain involved during educational experience with their children. Additionally, Hill and Tyson (2009) correlated research that demonstrated the relationship between parent involvement and its decline between elementary and middle school.

The use of the Bourdieu’s Theory of social capital (1986) and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s model (2005) both build the bridge of evidence that links the decline of parent involvement within urban communities of families with children with a disability. Bourdieu’s (1986) theory attributes the decline of parent involvement to social class differences between school personnel and parents of urban communities. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s model (2005) explores parent involvement based on the pretense of parents’ motivation, self-efficacy, and perceptions of the invitations for participation from others. The researcher shall focus on the
connection between socio-economic status and its influence on parents as well as attitudes of individuals controlling the level of parent involvement.

Kerns and Siklos (2006) discussed parents of children with disabilities being advocates for their children, “parents may have been more focused on finding consistent, appropriate interventions and assistance from knowledgeable professionals, as compared to the parents of the children with DS who were diagnosed, on average, 11 years ago” (p. 920). Specific learning disabilities do not require the same level of parent connection as ASD because parents of children with ASD tend to take on a greater role of involvement through the life cycle. Kerns and Siklos (2006) discussed, “that parents of children with ASD have significantly greater expectations from the service delivery system than parents of children without a specific disability” (p. 922). This research demonstrates that even in some circumstances you can find some parents who are involved.

**Supporting legislation.** The IDEA requires administrators of urban school districts to connect and collaborate with the families they serve. Mun-Jospeh (2008) “IDEA mandates the inclusion of families with disabilities in educational programming and as popular as family involvement has become as evidence by recent federal legislation initiatives” (p. 381). IDEA, which was first enacted in 1975 by President Gerald Ford, was established to provided legislation to support individuals with disabilities. “The law guaranteed access to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) to every child with a disability” (The Department of Education, n.d.). The IDEA has been the base of the legislation that focuses on the educational experience of children with disabilities. Torres-Burgo et al. (1999) highlighted regulations from this act that center around the involvement of parents:
Concerning parental rights, the IDEA requires schools that parents, a) be informed in their native language of actions taken by the school regarding special education services; b) give their consent prior to evaluation for and initiation of special education services; c) have the opportunity to participate in meetings concerning diagnostic and program decisions; and d) have the opportunity to pursue due process procedures if they disagree with current or intended actions of the school. (p. 373)

Olmstead (2013) presented that many principals and teachers have reported that the lack of parent involvement continues to be an obstacle to increasing student achievement at school. Torres-Burgo et al. (1999) continued to argue the parents in culturally and linguistically diverse communities are less likely to be involved in their children’s school, in addition with the comparison of Latino families were less likely to be included in these meetings than Anglo-Saxon families.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), first enacted in 1965, then reauthorized under No Child Left Behind (NLCB), in 2002, and lastly re-modified in 2015, identifies key roles of the school district and the schools. This legislation provided provisions for students and schools to ensure students achieve greater academic standards. Some of the provisions put in place included:

- Advances equity by upholding critical protections for America's disadvantaged and high-need students.
- Requires-for the first time-that all students in America be taught to high academic standards that will prepare them to succeed in college and careers.
• Ensures that vital information is provided to educators, families, students, and communities through annual statewide assessments that measure students' progress toward those high standards.

• Sustains and expands this administration's historic investments in increasing access to high-quality preschool.

• Maintains an expectation that there will be accountability and action to effect positive change in our lowest-performing schools, where groups of students are not making progress, and where graduation rates are low over extended periods of time. (The Department of Education)

“States who want to receive federal funding must comply with a specific mandate to investigate appropriate practices for involving parents in the education of their children” (Gonzalez-Dehass, Willams, & Holbein, 2005, p. 101). Under the ESEA the federal government has direct link to denying or approving continued funding to any one school and or district.

**Critique.** Throughout this literature review, the techniques used to analyze the information aligned with quantitative, qualitative, mixed-method, longitudinal, and cross-sectional studies. Presentation of the arguments of most of the pieces all supported the idea of the importance of parent involvement within schools.

Jeynes (2012) presented compelling case that outlined the effects of living in an urban community and attending its school system; as well as the role living in urban communities and how it influences in the school involvement levels of parents. Within this research, Jeynes (2012) stated,

the presence of more parents in the workforce, the fast pace of modern society as a whole, and the declining role of the family have all been reasons that some social
scientists have pointed to, to explain an apparent decline in parental involvement in education. (p. 713)

Also, Dotterer et al. (2012) emphasized the concerns from living in a community with lower socioeconomics. Dotterer (2012) also focused on research needed to identify the link between income and race and its influence on school readiness.

Stipulations associated with the IDEA and the school districts support enabling parents to become advocates for their children, the research reports that parents of children with an ASD diagnosis become adequate advocates for their children. Van Haren and Feidler (2008) showed evidence of parents of children with disabilities being advocates for their children and the benefits of this advocacy. Parent advocacy is to link the administration and provides gateway for parent services in parent involvement. Van Haren and Feilder (2008) suggested the benefits of parents becoming independent of the system. “Professionals must strive to make families less dependent on their advice and services through family empowerment strategies” (p. 233). Even with substantial amounts of data, the gap is finding and understanding of why parents of children with disabilities who live in urban communities become less involved in their children’s school over time.

Hill and Tyson (2009) argued there is a decrease in parent involvement as youth reach the higher grades, but they offered few explanations for this decline. Kersh, Hedvat, and Hauser (2006), Baker et al. (2005), and Hassal et al. (2005) described how parental stress level and the breakdown of the family unit can play a role in parent involvement. Benn et al. (2012) highlighted the high numbers of separation and divorce in households with a child with a disability. Within the urban community where the numbers are higher for single parents or non-
birth parent (i.e., Grandparent or other family members) having custody of children with disabilities, the strain on the household becomes enormous.

Moreover, the family factors identified through the research showed that the responsibility of the school administration to build an environment that supports teachers, parents, and children with disabilities. The IDEA (1979) provided a guideline for all the regulations followed by schools within districts that are serving youth with disabilities. The onus is on the school administrators and teachers to adhere to these regulations to support these families. However, Munn-Joseph and Gavin-Evans (2008) found, “generally discussion of the family-school relationship in urban schools serving low SES or ethnic minority children and their families focus on incongruence between families and school personnel” (p. 378). Marschall and Shah (2016) argued that when parents engage in engagement programs within their child’s school families remain involved. Marschall and Shah (2016) described the benefits of ongoing volunteering opportunities because when parents volunteer, they increase the connection between the student and the classroom.

The researcher analyzed the literature review and identified the factors that influence parent involvement. In additions the researcher investigated the reasons for the breakdown in relationships between parents, families, and administrators and teachers. The evidence of children being more at risk than their counterparts is evident in the literature review. The two fundamental theories, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s model (2005) as well as Boudieu’s Theory (1986) both align to show the relationship between the urban community and its possible influence on parent involvement.
Summary

This study provided the reasons for the decline of parent involvement in urban community. Torres-Burgo et al. (1999) stated, “the intent of the IDEA was to bring parents and professionals together as equal partners in the special education process so that previous discriminatory actions taken by school personnel against children with disabilities and their families would not continue” (p. 373). Parents of children with disabilities are faced with more challenges than families of children without disabilities, these challenges have contributed to the decline in participation in the school setting. Legislation from the IDEA to the ESEA is utilized by different school administrations to develop a plan of action to support student’s educational growth and empower parents.

Children within the urban community are faced with challenges in schools and in their neighborhoods. Dotterer et al. (2012) discussed how they found children from lower socioeconomic status lacking school readiness skills. Students with disabilities face greater concerns within the urban community, notably their socioeconomic status and lack of parent education, which result in increased stress of the household. Jeon et al. (2011) focused on the idea that children of low-income families are more likely to have developmental risks and disabilities, thus reducing their readiness.

The classifications centralized within this literature review are ASD, specific learning disabilities, other emotional concern, and ADHD. These classifications are most of the designations African American and Latino children, within the scope of this study. Thomas, Agran, and Scott (2015) explored the negative relationship between transitions of students with disabilities versus children without disabilities. Parents of children with disabilities combat behavioral concerns which affects the function of the family.
Parents of the children receiving disability services face increased levels of stress. Baker et al. (2005) stated that parents of children with disabilities experience three times the stress levels of parents of children who do not have disabilities. The concerns of living in urban communities, working multiple jobs to sustain, and having limited time to invest in their child with the disability all increase the decline of parent involvement.

Lastly, the research showed increases in homes with trauma due to divorce and or loss of a parent. Kersh et al. (2006) studied the comparisons between marital well-being and the development of children. In families with a disabled child, there are overwhelming numbers of divorce and absentee parents. The usual reason strongly correlates with stress levels and the inability of the family to cope with the behaviors of the child. “Marital quality is associated with positive child outcomes, such as fewer behavior problems and better peer relationships” (Kersh et al. 2006, p. 891). In turn strong family bonds will affect the overall academic experience of the child with disabilities in a positive way.

The number of single parent homes trying to survive in this economy places families at an even larger disadvantage. Nunez, Suarez, Rosario, and Vallejo (2015) discussed the forms of parent involvement. For instance, Nunez et al. (2015) showed how families assume homework is a key responsibility of the student and failed to assist, losing out on the opportunity to become engaged with their child. Many of these parents in most cases cannot afford to miss work for parent engagement activities such as PTA or parent day at the school. Many may want to take the opportunity to improve their child’s educational experience, but in most cases, they lack the skills or patience necessary to assist with homework.

Living in the urban community can multiply limitations for the parents of children with disabilities. These children who are diagnosed with a disability miss the opportunity to grow
academically and flourish in the school system, when there is a lack of parent involvement. The IDEA has set these regulations for schools to follow in ensure that parents are engaged and fully involved in the experience of their children. Hornby and Lafaele (2011) argued, “when parents think that parent involvement is not valued by teachers or schools, they are less likely to get involved” (p. 49). The culture of the school is an influential tool in parent engagement is the connection first made with teacher. Furthermore, this involvement shows as an active factor in the interaction of youth in urban communities.

This literature review focused on research concerning the benefits of parents being involved within the school setting. The research shows children with disabilities are at a greater risk based on circumstances of their environment. The theories researchers used within this review provide a clear path to demonstrate the decline of parent involvement as children age in the school system. The IDEA mandates the law of inclusion of children with disabilities and their families in the school system. In the urban community, significant gaps exist for African American and Latino children and families. These findings provided warrants for this study to explore the decline in parent involvement in the urban community from elementary school to middle school. Chapter 3 will discuss the methodological approach to completion of this study. The research provides insight to the choice of a multi-case study for this project. Chapter 4 goes into a detailed account of the data collected from the participants. The researcher provides several charts and tables to reference the data collected. Lastly, Chapter 5 provides the reader with a discussion of the findings from the data collected. The researcher identifies the observed and documents instances of declines in parent involvement and the potential reasons for this decline.
Introduction

Parent involvement for children with disabilities in the urban community is important in the development of these students. “However, low-income and ethnic minority families are more often characterized as hard-to-reach, thus less likely to be invited to participate” (Munn-Joseph & Gavin-Evans, 2008, p. 382). Children with disabilities need the support of their families and school districts to ensure they are receiving an adequate educational experience. The Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (1997) focuses on children with disabilities receiving opportunities to have an equal and accessible public education as their peers. “Parent involvement is believed to be especially critical to the success of students with disabilities” (Rodriguez, Blatz, & Elbaum, 2014, p. 89). Further, school administrators must determine the best methods for educating children with disabilities while attempting to overcome parents’ lack of involvement. School administrations have the daunting responsibility of operating an academic setting, while engaging families and educating youth. Chambers and Michelson (2016) stated, “urban districts perform more poorly as measured by quantitative student outcomes about now-urban districts” (p. 21).

For this study, the researcher used a case study design, which is most commonly utilized within qualitative methods, to identify the phenomenon taking place in the schools within urban communities. A qualitative method, “just requires a broader and less restrictive concept of design” (Bickman & Rog, 2008, p. 220). With this method, the researcher adapted and changed as the process unfolded, unlike quantitative methods, “tradition assumes that phenomena should be studied objectively with the goal of obtaining a single true reality, or at least reality within known probabilities, with an emphasis on measurement, numerical data, control, and objectivity”
The researcher searched to identify a phenomenon among schools in the urban community around parent involvement. McMillian (2012) stated, “qualitative research stresses a phenomenological model in which multiple realities are rooted in the subjects’ perception” (p. 12).

The design the researcher selected for this study manifested through a multi-case study. Stake (2006) discussed the collection of cases having a relationship to each other. The researcher used this method to establish the phenomena of this case study and collected the significant data to support the findings. Furthermore, Yin (2014) explained the purpose of doing a case study is to investigate the contemporary phenomenon in-depth and within its real-world context. The use of the case study method was utilized to establish the phenomenon of the decline of parent involvement.

The conceptual framework for the study was designed to explore the idea of parent involvement for children with a diagnosed disability. The base of the framework begins with students with disabilities, the researcher explored several types of disabilities and more specifically the disabilities identified in youth in the urban community. This information was used to fuel the study and its relationship to the individuals who attend to these youth, the primary being the parents, secondary the teachers, and administration (principals, counselor, and service coordinators). The researcher identified how and what role each played in how parents engaged in a partnership with the schools that their children are enrolled.

Based on the research and use of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s (2015) theory of parent involvement and Bourdieu’s (1986) theory of social capital, the researcher established baseline factors that influence parent involvement. The four factors established were stress, socio-economic status, cultural norms, and how legislation affects involvement. The researcher
explored the research questions by utilizing instruments that aligned with the framework. The researcher provides a figure in the appendix that demonstrates the conceptual framework.

**Purpose of the Study**

The researcher in this study examined the characteristics and the attributes of the urban community that affects the involvement level of parents of a child with disabilities. The researcher analyzed schools within districts of similar socio-economic status. The researcher collected data by using techniques pertinent to identifying the connections within the data and prior research. Based on the following research questions, the study unfolded the circumstances that create the environment within urban schools:

1. What does parent involvement looks like for children with a diagnosed disability?
2. What are the factors that affect parenting while living in the urban community?
3. What are the circumstances that influence the decline of parent involvement in the urban community schools, mainly when those parents have children with a diagnosed disability?

These three questions serve as the center of this qualitative study and guided data collection tools within this study. The questions all were built to support the initial argument and function to make a correlation with the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (2005), as well as Bourdieu's theory of social capital (1986). The purpose of this qualitative multiple case-study is to explore the root causes for the decline in parent involvement from elementary school to secondary school with families of children with disabilities.

**Research Design**

This study took the approach of a case study to uncover the experiences with parent involvement of an estimated 100 parents or guardians. In addition, an estimated eight teachers
and four administrators. A case study was the research method selected based on Yin’s (2014) definition of a case study which describes a two-fold understanding of the purpose to study of phenomenon in real work context. Zainal (2007) stated, “through case study methods, a researcher is able to go beyond the quantitative statistical results and understand the behavioral conditions through the actor’s perspective” (p. 1). Understanding of the perspective of the parents, teachers, and administrators was best established through a multi-case study. By including both quantitative and qualitative data, case study helps explain both the process and outcome of a phenomenon through complete observation, reconstruction and analysis of the cases under investigation (Tellis, 1997). The researcher focused on building the cases, and supporting the analysis with qualitative methods, but included quantitative analysis to support findings.

Based on the inquiry of parent involvement for a child with disabilities investigating experiences provides support and understanding of the plight of these families to remain engaged. Through a descriptive annotation of their experiences, the researcher collected enough data to determine if there is a notable decline of parent involvement from elementary to secondary school. The researcher used Hoover-Dempsey model (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005), which focuses on the factors that influence parents to be involved in their child's educational experience.

The study also utilized different questionnaires, surveys, and interview questions based on Bourdieu’s theory of social capital. Hauberer (2006) discussed this theory as being a cumulation of economic, cultural, and social attributes that work together as forms of capital to understand the structure of society. The Bourdieu theory focuses on how community and its dynamics support the success of an individual by providing tools and support socially,
economically, and culturally. Additionally, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler theory on parent involvement focuses on categories that align to demonstrate successful parent involvement. The alignment of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (2005) and the Bourdieu Theory (1986) provides a framework to explore parent involvement and the effect of socioeconomic status on parenting children with disabilities. The researcher expected that using a qualitative method will lead to collecting enough data to establish a clear picture of this phenomena.

**Research Population**

The population for this study was parents, teachers, and administrators from communities in southern New York state. The sample consisted of African American and Latino families from the urban communities selected for this study. In addition to these families, who were primarily African American and Latino, other ethnicities were also included in the study. The three school districts that were utilized in this study are identified as the following acronyms NX school district, MX school district, and YX school district.

Table 1

*Schools utilized for the selections of the Sample and Ethnicity Percentages.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Ethnicity Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School A (MX)</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B (MX)</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C (YX)</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School D (NX)</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School E (NX)</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School F (NX)</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* MX, YX, NX represents the schools district in which schools are located.

The data collected to determine the demographics of each of the schools was collected from the resource Great Schools.com, a site that provides national database information on schools. The data was then verified by the administrators from each of the schools.
During the advertising process ethnicity was not a selected determinate to partake in the study. The researcher selected schools to advertise that were populated with the specific demographic needed for this study. Additionally, the ages of children associated with this study were from four years old to 15 years old. No children physically participated in the study. Further, each of the participant economic status was determined by enrollment in a Title 1 school and reported income bracket by the family. Key qualifier for the study were having a child with a disability in the selected schools, as all families being advertised to already prequalified. McMillan (2012) stated that the sampling of various categories within a population is considered ‘nested’ as each of the sample candidates are within schools of the selected districts. The case study approach produces reliable data based on the grouping of samples through this process.

**Sampling Method**

The sampling method was indicative of typical case study sampling. McMillan (2014) stated, “the researcher investigates a person, group, or site that is ‘typical’ or ‘representative’ of many” (p. 106). The sample was based on individuals who engage or have engaged with families and children with disabilities. The administrators which were previously selected based on the school, were not limited to principals within the school. Yin (2012) discussed that case studies are beneficial because they represent a full picture of an event or situation. Once initial contact was made with the principal of the school the administration decided on who would be the individual to participate in the study. The teachers for the sample choose to be part of the study and were preselected by class assignment to receive advertisement. The researcher used the advertisement to find individuals who are willing to volunteer for the study. Families were provided with a letter that described the study and detailed their responsibility if they chose to
participate. Yin (2014) supported the idea of increasing the sample size of 15 to 30 because multiple candidates develops a stronger case study.

Selecting the proper candidates for the case study is a vital step in this process. Yin (2014) detailed a multi-phase approach to identifying the sample for a case study. Using a two-phase approach supports the selection of an adequate sample size because it allowed for contacting several possible participants. Once the families had submitted their initial request to participate in the study, the researcher randomly selected the first 20 consents, fulfilling the demographic needs for the study, which aligned, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and direct criteria related to their children’s diagnoses with a disability. Even though the study focused on families of African American and Latino decent there were families of other ethnicities who requested to participate. The researcher accepts some cases in order to broaden the research to identify some similarities and eliminate bias. The two qualifiers that were most important for the study were being a family of the selected school and have a child with a disability.

Table 2

*Parent participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years rearing a child with a disability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent 1</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent 2</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent 3</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent 4</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent 5</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent 6</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent 7</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent 8</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent 9</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent 10</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent 11</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent 12</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent 13</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 and Table 4 of teachers and administrators did not have the same factors to become participants in the study. The only qualifier was educators and administrators constituted of faculty who are currently or have worked with families of children with a disability either in elementary school or secondary school.

Table 3

**Administrator Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrator</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years in administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admin 1</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin 2</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin 3</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin 4</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4

**Teacher Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years in education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 1</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 3</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 4</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 5</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 6</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 7</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 8</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Instrumentation

The specific tools that were selected and/or developed in this study worked to identify the data that answers the research questions. “Case study evidence can come from many sources” (Yin, 2014, p. 103), thus the instruments the researcher used were surveys and questionnaires, which each of the participants in the study received and returned with contracts signed to the researcher. During interviews the researcher questioned all participants on their perception on attendance, rather than attempt to collect documents from schools. The interviews were all conducted on six multi-part questions, these questions are in Appendix A to this document. The researcher also took extensive notes during the interview process. These notes were utilized to begin to identify patterns. However, Yin (2014) cautioned that the documents should be vetted because these “documents play an explicit role in any data collections in doing the case study research” (p. 107). The researcher utilized former tools to ensure validity and accuracy of the instruments utilized.

Specific questionnaires and survey used in prior research that is associated with the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) model as well as the Bourdieu (1986) Theory of social capital, were selected by the researcher for this study. The researcher’s purpose for using these
sources for this study is to ensure validity of the chosen instruments prior to use during this research project. Questionnaires utilized in the study are located in Appendix B through Appendix E. The researcher used a modified version the following questionnaires for the study. Each study was retrieved from the original study which access is granted and overall permission for use is provided.

- Survey on Family and School Partnerships in Public Schools, K-8, which was generated by the National Center for Educational Statistics, (NCES). Respondents consisted of principals and administrators. The format consists of 24 items scored on various scales that address the relationship between schools and families from the perspective of the administrator.

- Parent-Teacher Involvement Questionnaire: Teacher, (PTIQ: T), created by The Fast Track Project. Respondents will consist of teachers from the selected schools in the study. The instrument contains 21 items on a 5-point Likert Scale.

- Family-School Partnership Lab Scales: Parent and Student Questionnaires, created by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler. Respondents will be parents. The structure contains a 116 questions parent questionnaire as well as a 49-question student questionnaire.

In addition to the three listed above, the researcher created questions based on the study and details of questionnaires for the interview process. One of the most reliable tools being the interview was used to gain insight on the perspectives of the members of the sample. Yin (2014) avowed the additional data selected will be supported by the interview process. “In qualitative research, interviews are perhaps the most widely used method of collecting data” (McMillan, 2012, p. 291).
Data Collection

The administration was the initial meeting in order to begin the data collection for this study, a meeting was held with the administrator from four of the participating schools. Of the four participants there was at least one administrator from each of the three school districts. During the initial meeting to discuss the logistics of the project, the signed a consent form for participation in the study and completed the Family and school Partnerships in Public Schools (NCES) questionnaire. In addition, they underwent the interview. Teachers viewed an advertisement for the study which was posted by the sign-in sheet in the primary office. Teachers contacted the researcher directly to participate in the study. Prior to interviews commencing the teachers completed the consent form for participation and the Parent-Teacher Involvement Questionnaire (PTIQ:T) questionnaire. School administrators approved for initial family packets to be sent home in take home folders of each children in the selected classrooms. The researcher selected classrooms that had a majority population of children with a disability.

The researcher collected the initial questionnaires and consents to participate from families; this was the first indication they were willing and able to participate in the study, materials were returned directly to the researcher, through the mail in the stamped envelope provided to the families. Subsequently, the researcher distributed additional questionnaires during the individual interviews with selected families. Yin (2014) described how the researcher must understand the participants’ time constraints. Caplan (2009) stated, “sociologists focus on the theory that parents spend less time with their kids than they used to” (para. 20). With the research showing time to be a concern of modern-day parents, the families were provided ample opportunity to read, complete, and return questionnaires. The researcher locked the received items in a cabinet located in locked office space.
The data allowed the opportunity for administrators, teachers, and families to give their detailed accounts of their story. Stake (2006) stated, “each case is studied to gain an understanding of that particular entity as it is situated” (p. 40). The case study process provided the details needed to support and build a compelling argument to why parent involvement is non-existent and/or declines over time. Secondly, addressing the effects of living in an urban community and its relationship to the decline of parent involvement for families of children with disabilities. Data on the demographics of the community and school populations aligned factors that influenced the academic experience. Moreover, the researcher focused on exploring the circumstances that support the decline for children diagnosed with specific learning disabilities. Examining these families, in general, will provide data on a population that is at greater risk than their counterparts. Lastly, data generated from surveys and questionnaires supported the key reasons why families of children with disabilities in the urban community feel there is a significant decline in parent involvement.

**Identification of Attributes**

The following attributes and characteristics are associated with various aspects of the study.

**Children with disabilities.** Children with specific impairments, ADHD, autism, and other emotional disturbances. Each of the children in this study will have had an active IEP for at least two school years.

**Collaboration.** The relationships that are bond together the stakeholders within the school setting, that is, administrators, teachers, and parents.

**Commitment.** The level in which stakeholders are focused on providing an adequate educational experience for children with a diagnosed disability.
**Parental limitations.** The study identified deficits associated with the primary stakeholder for children with disabilities the parents.

**Poverty.** The schools investigated within this study services community members and schools within proximity to the national poverty line.

**Urban.** Each school is in an area which is classified as urban, or characteristics of a city.

To measure the level of parent involvement in the study, these attributes were the focus point of the study to determine the decline of parent involvement on the urban community for these parents of children with disabilities.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

Yin (2014) cautioned, documents should not be taken as the actual recording of a chain of events, but a full picture should be presented with multiple sources of data. The analysis for this study was a multi-step process with thematic analysis for the interviews and the questionnaires and pattern analysis for the field notes.

The analysis of the data associated with the study was based on a thematic approach that developed through the review of the data. This qualitative study aligned with previous research using a case study design and identifying preliminary themes that existed within previous research. Boeije (2002) stated, “comparison is also the dominant principle of the analysis process in other traditions of qualitative research” (p. 391). Constant comparison is utilized within qualitative research this study focused on identifying themes determined from the data collected from the samples of administrators, teachers and parents. The questionnaires and interviews were designed to address the projects research questions. The data analysis began during the review of the collected data, the questionnaires was reviewed, and responses charted and scored to establish constant responses. In addition, the interviews were typed and reviewed the common
responses were highlighted by the researchers to establish constant responses. The method of analysis is,

used for practically all intellectual tasks during analysis: forming categories, establishing the boundaries of the categories, assigning the segments to categories, summarizing the content of each category, finding negative evidence, etc. The goal is to discern conceptual similarities, to refine the discriminative power of categories, and to discover patterns. (p. 393)

The researcher developed an understanding of parent involvement in the urban community for children with a diagnosed disability. The researcher utilized a thematic analysis as a base of the analysis process. The data collected through questionnaires, survey, interviews, and field notes were all tools used in the analysis process to develop the findings. “The goal of qualitative data analysis is to uncover emerging themes, patterns, concepts, insights, and understandings” (Patton, 2002). The themes were developed through the analysis process of the multiple steps of thematic analysis. The researcher utilized the 6-phase approach to thematic analysis determined by Nowell, Norris, White, and Moules’ (2017) article on thematic analysis. Nowell et al. (2017) “thematic analysis should be a foundational method for qualitative analysis, as it provides core skills for conducting many other forms of qualitative analysis” (p. 1). The researcher chose this analysis approach as it provided opportunity for a clear investigation to produce findings from the raw data. The 6-phase process of thematic analysis was the base of the process.
Table 5

Thematic Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Supported Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Phase 1    | Familiarizing yourself with the data | • Qualitative data that comes in various forms including recorded observations, focus groups, texts, documents, multimedia, public domain sources, policy manuals, and photographs.  
                                                       • The data collected through the interactive means of interviews, the researcher analyzed with some prior knowledge of the data and possibly some initial analytic interests or thoughts. |
| Phase 2    | Generating initial codes           | • The researcher read and familiarized the data, having ideas about what is in the data and what is interesting about them.  
                                                       • A consistent structure for identifying key terms was established and highlighted within the transcription of each interview and field notes. The questionnaires were built within system in place for clear thematic analysis. |
| Phase 3    | Searching for themes               | • The researcher sorted and collated all the potentially relevant coded data extracts into themes.  
                                                       • The researcher identified themes among the different cases that were in alignment.                                                                                                                   |
| Phase 4    | Reviewing theme                    | • The validity of individual themes will be considered to determine whether the themes accurately reflect the meanings evident in the data set as a whole  
                                                       • The researcher created the initial version on the themes the researcher reviews the data to ensure the determined themes fully explain the findings.                                                                 |
| Phase 5    | Defining and naming themes         | • The researcher determined what aspect of the data each theme captures and identify what is of interest about them and why.  
                                                       • For each individual theme, the researcher conducted and wrote a detailed analysis, identifying the story that each theme tells.                                                                 |
| Phase 6    | Producing the report               | • The researcher wrote an explanation of each of themes.                                                                                                                                                                |

To begin the analysis process, the researcher organized the questionnaires and response sheets to support the building of charts to track responses. As with most qualitative studies the researcher established a clear system of collecting data to support the ongoing analysis that existed throughout the entire study. The researchers utilized questionnaires that were lengthy and
provided a vast amount of information surrounding the samples perspectives on parent involvement. Once respondents submitted questionnaires the researcher scaled each on 2-point scale to 6-point scale. Each of the scores were placed in sections based on the developed sections on the questionnaire. Each of the questionnaires were counted and added to a ledger to detail the data and provide an accurate scale of respondent’s perspectives of parent involvement for a child with a diagnosed disability.

This table represents the base for the thematic analysis within the questionnaires and the results for each of the samples. The table demonstrates how the researcher used the findings from the questionnaire to assist in developing themes through thematic analysis.

Table 6
*Questionnaire Pattern matching results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrators</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Administrators perceive parents receive communications from the school.</td>
<td>Teachers responses to how often they participate and communicate with the parents.</td>
<td>How parents perceive invitation to the schools and how are they are communicated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for parents to be involved are available.</td>
<td>Teachers responses to how they feel about their parent interactions.</td>
<td>Parents' perception of how often they are, or a family member is involved at the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there barriers that exist in parent ability to be involved.</td>
<td>Teachers responses to how they feel their parents feel about the school.</td>
<td>Parents responses to how they feel about their Children’s school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interviews were essential to the data collection process, the interviews were structured as, “an in-depth interview uses a few open-response, relatively general questions with some probes to obtain more detail” (McMillan, 2012, p. 291). The researcher utilized the interview questions to support gaining a clear understanding of the perspective of the participants. The responses were transcribed within 36 hours of completing the interview to ensure the researcher could align field notes and mark repeated responses. Similar responses were then noted on ledger to track statements that showed similarities during this thematic
analysis. “A thematic analysis strives to identify patterns of themes in the interview data” (Mortensen, 2018, n.p). The interview transcripts were used by the researcher by providing the identifiable codes as well as the field notes. The researcher logged and noted code as they were mentioned by each of the participants.

Field notes were also influential in this study. During the transcription review the researcher looked over the field notes of each of the sessions with participants. The notes were read alongside the transcriptions for the researcher to identify patterns from each of the sessions. Suter (2012) discussed the important of field notes, “making notes, referred to as memos, as the data collection and analysis proceed is one important data analysis strategy” (p. 346). The pattern analysis was implemented to support the thematic analysis process within this study. Pattern analysis is described as, “in its simplest form, the theoretical realm is matched with the observational realm, component by component. Trochim recommends visual devices such as diagrams, charts, maps, etc.” (Suter, 2012, p. 348). The researcher utilized the field notes to support thematic analysis.

As the data was analyzed it was compiled into cases, each case followed the perspective of the administrators, teachers, and the parents. The data was used to identify themes associated with the common responses of the participants of the study. Triangulation occurred at this step in the process as triangulation is the process of using more than one source to study an idea or phenome. The researcher then compiled the data to create a cohesive study, that discussed parent involvement of children with disabilities (Patton, 2002).

Limitations

Multi-case studies entailed several limitations. One of the key concerns is the effect of the researcher’s worldview on the interpretation of the data. Removing the researcher’s opinions
was vital for avoiding biased data collection and analysis. Additionally, “a continuing problem in educational studies, as well as in much social science research, is the use of volunteers as subjects” (McMillan, 2014, p. 110). The limitation of the participants included the comfort level of providing information. The issues of privacy were a limitation as parents and some teachers were concerned with information being shared.

**Validation**

The researcher created validation by using guided interviews. Guided interviews and questionnaires helped the researcher collect accurate information, thus strengthening the study’s credibility and dependability. Interview guides were reviewed by the committee and school review to make sure they could yield credible and adequate data to support saturation of data. To secure credibility of the collected data cross-analysis occurred during the interview process. Yin (2014) suggested that the line of questions will come across as a guided conversation yet account as a structured query. To follow-up on questionnaires to ensure validation the researcher, allowed participants to confirm or negate prior information provided. This form of validation for qualitative research results in member checking (Patton, 2002). The participants had the opportunity to review and communicate any debate about the data collected. The participants did not discredit the findings based on their individual participation supported all the results.

**Expected Findings**

Based on the literature, there was a noticeable decline in parent involvement in different school’s districts with families of children with disabilities from similar socioeconomic backgrounds. Chambers and Michelson (2016) stated “parents in these neighborhoods are more likely than others to depend on public education as a pathway to success for their children, and
thus will have unique attitudes about their neighborhood schools” (p. 19). The researcher expected the data to show this level of trust placed in the schools.

The literature also identified high stress levels of parents of children with disabilities. Hassall, Rose, and McDonald (2005) argued, “specific characteristics associated with the disability are more important correlation of parental stress” (p. 49). This stress was a catalyst for a breakdown of the family unit, causing increasing single parent homes, lastly resulting in parents working more hours away from the home. Additionally, the added stress is amplified in children with disabilities as they have larger needs than children without a specific learning disability. Baker, Blacher, and Olsson (2005) stated children with intellectual disability are at heightened risk for behavior problems, and these are known to increase stress.

**Ethical Issues**

As with many studies, researchers must treat confidentiality as an ethical concern. Chao, Bryan, Burstein, and Ergul (2006) posted that the first documentation the participants will receive is a consent form. The participants read the initial outline if the project and what it entailed before any interviews were scheduled. They were told they can withdraw from the study at any point and their information will be kept confidential. Signed copies of the consent were submitted with initial surveys to the researcher and kept with individual files for each subject. In addition, instruments used in prior research, were utilized by the researcher to ensure validity and reduced possibilities of biased materials.

The ethical well-being of participants was also taken into consideration within this study. The researcher based all questions on surveys and interviews to discourage drawing negative conclusion about the population being studied. The process was built to ensure participants
provided account of their subjective experiences and perspective and not a list of opinions of others.

Confidentiality was established from the start of the data collection process. The researcher gained participants privately which allowed participants to remain anonymous. Participants were not interviewed in the same location within 30 minutes of each other to avoid participants visually recognizing participants. The researcher also did not use sign up sheets and allowed participants to contact the researcher directly.

The IRB process was completed for the study through Concordia University as well for the school districts in which IRB was required. From the districts that did not require an IRB consent was provided by the administrator for the individual school. As per the IRB application the data was stored on paper for each of the questionnaires and interviews were kept noted on field notes and recordings. All the collected data was locked in a cabinet within a locked office in which the researcher only has access.

**Summary**

The researcher conducted this study as a multi-case study. The goal was to identify and secure the reasons behind the decline of parent involvement in urban communities of children with disabilities from elementary to secondary school. The researcher compiled three cases from urban community school districts in southern New York state. Within the cases there was data collected from the parents, teachers, and administrators to develop a clear picture of the phenomena taking place. As a reference to the conceptual framework, the researcher used the Bourdieu’s (1986) theory of social capital and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s (2005) model of parent involvement as the guide for inquiry.
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction

Parent involvement is the backbone of the educational experience of children within any community. Children with a diagnosed disability are a select population whose success is strongly related to the interactions of the parents, who are their primary advocates. The study investigated parent involvement in the urban community for children with a disability. Children who receive an IEP have mandated meetings and documents that require parental consent to obtain an adequate education. “Collaboration with parents refers to parents being encouraged to take an active role in and to participate in decisions about their child’s education and healthcare” (Villeneue et al., 2013, p. 39). This study examined the story of parent involvement from the perspective of the administrators, teachers, and parents who all have direct contact with this population. The goal of the study is to examine what factors intertwine together to implement the success or decline of parent involvement for children with a disability.

Research Questions

The questions for this study were designed to guide the research to investigate parent involvement in the urban community for children with a disability. The questions are listed as follows:

1. What does parent involvement looks like for children with a diagnosed disability?
2. What are the factors that affect parenting while living in the urban community?
3. What are the circumstances that influence the decline of parent involvement in the urban community schools, mainly when those parents have children with the diagnosed disability?
These questions were selected as they each aligned with the research format and overall goal of the project. The items were utilized as a base to synthesize previous research and data collected to lead towards the development of themes and correlations related to parent involvement.

The development of the questions was drawn from the supported conceptual framework, which was built off the two theories of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2014) theory of parent involvement, and Bourdieu (1986) Theory of social capital. The framework outlines the foundations for the questions which are easily relatable to the perspective being investigated within the study. The conceptual framework develops the initial outline of the process of understanding. The framework was the base that relates to the question used in the study.

**Purpose and Organization**

The purpose of the study was to understand the perspective of the administrators, teachers, and parents; also, the reasons, concerns and implications associated with parent involvement for children with a diagnosed disability in the urban community. “The evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling and the overall study is therefore regarded as more robust” (Yin, 2012, p. 57). The connections increased the researchers’ ability to complete the analysis through thematic analysis. The research was set forth to examine the perspective of three groups who ultimately influence parent involvement in diverse ways. Yin (2014) discussed the difference between case study and other forms of research. He stated, “your case study report can itself be a significant communication device” (Yin, 2014, p. 182). This chapter will demonstrate how each of the parents, teachers, and administrators, perceive parent involvement, their responsibility to the children they serve, and what factors possibly work together for the success or decline of parent involvement in the urban community.
The organization was based on the three perspectives the parents, teachers, and the administrators; the reader can identify and draw the conclusion based on the data reported in this chapter. The data is revealed systematically to produce a storyline that demonstrates what these three subgroups identified as primary factors in parent involvement for children with a disability. Based on the research questions data would be placed in a systematic response from each participant group.

The data which came through questionnaires, survey, and interviews were analyzed with different practices to produce themes that aligned with the perspectives of the groups. Each of the three groups were responsible for filling at least one questionnaire, the parents completed an additional questionnaire, as they were the primary focus of the study. Each of the tools was reviewed and calculated to determine a scale which will be discussed later in the chapter. The investigation concluded with each participant completing an interview, the asked questions were all identical or similarly based on the group being interviewed. This data was transcribed and used to identify codes between responses in each group. The researcher utilized parts of the five analytic techniques described by Yin (2014). The base of the analysis was pattern matching. Yin (2014) discussed pattern matching and the importance of identifying descriptive conditions prior to beginning the inquiry. This was established through the literature review and development of the research questions. The researcher treated parents, administrators, and teachers as their own case. “The technique treats each individual case study as a separate study” (Yin, 2014, p. 164).

The investigation leads to an understanding of factors that identifies why parent involvement succeeds and declines. The researcher was able to show circumstances that influence parent involvement. The findings will demonstrate perspectives of the three groups and how they have experienced parent involvement for a child with a diagnosed disability. The study
explored the experience of the parents, teachers, administrators, and their perspective on parent involvement within the span of their lifetimes.

**Role of the Researcher**

The overall researcher role in this study was to provide the reader with a synopsis of the story of each of the groups within the sample. Coming from a background in education and having a child with an IEP, parent involvement has always resonated as a job within the researchers’ day to day interactions with her son. Throughout the researchers experience with the educational system, exhibited that parents were less involved as the researchers’ son got older within the school. Also, the researcher found that teachers were active and always encouraged parent involvement. Even so, the turnout of parents was still limited and decreased as he aged.

Overall the success of students with and without disabilities is a goal in which the researcher felt is essential to the success of our communities. As a director of a Head Start program, parent involvement is the foundation of their school’s mission. The focus of the educational facility is not just based on the educational experience of the children but the growth of the entire family. As the researcher has serviced children within the urban community and building bridges for families to learn to advocate for their children. Ultimately, this was the stipulation that fueled the researcher’s desire for this investigation.

**Methodical Approach**

In an effort, to build a story, the method of choice for the study was a qualitative study. The data was grouped and organized to align with three different perspectives that all focus on parent involvement for children with a disability. The three cases within this study are the administrators, teachers, and the parents of the children with a diagnosed disability. Using a case study allows the perceptions of the three groups identified to establish the corresponding data
that concluded to an understanding of parent involvement for children with a disability. A case study was the foundation for the review, Yin (2014) discussed that case studies are used to identify a phenomenon of some sort. The study is looking to address how or why parents of children with disabilities are engaged in the academic experience of their children. The study examined to establish how teachers and administrator influence these parents to be part of the educational experience of this population. This study looked at a population within the urban community and the factors that affect their involvement experience.

Through thematic analysis, the investigation took the approach of identifying themes within the data. These themes were developed on the establishment of repeated and continuous responses within the interview process. During the process, each of the interviews were transcribed and later read through to establish consistency in reactions until saturation was accomplished. Once initial themes were identified, they were set as the base of the coding process for the data. The analysis continued to build the coding system as the ideas evolved throughout the investigation, developing a more in-depth review of the data.

To support the qualitative data collected, the researcher used questionnaires, survey, interviews, and field notes. The project utilized quantitative questionnaires to help develop the themes associated with the data. Each of the samples surveys were designed with a numerical system attached to each of the response sections. Each of the questionnaires were previously used by other researchers to ensure validity. The records worked as a tool to examine the perspective of each of the parents, teachers, and administrators. These tools established a scale that was used to display the data, which demonstrated parent involvement in the urban community for children with a disability. Through the case study method, numerous sources for
data strengthened the study. Yin (2014) stated, “a major strength of a case study data collection in the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence” (p. 110).

The approach for this study was a qualitative study, with a case study design. To support the overall goal of the study the researcher used quantitative materials to support the development of the themes within the surveys. The utilization of the surveys and questionnaires provided concrete data to explore the relationship between parents, teachers, and administration within parent involvement. Each of the document are attached in the appendix in the back of this study. The administration completed the Family and School Partnership in Public Schools (NCES) Questionnaire. Which was 109-question questionnaire separated into numerous segments that discussed their perception and understanding of their role in parent involvement? The teachers completed the Parent-Teacher Involvement Questionnaire that identified teacher’s perceptions of parents and the administration. The parents completed the Parent-Teacher Involvement Questionnaire survey which explored their perspective of teachers and administration. The parents also completed the Family-School Partnership Lab Scales, a 109-question questionnaire by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s research on parent involvement.

**Role of the Analysis**

The analysis of the data in this study was to establish triangulation by taking the three perspectives to discuss the phenomenon of the decline of parent involvement within the urban community for children with a disability. The analysis process of the data was essential to the process of understanding the factors that are associated with parent involvement. This analysis process was to determine just how each perspective viewed parent involvement for children within the urban community. The research used thematic and pattern analysis to identify themes
to explain the phenomenon. The chapter thoroughly discusses the analysis process and the data in detail, through the lenses of its participants.

The interview process utilized open-ended questions that provided participants opportunity to disclose information that was true to their perspective. Additional questions were used to support the data collection process and were all based on responses to the details provided by the participant. As there are predisposed ideas as part of the investigator that exist these safe holds were implemented to exclude bias in the data results. The analysis was based on the data collected and a direct comparison of thoughts, comments, and ideas provided by participants in the study.

**Description of the Sample**

The base of the sample was formulated from the beginning of this project due to the zip code of the school. The participant sample are all individuals who have experience with working with children with disabilities. Stake (2006) stated, “the interactions within an entity and across entities help us recognize the case as an integrated system” (p. 3). By utilizing three subjects, administrators, teachers, and parents provide perspectives across the entire system. Therefore, the researcher aligned, Yin (2012) connection of the content with the following schools. The schools themselves are each Title I schools within school districts in southern New York state. These school districts were targeted due to their majority African American and Latino populations. The three areas in which the sample was collected was NX school district, MX school district, and YX school district. The number of schools that participated per district varied as the researcher sent request from over forty schools within all three of the districts. The researcher allowed numerous schools from each district to add to the constant comparison of the data. The researcher also utilized more than one district to provide data from a larger sample.
The researcher used demographics of each of the areas to determine the districts population. The researcher found the districts chosen each had a large dense population of these African American and Latino families which fit the parameters of the chosen population. The population size and description of the neighborhood of the schools fit an urban community, that is a densely populated area. The investigation was based on these families as the research shown in the Literature review demonstrated a gap in research that discussed the experience of these families.

Response Rate

The investigator created flyers that were posted for teachers and documents sent to the homes of the families in the special education classrooms. Teachers and administrators were surveyed and interviewed within two weeks from initial contact. The questionnaires began to arrive via the mail within one week of sending them out; in the first two weeks, ten questionnaires were received. In reference to, parent’s participation, a few initial parents contacted acquaintances within the school and referred them to the researcher as possible participants. As a result, the sample became inclusive of three different school districts and over ten different schools. The response rate for administrators was 9%, which is based on the number of schools reached out to and number of the participants in the study. The response rate for the teachers is estimated to be 20%, which is based on the number of teachers in each of the schools and the number of participants. The response rate of families was 7%, which is based on the number of packets sent out to the number of actual participants.
Presentation of Data and Results

The researcher utilized the data to establish an overall plan to investigate involvement in the urban community for children with a diagnosed disability, from the perspective of the administrators, teachers, and parents. Stake (2012) defined a case study as an in-depth analysis of one or more events, settings, programs, social groups, communities, individuals, or other “bounded systems” in their natural context” (p. 4). Yin (2012) discussed case study as a method that makes connections of experiences. Hence, selection of this case study supported, the researchers focus on the decline from elementary to middle school and the plausible factors that contributed to this decline. The data collection process was built to identify the factors that are associated with parent involvement and support a theory based on the literature review in Chapter 2 and data collected within Chapter 4. For the reader to establish triangulation, the researcher provided a diagram that describes the process and overall findings of the research, which is in the appendix of this document.

Themes

The use of the questionnaires, surveys, interviews, and field notes contributed to the establishment of the following themes. The key factors established in this study were, stakeholder collaboration, growth and maturation of diagnosed youth, commitment to diagnosed children, interpreted disconnect of stakeholders as a resource, systematic deficits of stakeholders. Each of the themes were established through the thematic analysis that took place with each of the data collection tools.

The identified themes are discussed in their entirety in this chapter. Here the researcher provides a detail account of the data collected which was used to develop the individual themes. The themes that were identified through the investigation were stakeholder collaboration, growth
and maturation of diagnosed youth, commitment to diagnosed children, interpreted disconnect of stakeholder as a resource, systematic deficits of stakeholders. The following sub categories stress, socioeconomic status, parental education, language, were developed through a deeper investigation during the study. The researcher used each of the tools of data collections to develop the themes associated with the study.

**Questionnaires and Surveys**

The researcher utilized the questionnaires that were charts on a six-tier scale for the parent and teacher surveys. The administrator surveys used in the study was scaled in a two-tier to six-tier to determine a level of how individuals perceived certain aspects of parent involvement. The responses per questionaries’ were counted and scaled to determine just how all participants felt about parent involvement. These documents were also used as tool during the analysis process to further develop the themes.

The Parent-Teacher involvement questionnaire was instrumental as it provided the results of the perspective of parents and teacher. Each listed section contained sections that addressed the question. The researcher tallied each of the responses and added total tallies to numerically understand what tier responses fell. Within the tiers function 1 as less likely, not all, or strongly disagree to tier 5 that functions as highly likely, a great deal, to strongly agree. The results showed the perspectives of these two cases, parents and teachers and their feelings towards parent involvement through interactions and perceptions of the schools.

The questionnaire provided data that contributed the development of the following themes stake holder collaboration, interpreted disconnect of stakeholders as a resource. Table 7 demonstrates the responses of parents and teachers, mainly their feelings on how communication is lacking from their experiences, this was seen from both the parents and teachers notes. Overall
this area tallied higher points in level 1 and 2 for the communication response. For interpreted disconnect of stakeholders as a resource the parents indicated they felt connected to the teacher, yet they were split about the school.

Table 7

*Parent-Teacher Involvement Questionnaire Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Responses</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents responses to how often they participate and communicate with teachers and the school.</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents responses to how they feel about their children’s teacher.</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents responses to how they feel about their Children’s school.</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Responses</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers responses to how often they participate and communicate with the parents.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers responses to how they feel about their parent interactions.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers responses to how they feel their parents feel about the school.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The totals are based on all the points added from each of the responses on the questionnaires. The higher number the most likely the response was seen over the parent and teacher participants. The data was used to identify the perspectives of parents and teachers.

The administrator completed the Survey on family and School Partnerships in Public schools. This survey went through an investigation of parent involvement through the perspective of administrators. The participants looked at the survey to examine communication, events provided and administrators’ perspective on their effectiveness. Below you will find the
results of administrator survey which was completed prior to any interaction with the researcher. The table provides data on each of the questions asked in the survey. It presents administrators take on parent involvement within the school in which they supervise.

This survey was extensive and provides an overview of the administrator’s perspective. The themes supported through the data were, stakeholder collaboration, interpreted disconnect of stakeholders as a resource, and systematic deficits of stakeholders. Stakeholder collaboration is seen through a number of areas indicated in Table 8, the researcher found that communication and interactions with families and teachers was visited with these particular questions on the survey. The results demonstrated that administrators found opportunities existed for involvement, yet parents weren’t taking them. Stakeholders as a resource was identified as low with the data collected, most schools did not provide a parent resource center, in addition the administrator reported the school district was not a feasible resource. Systematic deficits were noted through section dedicated to dual-language parents.

Table 8

Administrator Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events at school</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity Held</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents Attendance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most or All</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than Half</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About Half</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than Half</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Communication with Parents       |     |    |
| How Administrators perceive      |     |    |
| parents receive communications   |     |    |
| from the school.                 |     |    |
| Always                          | 1   |    |
| Frequently                      | 1   |    |
| Sometimes                       | 1   |    |
| Never                           | 1   |    |

| Information on Topics           |     |    |
| How administrator feel they     |     |    |
| provide information to parents  |     |    |
| on                                |     |    |
| Information Provided             | 2   |    |
| Information not Provided         | 2   |    |
### Workshops or classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshops or classes</th>
<th>Take home/audio clips</th>
<th>Printed Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Parent Resource Center

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is there a resource center available for parents in the building?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often parents utilize the resource center?</th>
<th>Very Frequently</th>
<th>Somewhat Frequently</th>
<th>Infrequently</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Home visit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who makes these student home visits?</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Home School Coordinator</th>
<th>School Counselor</th>
<th>Other Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What percentage of the school population received a home visit?</th>
<th>0-24%</th>
<th>25-49%</th>
<th>50-74%</th>
<th>75-100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Parents with limited English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources are provided to parents in the school who have limited English.</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Materials and assistance is provided directly to parents who need additional language support. | Yes | No |
|                                                                                          | 4   |    |

### Parent Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities for parents to be involved are available.</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents volunteer inside or outside of the classroom.</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Moderately Satisfactory</th>
<th>Moderately Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does the school</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
district have a training program for classroom volunteers? 4

Parent Input

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Great extent</th>
<th>Moderate extent</th>
<th>Small extent</th>
<th>Not at All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the administrator include parents in decisions regarding funds, materials, and teacher evaluations?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your school have a policy council?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does your school district offer assistance with parent involvement in your school?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the state offer assistance with parent involvement in your school?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Barriers with Parent Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Great Extent</th>
<th>Moderate Extent</th>
<th>Small Extent</th>
<th>Not at All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are there barriers that exist in parent ability to be involved?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>0-24%</th>
<th>25-49%</th>
<th>50-74%</th>
<th>75-100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What percent of your population receives free lunch?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your school receive Title I Funds?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your school operate a Title I school-wide program?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The totals are based on all the points added from each of the responses on the questionnaires.
The final questionnaire was completed by the parents, the primary focus of the study on parent involvement in the urban community for children with a diagnosed disability. The Family-School Partnership Lab Scales: Parent and Student Questionnaires. This Questionnaire was built by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) concept of parent involvement. This questionnaire was an extensive examination of parent involvement from the perspective of the parents. Each of the themes were supported through the data collected within Table 9.

Stakeholder collaboration and commitment to diagnosed youth was recorded in the questions on communication and parent’s idea of coming to the school to participate. The data showed that most families did not believe they were fully involved in their child’s education. Deficits of stakeholders was identified through parent perception of their school experience, this question contained questions that support how parents feel about their own educational experience. Growth and maturation of youth was identified in the question on youth invitation for parents to be involved in the schools. The data showed that some parents felt they received invitations to be involved as other felt they did not. Stakeholders as a resource was established through statements and responses discussing how much time and energy parents feel they must be involved, families reported that they did not feel they had enough time and energy. In addition, this theme was seen with teachers reporting lack of support from the administration. Systematic deficits were determined from the recorded responses to parent’s perceptions of how prepared they are for their child’s education, parents responded in the middle for this area, they reported neither prepared nor not prepared.
### Table 9

**Family-School Partnership Lab Scales**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental Role Construction for Involvement in the Child's Education Scale</th>
<th>Tier 1</th>
<th>Tier 2</th>
<th>Tier 3</th>
<th>Tier 4</th>
<th>Tier 5</th>
<th>Tier 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What parent perceives their level of responsibility to their child's school and school work.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How parents feel about their own school experience.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents' Perception of General Invitations for Involvement from the School Scale</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How parents perceive invitation to the schools and how are they are communicated.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents' Perception of Personal Knowledge and Skills Scale</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How parents feel they are prepared to help their children with school work and how parents feel they can communicate with the school.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents' Perception of Specific Invitations for Involvement from the Teacher</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents' perception of how they feel about specific invitations to become involved from the teacher</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents' Perception of Specific Invitations for involvement from the child scale</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents' perception of how they feel about specific invitations to become involved from their child</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parent Report of home-based Involvement Activities Scale
Parents' perception of how they feel about themselves or someone else in the family being involved with their child’s education at home

Parent Report of School based Involvement Activities Scale
Parents' perception of how often them or a family member is involved at the school

Parent Report of Encouragement Scale
Parents' perception of how much they encourage their child to succeed
Note. The totals are based on all the points added from each of the responses on the questionnaires.

**Interviews and Field Notes**

The researcher conducted the individual meeting with each of the participants at different points in the investigation. No multi-person or focus groups were utilized. Each of the individuals was asked seven questions for the interview. The researcher used the questions as a guided conversation, the participant was allowed opportunity to share any additional information they found may be relevant. During each of the interviews the field notes were collected by the researcher. These notes documented statements from the respondents that identified key words or phrases that researchers used for coding. The interviews were recorded to transcribe later, by the researcher. These transcriptions provided the researcher opportunity to review the field notes that were taken during the interviews and begin to highlight repeated responses, which entailed pattern analysis.

The data for the interviews and field notes were collaborated into charts based on the research questions, which can be found in the appendix. The transcribed interviews were documented in the order of the interviews questions which allowed the opportunity for the researcher to easily analyze the responses. The researcher pulled out the common responses from the administrators, teachers, and parents and placed the data on charts attached with the identification number of each participant. The researcher described the results of the interviews and field notes in the presentation of data and results section below.

The base development of the codes was initially formed through prior research from the literature review. During the initial investigation the researcher identified ongoing themes within the research. The researcher utilized the prior knowledge to lead identification of specific code words and statements repeated, the use of field notes allowed the researcher to note specific key
words mentioned by the participants. The key words were highlighted and charted into categories. This process was part of the thematic review of the data. The data collected from the field notes and interviews is displayed below. The researcher displays that data as it was utilized to establish each of the identified themes. The identification of themes was established after the completion of four administrator interviews, eight teacher interviews, and 29 family interviews.

**Stakeholder collaboration.** The ongoing theme that stood out during the analysis process was collaboration through communication. Parent 17 discussed how being able to speak to the teacher often defined parent involvement. She stated that “Umm being able to talk with teachers not just parent conference like a day today”. Teacher 2 discussed parent involvement also as communication. He discussed parent involvement as communicating concerns they may have in the school or programs they attend.

Administrator 1 discussed how she felt communication is the base of parent involvement. Administrator 1 talked about working with parents and developing additional avenues for communication. He went on to explain that parents and teachers need support to have successful communication. The example he provided was that “I found that when I was more available to communicate with parents and teachers, the better the children did”. Positive communication was the response from many of the respondents during this question.

The collected data provided insight on the discussion of communication in parent involvement. As all participants expressed the importance. The data demonstrated that communication was limited in most cases. Based on the Parent-Teacher Involvement Questionnaire, it shows that most parents communicate with the teacher once or twice a year. This communication included parent-teacher conferences, phone calls, written emails or text messages. Teachers who also completed this question responded below.
The teachers whom also expressed the importance of communication reported limited communication throughout the school year. Teacher 4 discussed during her interview that at times it is hard to reach parents. She provided the story of one of her children who struggled with maintaining self-control in the classroom. This occurred was also a child who did not come to school with supplies until after Winter Break in February. She would call the parent often, and she always stated she was a “busy woman”. After months of trying to reach the parent, she said, “I had to change the way I was talking to her”. I asked for further explanation, and she explained that at times you have adjusted your approach to reach those parents that are just distant. Teacher 6 stated, “you have to know how to talk to your parents”.

The administrators also expressed the importance of communication; Administrator 3 stated, “communication is the base of parent involvement”. She went on to explain that working with families you must be there answer their questions and provide support. She gave the example of a family who transferred to the school from another district due to an incident that involved legal repercussions for the child. At first, the parent did not want to communicate what behavioral concern occurred. When the child repeated the dangerous behavior on school property, then she wanted to communicate with the administrators. She stated, “that parent came in crying and distraught, she was ready, she was ready to communicate”. From that point, a plan was put in place for the child and no reoccurrence of the behavior. Administrator 3 explained, “sometimes the parents are so embarrassed that they don't want to share, even though it’s what may be best for the child”. The findings were that administrators felt differently about how parents received and accepted communication with them.

A specific discussion on communication was how events were offered at the school. All sample participants provided the examples of parent involvement and discussed how they were
communicated. One of the components was the parent turn out to these events in which they were invited. Each of the samples aligned their responses with discussing work as a factor that interfered with parents being involved. Parent 13 stated, “I wanted to go to stuff, but I always have to work”. Parent 11 also stated, “parents have to work, especially if they work 9 to 5, I don’t know how they will have time to be there”. Teacher 7 discussed how many parents are working more than one job, and it makes it hard for them to come out to the school. Administrator 2 talked about offering events during various times of the day to ensure parents can make something.

Invitations were a focus part of the investigation. The data showed that invitations came in different forms, in a perceived effort to reach as many parents as possible. The respondents reported mostly that they felt many parents did not make it to many of the events. Parent 21 stated “I just don’t go I am not involved at all. The one time that I did go, they were surprised to see me”. This was not the common response from most parents. Parent 17 talked about her work schedule interfered with her going to many of the meetings in the evening hours. She talked about getting out of work at five going home having to cook and do homework and there being no real time to go to events. Parent 17 stated, “I may not go, but I do call the teacher, I do know what is going on in the school”. Teacher 5 stated, “sometimes parents are hard to get the information they don’t check the bookbag, so they just miss out on things, those are the parents that I have to text information”.

The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler parent involvement questionnaire; provided a data that parents scaled themselves or a family member low on coming to the school for an event. Even though parent reported they wanted to attend they did not make it to the schools, though many parental respondents stated low attendance. The respondents reported that invitations were
communicated to them from the school. When it came to invitations from the teachers directly parental respondents were not in any specific category as parents scored all along the spectrum. On the contrary, administrators reported that there were limited events outside of parent-teacher conferences for parents to be involved in the school. In addition, administrators reported that about half of the families participated in events available at the school. During the interview process Administrator 1, 2, and 4 all stated that they felt parents were more involved on the elementary level.

**Commitment to diagnosed children.** Throughout the data collected through interviews and the responses to the questionnaires provided by the researcher established, their perspectives who is responsible for education of the children with a diagnosed disability. Parent 1 discussed their feelings on it, they indicated it is their responsibility to be involved in their child’s educational experience. Parent 3 talked about being there for your child, “parent involvement is being their hands on to help the school to help your child”. She went on to discuss how she felt it was her duty to be there to assist the teachers as needed. Teacher 5 discussed her responsibility to support the parents of children who showed the challenging behaviors. She stated, “many of the children I encounter have many layers of disabilities. I find that these children need me to support them and their parents”. Administrator 4 talked about his career as an educator. He talked in excess about the importance of his role. He stated, “leadership determines the whole tone of the building. It is important to me as the leader to create an environment for everyone to learn”. Most of the respondents expressed some level of responsibility to the educational process of children with a diagnosed disability.

The typical response across all cases is that if you aren’t involved there are limited academic gains. Parent 19 talked about parent involvement starts at home. “That is a big part of
me that is a big part because it starts at home”. He went on to explain that being on a team with the other parents makes a difference. He explained that he was separated from the mother and they did not communicate well. They have two boys, and both have an IEP; the older son he expressed to be of high concern. The other parent did not allow him to transfer him to a charter school. Also, she took the father off documentation, so he was no longer able to go to the school. As a result, he stated, “my son continues to suffer and not get what he needs”.

Parent 16 explained that “you have to be involved to know what your kid is doing”. She explained that she has had other children in the district and she was not as present with the older children. “I wasn’t that good of a parent with my older children. Now with this last one, I know everything”. Parent 5 also stated, “if you are not there to help the child won’t do well”. Having multiple children was a common response mentioned by respondents. Parent 5, who is the mother of 5 with a number of her children with an IEP, stated, “I know with my children I have to be there to help them cope with the day to day interactions. Even with each other at home can be a lot with so many children”. Parent 3 stated, “I wanted to be there but having another baby has made it harder to be as involved with my son”.

**Interpreted disconnect of stakeholders as a resource.** The respondents talked in length of how parents, teachers, and administrators are not supported for parent involvement in the urban community for these disabled children. Administrators discussed their perspective being supportive of the teachers and parents, yet the teachers and parents at these schools grossly reported a different view. Teacher 1 discussed how teachers do not feel supported by the administrations. “I feel very strongly that I do not feel supported as a teacher who works with children with disabilities”. Teacher 7 talked about being transferred from an older grade to a first-grade classroom. She specifically gave a story on the change in curriculum, where now
reading she is responsible. She stated, “I came in August to set up my room and found out my classroom had moved to another floor, and I was now teaching first grade. I was shocked, and I wasn’t ready”. She went on to explain how she was handed a book for reading and left there. The principal did not follow up or provide any training.

Teacher 1 also discuss this lack of support when it came to getting materials for her room. She mentioned a book basket, the whole school received book baskets from the district, and every other classroom received theirs delivered. I had to call and ask where the baskets were for the Special education classrooms; the response was in the closet you can just go it.

She went on to explain how this is unfair and there were other instances that played out with similar circumstances.

Parent 4 stated, “when I was at the old school, I found the administrations was not there at all. At my son’s new school, the administration is outside every day to great the children and the parents”. The parent went on to explain the energy in the school that she enjoyed as she felt that children were greeted by everyone. She talked about each of the parents being able to be at the school and the opportunities to be a positive influence on another person’s child.

Parent 10 talked a lot about the school administration. She described her story of having 10 children each with an IEP or a 504 plan. She talked about the changes the district made which pulled her children who were out of district back to their neighborhood schools.

When my son was 5 he got selected for a special program, a study where he and other children were pulled out of the district and sent to a school in upper Westchester. He has been there and had made great progress until this school year and he is now 14.
She went on to explain that she tried to meet with the district and that her son is not in the best setting. He is now overwhelmed in a class with one other child and is provided with test answers. When she addressed this concern with the teacher, she stated they responded, “it doesn’t matter he is going to get a local diploma anyways”. Of course, the parent was upset with such a statement. She explained she would continue to fight for her children to have more than what administration thinks they deserve.

Parent 15 talked about how she would reach out to the administration to get information, and they would respond that they would get back to you and never did. “I would attempt to schedule meetings, and they would never happen”. As there were concerns raised by some parents to the level of not feeling supported, there were instances of parents expressing they felt they could work with the administration. As parents have some concerns about the administration, there was no tangible evidence expressed by parents about concerns for their child's teacher. Parent 11 and 13 both talked about their child's teacher is important in understanding the constraints of their child's disability. Parent 13 stated, “I would have been lost if it wasn’t for my child’s teachers”. Parent 18 talked about how her older child and now her younger child has the same middle school teachers. She went on to explain how this teacher was instrumental in the progress her boys have made.

The Parent-Teacher Questionnaire responses indicated that parents feel they have a positive repour with their child’s teacher. In consideration some teacher respondents mentioned concerns with parent interactions. Overall teachers reported they thought they have positive interactions with their parents they work with.
Systematic Deficits of Stakeholders

**Stress.** The question of stress triggered responses from each of the respondents in the study. Teacher 2 talked about stress having great effects on parent’s ability to be involved. Teacher 2 stated, “because if you are stressed out, you don't know what to do”. She talked about how mental health is so important for everyone, and you cannot function when there is too much stress. Teacher 3 stated, “sometimes I feel like parents can't be involved”. He talked about one of his parents who came in because her child was acting out. He explained the parent came in and told him the dad was unable to be around. The teacher went on to say that is a common comment he was finding with many of his most troubled children. He stated, “so many single-parent homes, fathers in jail, mothers in jail, people just not there”. Many responding teachers discussed how parents are stressed and overwhelmed; Teacher 8 stated, “a lot of parents don't know how to deal with their child's disability”. Administrator 1 talked in depth about being in the urban community and the level of trauma that comes from living in this community. She explained that many families have a lot of stressors that have existed before them, that these children are born in households with stress.

Parent 19 raised one of the commonly mentioned concerns of the parents and teachers, “I was stressed out more because they never called me for anything good that my child did”. The Parents expressed at times that they found that the school would only call them when their child was misbehaving. Parent 3 talked about a conversation she had with the teacher about why they only called when unpleasant events happened. She explained that she had numerous children go through the school district, and one of her older children was a trigger for constant stress. Her story:
I was young with two kids, I just wasn’t around. I wanted to hang out and drink with my friends. One of them always got in trouble all the time. The teachers would call so much to complain I just stopped answering.

She jokingly talked about how he was so much of an issue that he didn’t know he graduated from middle school until he received his diploma in the mail. “they didn’t even tell him because they didn’t want him to come.”

**Work.** Work was also mentioned in excess by parents as a reason for high-stress levels, Parent 16 talked about single parents, “they are working two jobs they are working at night”.

Parent 16 talked about parents having to work a lot, and that causes parents to be stressed. Parent 12 who talked about working in daycare all day with other children. She felt that the stress of her job makes it hard to go home and have to work with her children. She stated, “you don't want to deal with work kids and other stuff outside of that”. Parent 5 stated, “stress makes you not want to do it at that point”. This parent went on to explain that she finds people get so stressed out about life and it makes it hard to focus on their children. Parent 10 had a similar response, “If I am stressed I don't want to be bothered”. Parent 9 talked more about mental health and how it affected people. She talked about how she felt that depression and living in a poor neighborhood influenced how much stress you have. She explained the result, “but since you are stressed you just shut down”.

**Parental education.** Parental education was discussed by Administrator 1; he talked about how parents who don't understand the work have a harder time being involved. “Here at the school, we offer resources, so parents can get the help they need to help their children”. He discussed the district-wide parenting classes that were offered specifically to discuss the common core which was a constant mention during data collection as being a stressor for parents. Teacher
I, also talked about working at this particular district-wide training, “I was one of the teachers who taught at these sessions and found that many parents didn't come. But they were offered, and the ones that did their children did better”. Administrator 3, talked about parents asking a lot of questions that surrounded their child and their specific needs and not being able to field of the questions, “there would be a lot of questions about curriculum and classes offered. I would just provide information about the training we have available”.

Parent 7 talked a lot about being able to advocate for her children with an IEP. She explained that she was lost to her first child who was diagnosed when she was in Kindergarten. “I didn't know anything; I was lucky to have a teacher who took time to explain everything to me”. Parent 10, “I found when I went to meetings there wasn’t a lot of information about children with special need”. She went on to explain that she would want to know how to help her daughter and could not find anyone who was willing to assist. She told the story of when she got a new walker for her child who had Cerebral Palsy. She asked the school could she have the equipment at home and she was willing to come in and learn how to use it. This way when her child was out of school she could practice at home. Parent 7 stated, “they told me that she can do it at school and that I could purchase my equipment. They also said I am not trained to use the equipment anyway”.

Parent 18 talked about wanting to know what was going on, “I wanted to be involved in my child’s education, my child is special”. She went on to explain how she would look up information on her child’s diagnosis especially since it was so rare. Parent 18 talked about her child’s teacher who also looked up more information. “Once I shared the diagnosis with a teacher she called me for a meeting one day, I came in, and she talked, she talked about all the information she found out about the diagnosis”. The teacher told me she did not understand, so
she thought, she may not have understood either. Teacher 6 discussed meeting with parents to help them with understanding the curriculum and goal setting for their child.

As a middle school special education teacher, I always have classrooms with different behavioral concerns. These parents were always the most stressed. I used to meet with them, talk to them on the phone, just come up with ways to work together (Teacher 6).

**Socioeconomic Status.** Money was a large part of the conversation with most of the respondents. Administrator 3 talked about financial concerns for parents because they do not have the resources to provide basic needs. “If you don’t have housing or just food you are not going to be at your best”. Administrator 2 discussed a family that had two children in the school who had excessive absences. “These children wouldn't come into school. I finally got the parent on the phone, and she thought they were coming to school”. She went on with the story to explain the parent was going from one overnight job to a day job and was not home to stay. So, the boys just were not going to school. Parent 11 talked about not being able to take time from work to be involved. Parent 13 made a similar claim, “if I don’t work I won’t be able to pay my bills, who will feed my kids then”. Parent 4, 9, 13, 18, 20, Teacher 3, 6, 1, and Administrator 2 all discussed the idea of the “latch-key kid”, this is when parents aren't home to receive their children due to work or other obligations. This expression was used to describe parents who aren’t able to be involved and in the urban community, children are coming home to an empty home.

**Language.** The language barrier was another statement that was a reason for why parents have a tough time being involved. Parent 13 talked about knowing the family member who did not master English, and it was harder for them to come to the school. She stated, “if you don’t speak English you are less likely to want to come because you can't communicate”. Teacher 3
talked about teaching at a predominately Latino school. She talked about parent-teacher conferences. “Parents don't come to conferences. I have report cards from the first marking period. I might catch them at graduation”. She went on to explain that she does not speak Spanish and when the parents come they need a translator, and there is only one. So, the four parents that do come if three only speak Spanish I am unable to communicate with them.

**Growth and maturation of diagnosed youth.** Independence was a theme discussed as respondents discussed in depth. The standard response was that children want and need their independence. Administrator 3 discussed how children from the elementary level have more parents at performances than the older children. “parents feel the need to be there for their younger children, they feel they have to still take care of them, they don’t feel like that for their older kids”. Teacher 1 discussed her experience of working in different age groups during her career. “Now I am a kindergarten teacher I do have some parents who are involved, when I taught in the 5th grade in the city parents just weren't there”. Teacher 7 stated, “I work at the high school, and parents just aren't around at all. I think they feel these children can take care of themselves”. Parent 9 stated, “when my son got older he started to ask me not to come to the school. He seemed embarrassed, so I went anyway”. Parent 4, “parents don't see them as babies anymore, and they want them to grow up”.

Parent 4 talked about parents feeling like now that their children are older, they can focus on other things. “With work and everything else going on, parents feel their children are older, so they can focus on other things, rather than them” (Parent 4). Parent 21 talked about when her son got older, “when my son got older, I naturally stopped doing as much and being there. I found that he didn't need me as much”. Parent 10 talked about how her being involved affects how her children take their education.
For me, I find that if he feels like I am not taking it seriously. If I am not going to school to see what he is doing and making that communication happen with the teacher, he may not take it seriously (Parent 10).

She went on to explain that if you are involved your kids will be more inclined to be involved.

The findings demonstrated that respondents felt they have a responsibility to children with a diagnosed disability. The findings provided insight into parent involvement. The themes developed from this investigation are utilized to understand the participants’ perception of parent involvement in the urban community. Based on the three research questions, the data answered the who, when, how about the decline of parent involvement. Parents expressed wanting to have access to information that will make them stronger advocates for their children. In general, the teachers explained that they had creative techniques to communicate with families as communication was a vital part to be involved. The administrators expressed their concern with parents not being as involved due to work. Overall all respondents expressed the decline of parent involvement as children get older to be evident through their life experiences.

**Triangulation**

The multi-case study was based on three samples from the study. As the data was collected, the researcher found that using the administrator, teacher, and parent perspective became evident in the data collection process. From the collection of questionnaires, a survey, interviews, and field notes provided triangulation of the data. The researcher examined the three perspectives of the collected data to distinguish data for understanding the multiple themes. Through this descriptive report, the researcher displayed the data that provided the reader with the opportunity to draw conclusions based on the themes. To ensure strength of the study the researcher reported opposing views within the reporting process. “the citing of rival claims or
alternative perspectives also should be part of a good abstract for your case study” (Yin, 2014, p. 203). Figure 1 shows how triangulation was established through all sources of data within this study on parent involvement. From the previous research to development and execution of data collection materials, the researcher analyzed the data to create themes that were identified from the data collected. This process is mapped in the figure below.

**Figure 1. Triangulation**

The multi-case study is based on three samples from the study. As the data was collected, the researcher found that using the administrator, teacher, and parent perspective became evident in the data collection process. The researcher examined the three perspectives of the collected data to distinguish data for understanding the multiple themes. Through this descriptive report, the researcher displayed the data that provided the reader with the opportunity to draw
conclusions based on the theme. To ensure strength of the study the researcher reported opposing views within the reporting process. “the citing of rival claims or alternative perspectives also should be part of a good abstract for your case study” (Yin, 2014, p. 203).

**Summary of the Findings**

The findings of the study displayed an understanding of parent involvement in the urban community for children with a diagnosed disability. Through the analysis of the data, a conclusion was drawn to understand the factors that affect parent involvement. Yin (2012) discussed the design of the case study and the significance, collection and analysis of quantitative data, including the use of surveys within each case supports the overall study. The use of the three cases aligned together to demonstrate parent involvement in the urban community.

The examination of the data showed that the administration believed they focused on building relationships and opportunities for parent involvement within the urban community for children with a diagnosed disability. The teachers within the study thought they were all focused on the best interest of the school and the families by building and promoting parent involvement opportunities. The parents in the study all stated they wanted to be there for their children and they wanted them to be successful. The data collected throughout the study assisted the researcher to determine an understanding of the research questions utilized in this study.

**Research Question 1**

What does parent involvement look like for children with a diagnosed disability?

The data showed that there was an overall understanding of parent involvement through all the participants this study. The participants made no distinction between parents of children with or without a diagnosed disability. Through the data it was noted that all participants felt
they had responsibility to partake in the educational experience of children with a diagnosed disability. Ultimately there was factors that hindered their ability to be as involved.

**Research Question 2**

What are the factors that affect parenting while living in the urban community?

The data showed that there are key factors that affect parenting in the urban community. These factors are socioeconomic status, language barriers, parent education, parental employment (work), and stress. Each of these categories were described by the literature and the data from the collection process as the key factors that affect parent involvement in the urban community. Stress was the leading factor, as participants expressed that having a child with a diagnosed disability came with significant levels of stress.

**Research Question 3**

What are the circumstances that influence the decline of parent involvement in the urban community schools, mainly when those parents have children with a diagnosed disability?

The data showed that factors affecting parenting were key in the decline of parent involvement in the urban community. The participants in the study also identified communication and support from stakeholders to be determining factors in why parents became less involved. The data also identified that parents and youth with a diagnosed disability, like their counterparts felt a need to inspire the level of independence in their child. The decline was expressed to occur more often, as youth aged from elementary school to secondary school.

**Summary**

Through the data collection process there was a considerable extent of data collected to develop themes associated with the decline in parent involvement. The researcher used the collected data to create a story of the perspective of parents, teachers and administrators in the
urban community for children with a diagnosed disability. Through the interviews and questionnaires collected the themes of stakeholder collaboration, growth and maturation of diagnosed youth, interpreted disconnect of stakeholder as a resource, systematic deficits of stakeholders, were discussed. The sub themes, of stress, parental education, socioeconomic status, language was discussed as respondents discussed reasons why parents are not involved.

The study was built to come to an understanding of parents of children with a diagnosed disability and their experience of parent involvement. By taking the perspective of three cases who all have an influence on this experience the researcher was able to detail the specifics of what plays into these interactions. The data supported the findings as it was evident in the surveys, questionnaires, interviews and field notes.
Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

Parent involvement in the urban community for children with a diagnosed disability is the base of their educational experience. In many cases there are reasons and factors that influence this involvement. There are items that influence parents to be there and remain the advocate for their child. Administrators and teachers within these Title I schools have a level of responsibility to the parents to be supportive. Munn-Joseph (2008) stated, “special educators have long recognized the necessity of family involvement in children’s education as presented in the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act” (p. 381). These requirements which are detailed in IDEA (1975), provide legislation that is designed to protect children with a disability to way to the age of twenty-one.

In the urban community the research has shown that there are several children of African American and Latino decent receiving Special Education services. The children who populate these classrooms are diagnosed with Autism, ADD, ADHD, OHI, and emotional concerns. The behaviors that children exhibit based on their disability raise alarms as many are hard to control at school and the home. This research has shown that families of such children experience levels of stress from the children and their experience living within the urban community.

The following chapter discussed the previous research, the data collected, and any new research that has developed in the last year since the beginning of this study. The researcher provided a summary of the data and dug deeper to explain the findings established through thematic analysis of the research and data. The conducted study was built to understand parent involvement in the urban community.
Summary of the Results

This qualitative study was an investigation of parent involvement in the urban community for children with a diagnosed disability. The research was designed to be able to draw conclusions on what the actual cause of the decline of parent involvement from elementary school to middle school for these children. The investigation was based on the premise that parents of children with a diagnosed disability in the urban community come with several additional limitations that are separate from parents of children without a disability. Marschall and Shah (2016) stated, “for parents who possess essential resources like time, money, and skills, the relative cost of participation is typically quite low”. This research exhibited parents in higher socio-economic status are more involved. The data collected within this study was based on the research design of a multi-case study. The results of the data collected from surveys, interviews and field notes built a bridge to understand parent involvement in the urban community for children with a diagnosed disability.

Discussion of Results

The research established through the collected this data, an understanding of what were the crucial factors that supported or negated parent involvement in the urban community. The researcher developed the case study and determined that three cases were evident throughout the research. The questions the researcher looked for responses were:

1. What does parent involvement looks like for children with a diagnosed disability?
2. What are the factors that affect parenting while living in the urban community?
3. What are the circumstances that influence the decline of parent involvement in the urban community schools, mainly when those parents have children with the diagnosed disability?
These three questions were used to understand parent involvement in the urban community. Through the investigation the following themes were established, stakeholder collaboration, growth and maturation on diagnosed youth, systematic deficits of stakeholders, interpreted disconnect of stakeholders as a resource, and commitment to diagnosed youth.

**Stakeholder collaboration.** Communication is the base of societal functions. This research study provided a detailed account of the importance of communication within the urban community. Marschall and Shah (2016) expressed that “communication is based on middle/upper-class values and forms of communication and this puts lower income families at a disadvantage” (p. 28). This was determined in the study as a key ideal. Communication is the only way to reach a consensus on a plan of action for any child. Children with disabilities are provided additional stipulations through IDEA, notably the legislations that institutes communication between families and administration as an important part of the child’s educational planning process. With Individual Education Plans and 504 plans, the creation of these documents establishes regulations for the parents to be supported by the school district.

Administrators discussed in length the importance of communication within their career as an educator. Graham-Clay (2005) stated, “strong communication is fundamental to this partnership and to building a sense of community between home and school” (p. 118). They discussed in length how talking to parents and teachers was an important part of their job. The data collection process showed that administrators focused on communication techniques to ensure valuable information being relayed to the families. Through communication tools such a “class dojo” and “breakfast with the principal”, such opportunities are in place to provide parents with a platform to communicate with the administration.
Teachers detailed their communication methods with parents and the administrations. Several teacher respondents discussed communication with administrators as being strained. They did not feel they were able to have access to the administrator. Regarding the parent-teacher relationships it was discussed how important communication with the parents was. Through interviews each of the teacher respondents expressed how talking to parents was an important part of their job description. The main discussion was how to get on the level of the parents to initiate adequate conversation.

Parents felt that communication with teachers and administrators was something they wanted to do. The parents talked about teachers being their main resource of communication in the schools. Their communication with the administration was reported to be limited by the parents who participated in the study. The accounts of teacher communication were noted that teachers put in effort to communicate with the parents. Many parents felt that their early understanding of their child’s disability came from conversations with their child’s teacher.

Parents expressed largest concern with communication to be an overflow of negative communication. Parents spoke in length of how receiving negative communication affected their ability to be involved with the school. Parents felt the energy generated their lack of involvement.

**Commitment to diagnosed children.** The responsibility of who is the educator of children with a disability. Through the research there was identifiable opinions on who felt they were responsible for providing an adequate education. The administrator presented that as the leader of the school setting, they played a significant position in providing a valuable experience. Tyler (2016) discussed the principal’s impact on educational experiences he states, “the actions that they take to hire teachers, create the school-wide conditions that support student learning,
and directly influence teacher effectiveness”. These responsibilities were expressed by the respondents within their interviews. The teachers talked a lot about their feelings of it being their duty to ensure each child had a chance to make it. The teachers provided the perspective that they were responsible to ensure parents got what they needed to support their child academically.

Parents discussed just how they are the first educator for their child. They talked in detail about not leaving it up to just the teacher to provide an adequate education for their children. They discussed building relationships with the teachers to assist in the educational process. Many of the parents felt the job was never done when it came to the education of their child and that they would do anything to make sure their child was successful.

**Interpreted disconnect of stakeholders as a resource.** The theme of not being supported was also address by the respondents within the three cases. In the case of the administrators there was no concerns with support. They reported that they felt they were supportive of teachers and families. This was not the same perspective from the other two cases. The teachers and parents provided different perspectives within their responses. Numerous teacher respondents reported that they did not feel supported by their administration. They talked in depth about having to search for resources and supplies. The teachers felt as if they were on their own island within the school and their school district. Numerous statements were collected that described special education teachers as being treated differently than general education teachers.

Parents discussed that teachers were supportive on diverse levels and experiences. Yet most of the parents felt a level of discomfort from the administration. Many reported that the administration was inaccessible to the parents and was not a plausible resource. Torres-Burgo et al. (1999) suggested that many urban parents, regardless of their cultural and linguistic
backgrounds, are not adequately included in some of the most basic aspects of the special education process in public schools. Respondents stated that they felt they reached out and tried to be involved and just were not considered. The parent talked about only seeing the administrator for short periods at parent teacher conference and or when there was a behavior concern with their child.

**Systematic deficits of stakeholders.** The idea of not being prepared was mentioned in length by all three cases. The discussion went in depth and created clear sub-themes. The mention of certain criteria created these subthemes as the respondents had overwhelming discussions about these factors playing a role in parent involvement for children with a diagnosed disability.

**Stress.** Stress was the most identifiable cause for concerns in parent involvement in the urban community. All the respondents from each of the cases talked in length about how stress affects the daily life of parents with a child with a diagnosed disability. They talked about how parenting was more complex as they had the weight of the disability to learn about and how to engage with their child. Each of parent respondents specially talked about stress and the behavioral concerns that came with the disability. Tuominen-Eriksson (2012) stated, “disabilities in a child may lead to low self-esteem and social problems” (p. 583). From these low self-esteem and social problems as exhibited and viewed as inappropriate behavior. For parents this brings on phone calls from the school to discuss these behaviors. Most parents drew conclusions that the stress of the phone calls for behavioral concerns caused great levels of stress. In addition, the most common response was that when you are stressed you do not want to do anything. The stress of being a parent with a disability can overwhelm you with stress that makes parent involvement more complex.
Parental education. The education of parents was also a topic that raised numerous red flags as teachers and administrators expressed concerns about how prepared parents were. The common response related to curriculum and understanding the disability. The common core curriculum, which is the current nationally recognized curriculum, was mentioned most by respondents. This mentioning focused on math skills, many parents made statements about how the math is different from math taught previously with other curriculum. These changes have placed them in a position that they are unable to assist their children at home.

The secondary argument was the parents do not understand the disability their child has. Many parents talked a lot about having to find resources to help their child. Chao et al. (2006) discussed the importance of empowering parents to have the skills needed to understand and assess the needs of their child with a disability. The investigation showed they felt that most teachers were a source of information, but they had to do the footwork themselves. These parents felt it was important to find out everything they could about their child’s, diagnosed disability.

Socioeconomic status. Money was a part of the discussion as many respondents discussed just how money affected parenting in the urban community. When looking at parents of children with disabilities finances is a concern. Parish et al. (2012) stated, “children of families with developmental disabilities experience increased financial burden” (p. 237). Respondents talked from their perspectives how parents of African American and Latino decent have numerous financial handicaps within these communities. Financial stability is the base of the stability within any household. The respondents in these cases each drew conclusions that finances stood at the forefront for just how you would be involved within the school. The
discussion of single parent homes was a factor that they talked about throughout each of the interviews.

**Work.** Within the sub theme of socioeconomic status, the subtheme of work was evolved. The discussion talked in detail about how work was influential in parent involvement. The parents responded, being at work interfered with their ability to be present for their children. The teachers within the study gave detailed account of parents expressing how work put a hindrance on their involvement.

**Language.** English as a second language was a highlighted concern within these schools which all have an extensive Latino population. The ability to communicate is an important part of being involved. Not having the capability to communicate with those around you will make it hard for you present to be engaged. The parental respondents discussed how language can be a significant barrier when it comes to parent involvement. One of the highlights is the accommodation for non-English speakers. Torres-Burgo et al. (1999) discussed parental rights and that providing documentation in native language as a requirement. Idea focuses on non-discriminatory actions towards parents with children with a disability.

**Growth and maturation of diagnosed youth.** The idea of independence was created after discussion on why parents become less involved as children get older. The data showed that administrators, teachers and parents all have this assumption that as children get older there should be a certain level on responsibility placed on them directly. “Despite the evidence that parenting behaviors contribute to child outcomes, less is known about the type, quality, and effects of parenting outcomes, for children with intellectual and developmental disability” (Totsika, Hastings, Vagenos, & Emerson, 2014, p. 430). Even though there is clear evidence that
children with disabilities develop certain social skills later. That did not seem to influence respondents from having expectations the suggested youth should be more independent.

The secondary part of this independence was that fact that many reported that the children themselves required this level of independence as well. That data supported that parents wanted to give the independence, the children themselves desired their independence. That idea that as children hit puberty and the need for independence increased. Lastly independence was expressed in the term, “latch-key” kid. This term was mentioned by more about 65% of total participants in the study. The term represents children who come home without a parent or adult to receive them. These young people are expected to come home and prepare from their evening without a parent to assist.

**Discussion of Results in Relation to the Literature**

The reported data correlated to the literature review in Chapter 2. The literature identified and aligns with several of the concepts created through the data analysis. This analysis of the collected data corresponded with data from the previous literature supporting the thematic analysis in this study. The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2015) and Bourdieu (1986) Theory of social capital worked as a foundation to identify the pheromone in within this investigation. Duchnowski et al. (2012) researched and determined that this is direct correlation between parent involvement and academic achievement. The primary theme that was made relevant in the study was stakeholder collaboration. Lovitt and Cushing (1999) stated, “communication and collaboration between parents and teachers is key to the successful education of youth with disabilities” (p. 134).

The participants in the study all agreed that they were a key influence in the education of their children. Parent involvement in the urban community shows that there are several factors
that affect parents’ ability to be involved. Stress was identified as a sub-theme that parents felt affected their ability to be involved. This stress was related to having a link to the socioeconomic status of many of the families. Yoshikawa, Aber, and Beardslee (2012) stated, “poverty is a critical risk factor for many of the mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders of children and youth” (p. 272). The addition of the behavior of children with a disability is an additional factor worth further exploration. Parents of children with a disability have additional factors that affect them from being involved. “Having a disabled child will also affect the lives of parents and siblings” (Tuominen-Erikson, Svensson, & Gunnarsson, 2013, p. 579). The themes created through this investigation helped the researcher to understand just how parent involvement is affected in the urban community.

The ethnicity of the population chosen was examined in the literature review. The demographics of the sample was key determinate for the data collected for the study. The researcher focused on the ethnicities of African American and Latino as they both represented the densely populated areas for the study. From the research there was clear evidence that children with a diagnosed disability are from families that lack the skills to assist their child. Within the Latino families the language barriers were a determining factor from literature and the data collected from participants. In addition, the literature showed that parents of African American and Latino decent wanted to be involved but lacked the resources to be advocates for their children with a diagnosed disability.

**Implications of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory**

Children with a diagnosed disability have been a societal concern since the development of legislation that provided rights that schools and school districts adhere to. The decline in parent involvement from elementary school to middle school was the initial goal of this study.
Only to come to an understanding larger than this one question. The use of Bourdieu (1986) Theory of social capital and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) parent involvement model provided the base of the study and became relevant throughout the study. Below you will find the conceptual framework of this study which demonstrates the link between the theories and the way to the data was collected.

*Figure 2. Conceptual Framework*

This qualitative study took descriptive data and thematic analysis to identify a blend of factors that play together to cause this decline. The study provided data to understand the phenomena of parent involvement in the urban community for children with a diagnosed disability. Chambers and Michelson (2016) talked about collaboration between administrators, teachers, parents, and policymakers, “education must not be a phenomenon limited to middle and upper-class students” (p. 20). The needs of the members of the urban communities must be met.
Through the themes identified in this study, there are direct links that are established to understand parent involvement. The themes of stakeholder collaboration, growth and maturation of diagnosed youth, commitment to diagnosed children, systematic deficits of stakeholders, interpreted disconnect of stakeholders as a resource. The identified themes above each correlate within an area of the conceptual framework of this study which corresponded with the literature review. Based on the responses from the respondents each of the themes touched on how they affected parent involvement. The following are strategies for improving parent involvement for the community of parents.

**Improving the thread of communication.** The respondents provided overwhelming responses to how important communication was in parent involvement. One of the highlighted concerns in the urban community was increasing communication focusing on the children with a disability. Many of the parent respondents felt as if communication was generalized for the school and did not address their concerns. The research has shown that this population has additional concerns in consideration with having a child with a diagnosed disability.

**Parent education.** In addition to communication providing additional training for parents of children with a diagnosed disability. The data showed that parents feel they want to know everything about their child’s disability and that they are willing to work with teachers and administration to educate their children. Each of the perspectives within this study showed they felt there were parents who want to be involved in their child’s education yet have concerns outside of their control.

**Support groups.** The school is a fantastic location to have a resource center or support group for parents of these children. When individuals feel supported, they are more likely to
remain part of the team. If a school functions as a support system for parents, they are more inclined to be present in the school.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

This qualitative study investigated parent involvement in the urban community, the goal for the study was to establish the factors that effects parent involvement. The factors that are associated with parent involvement are key in understand why parents are struggling to remain involved. The data demonstrated about how parents are plagued with additional factors that affect their ability engage.

Recommendations for further research on parent involvement in the urban community could reflect data on the themes provided within this study. Looking at each of the themes identified in this study each can be used to build a deeper understanding of parent involvement in the urban community. Each of the themes such as stakeholder collaboration, systematic deficits of stakeholders, commitment to diagnosed children, interpreted disconnect of stakeholder as a resource, and growth and maturation of diagnosed youth can each be explored to come to a deeper understanding of parent involvement in the urban community for children with a diagnosed disability.

Another recommendation for further research would be to examine the effects of the behavior of children with a diagnosed disability in the urban community. This qualitative study explored disabilities of children in Title 1 schools. Future research would be beneficial with an investigation of these disabilities and how the associated behaviors affect educational gains and parent involvement.

Lastly, an investigation on collaborative relationships of the stakeholders, who are the administrators, teachers, and parents. Relationships was established as an essential part of the
overall system. Research should be conducted to understand how to build these relationships and the circumstances that surround them.

The research and data collected pointed to a decrease in parent involvement in the urban community due to the circumstances that affect the lives of individuals in these communities. Living in a city with socioeconomic strains adds levels of stress to families. With the proven factor that families of children with a diagnosed disability experience more stress than their counterparts. Overall parent involvement becomes secondary to the needs of community members.

**Conclusion**

Parent involvement is a highlight in the educational experience of all children in the school. The experience of a parenting a child with a diagnosed disability is more complex than a child without a disability. The argument is living in the urban community comes with its own concerns that affect day to day living. The overflow of concerns with the community individuals live in and the financial constraints that come with it are at the forefront of parent involvement. The complete understanding of parent involvement is essential to the success of children within this community. This study searched to come to and understanding of parent involvement and the experience of parents was understood through the administrators, teachers and parents of these children.
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Thomas, C., Agran, M., & Scott, L. (2016). Transition to adult life for students who are black and have disabilities: What do we know and what do we need to know?. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 149–158.*


Tyler, D. (2016). Communication behaviors of principals at high performing Title I elementary schools in Virginia, school leaders, communication, and transformative efforts. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Leadership, 2*(2) 2–16. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.17062/CJIL.v2i2.51


Appendix A: Interview Questions

The following chart was used by the researcher during the direct questioning of each of the participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrator</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Parent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| What does parent involvement mean to you?  
A. What are some examples of parent involvement? | What does parent involvement mean to you?  
A. What are some examples of parent involvement? | What does parent involvement mean to you?  
A. What are some examples of parent involvement? |
| What do you think do you influences the decline or success of parent involvement in the urban community? | How do you think teachers influence the decline or success of parent involvement in the urban community? | How do you think parents influence the decline or success of parent involvement in the urban community? |
| How does the administration influence parents to remain involved in the education of students with disabilities? | How does the administration influence parents to remain involved in the education of students with disabilities? | How does the administration influence parents to remain involved in the education of students with disabilities? |
| What parent activities are available for parents to be involved?  
A. How are they communicated to the parents?  
B. What is the usual turn out? | What parent activities are available for parents to be involved?  
A. How are they communicated to the parents?  
B. What is the usual turn out? | What parent activities are available for parents to be involved?  
A. How are they communicated to your family.  
B. What is the usual turn out? |
| How do you think the following affects parent’s ability to be involved:  
A. Stress?  
B. Parental Education?  
C. Socio-economic status?  
D. Are there any other factors you feel affect parents being involved? | How do you think the following affects parent’s ability to be involved:  
A. Stress?  
B. Parental Education?  
C. Socio-economic status?  
D. Are there any other factors you feel affect parents being involved? | How do you think the following affects parent’s ability to be involved:  
A. Stress?  
B. Parental Education?  
C. Socio-economic status?  
D. Are there any other factors you feel affect parents being involved? |
| How does parent involvement affect educational gains? | How does parent involvement affect educational gains? | How does parent involvement affect educational gains? |
Appendix B: Parent Questionnaire

The parent questionnaire provided to each of the parents with their initial consent form to participate in the study.

**Parent and teacher involvement questionnaire**

Please put an “x” in the box that best fits your response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once or Twice a year</th>
<th>Almost Every month</th>
<th>Almost Every Week</th>
<th>More than Once per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the past year, you have called you child’s teacher.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In the past year, your child’s teacher has called you.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In the past year, you have written your child’s teacher.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In the past year, your child’s teacher has written you.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the past year, you stopped by to talk to your child’s teacher.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In the past year, you have been invited to attend an event at your child’s school. (book fair)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the past year, you have visited your child’s school for an event at your child’s school. (book fair)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In the past year, you have been</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
invited to attend a parent-teacher conference.

In the past year, you have attended a PTA meeting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>A Little</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
<th>A Great Deal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You feel welcome to visit your child’s school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>You enjoy talking with your child’s teacher.</td>
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<tr>
<td>You feel you child’s teacher cares about your child.</td>
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<tr>
<td>You think your child’s teacher is interested in getting to know you.</td>
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<tr>
<td>You are comfortable talking to your child’s teacher about your child.</td>
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<tr>
<td>You feel your child’s teacher pays attention to your suggestions.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>You ask your child’s teacher questions or makes suggestions about your child.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>You send things to class like story books and other things.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You read to your child.

You take your child to the library

You play games at home with your child to teach them new things.

You volunteer at your child’s school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your child’s school is a good place for your child to be.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The staff of your child’s school is doing good things for your child.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have confidence in the people at your child’s school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your child’s school is doing a good job of preparing children for their futures.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Comments:
Appendix C: Parent Questionnaire

This Hoover Dempsey and Sandler (2015) questionnaire was completed by parent participant’s only.

Parental Role Construction for Involvement in the Child’s Education Scale

Part 1: Role Activity Beliefs

Instructions

Please indicate how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with each of the following statements. Please think about the current school year as you consider each statement.

Response format

All items in the scale use a six-point response format (disagree very strongly to agree very strongly): 1 = Disagree very strongly; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Disagree just a little; 4 = Agree just a little; 5 = Agree; 6 = Agree very strongly.

I believe it is my responsibility…….

1. …to volunteer at the school. 

2. …to communicate with my child’s teacher regularly.

3. …to help my child with homework.

4. …make sure the school has what it needs.

5. …support decisions made by the teacher.

6. …stay on top of things at school.

7. …explain tough assignments to my child.

8. …talk with other parents from my child’s school.

9. …make the school better.

10. …talk with my child about the school day.
Part 2: Valence toward School

Instructions

People have different feelings about school. Please mark the number on each line below that best describes your feelings about your school experiences when you were a student.

My School: disliked 1 2 3 4 5 6 liked
My Teachers: were mean 1 2 3 4 5 6 were nice
My Teachers: ignored me 1 2 3 4 5 6 cared about me
My school experience: bad 1 2 3 4 5 6 good
I felt like: an outsider 1 2 3 4 5 6 I belonged
My overall experience: failure 1 2 3 4 5 6 success

Parental Self-Efficacy for Helping the Child Succeed in School Scale

Instructions to respondent

Please indicate how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with each of the following statements. Please think about the current school year as you consider each statement.

Response format

All items in the scale use a six-point response format (disagree very strongly to agree very strongly): 1 = Disagree very strongly; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Disagree just a little; 4 = Agree just a little; 5 = Agree; 6 = Agree very strongly.

1. I know how to help my child do well in school.
2. I don’t know if I’m getting through to my child. (reversed)
3. I don’t know how to help my child make good grades in school. (reversed)
4. I feel successful about my efforts to help my child learn.
5. Other children have more influence on my child’s grades than I do. (reverse)
6. I don’t know how to help my child learn. (reversed)
7. I make a significant difference in my child’s school performance.
Parents’ Perceptions of General Invitations for Involvement from the School Scale

Instructions to respondent

Please indicate how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with each of the following statements. Please think about the current school year as you consider each statement.

Response format

All items in the scale use a six-point response format (disagree very strongly to agree very strongly): 1 = Disagree very strongly; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Disagree just a little; 4 = Agree just a little; 5 = Agree; 6 = Agree very strongly.

1. Teachers at this school are interested and cooperative when they discuss my child. 

2. I feel welcome at this school.

3. Parent activities are scheduled at this school so that I can attend.

4. This school lets me know about meetings and special school events.

5. This school’s staff contacts me promptly about any problems involving my child.

6. The teachers at this school keep me informed about my child’s progress in school.

Parents’ Perceptions of Personal Knowledge and Skills Scale

Instructions to respondent

Please indicate how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with each of the following statements with regard to the current school year.

Response format

All items in the scale use a six-point response format (disagree very strongly to agree very strongly): 1 = Disagree very strongly; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Disagree just a little; 4 = Agree just a little; 5 = Agree; 6 = Agree very strongly.

1. I know about volunteering opportunities at my child's school.

2. I know about special events at my child’s school.

3. I know effective ways to contact my child’s teacher.
4. I know how to communicate effectively with my child about the school day. 

5. I know how to explain things to my child about his or her homework. 

6. I know enough about the subjects of my child's homework to help him or her. 

7. I know how to communicate effectively with my child’s teacher. 

8. I know how to supervise my child's homework. 

9. I have the skills to help out at my child's school. 

---

**Parents’ Perceptions of Personal Time and Energy Scale**

*Instructions to respondent*

Please indicate how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with each of the following statements with regard to the current school year.

*Response format*

All items in the scale use a six-point response format (disagree very strongly to agree very strongly): 1 = Disagree very strongly; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Disagree just a little; 4 = Agree just a little; 5 = Agree; 6 = Agree very strongly.

I have enough time and energy to…

1. … communicate effectively with my child about the school day. 

2. … help out at my child's school. 

3. … communicate effectively with my child's teacher. 

4. … attend special events at school. 

5. … help my child with homework. 

6. … supervise my child's homework.
Parents’ Perceptions of Specific Invitations for Involvement from the Teacher

Instructions to respondent

Please indicate HOW OFTEN the following have happened SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THIS SCHOOL YEAR.

Response format

All items in the scale use a six-point response format (never to daily): 1 = never; 2 = 1 or 2 times; 3 = 4 or 5 times; 4 = once a week; 5 = a few times a week; 6 = daily.

1. My child's teacher asked me or expected me to help my child with homework. _____
2. My child’s teacher asked me or expected me to supervise my child’s homework. _____
3. My child's teacher asked me to talk with my child about the school day. _____
4. My child's teacher asked me to attend a special event at school. _____
5. My child's teacher asked me to help out at the school. _____
6. My child's teacher contacted me (for example, sent a note, phoned, e-mailed). _____

Parents’ Perceptions of Specific Invitations for Involvement from the Child Scale

Instructions to respondent

Please indicate HOW OFTEN the following have happened SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THIS SCHOOL YEAR.

Response format

All items in the scale use a six-point response format (never to daily): 1 = never; 2 = 1 or 2 times; 3 = 4 or 5 times; 4 = once a week; 5 = a few times a week; 6 = daily.

1. My child asked me to help explain something about his or her homework. _____
2. My child asked me to supervise his or her homework. _____
3. My child talked with me about the school day. _____
4. My child asked me to attend a special event at school. _____
5. My child asked me to help out at the school. _____
6. My child asked me talk with his or her teacher._____

Parent Report of Home-based Involvement Activities Scale

Instructions to respondent

Parent and families do many different things when they are involved in their children’s education. We would like to know how true the following things are for you and your family. Please think about the current school year as you read and respond to each item.

Response format

All items in the scale use a six-point response format: 1 = Never; 2 = 1 or 2 times this year; 3 = 4 or 5 times this year; 4 = once a week; 5 = A few times a week; 6 = Daily.

Someone in this family…

1. … talks with this child about the school day. ______
2. … supervises this child’s homework. ______
3. … helps this child study for tests. ______
4. … practices spelling, math or other skills with this child. ______
5. … reads with this child. ______

Parent Report of School-based Involvement Activities Scale

Instructions to respondent

Parent and families do many different things when they are involved in their children’s education. We would like to know how true the following things are for you and your family. Please think about the current school year as you read and respond to each item.

Response format

All items in the scale use a six-point response format: 1 = Never; 2 = 1 or 2 times this year; 3 = 4 or 5 times this year; 4 = once a week; 5 = A few times a week; 6 = Daily.
Someone in this family…

1. . . . helps out at this child’s school.  
2. . . . attends special events at school.  
3. . . . volunteers to go on class field trips.  
4. . . . attends PTA meetings.  
5. . . . goes to the school’s open-house 

Parent Report of Encouragement Scale

Instructions

Parents and families do many different things when they help their children with schoolwork. We would like to know how true the following things are for you and your family when you help your child with schoolwork. Please think about the current school year as you read and respond to each item.

Response format

All items in the scale use a six-point response format (not at all true to completely true):

Not at all true = 1, A little bit true = 2, Somewhat true = 3, Often true = 4, Mostly true = 5, Completely true=6

We encourage this child …

1. … when he or she doesn’t feel like doing schoolwork.  
2. ... to look for more information about school subjects.  
3. ... to develop an interest in schoolwork.  
4. ... to believe that he/she can do well in school.  
5. ... to stick with problems until he/she solves it.  
6. ... to believe that he/she can learn new things.  
7. ... when he or she has trouble doing schoolwork.  
8. ... to ask other people for help when a problem is hard to solve.
9. ... to explain what he/she thinks to the teacher.

10. ... to follow the teacher’s directions.

11. ... when he or she has trouble organizing schoolwork.

12. ... to try new ways to do schoolwork when he or she is having a hard time.

13. ... to be aware of how he or she is doing with schoolwork.
Appendix D: Teacher Questionnaire

The teacher questionnaire was completed by all teacher participants in the study.

**Parent and Teacher Involvement Questionnaire**

Please put an “x” in the box that best fits your response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once or Twice a Year</th>
<th>Almost Every Month</th>
<th>Almost Every Week</th>
<th>More than Once per Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the past year, parents have called you.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the past year, you have called parents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In the past year, you have written your parents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In the past year, your parents have written you.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the past year, parents stopped by to talk to you.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the past year, your parents have been invited to attend an event at you school. (book fair)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the past year, your parents have visited for an event at your school. (book fair)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the past year, you have invited parents to attend a parent-teacher conference.

In the past year, you have attended a PTA meeting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>A Little</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
<th>A Great Deal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you think parents feel welcome to visit your school?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think parents enjoy talking with you or other teachers/administrators?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think parents feel you or other teachers/administrators care about their child?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you think parents feel you are interested in getting to know them?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are you comfortable talking to parents about their child?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are you comfortable taking suggestions from parents?</td>
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<tr>
<td>You ask parents questions or makes suggestions about their child.</td>
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<tr>
<td>You send things home like story books and other things to support parent-child interactions?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think your parents read to their children?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think parents take their children to the library?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think parents play games at home with your child to teach them new things?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do your parents volunteer your school?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you think parents feel the school is a good place for their child to be?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you think parents feel the staff of your school is doing good things for their child?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you think parents feel they have confidence in the people at their child’s school?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think parents feel your school is doing a good job of preparing children for their futures?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional Comments:</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E: Administrator Survey

This survey was completed by the administrator participants in the study.

Please answer this questionnaire only for the grade range of the school designated on the cover page, but exclude pre-K classes.
Refer to the definitions on the cover for words in bold type.

1. What grades are taught at this school? (Circle all that apply.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>K</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. In column A, indicate which kinds of activities have been held at your school during the 2016-2017 school year. In column B, select the number that corresponds to the BEST description of the typical parent attendance for each type of activity. **NOTE: When answering column B, if some events at your school are held primarily for certain classes or students, consider the attendance only for the parents of students who participate in the event. (Circle one number in column A; if yes, circle one number in column B.)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Activity held?</th>
<th>B. Parents Attending?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Open House or Back-to-School Night:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Regularly-scheduled school wide parent teacher conferences:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Arts events such as plays or dance or musical performances:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Sports events such as Field Days or other athletic demonstrations or events:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Science fairs or other academic demonstrations or events:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. How often do the following forms of communication between parents and staff occur throughout your school?
(Circle one number in each row.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Parents are given written interim reports during grading periods:
a. Parents are requested to sign off on homework:

c. Parents have access to a school-sponsored “homework helpline” for information on assignments:

d. Parents are given written information about the goals and objectives of the school’s regular instructional program:

e. Parents are given written information about the school’s overall performance on standardized tests:

f. Parents receive positive phone calls or notes from teachers when their children’s performance improves at school:

g. Parents are given examples of work that meets high standards:

4. Does your school provide information to parents on the following topics? If yes, please indicate how it is offered.
(Circle one number in column A; if yes, circle all that apply in column B.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information provided?</th>
<th>How offered?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Child or adolescent development:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Nutrition, health, or safety:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Parenting skills:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Helping with homework:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Developing study skills:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Ideas for learning activities outside of school:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
g. Information on community services to help children or their families: 1 2 1 2 3

5. Does your school have a parent resource center, that is, a place where parents can get information on parenting and school-related issues and can gather informally?

Yes .................................... 1 (Continue with Question 6.)

Currently developing one .... 2 (Skip to Question 7.)

No....................................... 3

6. To what extent do parents make use of this parent resource center?

Very frequently ............... 1

Infrequently or not at all... 3

Somewhat frequently ........ 2

Don’t know ..................... 4

7. Do staff at your school make visits to students’ homes?

Yes .................................... 1

No................................... 2 (Skip to Question 10.)

8. Who makes these visits to students’ homes? (Circle all that apply.)

Teachers......................... 1

School counselor........... 3

Home school coordinator ... 2

Other staff..................... 4

(specify)___________________________

9. Approximately what percent of the families at your school have received at least one home visit during the 2016-2017 school year? __________%

10. Does your school provide any of the following for parents with limited English skills? If your school has NO parents with limited English skills, check the box and skip to Question 11............

Yes  No

   a. Interpreters for meetings or parent-teacher conferences: 1 2

   b. Translations of printed materials, such as newsletters or school notices: 1 2

   c. School signs printed in different languages: 1 2
11. In column A, indicate which opportunities are available to parents at your school during the 2016-2017 school year.

In column B, select the number that corresponds to the statement that BEST describes how satisfactory the average parent involvement is for each opportunity. (*Circle one number in column A; if yes, circle one number in column B.*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity Available?</th>
<th>Parent Involvement?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Serving as volunteers in the classrooms:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Serving as volunteers outside classrooms:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Assisting in fundraising activities:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Attending meetings of the PTA:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Does your school or school district have a training program for its classroom volunteers?

Yes ........................................ 1  
No........................................... 2
13. Please indicate the extent to which parent input is considered in making decisions on the following issues at your school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent input considered?</th>
<th>Great extent</th>
<th>Moderate Extent</th>
<th>Small extent</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Allocation of funds:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Curriculum or overall instructional program:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. The design of special programs:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Library books and materials:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Discipline policies and procedures:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Health-related topics or policies, such as drug or alcohol abuse:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Monitoring or evaluating teachers:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Developing parent involvement activities:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. Does your school have an **Advisory Group or Policy Council** that includes parents (*other than as part of a parent-teacher organization*)?

Yes .................................... 1
No....................................... 2
15. Does your school receive assistance on parent involvement activities from your school district or state in any of the following ways? (Circle one number in the district column and one number in the state column.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assistance from:</th>
<th>District?</th>
<th>State?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Setting policies for involving parent’s in school activities: 1 2 1 2 3

b. Providing technical assistance for parent programs to school staff (e.g., workshops, training): 1 2 1 2 3

c. Providing staff to assist your school in parent programs: 1 2 1 2 3

d. Providing funds for parent programs: 1 2 1 2 3

16. To what extent are the following concerns barriers to parent involvement in your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Great extent</th>
<th>Moderate extent</th>
<th>Small extent</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Lack of time on the part of parents:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Lack of time on the part of staff:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Lack of staff training in working with parents:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Cultural or socioeconomic differences between parents and staff:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Language differences between parents and staff:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Lack of parent education to help with schoolwork:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Parent attitudes about the school:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Staff attitudes about the parents:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
i. Safety in the area after school hours: 1 2 3 4

17. Does your school have voluntary written agreements (e.g., compacts or learning contracts) between the school and individual parents on what each will do to help students succeed in school?

Yes .................................... 1 No........................................ 2 (Skip to Question 20.)

18. For whom are these voluntary written agreements prepared?

All parents.......................... 1 (Skip to Question 20.) Some parents .................... 2

19. Are there daily child care programs offered to students at your school (regardless of sponsorship)?

Yes .................................... 1 No........................................ 2 (Skip to Question 22.)

20. When are these child care programs offered? (Circle all that apply.)

Before school..................... 1 After school..................... 2

21. What percent of the students in your school are eligible for the free-or reduced-price lunch program? __% 

22. Does your school receive federal Title I funds?

Yes .................................... 1 No........................................ 2

23. Does your school operate a Title I school-wide program?

Yes .................................... 1 No........................................ 2 

THANK YOU. PLEASE RETAIN A COPY OF THIS SURVEY FOR YOUR FILES
Appendix F: Conceptual Framework
Appendix G: Triangulation

Themes
- Stakeholder Collaboration, Commitment to Diagnosed Children, Interpretation
- Disconnect of Stakeholders as a Resource, Growth and Maturity of Diagnosed Youth, Systematic Deficits of Stakeholders
- Sub-themes: work, parental education, socioeconomic status, language

Previous Research/Literature

Interview Questions
- Appendix A

Parent/Teacher Involvement Questionnaire
- Appendix C

Teacher/Parent-Teacher Involvement Questionnaire
- Appendix D

Administrator Survey on Family and School Partnerships in Public Schools
- Appendix E

Parents Family School Partnership Lab Scales
- Appendix B
Appendix H: Statement of Original Work

The Concordia University Doctorate of Education Program is a collaborative community of scholar-practitioners, who seek to transform society by pursuing ethically-informed, rigorously-researched, inquiry-based projects that benefit professional, institutional, and local educational contexts. Each member of the community affirms throughout their program of study, adherence to the principles and standards outlined in the Concordia University Academic Integrity Policy. This policy states the following:

Statement of academic integrity.

As a member of the Concordia University community, I will neither engage in fraudulent or unauthorized behaviors in the presentation and completion of my work, nor will I provide unauthorized assistance to others.

Explanations:

What does “fraudulent” mean?

“Fraudulent” work is any material submitted for evaluation that is falsely or improperly presented as one’s own. This includes, but is not limited to texts, graphics and other multi-media files appropriated from any source, including another individual, that are intentionally presented as all or part of a candidate’s final work without full and complete documentation.

What is “unauthorized” assistance?

“Unauthorized assistance” refers to any support candidates solicit in the completion of their work, that has not been either explicitly specified as appropriate by the instructor, or any assistance that is understood in the class context as inappropriate. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Use of unauthorized notes or another’s work during an online test
- Use of unauthorized notes or personal assistance in an online exam setting
- Inappropriate collaboration in preparation and/or completion of a project
- Unauthorized solicitation of professional resources for the completion of the work.
Statement of Original Work (continued)

I attest that:

1. I have read, understood, and complied with all aspects of the Concordia University-Portland Academic Integrity Policy during the development and writing of this dissertation.

2. Where information and/or materials from outside sources has been used in the production of this dissertation, all information and/or materials from outside sources has been properly referenced and all permissions required for use of the information and/or materials have been obtained, in accordance with research in the Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association.

Gloria M. Pope
Digital Signature

__________________________
Gloria M. Pope
Name (Typed)

__________________________
June 30, 2018
Date
Appendix I: Permissions

Fast Track – Parent-Teacher Questionnaire

This measure was created by the Fast Track Project. You can download the questionnaire, technical reports, scoring programs, etc. from our website.

**Please Note:** The scan forms are copyrighted and you may NOT make copies of the scan forms to distribute as that is a violation of copyright laws.

If you would like to use this measure in your own study please do the following:

1. Create your own document with the questions and possible responses,
2. Do not change the wording of the questions or responses,
3. Remove all references to Fast Track from the measure,
4. Cite the measure source as the Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group (CPPRG),
5. If you do change the wording of the questions or responses, describe all changes in detail in all publications, presentations, and grant proposals, AND note that your measure is a modification on the original Fast Track version of the measure.

NCES-

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**Contacting NCES**
To access the NCES address or the phone directory, visit the Contact NCES page.

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Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler
The Family-School Partnership Lab

Statement of Use

We thank you for your interest in our research. On behalf of Kathy Hoover-Dempsey and Howard Sandler, you have permission to use and/or modify any of these scales. We ask that you cite the following:


If you use any of the scales at Level 1 in the model-based graphic (including Parental Role Construction, Parental Efficacy, General School Invitations, Specific School Invitations, Specific Child Invitations, Time and Energy, Knowledge and Skills), please cite also:

Appendix J: Consent to participate

Research Study Title: 
Principal Investigator: 
Research Institution: 
Faculty Advisor: 

Purpose and what you will be doing: 
The purpose of this survey is to examine the decline of parent involvement in the urban community for children with a diagnosed disability. We expect approximately 100 volunteers. No one will be paid to be in the study. We will begin enrollment on, December 15, 2017 and end enrollment on December 31, 2017. To be in the study, you will:

Administrators

A. Step 1- Participants will be contacted via phone and or email to discuss the school as being part of the study.
B. Step 2- The researcher will meet with the participant to display all materials being used if needed.
C. Step 3- Participant will receive initial letter describing the study with the attached consent. Administrator will complete attached survey/questionnaire.
D. Step 4- Participant will mail signed consent and questionnaire to the researcher in stamped envelope provided.
E. Step 5- Participant will be contacted by researcher to set up interview.
F. Step 6- Interview will be held and documented by the researcher.
G. Step 7- Participant will complete and sign an exit letter stating again how the data will be utilized and then destroyed.

Parents

A. Step 1- Participants will receive the initial letter describing the study with the attached consent. Participants will complete the survey and consent form and mail it in with a stamped envelope. (Researcher will be available for a preliminary phone conference if requested by the participant prior to sending in consent to participate)
B. Step 2- Participants will be contacted by the researchers to set up for an interview.
C. Step 3- At the interview questions will be asked and documented by the researcher.
D. Step 4- Participants will complete and sign an exit letter stating again how data will be utilized and then destroyed.
Teachers

A. Step 1 - Participants will receive the initial letter describing the study with the attached consent. Participants will complete the survey and consent form and mail it in with a stamped envelope. (Researcher will be available for a preliminary phone conference if requested by the participant prior to sending in consent to participate)

B. Step 2 - Participants will be contacted by the researchers to set up for an interview.

C. Step 3 - At the interview questions will be asked and documented by the researcher.

D. Step 4 - Participants will complete and sign an exit letter stating again how data will be utilized and then destroyed.

Completing surveys and interviews should take less than 3 hours of your time total.

Risks:
There are no risks to participating in this study other than providing your information. However, we will protect your information. Any personal information you provide will be coded so it cannot be linked to you. Any name or identifying information you give will be kept securely via electronic encryption or locked inside a cabinet within a locked office which is only accessible by the researcher. When we or any of our investigators look at the data, none of the data will have your name or identifying information. We will refer to your data with a code that only the principal investigator knows links to you. This way, your identifiable information will not be stored with the data. We will not identify you in any publication or report. Your information will be kept private at all times and then all study documents will be destroyed 3 years after we conclude this study.

Benefits:
Information you provide will help to investigate this decline in parent involvement in schools within your school. You could benefit from this by improving communication between school and home. Also, data from this study will be utilized by the school to improve parent involvement

Confidentiality:
This information will not be distributed to any other agency and will be kept private and confidential. The only exception to this is if you tell us abuse or neglect that makes us seriously concerned for your immediate health and safety.
Right to Withdraw:
Your participation is greatly appreciated, but we acknowledge that the questions we are asking are personal in nature. You are free at any point to choose not to engage with or stop the study. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer. This study is not required and there is no penalty for not participating. If at any time you experience a negative emotion from answering the questions, we will stop asking you questions. If you decide to withdraw from the study information you have already provided can be utilized with your permission only.

Contact Information:
You will receive a copy of this consent form. If you have questions you can talk to or write the principal investigator, Gloria Pope at email g pope@mail2.cu-portland.edu. If you want to talk with a participant advocate other than the investigator, you can write or call the director of our institutional review board, Dr. OraLee Branch (email obranch@cu-portland.edu or call 503-493-6390).

Your Statement of Consent:
I have read the above information. I asked questions if I had them, and my questions were answered. I volunteer my consent for this study.

_________________________________________  ____________________
Participant Name                                     Date

_________________________________________  ____________________
Participant Signature                                Date

_________________________________________  ____________________
Investigator Name                                    Date

_________________________________________  ____________________
Investigator Signature                               Date

Investigator: __XXXX_; email: __XXXXX@mail2.cu-portland.edu__ c/o: Professor __XXXX_; Concordia University–Portland 2811 NE Holman Street Portland, Oregon 97221
Appendix K: Gateway Letter

Concordia University
Doctoral Program

February 1, 2018

Dear Administrator,

In these changing times, there has been a substantial emphasis on parent involvement and its effect on the academic performance of our youth. Children with disabilities are at a higher risk, this population of students needs additional support navigating the learning process. I would like to invite your school to participate in a study that will focus on the parent involvement within your school community.

The title of the study is, The decline of parent involvement in the urban community for children with a diagnosed disability from elementary school to middle school. Research is due to begin, February 15, 2017, and be complete by March 15, 2018. Participants for the study will be the parents/ guardians of children with disabilities (approximately 25 families), three classroom teachers, and one administrator. This qualitative research will follow a case study design; your school will be classified as one actual case.

The names of participants and the school will not be named within the completed study. Once concluded the study would be made available to all participants, all collected data will be destroyed three years from completion of the study. The data will be collected through 1-2 surveys and one interview with each of the participants. To obtain family participants a brief explanation of the research, as well as the initial study, will be sent to 40 of your families. In regards to a teacher, a flyer will be provided so teachers can volunteer their time to complete the study. Overall, all participants should spend no more than 3 hours of their time to complete the review.

Your participation is much appreciated, if you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at, (914) XXX-XXXX or XXXX@mail2.cu-portland.edu.

Sincerely,

Principal Investigator
Appendix L: Teacher Flyer

Teachers Needed

In these changing times, there has been a substantial emphasis on parent involvement and its effect on the academic performance of our youth. Children with disabilities are at a higher risk, this population of students needs additional support navigating the learning process. I would like to invite you to participate in a study that will focus on the parent involvement within your school community.

The title of the study is, *The decline of parent involvement in the urban community for children with a diagnosed disability from elementary school to middle school.*

Research is due to begin, December 15, 2017, and be complete by January 15, 2018. Participants for the study will be the parents/guardians of children with disabilities (approximately 25 families), three classroom teachers, and one administrator. This qualitative research will follow a case study design; your school will be classified as one actual case.

At no point will your name be listed within the completed study, nor will any data will be provided to the administration. Once the study is completed, a copy of the project will be available for all participants. As a participant you will be asked to complete one survey and complete one interview (20 minutes).

If interested, please feel free to reply to the email below.
Appendix M: Parent Letter

XXXX
Concordia University
Doctoral Program

November 9, 2017

Dear Family,

In these changing times, there has been a substantial emphasis on parent involvement and its effect on the academic performance of our youth. Children with disabilities are at a higher risk, this population of students needs additional support navigating the learning process. I would like to invite your school to participate in a study that will focus on the parent involvement within your school community.

The title of the study is, The decline of parent involvement in the urban community for children with a diagnosed disability from elementary school to middle school. Research is due to begin, December 15, 2017, and be complete by January 15, 2018. Participants for the study will be the parents/guardians of children with disabilities (approximately 25 families) This qualitative research will follow a case study design; your school will be classified as one actual case.

Your name will not be listed within the completed study. Once concluded the study would be made available to all participants, all collected data will be destroyed three years from completion of the study. The data will be collected through 1-2 surveys and one interview with each of the participants. Overall, all participants should spend no more than 3 hours of their time to complete the review.

Your participation is much appreciated, if you have any further questions or are in need of assistance to complete the survey, please feel free to contact me at, (914) X XX-XXXX or XXXX@mail2.cu-portland.edu.

Sincerely,

Principal Investigator