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A Program Evaluation Of The Parent Academy For One School District

Kathleen Gordon
National Louis University

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A PROGRAM EVALUATION OF THE PARENT ACADEMY
FOR ONE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Kathleen B. Gordon
Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of
Doctor of Education
in the Foster G. McGaw Graduate School

National College of Education
National Louis University
April 2019
A DISSECTATION:

A PROGRAM EVALUATION OF THE PARENT ACADEMY
FOR ONE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Kathleen B. Gordon

Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Approved:

Chair, Dissertation Committee

Member, Dissertation Committee

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Date Approved

12-5-18
NLU Digital Commons Document Origination Statement

This document was created for the dissertation requirement of the National Louis University (NLU) Educational Leadership (EDL) Doctoral Program. The National Louis Educational Leadership EdD is a professional practice degree program (Shulman et al., 2006).

For the dissertation requirement, doctoral candidates are required to plan, research, and implement a major project within their school or district that relates to professional practice. The three foci of the project are:

- Program Evaluation
- Change Leadership
- Policy Advocacy

For the Program Evaluation focus, candidates are required to identify and evaluate a program or practice within their school or district. The “program” can be a current initiative; a grant project; a common practice; or a movement. Focused on utilization, the evaluation can be formative, summative, or developmental (Patton, 2008). The candidate must demonstrate how the evaluation directly relates to student learning.

In the Change Leadership focus, candidates develop a plan that considers organizational possibilities for renewal. The plan for organizational change may be at the building or district level. It must be related to an area in need of improvement, and have a clear target in mind. The candidate must be able to identify noticeable and feasible differences that should exist as a result of the change plan (Wagner et al., 2006).

In the Policy Advocacy focus, candidates develop and advocate for a policy at the local, state or national level using reflective practice and research as a means for supporting and promoting reforms in education. Policy advocacy dissertations use critical theory to address moral and ethical issues of policy formation and administrative decision making (i.e., what ought to be). The purpose is to develop reflective, humane and social critics, moral leaders, and competent professionals, guided by a critical practical rational model (Browder, 1995).

Works Cited


4.21.16
ABSTRACT

This program evaluation project addresses issues relating to low-parent attendance at one district’s parent academy. The process I used to gather information from the parents, administrators, board members, and business partners included individual surveys and interviews. The results indicated the biggest problems for mediocre parent engagement centered on transportation and the lack of parent involvement in the planning process. Improving the strategic planning process of the parent academy was the dominant need I identified based on my Change Leadership Plan. Included is a policy amendment regarding parent involvement in matters related to student achievement.
**PREFACE**

My dissertation is entitled: “A Program Evaluation of the One Parent Academy for the Sunny Side School District.” It is a study of parent attendance at a school district’s parent academy. I used several stakeholders to conduct this study. I have written it in part to fulfill the graduation requirements of National Louis University (NLU) Education Department. I was engaged in researching and writing it from January 2016 to October 2018.

I formulated my research questions based on my consideration of the information that I would need to help most effectively address my identified problems and related concerns and needs. I analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data. By conducting this extensive research, it has allowed me to answer the questions I formulated in the study.

Currently, I serve as an educator in a school district, and presently, I am serving as a school board member in another school district. As a school board member, I targeted one district’s parent academy as my program evaluation to increase parent attendance and involvement and engagement. Intimately, I involved myself with the parent academy, which prompted me to assist in increasing the attendance to the academy by funding transportation to the academy for parents and children who would not have attended if I had not availed them of the resources. Additionally, I incentivized schools for encouraging parents to attend by subsidizing the purchase of trophies for those schools with the highest number of parent attendance.

The change leadership portion of my project reflected on best practices I saw as I visited several districts’ parent academies throughout the state. Several leadership
lessons I learned throughout the process enabled me to grow as a leader and as a scholar, especially as I wrote the information relative to my topic. I learned that for a project to function as properly as the other districts’ parent academies, I needed to ensure that all stakeholders had a seat at the table from the beginning and play a vital role throughout.

Finally, my involvement as a school board member may influence the policy remake that I suggested for my policy advocacy section of my project. I do not think it would make a difference because what I suggested is logical and appropriate. I felt that many others would support my advocation because I presented why through the educational, legal, political, social, moral, and ethical analyses why such policy should exist.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, this writing would have never taken place if it had not been for the Lord God Almighty who stayed on my side. HE guided my steps and directed my path. When I could not visually see the end, HE sent angels of light into my path to take me on this three-year journey. These angels came in several ways, and I will attempt to provide you with detailed information about them.

HE selected my NLU Professors and placed me in an excellent NLU Residency Cohort, a great source of intellectual support. I was very blessed to have found peers who worked with me in the dark of the night and early mornings. I gleaned so much from their professionalism. We laughed, cried, and shared many stories of our lives. Reflecting on my time working toward this degree, I realized how blessed I am. The composition of my study group changed several times, and I am grateful to the two Nikkis, Chundra, Tamara, TaShanda, Contobia, Monique, the two Tiffanys, the two Kims, Erin, and Jerome. They were there for motivation as I continued the dissertation process.

My position as an educator, elected school board member, and state constitutional officer allowed me to affiliate, collaborate, and build relationships with many program staff directors in our schools and community. Through my affiliation with the school district, I gained from their insights. The District Parent Academy guided by Dr. Kathy Shuler and Kim Gilbert caught my eyes. They were a steadfast source of support. They exposed me to many ideas and provided me with scholarly lessons learned that resonated throughout my references and research. Their programs were energized and fast moving in the district. The Parent Academy was my choice of research for program evaluation. I
dream that the respect I have for their dedication to their work in that program comes across in this dissertation as a focus on parents and partners as learners collaborating in the development of children.

Professor Dr. Carol Burg took time to address all inquiries of NLU procedures about programs to evaluate and led in creating the scholarly writing class for our cohort. Also, she contacted the district office to make arrangements for my colleagues and me through the Research, Accountability, and Grants Office about concerns with the IRRB. I was made welcome by the district, and I am eternally grateful for the kindness and professionalism showed by the entire staff of the Parent Academy, Accountability Office, and the Minority Achievement Office.

I must thank those that have allowed me to benefit from their wisdom and guidance. I thank each of you for your help and for the great ideas that you have helped me develop. I am honored to have built this relationship with each of you, namely:

- Dr. Barbara Jenkins, superintendent of the ninth largest school district in the nation for giving me the opportunity to complete my IRB and IRRB through her school district.
- Dr. Brandon McKelvey, associate superintendent, Research, Accountability, and Grants, for being the guiding coalition link to NLU for the completion of both the IRB and IRRB approval steps.
- NLU Professors: Drs. Burg, chair of the dissertation committee, Schott, co-chair of the dissertation committee, Buckman, Minnis, S. Moxley, D. Moxley, and NLU Professors
- Major Mentor Dr. James Lawson, the minority achievement officer.
Dr. Kathy Shuler, chief academic officer
Dr. Carla Keenum
Dr. Vickie Cartwright, Oshkosh Area School District superintendent
Dr. Carl Cartwright, executive area director
Dr. Osvaldo Piedra, elementary school principal
Dr. Carol McGowin, director of Pupil Assignment
General Counsel Woody Rodriquez
Assistant General Counsels John Palmerani and Eileen Fernandez
Dr. David “D. J.” Hardrick, APA formatting
My fellow church members, especially St. Mark and churches I visited throughout the community
My fellow school board colleagues (Flynn, Gould, Cadle, Robinson, Moore, and Korbert), administrators (Lynaugh-Witemyre and Gangwisch, the business partners from many branding companies and the many parents (61) who participated in this study and were involved and continued to be involved in the District Parent Academy
GPD and AKA sisters, the AMEC/WMS/Minister’s Spouses and my professional organizations: NSBA, NSBA-Council of AA School Board Members, CGCS, FSBA, NEA, AFT, FEA, OCTA, CTA, CTA-R, who have cheered me on
My political organizations: DNC, Florida DEC, Orange County DEC-Precinct Captain
last, but not least, my family, brothers, and sisters (Carleen, Carl, Clary, and Marsha), my children (Tracy Lynn, James III, and Stacey Michelle) and especially my grandchildren who have not seen me in three years.

Because my Lord God made all this possible, “No weapons formed against me shall prosper....” Isaiah 54:17 (King James Version).
DEDICATION

Dr. James Lawson and Principal Nina Wehmeyer gave me the support that I needed. They guided me and helped me to focus my attention on the importance of my dissertation. Their guidance and wisdom were ever present. I completed the task within the university timeline and felt a great sense of relief. To you, Dr. James Lawson and Principal Wehmeyer, your greatest gifts are assisting others to attain the educational goals that both of you have achieved. I am very grateful.
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According to Guilbert (2006), parent academies were projects designed to improve students’ education by improving first the parenting competencies of their parents. Throughout the United States and abroad, districts have implemented a parent academy in hopes that it will serve as a strategy to improve student achievement, conduct, and attendance. The Sunny Side School District (SSSD) Parent Academy (PA) was an initiative of its superintendent that began during the 2013-2014 school year. It had three successful years of implementation, offering parents access to district experts and special guests who presented timely and useful topics and lessons. Since its inception, the academy for parents happens six-times-a-year and provides information and resources to help students succeed. Last year, 4,064 parents participated in the PA. Table 1 indicated the participation of parents at the district’s PA for the past three years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>3,745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>3,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>4,064</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each year, participation in the PA increased: 4.5% the second year and 3.8% the third year. However, parents’ and children’s attendance was not as high as it could have been. I think it happened because there was not enough parental and public awareness of the program’s value. Even though there were increases each year, monthly attendance had been on a roller coaster. It increased 37% in November 2015 and decreased 10% in January 2016 (This citation was omitted to preserve the anonymity of the school district.). I believed that certain specific areas of the SSSD’s PA were working well;
however, there were others that were not. One problem was that most parents felt they
did not need to attend the academy if their children were progressing in their schools.
Also, SSSD board members had not bought entirely into the parent academy program.
Also, there was poor tracking of attendance, limited training for school leaders, a lack of
collaboration of multiple stakeholders, and insufficient funding for promoting it.

My goal was to increase parent involvement in the PA to enhance student
learning. Also, I wanted to identify the strategies necessary to make that happen. The
strategy I chose was to focus on one school, Crispus Attucks Elementary School (CAES),
and help it get more parents involved in the district’s virtual PA training that would
include, among other approaches, video lessons. “Parent training and contact through
video is invaluable, particularly in poor communities” (Payne, 2005, p.73). If successful,
I wanted my discoveries used to expand the involvement of all schools in the district.

I thought to make the district’s academy more successful, it may need to continue
or expand the School Board Attendance Parental Involvement Challenge that provides
incentives or special needed support for parents in all schools to participate and by
providing transportation for parents and significant others to various PA activities at
whatever locations of the event. To make this happen at Attucks and throughout the
district, would require the involvement of school board members, principals, students,
and parents within their different learning communities contacting their respective
supporters for their schools to campaign for increased participation in the district’s PA.
To incentivize increased parental participation, the school board might provide special
awards, including trophies and funding, to schools with the largest increases in
participation and student academic growth.
Unfortunately, most parents want to be involved in their child’s education; however, they do not know how to make the connection between the home and the school. Parents do not know how to access the system well enough to achieve their goals. Teachers believe that their students would perform better in school if their parents were more involved. Many do not know how to do it effectively. According to NEA (2016), parent involvement when done well could be a booster for student attendance, academic achievement, and good behavior. I know, based on my personal experiences, without effective business partner relationships where they provide special support to CAES, or any other schools in the district, by donating such things as backpacks, food, and supplies to assist families, the parents tend not to stay involved and connected in any meaningful way with the school.

SSSD PA would be an excellent training ground for the CAES parents who could share their knowledge with other parents throughout its learning areas and the district and bring forth a community of informed and well-trained parents. Also, there was a possibility that the parents of CAES could be a district’s PA site.

SSSD has a student population of more than 180,000. It was reaching a small percentage of its parents through its parent academies. Sixty-One of CAES’s 724 parents attended the SSSD PA from October 2014-March 2016. At CAES, there were more than 800 students from prekindergarten through Grade 5. According to the school website, 22% of the students were English language learners, and 100% were eligible for free and reduced-price school lunch (this citation was omitted to preserve the anonymity of the school district). The school’s student demographics were: 62% Hispanic, 15% White,
21% Black, and 2% other/Multi-ethnic. Students at CAES were eligible for participation in authorized programs for low-income students.

The overall school rating indicated that CAES performed on an average in Reading worse than many other schools in the district and across the state on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) in the following subjects: Math, Reading, and Science. Even though the school team placed an intense focus on student achievement and provided students with various forms of instructional support, there was still a need for parent involvement. Research supports the notion that parental involvement is essential to student success.

Because district administrators believed that a parent academy would help to improve student achievement with the support and involvement of families and the school district, they began the initial planning of the PA in the spring of 2013. Seven school board members from the individual districts where they resided and the residents they represented, collaborated to involve and recruit parents to attend the PA. Attendance and parental involvement in the district’s schools were better than it was three years ago; however, the school’s parents were not yet attending the PA in sufficient numbers to make a difference in student learning. Table 2 represented the district attendance of parents at the PA.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Total Parent Attending PA</th>
<th>Total District Student Enrollment</th>
<th>Percentage of Parents Attending PA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>3,745</td>
<td>187,193</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>3,914</td>
<td>192,077</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>4,064</td>
<td>198,004</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Consistently, the total number of parents attending the district’s PA increased yearly as the total student population grew. Because it is difficult to determine the number of parents who attended per family, I am leaping and considering the average number of children per parent is three and the percentage of parents attending the PA remained at 6%. Parent participation at the district’s PA needed to increase.

Consistently, parents at CAES had attended curricular and extracurricular events. There were always approximately 200 parents at each night. Many parents had expressed that they would have attended if they were not working at two or three work sites. The majority of the events at CAES were at night to allow parents to attend. Parents came to several of the night events. A few of the night programs included the Science Night, Reading Night, STEM Night, Math Mini Workshops, Super Hero Night, AVID, Stretch for Excellence Awards, and PE at the Field. My concern related to why they participated in these activities and did not participate in the PA, sufficiently.

**Purpose of the Evaluation**

My purpose for conducting this evaluation was to investigate the efficacy of the PA as well as find ways to increase the effectiveness and awareness of the district’s PA to all stakeholders, including parents, principals, business leaders, and others interested in the district’s schools and students success. The low awareness of how the PA was meeting its own goals through parent involvement even with limited parental participation was a concern. I decided to evaluate the effectiveness of the PA in SSSD by seeking information from a group of parents from CAES regarding the success of its parent evening meetings, academic programs, and community discussions in attracting parents to the school’s events. I investigated why these parents participated at the
school’s evening events and what were some contributing factors causing their low attendance at the district’s PA.

Currently, the process of the PA was to offer classes for parental development as well as skill-building workshops that specialized in parental support, educational events, and other activities for families throughout the school year. The classes for the parents and the community fell within a gamut of academic support, health care, and emotional and financial management. The focus of the PA was (a) student achievement, (b) parenting, advocacy, and involvement, and (c) personal and individual growth. The most important emphasis of the program was to provide parents with information that enables them to make informed decisions about their child’s educational passage.

**Rationale**

I chose to evaluate the SSSD PA because it was not excelling in recruiting parents’ participation. The district ranked high among the United States’ school districts based on enrollment. While there was significant interest in enrolling in the PA, the actual attendance was still an issue. I believe, if the number of parents participating in the PA increased, there would have been an increase in student achievement. SSSD was a fast-growing district. Also, in just a few years, the SSSD has made marked academic improvement across nearly all grades and subjects.

On the state 2010 comprehensive assessment test in Math and Reading, the third grade students at CAES fell below the district’s scores. There were several involvements in the development of the district’s strategic plan, which included input and feedback from district and school leaders and other stakeholders, specific parents from some School Advisory Councils (SAC), and community vendors who served on the SAC.
These stakeholders are actively involved in work to improve low-performing schools. The vendors wanted the students and parents to succeed and support the PA by volunteering and subsidizing some functions. On the other hand, SSSD staff served as volunteers and supported the PA through the general operating budget, Title 1, and the SSSD Foundation.

It was my objective to see every parent in the district engaged in high-quality personal and professional development that enhances effective learning for their children. I desire to see parents collaborating monthly; whereby, they acquire leadership skills to better advocate for their children. Moreover, I want the parents to become more sophisticated in the use of data, so they have the information necessary to discuss how and what their children would need to do to elevate their academic performance and behaviors.

The full involvement of stakeholders, parents, administrators, business partners, and school board members, in the PA and the implementation of that academy were essential factors to whatever success the PA has had. Because the parents’ lives were affected based on the policies and procedures adopted by the PA, these stakeholders shouldered some responsibility for providing some input in developing it.

Actively, parents were involved in the establishment or development of agendas, so they captured the necessary personal and professional development needed to augment their connection with their children’s schools. Administrators provided an opportunity for learning within their school settings, and they built partnerships—a vital prerequisite for the sustainability of high-quality programs and the necessary connections between parents and students. School principals benefitted from a successful PA because it helped
build equal partnerships with parents, and it adjusted parents’ negative perceptions or interactions with the schools.

Business partners benefitted from SSSD having a successful PA because it afforded many patrons to learn more about their establishment, which yielded greater support to their businesses in the community. Of course, school board members welcomed the business partners because the partnership brought monetary investment and possible services that helped to sustain a positive PA. They relished the fact that parents gleaned from the experiences of receiving supportive assistance from the personal and professional development that they received. The professional development helped to facilitate a more harmonious school environment that school board members desired.

To raise the quality of instruction at every underperforming school, SSSD, through recurring cost, provided extra support to help teachers and parents, which ranged in number from 15 to 44. The community at large rallied around this support in their schools. Again, the program works. The problem is getting more parents engaged with its programs. According to Henderson and Mapp (2002, p. 7) “When schools, families and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more.” Because the PA yielded positive student achievement, it was considered the best venue to bring the groups together.

**Goals of the Program Evaluation**

I commenced my project on December 16 at a parent meeting at CAES. The PA is an educational resource option for families and schools in SSSD. According to Levitt, List, Metcalfe, and Sandoff (2016, p. 1), “Researchers, policymakers and educators have long recognized the role of parents in shaping student achievement.” The intended goal
of this evaluation was to determine why few parents were attending the SSSD PA and how to attract more parents to it.

**Exploratory Questions**

For this study, I focused on one school, CAES. It contains PK-Grade 5 with a focus on Grades 3 and 4 because these parents and students had the opportunity to attend the SSSD PA since Grade 1. To evaluate the PA, I identified specific primary and secondary exploratory questions. I developed four primary exploratory questions for my research. They are as follows:

1. What did parents and district school leaders perceive as working well in the Sunny Side School District Parent Academy?
2. What did parents and district school leaders perceive as not working well in the Sunny Side School District Parent Academy?
3. What did parents and district school leaders perceive as the biggest challenges faced by the Sunny Side School District Parent Academy?
4. What did parents and district school leaders perceive as the best ways to address these challenges facing the Sunny Side School District Parent Academy?

Also, I developed four secondary exploratory questions for this research. They are as follows:

1. How did participating business partners at the Sunny Side School District Parent Academy increase awareness of other businesses partners and parents in the community?
2. What role did school board members play to increase attendance at the District’s Parent Academy?

3. What did parents, district administrators and school leaders think were the best methods to use to increase parent and community awareness of the Sunny Side School District Parent Academy to enhance teaching and learning?

4. What did parents and district and school leaders perceive to be the most effective ways to increase attendance and involvement in the Sunny Side School District Parent Academy?

The research questions assisted me in determining what course of action I took to increase attendance at the SSSD PA.

**Conclusion**

The SSSD is committed to ensuring that students have the necessary education to attain the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in school and life. PAs can provide parents with the information and skills needed to help their children succeed in school. Henderson (2010), described four types of parent leadership training programs. One of the four focuses was on the parent academy concept and how it can be effective in improving student achievement through parental education and engagement in their children’s learning. The intent of my research was to provide significant information to the district on quality parent academy programs that would yield positive student learning results. I focused on one school in the district where I conducted my study to improve the district’s current program as well as help other districts that might want to develop and implement a districtwide parent academy.
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

As mentioned in the previous chapter, I sought ways to improve the participation rate of parents at the SSSD PA. The purpose of my literature review was to explore the nuances of effective parent academies to determine why they were successful. Also, I wanted to examine what pitfalls others encountered, so the district in my study might avoid them as it strives to enhance its program. Moreover, I explored how others viewed parental involvement or engagement and the effects it had on student achievement and what some of the strategies used were to get more parent participation.

Successful Parent Academies

According to Jay and Korin (2010) and Avvisati, Besbas, and Guyon (2011), a parent academy served as an impetus to foster positive parent awareness and long-term involvement. Miami Dade County Public Schools designed its PA initiative to support the schools and their communities throughout the district. According to Miami Dade Public Schools (2015), officials designed its academy in part to learn how to work more effectively with local and national organizations to get free resources to assist the parents to become full partners with their children’s education. The resources the district’s PA received included the network capability where parents could follow-up after the PA events for added information and support. Monetary support came from investment bankers, foundations, and grants. Many of the universities offered free parenting support and programs. America Online (AOL) provided technical support and offered one-year free Internet access to participating parents.
One of the major successes noted was that the principals spoke positively about the academy and the parents involved. According to Matt and Brookover (2015) and Kakli (2010), the principals indicated that the parents were intellectual partners. Another success of the program was the change in teachers and staff members’ attitudes toward parents. According to Chebbi (2008), the funding from Knight’s Foundation subsidized the professional development for stakeholders: teachers, staff members, administrators, and parents. Teachers and staff members felt that the professional development they received helped them understand the roles of the parents in their child’s learning.

District leaders from Duval County Public Schools in Jacksonville, Florida and other districts in the state created a PA during the 2013-2014 academic year, one year before SSSD’s PA. According to Stovall (2013), the superintendent created the parent academy specifically to encourage or enhance parental involvement for student achievement. The academy established three strands or categories of emphasis: student achievement, parenting and advocacy, and personal and individual growth. Presentations or sessions must fit into these three categories. According to Duval County Public Schools PA website (2016), members of the parent academy committee met their participant attendance goal each year (see Table 3 below). Duval County Public Schools PA had been successful, and the number of parents participating in the academy indicated that they gained useful knowledge in helping their children.

The Academy of Parents in Leadership through National Louis University and the Chicago Public Schools designed and provided a quality program to improve the personal and professional skills of the parents. According to Defiglion (2016), the program was unique. It was unusual because it allowed parents to be awarded college credit in the
humanities if they had a high school diploma or a GED and completed the academy’s requirements.

Table 3

*Parent Participation at the Duval County Public Schools Parent Academy from 2014-2016*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Participants Goal</th>
<th>Number of Participants Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>2,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2,875</td>
<td>5,451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>5,724</td>
<td>7,309</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pitfalls of Parent Academics**

As mentioned in the topic of success in academics, Miami-Dade County Public Schools had some successes. Dr. Kakli (2010) mentioned that there was a major drawback to the implementation and the district staff supported this statement. They failed to focus on relationship building between parents and educators. Greder (2004) concurred that parents played a transformative role in school reform, but the district failed to collaborate with the parents. Immediately, the district rectified this situation and involved parents more resulting in better advocacy from the parents.

**The Effects of Parent Involvement or Engagement**

According to Levitt, List, Metcalfe, and Sadoff (2016, p. 1), “researchers, policymakers, and educators had long recognized the role of parents in shaping student achievement.” Research contributes to the school district by increasing parent involvement and raising awareness of resources available. According to Guilbert (2006), there was extensive research conducted on the PA in Miami-Dade County Public Schools, and according to a majority of the principals, the academy played a role in the
improvement of achievement and helped to improve student conduct and attendance.

This research identified many of the strategies and processes Miami-Dade County Public Schools used to improve its district, and I learned from the work and adapted concepts to the district in my study.

The work of Dor (2012), a qualitative study that compared the attitudes of teachers and school counselors toward parents’ involvement in school, showed the benefits derived from their interaction with parents. I gleaned from these studies how different models helped distinguished the contribution of parents’ involvement in children’s outcomes. Also, it helped me define what clear communication with parents was and guided the development of a variety of goal-linked partnership programs that reached families. According to Ferlazzo (2011, p.10), “the goal of family engagement is not to serve clients but to gain partners.” The PA was one way to help SSSD to gain families as partners and had them participate in activities that strengthened their support and guidance for their children. Districts wanted this kind of partnership from the parents.

A unique, once-operated parent academy at the Robert W. Coleman Elementary School in Baltimore, Maryland had a way of involving parent volunteers and ensuring engagement. Different from the type of academy I am researching, this academy became a vehicle for connecting parents with the school. A room in the building served as the school’s parent academy, which operated for parents and grandparents. Daily, about 20 parents attended; some even brought their infants and toddlers along. Lipman (1995) indicated that the Coleman School designed the parent academy to develop new parenting skills and to build the parents’ self-confidence. Parenting skills included the following:
(a) love and affection, (b) stress management, (c) relationship skills, and (d) autonomy and independence. The confidence helped them to work well with their students.

**Strategies to Improve a Parent Academy**

Many school districts worked to involve their parents and families. Some created strategies to involve their entire families or parents in their schools. Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) established a Facebook page to advertise and communicate with parents. Previously, the WCPSS Parent Academy, now the WCPSS Family Academy, the district’s leaders established a Facebook page where parents are kept abreast of workshops, events, and information about schools in the district. Also, WCPSS Family Academy advertised upcoming family academy programs on the site. As I researched for effective parent academies, I reviewed strategies to incorporate and ensure success in attracting parents and yielding better achievement for the students.

According to Henderson and Mapp (2002), having a positive and convincing relationship with families and their involvement in activities was beneficial for students, including improved academic achievement. Henderson and Mapp suggested that relationships were developed across families of different economic, racial or ethnic, and educational backgrounds and for students at all ages, including students in secondary schools. The benefits for students were broad-range and included: (a) higher grade point averages and scores on standardized tests, (b) enrollment in challenging academic programs, (c) more classes passed and credits earned, (d) better attendance, (e) improved behavior at school and at home, and (f) better social skills and adaptation to school (Henderson and Mapp, 2002).
Levitt et al. (2016) discussed a study that involved incentivizing parents to participate in parent Academies in the UK. They looked at 16 disadvantaged schools that involved parents of 2,690 students. Many of the parents were poor and spoke English as a second language. Randomly, the academies divided parents into two groups: one that received incentives and one that did not receive incentives. The incentives were grocery vouchers at each session. The results showed that the attendance incentives had a significant impact on the parents’ involvement or engagement.

According to Miami Dade Public Schools (2015) and Kakli (2010), Houghton Mifflin Harcourt hired a public relations firm that acquired celebrities to make public address announcements to attract parents to participate in the academy. Since its inception in 2005, this advertisement yielded more than 100,000 parents (Matt & Brookover, 2010). Today, it reached more than 200,000 parents.

Henderson (2010) stressed the importance of parents learning how to support their schools, namely:

- parents needed to learn how to design and carry out projects that were designed to have an impact on student achievement by learning the standards-based system and speaking out and influencing decisions;
- parents learned how to engage other parents by running parent meetings and facilitating constructive dialogues between parents and teachers; and
- parents advocated for higher achievement for students by learning ways to get programs that yield great rewards for the student and finding some local and state funds or mini-grants.
When districts were planning parent academies, they prepared for parents who speak a language other than English, so they incorporated activities to address their language needs. They provided translators and materials in multiple languages. According to a publication titled, University of Washington: Engaging parents, King County (2014) indicated that parents felt they belonged and welcomed. Schools asked parents to join the Parent Teacher Association or give money to fundraisers. It indicated that parents felt as if they only interacted with schools in this manner.

According to Lewis, Kim, and Bey (2011), effective parent academy strategies involved five strategies to engage parents better. They believed that academies must: (1) practice parent outreach, (2) establish relationships with the parents, (3) create a positive classroom climate, (4) teach to involve parents, and (5) make the community–school connection. They believed that if enforced, these strategies and practices would generate a stronger parent academy, and students would achieve more academically. They believed that these strategies were successful in urban environments.

Excellent strategies for attracting parents to the school were a means to attach parents to the PA. According to Mapp and Hong (2010), schools embraced partnerships with families using four core beliefs infused within every aspect of the school culture and environment. These core beliefs were as follows:

- Parents believed in their children, had dreams for their children, and wanted the best for them. Parents valued the role education played in increasing the probabilities that their child would lead productive lives (Henderson, Johnson, Mapp, & Davies, 2007). A welcoming hand and support from school staff were essential to help bridge the gap between home and school.
Families supported their children’s learning. Regardless of a family’s income, their level of education or racial or ethnic background, parents contributed to or supported their children’s learning by using their experiences, support, and encouragement. School official sometimes assumed that parents had nothing to offer in their children’s learning and school personnel showed it. When parents felt disrespected, based on various cues from school personnel, they became offensive or disconnected.

Parents and school personnel were equal partners. Parent Academy officials benefitted by involving parents in the planning and scheduling of the courses for the PA. According to former Miami-Dade Superintendent Rudy Crew (2007), educators should cultivate parents to serve as equal partners and to advocate for their children’s education.

Responsibility for building partnerships rested with school leaders. It was imperative that the school leader, principal, was purposeful in creating opportunities to reach out to the families and build a partnership.

Redding, Langdon, Meyer, and Sheley (2004) performed an extensive study on parent engagement. They studied schools that were in high-poverty areas or low-socioeconomic zones that executed comprehensive parent engagement strategies. The strategies included: (a) parent involvement and participation in decision-making at the school and (b) alignment of the school’s guidelines and practices regarding homework and parent-teacher conferences with research-based practices and discussion of the parents, teachers, and students’ roles about learning standards and homework policies. Also, the strategies included: (a) reading programs at home aligned with state standards
and in-class instruction, (b) education of parents focused on reading and study habits at home, and (c) outreach by school staff through home visits and family nights (Redding et al., 2004).

**Definition of Terms**

*Parent Involvement.* According to Ferlazzo (2011), parent involvement is sharing ideas through speaking out. Thus, he noted involvement leads with the mouth. Through this process, schools identify their needs and goals and seek out parents and let them know how they can contribute.

*Parent Engagement.* Ferlazzo defined engagement as leading with the ears. Schools process this by listening to parents to know what they think, believed, or what concerns them.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, I learned that families function in an environment of learning. It was not a matter of status, income, and family structure, or ethnic and cultural background. The family matters, and it could create a learning environment. Regardless of the make-up of the family, the members could improve the academic achievement of its children. Every family had great potential. When the parents held high academic standards, regardless of whether they had a high school diploma or not, they could teach moral values and high-expectations to their children. Also, they could encourage them to excel and work hard. When these things happen, the parents could succeed as well as the child.

Based on my research and personal experiences, I believed every parent should possess the empowerment with the skills needed to help the school system move their
children forward. I believed that school districts should develop parent centers, academies, workshops, and skilled sessions for parents to help their children learn if this generation of children is to succeed in life. Parents could learn how to take control of their children’s education with the right training.

After trained by an academy of experts, parents could be accountable for the success of their children’s progress and these skilled parents would be able to participate effectively in the planning and development of their children’s future. According to Ferlazzo and Hammond (2009), family engagement benefited students, families, school, and communities. In Chapter 3, I explained the process of gathering data to learn how to improve the parent academy in SSSD.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Students achieved more when families were involved in their education. Family academy workshops could provide families with tools to support academic success, and they helped to bring schools, families, and community partners together. This evaluation of SSSD PA helped me determine how a school district could enhance its parenting involvement program experiences and get more parents to participate.

Research Design Overview

According to Patton (2008), “Implementation evaluation focuses on finding out if the program…is operating as it supposed to be operating” (p. 308). My methodology was to find out if the PA was meeting its goals through parent involvement through the combination of qualitative interview data and quantitative survey results. As the researcher for this project, I collected, analyzed, interpreted, and presented data on the PA. It was my responsibility to learn as much as possible about parent academies and how other parent academies were working and attracted more parents to participate. As a by-product of this research, I hoped to learn how to enhance student achievement through the parent academy process. The survey and interview questions are directly correlated to my research questions. I performed a crosswalk of the research questions to the questions on the survey and interview instruments to ensure that I attained from my data sources the appropriate information I sought for an accurate evaluation.

Participants

The participants in this study included the following: two administrators, principal and assistant principal, 61 parents who had attended the PA in the last three years, six school board members, all females, 10 business partners, who were volunteers and
vendors at the PA, and two other adults, the School Advisory Council (SAC) and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) chairpersons. Participants were adults, ages 25-65 years-old, male and female. Minors or students were not included in this study and were not participants in interviews or surveys.

The survey and interview protocols were the data elements that I used to recruit administrators, parents, SAC and PTA chairpersons, school board members, and business partners. At a community meeting at CAES, I spoke with the administrators and parents, including the PTA and SAC chairpersons, in an open forum and requested participation to garner information from them to improve the PA and student achievement.

I chose the participants to participate in my program evaluation. The parents were those who participated in both a CAES PA (e.g., Parent Night, Science Night, Math Night, etc.) and the district’s PA events (e.g., FCAT Preparation, STEM, College Days, etc.). I acquired the names of parents who attended the district’s PA who were parents at CAES. I compared the names of parents who participated in the school-based parent nights. The principal and assistant principal had been participants at both events as well. Six of the seven school board members took the survey and participated in the interviews because the six attended at least one of the PA events. Business partners participated in at least one PA event.

Data Gathering Techniques

I collected survey data before and after school normal operating hours. I distributed the parents, including the PTA and SAC chairpersons, and the administrators’ surveys at a parent community meeting in the evening. I collected the school board members’ surveys after a school board work session and regular meeting. The school
board held its meetings at the district office, and the meeting began no earlier than 4:00 p.m. Before one of the district’s work sessions, I announced that I was a doctoral student at National Louis University. I said I was seeking their consent to participate in my dissertation project. I provided them with a consent form and a printed survey to complete.

I contacted the district’s PA Department to acquire the names and addresses of business partners who participated in the district’s PA. I mailed two consent forms and the survey to the business partners with a self-addressed stamped envelope. In the letter, I directed the business partners to sign the two consent forms and complete the survey. The business partners returned the surveys; however, I conducted several follow-up calls and e-mails to accomplish this feat. I informed participants that their participation in the survey and interview was voluntary, and they may discontinue their participation at any time during the process with no negative consequences.

I requested the following documents from the Title I Department: Parent Academy: (a) the district’s PA log-in sheets, (b) the district’s PA registration forms, (c) the virtual PA registration forms, (d) the virtual PA attendance logs of groups of parents who attended on their local school sites, and (e) the local school parent training logs. I analyzed the data that reflected parental and business attendance and used the documents to assist in developing a foundational perspective of the parent academy. This request did not involve any time of the participants.

**Surveys**

I obtained a signed consent form from the parents, administrators, SAC and PTA chairpersons, school board members, and business partners. I hosted a parent and
community meeting at the school. As the parents entered the event, I distributed two informed consent forms (Appendix F) and the parent survey (Appendix A) to the parents and received 61-parent surveys. I acquired the number of parents and the surveys at the first event. The consent forms took a maximum of five minutes for the participants to read and sign.

Surveys took approximately 30 minutes to complete. I stood before the parents, shared with them the purpose of the consent forms and had them fillout the survey. After the event, I stood at the door and collected both the consent forms and the surveys. I did not accept any surveys without the consent form. Because the PTA and SAC chairpersons attended all parent events at the school, I obtained their consent forms (Appendix F) and surveys (Appendix A) as well. I gathered at the event the administrators’ consent forms (Appendix F) and surveys (Appendix B). It took approximately 35 minutes to read the consent form and complete the survey.

I contacted the district’s PA Department and acquired the names and addresses of community vendors who participated in the district’s PA. I mailed a letter to them that described the purpose for the letter (Appendix H), two consent forms (Appendix F), and the survey (Appendix D) to the vendors with a self-addressed stamped envelope. In the letter, I directed the business partners to sign the two consent forms and to complete the survey. Also, the directions indicated that they were to mail one of the consent forms along with the survey back to me. To complete the survey, the business partners took approximately 30 minutes. Completing a survey was the only time I involved business partners. The business partners returned their surveys in a self-address, stamped envelope that I mailed to them.
The survey questions correlated with the research questions. Because I performed a crosswalk of the research questions to the questions on the survey, I was confident that I attained from my surveys the appropriate information that I sought for an accurate evaluation. The crosswalk assisted me in meeting my objective of increasing the number of participants to the PA.

**Individual Interviews**

Before one of the school district’s school board work sessions, I provided the members with two consent forms (Appendix F). They signed both consent forms; they gave me one of each consent form for my records. I collected the survey from the school board members during the work session. Because the school board members were the only group of adults I interviewed, I scheduled them through the school board services senior specialist for the interview dates. During the individual interviews, which lasted approximately 30 minutes, I took notes and used a voice recording device for accuracy.

I met with the school board members for the interview. Upon completion of the interviews, I sent off the tapes for transcription. After receiving the tapes, I used my interview notes to make corrections for accuracy. I created a matrix to assist me in the analytical process of coding by themes, patterns, and codes.

Also, the interview questions directly correlated to the research questions. Because I performed a crosswalk of the research questions to the questions on the interview protocol, I was confident that I attained from my interviews the appropriate information that I sought for accurate evaluation. The crosswalk assisted me in addressing my objective of identifying ways for increasing the number of participants to the PA.
Data Analysis Techniques

I analyzed the data using descriptive statistics. I decided on this approach because the responses to the survey questions and the interviews helped me to describe and summarize the responses or results in a meaningful way. I hoped to see patterns emerge from the data. This approach allowed for simple summaries about the parents, administrators, school board members, and the business partners and the measures. The processes for gathering the data and determining themes kept me from making biased conclusions because I attended the district’s PA for three years.

Survey Data

The two pieces of data used were surveys and interviews. The survey data were somewhat tedious. For the parents, it was the most difficult of all because there was data gathered from 61 parents. The number presented a great concern because I thought I would have too many themes to address effectively. Also, I was not sure that some of them understood the purpose of their participation in the surveys. Language could have been a problem because many were native Spanish speakers with limited English language capabilities. Even though there were translators at the meeting, many of the parents failed to answer some of the questions, and I could not ascertain if language played a part in completing the survey. I used the same process for analyzing the data for each group. The process included the following:

1. I typed responses and cut them out and posted them. If some of the responses included two or more ideas, I typed each idea separately.

2. I wrote questions on a large 24” x 36” poster paper. The responses to the questions by respondents were posted.
3. I clustered data by similar ideas or themes.

4. I used the number of the ideas, frequency, to determine the strength of the theme along with how many people felt the theme was important enough to mention.

These processes allowed me to mitigate the effect of my biases or beliefs to capture what the respondents were saying more objectively. I addressed the information in this study.

**Interviews**

The interview process required attention. Initially, I interviewed the school board members. After the interviews, I thought I determined the themes during the interviews; I discovered I was wrong. The process included: (a) sending the recorded interview off to a transcriptionist who sent back the original transcript, (b) my highlighting repeated themes to determine emergent central themes and codes, and (c) writing the results based on that information. When looking at the number of themes, two or three, I identified, I felt that I missed many because the survey process generated much more. I took the transcription and followed the process I used for the survey. I identified many more themes, and it became clearer what the interviewees intended. Many statements were not clear. I took copious notes while I interviewed the school board members.

**Ethical Considerations**

I handled the participants in this study with kid gloves, and I handled participants ethically. The ethical considerations I put into play dealt with how I controlled the involvement of the participants. There was no emotional, physical, social, or political risk to the participants in this project beyond that of everyday life. Participants did not receive any direct benefits from being in this research study. Their taking part in this
study contributed to a better understanding of the PA at a school or district and the changes, if any, required. Participants signed an informed consent (see Appendices F, G, and H), which indicated that it was voluntary, and they could discontinue their participation at any time with no negative consequences. Also, the informed consent (Appendices F, G, and H) informed participants that the results of this study might be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies; their identity will in no way be revealed. I held data in the strictest of confidence.

I did not share the information I gathered from the surveys and interview protocols. I kept the identity of the participants, school, and district confidential, and I used pseudonyms for participants in the report. Only I had access to survey data, and it remained in a locked cabinet at my home and on a password-protected hard drive. I will do so for five years. Upon receiving written consent from a person with a legitimate claim to such information and checking its validity, I will provide access to the extent I have the legal and ethical right to do so. I contacted all participants and informed them that their individual collected information from the survey and the interview process were available for access by contacting me. Individuals may contact me to request a copy of the final report as well.

**Conclusion**

The evaluation of the PA included several of the stakeholders: parents, administrators, board member, and community partners. I took necessary steps to ensure that the participants were never at risk, and I secured information against any inappropriate future use. Participants are adults, and no minors were involved in the study. I sought to gather information from two data gathering instruments, surveys and
interviews. I used it to make decisions in developing quality suggestions and recommendations to the superintendent of SSSD on how to improve its PA programs and parent attendance. I hope that my research will encourage the administrators in the district to find ways to attract more parents to participate in the SSSD PA.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Findings

In this chapter of the research, I revealed the results of my study through an analysis of the interview and survey data I captured from parents, administrators, school board members, and business partners. The qualitative and quantitative data I ascertained provided necessary evaluation information relative to the SSSD PA. In this chapter, I reported the findings from survey information from 61 parents, two administrators, and 10 business partners, and interview results from six school board members. In reporting the findings, I described the participants’ perspective of the PA. In my evaluation, I assumed that district personnel would need to continue offering the PA with some improvement based on the information gathered from the surveys and the interviews.

The organizational change in this study centered on the information gathered from the parents, administrators, school board members, and business partners. They felt that the PA was effective in terms of the structure of the sessions. They indicated they liked the planning and organization of the sessions, the information they received, the use of the high schools, the fact that child care was available, cleanliness of the facilities, and staff involvement. However, they were willing to share that there were some shortcomings as well. These included the relatively low attendance allegedly because of the location and transportation, time of day programs were available, and only available on Saturdays. Also, some offerings did not appeal to some parents. I discovered some of these challenges were technical; they could be instantaneously rectified with a decision. Others were adaptive challenges. These existed where beliefs and values came into play, and they required and involved a disparity between values and circumstances with people.
other than the few staff members who planned the PA. The challenges seemed to result from the limited inclusion of stakeholders in the planning and the change in the system that determined the functionality of the PA.

**Surveys**

Exactly 61 parents responded to the survey. I invited these parents to a meeting at CAES specifically for completing the survey. At this meeting, the students performed and were engaged in many activities. Fortunately, the parents at the meeting were parents who attended at least one PA event last year. Some of the parents did not complete the statements in Sections A and B of the survey. There were exactly 61 parents who attended, and 100% responded to the parent survey (Appendix A). I invited these parents to a meeting at CAES specifically to complete the survey. Some of the parents did not complete the statements in Section A of the survey.

The first statement reads, “The Parent Academy is an effective program for parents.” Ninety-Three percent of the 61 respondents either strongly agree (35 or 57%) or agree (22 or 36%). Table 4 reflects the number and the percent of the parent responses. None of the parents disagree or strongly disagree with this statement, and four respondents (7%) remained neutral. From this statement in Section A, it was apparent that the parents thought that the academy served its purpose of informing parents to provide them with support for their children. From these data, it seemed that the parents felt that the PA was meeting their needs and offered them relevant information that they could use to help their children. I felt that having this knowledge supported and provided me with direction as I move forward in offering suggested changes and improvement to the PA.
Table 4

*Parent Survey Statement 1*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35 (57%)</td>
<td>22 (36%)</td>
<td>4 (7%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the response to the second statement in the Likert-type scale in Section A, significantly, parents responded positively: 35 parents (57%) strongly agree, and 30 parents (30%) agree. However, eight parents (13%) felt neutral about this, and zero parents disagree or strongly disagree. There was an increase in the neutral category with how the PA can help prepare their child for college. There is nothing in the latter portion of this survey that could address the reduction in the agreed category. Even in the open-ended section, nothing connected to this question. The majority of the parents felt that the PA was a mechanism they could use to gather insight and more information related to preparing their children for college. I understood that it was necessary for me to ensure that this component remained in the parent academy. I was not sure how the parents who selected neutral as a response felt about the effectiveness of the program.

Table 5

*Parent Survey Statement 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35 (57%)</td>
<td>18 (30%)</td>
<td>8 (13%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the third statement in Section A, “The Parent Academy can help parents better support their child’s education,” parents saw that there were benefits to attending it. Fifty-Five of the respondents (90%) strongly agree or agree that the PA could help them better support their child’s education. Thirty-Five parents (57%)
strongly agree, and 20 parents (32%) agree. Three parents (5%) were neutral with this response. One parent (2%) disagree and zero parents strongly disagree. With a great number of parents who agreed with this statement, I had to ensure that future training supported this notion that the academy played a strong role in assisting parents with their child’s education.

Table 6

*Parent Survey Statement 3*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35 (57%)</td>
<td>20 (32%)</td>
<td>5 (8%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fourth statement in Section A was “The Parent Academy can help parents to understand better and navigate the school system.” The responses were strongly agree, agree, and neutral. Thirty-Five of the parents (59%) strongly agree, and 19 parents (31%) agree. Only six parents (10%) selected neutral to the statement; zero parents responded disagree or strongly disagree to the statement. This question, like the previous questions, provided me with vital information needed as I continued this study. It was, as the previous questions were, essential for the district to know as it continued the offering of the parent academy sessions.

Table 7

*Parent Survey Statement 4*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35 (59%)</td>
<td>19 (31%)</td>
<td>6 (10%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fifth statement in Section A of the parent survey stated, “The Parent Academy can help me better support my child in general.” This statement had mixed
reviews. Thirty-Five of the parents responded with (58%) strongly agree, and 19 parents (32%) agree with this statement; whereas, five parents (8%) were neutral. One parent responded with (2%) disagree with this statement and zero responded with strongly disagree. With the neutral and disagree responses, I could not interpret the respondents’ understanding of this statement. In retrospect, I should have stated the question differently. For example, “The Parent Academy provided me with information that I can use with my children” would have been a better question.

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Survey Statement 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statement 6 in Section A of the parent survey states, “The Parent Academy can help me to support my child’s future.” Also, it had some significant responses. As the results in the previous question, 88% of the parents rated it positively. Thirty-Five of the parents (57%) rated it strongly agree, and 19 parents (31%) agree that the PA provided positive strategies and knowledge and that their children would benefit. Six parents (10%) straddled the fence on this statement; however, one parent (2%) responded disagree, and zero parents responded strongly disagree. I think this question would have been clearer if it had stated, “The Parent Academy can help me with strategies to help with my child’s future.” I think the seven respondents who responded neutral or disagree may have responded positively. I could have eliminated this question because Statement 5 provided me with the data I was seeking.

Table 9
Statement 7 in Section A of the parent survey stated, “The Parent Academy has improved community support.” The parents responded to the statement in four categories. Thirty of the parents (49%) responded strongly agree. There were 23 parents (38%) who responded agree; there were six parents (12%) who responded neutral. There was 1 parent (2%) who responded disagree, and zero responded with a strongly disagree. These data showed a need for more work in demonstrating the value of having a PA and how it could garner better community support.

Table 10

Parent Survey Statement 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 (49%)</td>
<td>23 (38%)</td>
<td>7 (12%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statement 8 in Section A of the parent survey stated, “The Parent Academy provided me with strategies and techniques to improve my child’s grades. Thirty of the respondents (49%) rated strongly agree. Twenty-Three parents (38%) rated agree, and six parents (12%) rated neutral if the PA provided strategies and techniques to improve their child’s grades. There was one parent (2%) who rated disagree, and zero responded with strongly disagree. With 87% of the parents feeling the PA provided strategies and techniques to improve their child’s grades, it would behoove the district personnel to continue to offer these same strategies and technique in future meetings. Moreover, they should look for methods to improve some of the presentations.
Table 11

*Parent Survey Statement 8*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 (49%)</td>
<td>23 (38%)</td>
<td>7 (12%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statement 9 in Section A of the parent survey stated, “The Parent Academy helped me to communicate with school staff.” The responses indicated that the PA was able to help parents to communicate with school staff. Eight-Five percent, 52, of the parents rated agree; they were able to connect. Nine (15%) rated neutral. None of the parents rated disagree or strongly disagree. Strangely, not one parent rated strongly agree. Not all principals attended every academy, but there were always a representative group of staff members at every event. More administrators and other school staff members should have attended more frequently.

Table 12

*Parent Survey Statement 9*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>52 (85)</td>
<td>9 (15)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statement 10 in Section A of the parent survey (Appendix A) read, “The Parent Academy helped to provide more opportunities for parental involvement.” Thirty-Four of the parents (56%) rated strongly agree. Twenty of the parent (34%) rated agree, and five of the parents (9%) were neutral. However, this was the only statement that received one (1%) strongly disagree rating. There were no parents who rated disagree. With no response, this was a good statement to ascertain if parents perceive their participation as being engaging. More work is needed to help parents to understand parental engagement.
Table 13

**Parent Survey Statement 10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34 (56%)</td>
<td>20 (34%)</td>
<td>5 (9%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statement 11 in Section A of the parent survey stated, “The Parent Academy curriculum was extremely clear, and the information was understandable.” This statement had significant responses. Forty-Two of the parents (69%) rated it strongly agree, and 19 parents (31%) agree. There were no parents who responded neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree. The no response is significant for this study because it provided a foundation for any improvement and future planning and structure of PA meetings.

Table 14

**Parent Survey Statement 11**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42 (69%)</td>
<td>19 (31%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statement 12 in Section A of the parent survey stated, “The Parent Academy should be divided by levels (Elementary, Middle and High).” Twenty-Four of the parents (39%) indicated that they strongly agree, and seven parents (12%) agree that the meetings should be divided based on levels. Nine of the parents (15%) selected neutral as a choice, and 21 parents (34%) chose disagree. The divide of the choices was interesting. It is a conjecture that the families with children in two or more of the levels that would require more than one meeting.

Table 15
Parent Survey Statement 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24 (39)</td>
<td>7 (12)</td>
<td>9 (15)</td>
<td>21 (34)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were seven open-ended questions in Section B of the Parent Survey (see Appendix B). This section allowed parents to respond to the questions that allowed them the freedom to express themselves without prompting or guiding any particular response. I specifically encouraged parents to provide meaningful answers using their knowledge and feelings about SSSD PA. I allowed parents to determine how extensive or brief they wanted to respond to the questions. I provided ample space on the survey for the participants to respond. I even said if they needed to respond on the back of the page, they may if they so choose.

Fifty-Four (89%) of the 61 parents responded to Question 13 which asked, “What is working well in the Parent Academy?” Seven parents (12%) did not respond. I identified nine themes from the respondents. The most frequent theme with 89% (54) of the respondents indicated that they believed that the SSSD PA is working well. These results are significant to the research because I know I would need to make a little adjustment in changing the current structure.

The second most frequently reported theme was the logistics of the PA. Twelve of 54 respondents, 22%, liked the logistical resources. They listed such items as transportation, organization, exceptional interaction, and consistency of operation. Another item was the PA should continue to provide an interactive orientation to help with the development of the child.
The third most frequently reported theme was the parents’ satisfaction with the PA. Seventeen percent, nine out of the 54 respondents, indicated that they were satisfied with the PA. One parent indicated that she was happy that the PA existed. With the information provided, I was able to take away from this response that the PA should continue to provide high-quality, relevant information, and services that would yield satisfied stakeholders.

The fourth most frequently reported theme was communication. Fifteen percent, eight out of 54 respondents, specified that communication was an essential component in what was working well in the PA. One parent indicated that getting information from the PA has helped to provide better parenting at home. Parents stressed that direct communication continued through the PA newsletter and website. This information was a clear indication that parents’ knowledge of the PA was impactful to them. Perhaps the district personnel should have surveyed the parents earlier.

The fifth most frequent reported theme from the parent survey was that the PA was informative. Five of the 54 respondents (9%) indicated that the SSSD PA provided useful information. One parent responded that the PA provided information to equip the child and parent. Based on the data, SSSD needed to continue to offer information that will keep parents up-to-date on their child’s progress.

Strategies offered by the PA was the sixth most frequently reported theme with four (7%) out of 54 responding. The PA provided useful strategies for parents to use at home with their children. The information gathered from this question was significant information from this study because district personnel enhanced the PA program each
year to ensure it increased the kinds of strategies that parents used to help their child socially, emotionally, and academically.

The next theme with three (6%) out of 54 respondents suggested that *parent involvement* was one of the components that worked well with the PA. All three responses indicated that the PA involved parents and teachers working together. As a takeaway, building relationships with the parents, teachers, and students was paramount in forging more involvement with the PA.

The next theme that emerged was *community partnership*. Two respondents (4%) out of 54 stated that the community plays an integral part in the PA. Based on the data, it revealed that SSSD needs to reach out to more businesses in the community. One response indicated that the parent was not completely sure what the PA consisted of and if and where there is a place to sign-up to volunteer for his son’s first ever field day. SSSD needs to ensure that parents are kept informed of the agenda of the PA before attending.

The reoccurring themes indicated certain elements or norms that seemed to help the respondents feel that the PA was productive. The data gathered determined the finer points of the PA. Also, the data helped me to know what I needed to do to promote SSSD in continuing its venture in providing services in its PA. Based on the data collected, I determined that the PA was effective as it was operating with opportunities for improvement.

Twenty-Eight, 46%, of the 61 parents responded to Question 14, which asked, “What is not working well in the Parent Academy?” Thirty-Three, 54%, did not respond. I identified six themes from the respondents who participated in the survey. The most
frequently reported theme was about the resources provided to parents. Seven of the 28 (25%) respondents felt there was a need for more resources. One parent felt that the PA did not provide resources to meet the parents’ needs. Two parents indicated that there was a need for more support for second language parents. I felt that these data were beneficial because of future development of ways to improve the PA.

*Communication* tied as the second most reported theme with six (21%) out of 28 responses. One of the parents indicated that the district should provide more information. Another parent supported this idea and stated that the district must communicate with parents consistently about the PA. It became obvious that the district should work toward better-informing parents.

The second tied theme fell under a category that was contrary to the question. Parents responded that they did not have a problem with the PA, and they felt that things were working well. This theme had six respondents (21%) who felt positively about the PA.

The theme with four responses (14%) was scheduling. One respondent indicated that having the PA on Saturday interferes with their religious lifestyle. One respondent specified that the specific day offering of the parent academy needed to be more frequently other than on Saturdays. These data should be taken into consideration and should be helpful for future scheduling.

Lack of awareness of what is not working well in the PA was the next theme for Question 2. The three respondents (11%) expressed that they did not know enough to respond appropriately to this question. They expressly indicated that they did not know or felt neutral about this question.
The last theme was participation. Two respondents (7%) announced that they did not see enough parents participating. Specifically, one expressed that more parents needed to be involved. Based on my data, there was a need for more parents to become involved. SSSD must find ways to engage more parents in the PA.

Fifty-One (84%) of the 61 parents responded to Question 15, which asked, “Are there any challenges with the Parent Academy? Yes or No? If yes, what are they?” Eleven (22%) out of 51 parents responded yes, and 40 (78%) out of 51 responded no. Five themes emerged.

The most frequent theme identified was academic growth. There were four (8%) out of 51 respondents who expressed there was a challenge in helping the child to achieve, helping the child to learn, and explain and develop vocabulary skills and getting the children to progress. These statements along with other data helped me discover that parents perceived academic growth as a major challenge.

The second theme that arose was the location. Three of the 51 respondents (6%) shared that the PA should be divided and located at each school. Another person expressed combing schools’ PAs if they were within a seven-mile radius. Based on the data, parents perceived location as a challenge.

Support and time both received two responses (4%). A parent indicated that the PA must learn to use resources from other schools. According to another parent, if the PA were offered at the home school site with child-care as an incentive, parent would be encouraged to attend. Parents indicated that time and day of the week were impediments and challenges. I discovered that there were many challenges. Parents identified support,
time, location, and academic growth as challenges. The district’s PA should explore more ways to address these concerns.

Thirty-Four (56%) of the 61 parents responded to Question 16 which asked, “What are the best ways to address the challenges you mentioned above?” Twenty-Seven out of 61 (44%), did not respond. I identified six themes from the responses to the survey question.

The most frequent theme with 44% (15) of the respondents indicated a desire for more effective communication for the SSSD PA. The respondents listed the following indicators under this theme: (a) collaboration with the school, (b) involvement of parents through better communication, (c) parents and teachers working together as a team, and (d) classroom teachers sending out reminders. Also, they mentioned having schools sending text messages, memos, phone calls, and electronic class applications to improve communication. The PA must collaborate and provide benefits by increasing more effective communication for parents.

The second most frequent theme that evolved from this question indicated they had no suggestions. Nine (27%) of the 34 respondents gave no suggestions. I interpreted these responses two ways: parents had no ideas or suggestions at the time concerning the best ways to address the challenge, and parents lacked sufficient knowledge to address the challenges.

The third most frequently reported theme was accommodations for parents. Nine of 34 respondents, 27%, indicated that the best ways to address the challenges of the PA were to accommodate parents by addressing their needs. They listed providing education to parents where they needed reinforcement, offering adult programs, accommodating
information packages and handouts, directing communication with the principal, and using e-mail to provide more opportunities for parent involvement. The PA should continue to provide interactive types of reinforcement for the benefit of parents wanting and needing to attend the academy.

The fourth most frequently reported theme was the benefits for students. Nine percent, three out of the 34 respondents, indicated that the focus should be on the students’ growth and parents keeping abreast of their child’s work. One parent indicated that parents should always keep up by learning and growing alongside their child. With the information provided, I took away from the responses that the PA should continue to focus on the students’ academic growth and find ways to provide parents with a vehicle to get more involved with their children’s growth.

The fifth and sixth themes had two respondents. The fifth theme dealt with community support. Six percent, two out of 34 respondents, specified that community support needed to improve, and the PA should have advertised on television. Parents suggested that the PA could improve by seeking out more community businesses partnerships. Two respondents (6%) indicated the PA could improve by increasing staff. They further suggested that the district come up with more funding to support the academy. I gathered from their suggestions that the district should set-asides dollars in the school board’s general budget to increase staff and to increase the academy’s budget.

Forty-Two (69%) of the 61 parents responded to Question 17 which asked, “What are some of the best ways to increase parent awareness of the District’s Parent Academy as a means to increase teaching and learning?” Nineteen, 31%, of 61 respondents, did not respond. I identified six themes from the responses to Question 17. The most frequent
theme with 36%, 15 of 42, of the respondents indicated that communication about the PA to parents, teachers, and the community was of importance. Parents wanted to remain in the loop.

They wanted the district to do more advertisements of the PA through notices sent home by teachers, social media, texts, e-mails, and classroom apps like Class Dojo and See-Saw. Class Dojo was a communication application for the classroom use for teachers, parents, students, videos, and messages throughout the school day. Class Dojo was a shared-classroom experience: precipitating concepts that transmit from the classrooms to the home. See-Saw was a student-driven digital portfolio. The data gathered from this question generated an awareness of digital applications available to parents and teachers that could enhance the teaching and learning of students.

Awareness was the second most frequent theme that evolved from this question. Eleven of the 42 (26%) responses indicated they were aware of the PA, and they thought things worked well. Many of the parents were satisfied with the ways the PA operated. However, they did not fully answer the survey question, which asked for the best ways to increase parent awareness. I surmised that those parents appreciated and liked the PA, but they could not immediately offer any suggestions for improvement.

The third most frequently reported theme was targeted training for parents. Nine of 42 respondents, 21%, indicated that the best ways to increase parent awareness were through training where parents could enhance their education regarding how to address and reinforce their child’s needs. Parents felt that learning about technology could have played an integral part in assisting their children. Based on the respondents’ information,
I felt that various targeted training was vital to accommodate parents’ need to learn technology to support their children’s learning.

The fourth most frequently reported theme was the scheduling of meetings for the PA. Ten percent, four out of the 42 respondents, indicated the importance of scheduling meetings at different times. One respondent stated that proper scheduling at different times would allow more parents to attend; they felt that the current structure was restricting and limiting. Another parent indicated that the frequency and the different offering of times for the meetings would be advantageous for parents. From the information gathered, I felt that the PA must work collaboratively with parents in scheduling.

The next theme dealt with the collection of data. Five percent, two out of 42 respondents, specified that collecting the data would give the parents a voice. I believed that by surveying the parents more frequently would allow for more empirical data that would help the PA to increase awareness as a means of increasing teaching and learning.

The last theme was agreements between parents and schools, one of 42 respondents at 2%. I was not able to ascertain what the parent meant with this statement. I thought that such a statement would take further investigation for more information and development.

As a means to increase parent awareness of the district’s PA, the data collected showed that the respondents were aware of the district’s PA. Having an awareness of the PA itself was not enough; parents thought of ways to increase teaching and learning. Respondents felt that communication, targeted training, and the scheduling of meetings
were the best ways of increasing the awareness of the PA as a means of increasing teaching and learning.

Seventeen (28%) of the 61 parents responded to Question 18 which asked, “What do you perceive as the most effective ways to increase attendance and involvement in the District’s Parent Academy?” Fourty-Four out of 61 (72%), did not respond. I identified four themes from the responses to the survey question.

The most frequent reported theme for this question was incentives and increased communication. There were six of the 17 respondents (35%) who indicated the PA should provide the following and encourage the following: (a) fun learning games, (b) child care services, and (c) rewards for children. Parents felt that providing motivations of this sort would generate more attendance and offer encouragement for involvement. The other tied theme that evolved from this question was increased communication. That was six (35%) of the 17 respondents. They wanted to receive more communication. These parents felt that the district needed to provide weekly communication from the school authority. Parents felt that communication was the essential to increase parent attendance and involvement.

The next theme is labeled neutral. This category was labeled neutral because they responded with none, not sure, or I don’t know. Data collected here indicated that parents did not know of ways to increase attendance and parental involvement.

The last theme was scheduling. One of 17 (6%) respondents focused on time. That parent felt changing the hours to later in the day would be a way to increase attendance and involvement. District personnel needed to devise a flexible schedule to accommodate parents’ needs, especially if they want more participation from the parents.
The district needed to develop a sense of urgency in increasing attendance and involvement in the district’s PA. The data collected indicated that parents perceived incentives, communication, and scheduling as effective ways to increase attendance and involvement in the PA. District personnel needed to focus on scheduling and communication with parents to get them more involved.

Fifteen (25%) of the 61 parents responded to Question 19 which asked, “Is there anything else that I may not have touched on that you would like to share with me regarding the District’s Parent Academy?” Fourty-Six (75%) of 61 did not respond. I identified six themes from the responses to the survey question.

The most frequent theme with 67%, 10 of the 15, respondents indicated that there was no additional information to provide. Additionally, there were five themes with a single response, one of 15 responses. Each was at 7%. The themes were as follows: (a) love for the PA, (b) teacher involvement, (c) scheduling, (d) curricular program, and (e) raw data. A parent expressed, “I love the Parent Academy.” An eye-opening response indicated that the district should change the hours for the PA because children do not want to get up at 7:30 a.m. on Saturdays. The changing of schedule was great information for me because it was my initial suggestion.

Administrator Responses

When reviewing the data of the two administrators in Section A of the administrators’ survey (see Appendix B), they either responded agree or strongly agree with the statements in the Likert-type portion of the survey. There were only two surveys handed out to the administrators, and both completed the surveys. Both administrators, 100%, responded strongly agree with the following statements:
Statement 1. The Parent Academy is an effective program for parents;
Statement 3. The Parent Academy can help parents better support their child’s education;
Statement 5. The Parent Academy can help parents better support their child in general;
Statement 6. The Parent Academy can improve community support;
Statement 7. The Parent Academy provides parents with strategies and techniques to improve their child’s grades;
Statement 9. The Parent Academy can provide more opportunities for parental involvement; and
Statement 11. The Parent Academy should be divided by levels (Elementary, Middle and High).

There were four statements where one administrator responded strongly agree, and the other administrator agree. All captured in these following statements:

Statement 2. The Parent Academy help prepare children for college;
Statement 4. The Parent Academy can help parents to understand better and navigate the school system;
Statement 8. The Parent Academy can help parents to communicate with business partners; and
Statement 10. The Parent Academy curriculum was extremely clear, and the information was understandable.

The administrators felt strongly positive about the PA. They were more positive than the parents. Although the administrators provided good information, I should have
sought out more than two. The weakness in the study fell on me and my involvement of only two administrators who worked with each other at the same site. They were able to provide their impression of the PA, which captured many of the same assessments from the parents. Triangulation of themes, especially the frequency of many, made for a strong assessment.

There were seven open-ended questions in Section B of the administrators’ survey. This section allowed administrators to respond to the questions that permitted them the freedom to express themselves without prompting or guiding for any response. Specifically, I encouraged the administrators to provide meaningful answers using their knowledge and feelings about the SSSD PA. I allowed them to determine how extensive or however brief they were willing to respond to the questions. I provided ample space on the survey for the participants to respond. Moreover, I shared that if they needed to respond on the back of the page, they may if they so choose.

The two administrators, 100%, responded to Question 12 which asked, “What is working well in the Parent Academy?” I identified three themes from the two respondents. There was not an apparent, most frequent theme. The themes were independent statements. The three themes were (a) workshops, (b) transportation to the events, and (c) program offering. One mentioned that the workshops that were catered to a specific area like behavior strategies and those that focused on academic areas were good indications that things were working well. Providing transportation to the meetings was considered a good part of the PA. Also, the administrators identified program offerings as a positive component. Based on the data collected, I determined that these two principals felt that the PA worked well, and they identified three areas of strength.
Much of what they mentioned corresponded with the parents’ comments. These data suggested that further investigation with transportation was essential for the success of the PA.

The two administrators, 100%, responded to Question 13, which asked, “What is not working well in the Parent Academy?” I identified four themes. The most frequent theme was preregistration. The electronic preregistration was a limitation to some parents because there was no access to a computer or the Internet at home. The second most frequent theme was the signing-in of parents when they first registered at the event. Some parents had difficulties registering because of a language barrier that required a translator for assistance. The third most frequent theme was the massive numbers of attendees at the event. One administrator mentioned that many parents left without attending the workshops because they were frustrated with a large number of attendees. The fourth most frequent theme dealt with having one location for the major event. One administrator mentioned that one location for parents to attend appeared to be a concern. I believed that the SSSD must find a way to assure that all parents registered for each PA that they desired to attend. When non-English speaking parents registered, there must be a translator provided.

The two administrators, 100%, responded to Question 14, which asked, “Are there any challenges with the Parent Academy? Yes or No? If yes, what are they?” Both administrators responded yes. Four themes emerged with a comment about each.

The first theme identified was transportation. Several parents signed up to attend the parent academy. It was the school official who provided the transportation; however, the parents had to get to the school to ride the bus to the event. Lack of transportation
hindered many from attending. The second theme that arose was registration. The online registration presented a challenge for a parent who could not afford a computer or the Internet. The third theme was the signing-in at the parent academy. The administrator indicated that it was a challenge for the parents and the district staff. The fourth theme was time. The administrator wanted the parent to have options when to attend, especially for the working parents. I believe these were significant challenges that the SSSD needed to examine with some parents not having transportation to get to the local school. Not having the academy could have impeded the progress and education of parents who desired knowledge that would have assisted them in educating their children.

The two administrators, 100%, responded to Question 15, which asked, “What are the best ways to address the challenges you mentioned above?” I identified two themes. The first theme dealt with registration. The administrator offered a process for local school registration. Administrators expressed that the school leadership team would rather (a) allow the schools to register parents, (b) allow the local school to scan the registration sheet to the PA staff, and (c) offer different times, so parents have different options to register when to attend. The second theme was the offering of different times, so that parents had options as to when to attend. I gathered from these data that the SSSD’s registration procedures must be accessible to parents who desire to attend the PA.

The two administrators, 100%, responded to Question 16, which asked, “What are the best ways to increase parent awareness of the District’s Parent Academy to increase teaching and learning?” I identified three themes. The first theme was online offerings. The administrators suggested that the district offer the courses that were at the walk-in PA online. The second theme was the hosting of the academy at multiples sites
simultaneously. The third theme involved celebrities. The administrators suggested that the district involve guest celebrities on local, state, and national levels.

The two administrators, 100%, did not respond on paper to Question 17, which asked, “What do you perceive as the most effective way to increase attendance and involvement in the Parent Academy?” The administrators conveyed their thoughts verbally and in several of the previous questions. The two administrators, 100%, did not respond to Question 18, which asked, “Is there anything else that I may not have touched on that you would like to share with me regarding District’s Parent Academy?” There were only two surveys issued to the administrators, and both of them returned their surveys to me with their responses.

**School Board Member Responses**

Six school board members participated in responding to the survey (see Appendix C). Six school board member received surveys, and six returned their surveys with responses. On the first question, five of the six school board members (83%) responded to this statement, “The Parent Academy is an effective program for parents.” The five school board members, 100%, who responded to this statement indicated that they strongly agree that the PA was an effective program for the parents. Zero responded with agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree (see Figure 1). The school board members provided interesting data for the study. The data were similar to the parents, administrators, and business partners’ responses.
The second statement in Section A was “The Parent Academy can help prepare children for college.” Five of the school board members (83%) responded agree or strongly agree that the PA had the potential to prepare children for college. Four school board members (66%) responded agree and one each (33%) strongly agree or selected a neutral vote. There was no selection for disagree or strongly disagree (see Figure 2).

Fewer high school students attended the PA alone. Many of the students were there along with their parents. The only high school students who attended were those students of the host school. In retrospect, I wished I could have followed up with the individual who responded with neutral. The interview may have captured this opinion.

Figure 1. Responses to Statement #1, Section A on the School Board Member Survey
School Board Members had a strong opinion about Statement 3, which stated “The Parent Academy can help parents better support their child’s education.” One-Hundred percent responded agree or strongly agree that the PA could help them better support children. Four of the six board members (66%) responded strongly agree, and two board members (33%) responded agree. No school board members rated neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree for this statement. The board members understood the value of the PA. The information from the board members was significant to this study as I progressed to consider changes.
In response to Statement 4 that mentioned that “the Parent Academy can help parents to understand better and navigate the school system,” the school board members had a 50-50 split in their responses (see Figure 4). Three of them rated strongly agree, and three agree that the PA could help parents to understand better and navigate the school system. Three of them did not. Zero responded neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree. With this data, I will need to ensure that the district personnel continues to offer strategies and information to accommodate effectively. Parents need to understand the district better.
“The Parent Academy can help parents to better understand and navigate the school system.”

Figure 4. Responses to Statement #4, Section A on the School Board Member Survey

With Statement 5 of Section A, “The Parent Academy can help parents better support their child in general,” the school board members have confidence that the PA provide helpful information that parents can gather and assist them with their children. Question 1 in Section B can support their responses to this question. However, one board member could not say it did or did not. Three board members (50%) indicated that they strongly agree. Two board members (33%) agree. One (17%) board member indicated neutral. There was no board member with a disagree or strongly disagree selection. Interesting results because I would like to know why one chose a neutral vote for this statement.
Figure 5. Responses to Statement #5, Section A on the School Board Member Survey

Statement 6 in Section A of the school board member survey read, “The Parent Academy has improved community support.” There was a 50-50 split with the board members selecting agree and three choosing neutral ratings (see Figure 6). None of the board members chose strongly agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. They attributed their rating to a lack of transportation, poor location, and limited staff members working in the PA. These were the comments reflected in the open-ended questions in Section B of the survey.
Figure 6. Responses to Statement #6, Section A on the School Board Member Survey

Even though the school board members do not strongly believe that the PA has improved community support, they do believe that parents felt that, “The Parent Academy provided strategies and techniques to improve their child’s grades.” According to Figure 7, which depicted the response to Statement 7 of the school board member survey, it showed just how strongly board members believed that the PA affected academics. There was a three-to-three split, 50% each, with board members who strongly agree and agree. There were no board members who chose neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree. The information was significant because I was trying to gauge if board members felt that parent engagement has a direct or indirect effect on student achievement. However, based on the information received through my data gatherings, I would need to research further actual achievement data to more definitively respond to their feelings about learning outcomes and address this linkage more directly.

Figure 7. Statement #7, Section A on the School board member survey

Statement 8 of Section A on the school board member survey stated, “The Parent Academy can help parents to communicate with school staff.” Communication was
essential, and the school board members agreed that the PA could help parents communicate with the school staff. Four of the school board members, 66.6%, responded that they agree with the statement. One member (16.6%) rated strongly agree, and the same number chose neutral (see Figure 8). I expected the results to be all positive because board members see the parents and teachers or administrators. These data required close examination as I determine a change in the program offerings.

Figure 8. Statement #8, Section A on the School Board Member Survey

Statement 9 of Section A of the school board member survey stated, “The Parent Academy can help parents to communicate with business partners.” There were some interesting results. Four of the school board members, 66.6%, responded that they agree with the statement. One member (16.6%) rated strongly agree, and the same number chose neutral (see Figure 9). With this data, I believed that it would be significant to this study and district personnel responsible for the program. Business partners want to have more communication or involvement with the parents. I do not know if it is for their business gain or if they know how they can help parents with their children by providing
them with strategies to help with acquiring support with college or provide other types of support in the spirit of building the community through improved educational results.

![Bar chart showing responses to Statement #9, Section A on the School Board Member Survey.

Figure 9. Responses to Statement #9, Section A on the School Board Member Survey

Even though they do not strongly agree that the PA had improved community support (see Figure 6), they had a strong opinion about the effect of the PA on parental involvement (see Figure 10). Statement 10 in Section A of the school board member survey stated, “The Parent Academy can provide more opportunities for parental involvement.” Three school board members (50%) responded strongly agree while 50% rated agree. These data would prove essential to this study as I examine the involvement of parents and its effect on student achievement.
It was interesting how the members responded to Statement 11 in Section A of the school board member survey if the PA’s curriculum was extremely clear and the information was understandable. Only half the participants, 50%, responded to this question. Two (33%) replied with a neutral selection, and one person (16%) rated strongly agree. To infer or make implications on this small data set would not be prudent at this point.

"The Parent Academy curriculum was extremely clear, and the information was understandable."

**Figure 10.** Statement #10, Section A on the School Board Member Survey

**Figure 11.** Responses to Statement #11, Section A on the School Board Member Survey

"The Parent Academy can provide more opportunities for parental involvement."
Statement 12 in Section A of the school board member survey stated, “The Parent Academy should be divided by levels (Elementary, Middle and High).” The responses divided evenly with a selection of strongly agree, agree, or neutral. Each category received two responses (33%). There was no selection of disagree or strongly disagree. Nothing in their open-ended responses supported any of these responses. I gathered from those selections indicating that they would like to have the academies at their local school site to have a greater school parental representation. The data from this question were significant information for my study and the district personnel.

![Bar chart](chart.png)

“The Parent Academy should be divided by levels (Elementary, Middle, High).”

Figure 12. Statement #12, Section A on the School Board Member Survey

Section B of the school board member survey was open-ended questions. Five (83%) of the six school board members responded to Question 13, which asked “What is working well in the Parent Academy?” I identified four themes from the respondents who participated in the survey. The first most frequent theme of the respondents had 60%, three of the five respondents, indicate that training parents was working well with
the PA. One of the respondents stated parents were becoming more knowledgeable and engaged since participating in the PA. Another board member indicated that the parents must learn how to meet their children’s academic needs best to be successful in school. The second most frequently reported theme with three responses (60%) was that the PA was professionally run. The school board members felt that the organization of the events was well done. The sessions were of value. They expressed that the quality of the program was exemplary.

The third and fourth themes received one response each (20%). The third theme that captured one of the board members was that the district personnel were accessible to parents. That board member reported that the district personnel navigated questions or opportunities within the system well. Parents sensed the personal and professional touch. The last theme was positive comments–what seems to work. One board member provided an overall comment about how nice it was attending the PA. That board member’s comments seemed to indicate the district’s PA team accomplished its mission of providing a worthwhile event for the session he attended.

Five (83%) of the six school board members responded to Question 14 which asked, “What is not working well in the Parent Academy?” I identified five themes from the respondents who participated in the survey. The themes from this question had one response (20%) each. The first theme indicated the technical difficulties that were not working well with the PA. One of the respondents stated that sometimes simple technical difficulties, particularly, inoperable air conditioning at an event could be problematic. It should have been a priority that the system was in operation.
The second theme was the perception of the academy. According to one board member, it was difficult to get all parents to think the PA was for them. They felt that it was designed specifically for one group of parents. The third theme that emerged was the low attendance. This board member felt that more parents should participate. The fourth theme had the PA in remote locations made it difficult for some parents. The last theme was another positive comment. This board member indicated there was nothing negative about the PA; everything was working well. All of these perceptions of the parent academy were helpful to my study.

Six (100%) of the six school board members responded to Question 15, which asked, “Are there any challenges with the Parent Academy? Yes or No? If yes, what are they?” Six (100%) of six board members responded yes, and zero out of six responded no. Six themes emerged.

The most frequent theme identified was the need for more staff members operating the PA. There were three (50%) of six respondents who expressed a desire to have more staff present. One board member indicated that the academy required a significant amount of district personnel and human resources to produce the events. The second theme that elevated was transportation. Two of the six respondents (33%) shared that the PA meetings scheduled at places in such a large geographic area in the district that travel time and transportation could be a challenge. The third most frequent topic that received two out of six respondents (33%) was the scheduling process. One board member indicated that having the meetings on the same day and time could be presenting a challenge. Another board member stated that the Saturday schedule conflicted with many other community activities like the community yard sales.
The fourth, fifth, and sixth themes received one response (17%) each. The fourth was communication. One board member felt that the need to do a better job communicating information about the PA. It was emphasized that some people still did not know the purpose of the PA. The fifth theme was attendance. A board member accentuated that getting more parents involved in the PA was a challenge. The sixth theme was perception. According to one board member, some parents do not think that the PA was for them.

Based on the data, some school board members perceived having a limited staff for the PA as their greatest challenge. The district’s PA should explore strategies to address this concern. It might take board action to resolve this issue. I further explored this staffing matter; I will need to consider incorporating strategies to address the challenge by both reassigning current staff and adding staff.

Six (100%) of the six school board members responded to Question 16, which asked, “What are the best ways to address the challenges you mentioned above?” I identified five themes from the respondents who participated in the survey. The most frequent theme with 83%, five, of the respondents indicated that they felt the district could better help with the advertisement. It suggested that advertising aggressively would be the best remedy for a challenge they identified earlier (low attendance). A board member suggested having all principals, district administrators, and school board members advertise through social media or to put an advertisement in the local papers.

The second most frequently reported theme was the need for more funding. Four of six respondents, 67%, advocated funding. One board member proposed searching for funding support from outside the school district or through the district’s foundation
philanthropic support to supplement the resources. The third and fourth most reported themes were scheduling and a focus on grade levels, respectively; they both received three responses (50%). A board member suggested that the district talks with school representatives to find out if there were community conflicts. If so, schedule meetings in other locations. Also, a board member suggested that the district should focus on incoming kindergarten, Grade 6, and Grade 8 parents. This board member suggested that this was the perfect time to reach parents because it was they who were worried about the impending grade level for their children. The last theme was transportation. Two (33%) of the respondents suggested that the best way to increase participation from the parents was to transport them to and from the designated sites. One board member suggested hub transportation as a possibility. The board member stressed that if parents were to participate, they would be able to help their children better.

The school board members who responded reflected upon five themes that addressed the challenges that would increase attendance and involvement in the district’s PA. Some of what they suggested could require board action. Their suggestions could make a significant difference in the number of participants at the district’s PA.

Six (100%) of the six school board members responded to Question 17, which asked, “What are some of the best ways to increase parent awareness of the District’s Parent Academy as a means to improve teaching and learning?” I identified six themes from the respondents who participated in the survey. The most frequent theme with 83%, five, of the respondents indicated that advertisement was one of the most effective ways of increasing attendance at the PA. One of the school board members stated promoting
through the school newsletters, flyers, mailers, and social media would be good methods of advertisement.

The second most frequently reported theme was to provide incentives at the PA. Four of six respondents, 67%, felt that parents need more direct benefits for attending. One board member indicated that incentives and perks were good for parents, but children would need something tangible. The third most frequent theme was communication. It too received four of the six responses (67%). One board member suggested that the district’s PA staff members should continue as they were communicating, but they need to intensify their usage of the parent groups, the district phone calling system, and social media.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth themes all received two responses (33%). The fourth theme was the availability of the district staff. One board member stressed how she appreciated how the staff was attentive to parents’ needs. It was further stated that parents did not have to make an appointment to see the staff members. The fifth theme was pre-event promotions. One board member felt that there should be more promotions about the PA agenda before an event took place. Then after the promotion, there should be a follow-up newsletter to all parents that highlights the purpose and messages of the PA. The sixth and last theme from this question was advanced parent training. One board member felt that because parents differ and they have different skill sets, there should be advanced training for parents who are skilled and would not require the training that some other less knowledgeable parents would require.

The school board members offered some interesting suggestions. The data from this question showed that school board members placed value on advertisement and
funding for the PA. Because of this data, the district would need to examine its budget further and reprioritize some decisions if not congruent with the board’s wishes.

Six (100%) of the six school board members responded to Question 18, which asked, “What do you perceive as the most effective ways to increase attendance and involvement in the District’s Parent Academy?” I identified seven themes. The most frequently reported theme was to offer transportation. Three (50%) of the six respondents thought that the most effective way to get the parents there was to bus them to and from the PA. One school board member suggested that the district provide a transportation hub for those parents who do not have cars.

The second most reported theme was principals serving as motivators. Three (50%) of the six respondents wanted the principals to play an active role in getting parents to attend. One member emphasized that all principals attend the meetings. This board member felt that if parents knew that the principal would be attending, then they would too. Another board member suggested that the principals motivate attendance simply by encouraging them to attend.

The third most frequently reported theme was to target parents for training. Targeting parents for training was suggested: (a) for parents who have children in the transition years (kindergarten, Grade 5 and Grade 8) and (b) to offer training separately for elementary, middle and high schools parents. Two respondents (33%) indicated that this would attract more parents, especially if they were there for topics that interest them.

The fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh themes all received one response each (17%). The fourth theme was to have students perform. The board member felt that one of the greatest attractor to any event was to have the students to perform. The fifth theme was
streaming. This board member indicated that families were busy and having the opportunity to view the PA at their leisure would be appealing to some parents. The sixth theme centered on *Naviance* (a software). One board member suggested having training for parents centered on the newest software in the district. *Naviance* was a comprehensive K-12 college-and-career readiness program. This program purported to align with student strengths and interests for postsecondary goal. The seventh and last theme was positive feedback. One board member touted the trophies offered and the video advertisement.

School board members had personal ideas about some best practices for attracting more parent participation and involvement in the district’s PA. Many of their suggestions fit well within the realm of this study. As I further developed the change portion of this research, I anticipated that I would include their judgments regarding creative and quality strategies to achieve my goal in helping to attract more parent to the district’s PA.

**Business Partner Responses**

I contacted the district’s PA Department and acquired the names and addresses of community vendors who participated in the district’s PA. I mailed a letter to business leaders. I stated in it the purpose of the letter (Appendix H) and included two consent forms (Appendix F) and the survey (Appendix D) to the business partners with a self-addressed stamped envelope. In the letter, I requested the business partners to sign the two consent forms and to complete the survey. Also, the directions indicated that they were to mail one of the consent forms, along with the survey, back to me. To complete the survey, the business partners took approximately 30 minutes. The 30 minutes was supposed to be the only time I would involve the business partners. The business
partners were supposed to return their surveys in a self-address stamped envelope that I mailed to them.

This task was problematic. It was extremely difficult getting the business partners to return the surveys. Two of them returned the surveys immediately, but others required my sending e-mails or a duplicate copy of the previous packet of information. When I saw that I was not getting the surveys returned, I resulted to calling the different companies. Fortunately, they were all returned. Business partners who returned the survey had participated in at least one PA event. One-Hundred percent (10) of the respondents responded to all statements in Section A of the business partner survey.

The first statement read, “The Parent Academy that I have participated in has been effective for the parents.” Of the 100% of the respondents that replied to the question, 100% rated either strongly agree or agree. A significant number of them rated strongly agree (60%). Table 16 reflects the number and the percentage in parentheses in the partners’ responses. None of the business partners rated disagree or strongly disagree with this statement. From the responses, I determined that the business partners thought that the PA was effective. This information was important as I triangulated this kind of response about the PA.

Table 16

Statement 1: Business Partner Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 (60%)</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the response to the second statement, “The Parent Academy that I have participated in has been effective in building positive business-parents relationship,”
again business partners significantly responded positively; 80% responded with a strongly agree and 20% with agree. There were not any responses of neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree. The results of these data could be built on and used as the district attempt to recruit other business partners. It showed that the business partners felt that there was a return on their investment when they participated in the PA. I hope to determine what those returns were, other than the attitudinal information I gleaned from this portion of the survey. Table 17 portrayed the results below.

Table 17

*Statement 2: Business Partner Survey*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 (80%)</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the third statement in Section A, “The Parent Academy that I participated in was designed to help parents better support their child’s education,” business partners responded positively about this statement. One-Hundred percent of the partners agreed with the statement that the PA that they participated in was designed to help parents better support their child’s education. The data indicated that 80% of the partners rated strongly agree with the statement and 20% agree. The information gathered would be stronger data if it determined if partners were participants who provided some of the training or if they were vendors that sat in the exhibit hall sharing information about their product the entire day.

The fourth statement in Section A, “The Parent Academy that I have participated in was designed to help parents to understand better and navigate the school system” had followed the pattern of the previous four statements. The responses were either strongly
agree or agree. Seventy percent rated strongly agree and 30% agree. The weakness in the survey was that open-ended section should have allowed the business partners to follow-up or provide supporting evidence to this statement. With that information, I would have gained more supportive information as I progressed through the study and as I wrote the recommendation section of the research.

The fifth statement in Section A stated, “The Parent Academy that I have participated in has improved community support.” This statement was the first where one of the respondents provided a neutral response. Eighty percent of the business partners rated strongly agree with this statement while 10% agree and 10% was neutral. There was zero responses for disagree and strongly disagree. This information is important to the study because it helped me to understand how the business viewed the PA in general. Table 18 represented the results of the statement.

Table 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement 5: Business Partner Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 (80%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sixth statement in Section A stated, “The Parent Academy that I have participated in provided parents with strategies and techniques to improve their child’s grades.” The statement was an interesting one based on the responses of the business partners. Ninety percent of the business partners agreed with this statement, with 60% rated strongly agree and 30% agree. There was 10% (one) who responded with neutral. Disagree and strongly disagree did not receive a response. The information is good for my final evaluation; however, it would have been more pertinent if I could have
determined if the business partners were active participants and were leading the
sessions, providing literature or supplies in the exhibit hall, or if they were serving in the
food area. Table 19 demonstrated the responses to the question.

Table 19

Statement 6: Business Partner Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 (60%)</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A follow-up question to this statement would have strengthened the research.
That question would have been, “What role did you play at the Parent Academy?” Also,
it would have included choices like (a) presenter or trainer, (b) vendor in the exhibit hall,
or (c) vendor advertising or selling goods. This data could have been disaggregated to
determine how the partners responded.

The business partners responded to the seventh statement, “The Parent Academy
that I have participated in can provide more opportunities for parental involvement.”
Eighty percent rated strongly agree and 20% agree. These data indicated that the
business partners were aware of the number of parents who participated. They may have
thought that the number was representative of the community the district served.
Because the study is about the PA and parental involvement, the data would help in
determining if others saw the PA as another opportunity for parental involvement.

The eighth statement was, “The Parent Academy that I have participated in can
provide more opportunities for business involvement.” According to the information
provided by the PA Department, many of the partners were repeat participants. That
could have influenced the data. Sixty percent of the partners rated strongly agree and
40% agree. No one chose a neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree rating. These data helped in suggesting if to continue or not to continue with the PA and to involve business partners or not. Table 20 depicted the responses for Statement 8.

Table 20

Statement 8: Business Partner Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 (60%)</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final statement in Section A generated some disagree ratings. The statement, “The Parent Academy that I have participated in should be divided by levels (Elementary, Middle and High)” sparked some business partners to disagree. Sixty percent rated strongly agree and 10% agree for splitting up of the academy based on grade levels. One (10%) remained neutral while 30% of the business partners rated disagree. Zero percent responded strongly disagree. Table 21 reflected the thinking of the business partners in splitting up the PA by grade levels.

Table 21

Statement 9: Business Partner Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 (50)</td>
<td>1 (10)</td>
<td>1 (10)</td>
<td>3 (30)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responses to this statement represented another piece that strengthened the study and provided valuable information for planning future events. These data helped me to determine what needed to be done to change the structure of the PA, possibly.

There are seven open-ended questions of Section B of the business partner survey. This section allowed business partners to respond to the questions that permitted them the
freedom to express themselves without prompting or guiding for any response. I specifically encouraged business partners to provide meaningful answers using their knowledge and feelings about the SSSD PA. I allowed business partners to determine how extensive or however brief they were willing to respond to the questions. I provided ample space on the survey for the participants to respond.

Nine (90%) of the 10 business partners responded to Question 10, which asked “What is working well in the Parent Academy?” I identified six themes from the respondents who participated in the survey. The most frequent theme with 67% (six) of the respondents indicated that the opportunities for a parent to participate were working well in the PA. One of the respondents stated how seeing the parents attend and engage was great.

The second most frequently reported theme was the coordination of the PA. Five of the nine respondents, 56%, liked how the district synchronized the sessions and the variety of the topics. One business partner was impressed with the parents’ engagement with the topics and mentioned that at the PA, the parents had access to valuable information that could strengthen their family and their children educational experiences.

The next most frequently reported theme was that the PA provided parents with appropriate grade-level resources. Forty-Four percent, four of the nine respondents, were happy that parents received school-related resources for their children. One business partner indicated that SSSD allowed a company the opportunity to share their free educational resources and empowered parents to seek information specifically relevant to the needs of their children.
The fourth most frequently reported theme, 33% (three of nine respondents), was the interaction of parents and the community. One business partner was pleased with the PA because it provided opportunities for parents and the community to interact with each other. The fifth and sixth most frequently reported themes were the marketing of the PA and the rotation of the meetings throughout the district. There were two respondents (22%) each for the last two themes. One respondent specified that the marketing for the PA was one thing that worked well. One business partner indicated that rotating the academies allowed for more participation and that it helped to meet the needs of the demographic area.

The reoccurring themes indicated certain elements seemed to help the respondents feel that the PA was productive. Based on the data collected, I determined that the PA was effective for the business partners. It was operating, and there was a need for improvement by providing the parents more opportunities to interact more with the business partners and having the partners to plan for events as the district continued with the process of the PA.

Seven (70%) of the ten business partners responded to Question 11, which asked “What is not working well in the Parent Academy?” I identified seven themes from the respondents who participated in the survey. Three themes equaled in receiving two responses (29%) each. The first most frequent theme of the respondents indicated that low attendance was not working well with the PA. One of the respondents stated more parents should attend. The partner further stated that his company was a constant, and he appreciated seeing the dedicated parents who attended at various locations.
The second most frequently reported theme was that the partners wanted to meet more with the parents. The partners wanted to either meet with parents before or during intermission as they were transitioning from one session to another. The vendors stated that meeting with parents following the ending session was difficult because they carpooled or rode buses and had to leave immediately after the academy.

The next most frequently reported theme of what did not work well with the PA was that the PA did not have a division of grade-level specific training. They mentioned that they would have preferred that the high school training be offered at different training than the elementary. One suggested separating the dates of training by levels and tailored to the needs of that specific population.

The fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh most frequently reported themes at 14% each, one of seven respondents, were lack of hands-on activities, few translators, the proximity of meeting rooms, and keynote speakers. The business partners felt that parents would have appreciated having more hands-on activities that were interactive with various school applications. They saw places where parents needed translation, and they were assisting other parents at other sessions. The sixth most frequently reported theme dealt with the training sessions. PA meetings took place in a high school, and the high schools were considered considerably large. They felt that the sessions were too spread out and forced parents to walk from one side of the campus to the other side. The last theme was the choice of keynote speakers. The business partners felt that the district choice of topics from the keynote speakers should have been more relevant to the parents. They did not feel that the speakers spoke to the parents’ needs.
The reoccurring themes indicated certain elements seemed to help the respondents feel that the PA was productive. Based on the data collected, I determined that the PA was considered effective by the business partners as it was operating, but there was a need for improvement as the district continues with the activities of the PA. The areas of improvement were (a) providing more opportunities for parents to interact more with the business partners and (b) allowing the business partners to participate in the planning of the meetings.

Nine (90%) of the 10 business partners responded to Question 12, which asked “Are there any challenges with the Parent Academy? Yes or No? If yes, what are they?” Five (56%) of nine business partners responded yes, and two (22%) out of nine responded no. Nine themes emerged.

The most frequent theme identified was partners meeting with parents. There were four (44%) of nine respondents who expressed a desire to have more interaction with the parents. I believed that these partners felt that they too could help the parent to gain more knowledge from the vendors as well. The second theme that elevated was the relevant leveled-topics. Two of the nine respondents (22%) shared that the PA should have a division by levels (elementary, middle and high). They felt that the topics could be tailored to meet parents and students at their level. Parents of elementary children would not have been in a session that dealt with middle or high schools students. The third most frequent topic that received two out of nine responses (22%) was the registration process. The partners felt that the process for registration was complicated and confusing. They did not particularly feel that they too had to complete information if they have previously done so. The fourth most frequently received two out of nine
responses (22%) was attendance. Business partners felt more parents should have attended; however, they were excited about seeing the dedicated ones who frequently attended.

The fifth, sixth, and seventh most frequently reported themes similarly received two responses (22%). They were life-relevant training, a vendor offering monetary support to parents, and attendance of host schools’ parents, respectively. One partner felt that SSSD should offer more real-world experiences training for the parents and the students. Another partner felt the business partners should offer a monetary resource (voucher) for families that participated in the PA. It seemed that the partners asked the parents what school their children attended. What they noticed was that fewer parents from the host schools were not in attendance.

The eighth and ninth most frequent themes were transportation and parking. These themes receive one of nine responses (11%). The business partners felt that these challenges might have played a role in the low turnout. One partner indicated that transportation to and from the PA might have been a challenge for parents from a low-socioeconomic status group. One partner mentioned that parking was an issue. After parents showed up and found it difficult to find a parking space, many lefts.

Based on the data, business partners perceived meeting with the parents before, during the transition, and after the PA as their greatest challenge. The district’s PA staff members should explore more ways to address this concern and target ways to attract and sustain parents’ interest and excitement about coming to the PA. Any further development should incorporate strategies to address the challenges addressed by this group.
Eight (80%) of the 10 business partners responded to Question 13, which asked “What are the best ways to address the challenges you mentioned above?” I identified eight themes from the respondents who participated in the survey. The most frequent theme with 37% (three) of the respondents indicated that they felt that the district leaders should increase resources for the PA. A respondent stated that there were no challenges; however, there was a need to increase the impact of resources. It further supported the concept that it would help the district to advertise more. The second most frequently reported theme was transportation. Two of eight respondents, 25%, focused on getting more parents to participate by providing parents transportation to attend the PA and participate in its activities. The third most frequently reported theme was advertisement. Twenty-Five percent (two of eight responses) shared that more announcements on the district robocalls system, letters sent home, and advertisements through the television and radio would yield more participants.

The next five themes all garnered one of eight responses (13%) each. The fourth most frequently reported theme was flexible scheduling. One business partner recommended having the PA on different days and perhaps different times. This vendor thought Saturdays and early mornings were impediments for many parents. The fifth most frequently reported theme was higher education services. The partners reported that the district should get more commonly involved with higher education (colleges and universities). The sixth most frequently reported theme was a need for virtual sessions. One partner suggested having more virtual sessions hosted at the neighborhood school with group discussions and guided participation would yield more participants. The seventh most recent theme was planning with vendors. The business partners felt that if
they were a part of the initial planning, they would be able to provide more resources. The last reported theme was media outlets partnership. The partners suggested that the district partners collaborate with the outside local media outlets because they felt that they would help to spread the word about the PA being free of charge.

The business partners who responded reflected upon eight themes that addressed the challenges that would increase attendance and involvement in the district’s PA. There must be planning with vendors that will be able to provide resources that would be beneficial to student learning. The district must find ways to provide transportation for parents that would allow parents to continue to be involved in the district’s PA activities. Building media outlet partnerships will assist the PA in motivating parents to attend. The district’s PA must look at ways to provide flexible scheduling that would meet the needs of every parent wanting to attend the district’s PA.

The ten business partners, 100%, responded to Question 14, which asked “What do you perceive as the most effective ways to increase attendance and involvement in the District’s Parent Academy?” I identified eight themes from the respondents who participated in the survey. The most frequent theme with 40% (four) of the respondents indicated that advertisement was one of the most effective ways of increasing attendance at the PA. One of the respondents stated promoting it through the school and teachers would be the best tool for advertisement. The partners suggested that using phones and social media would be pragmatic because people’s usage of phones and social media was commonplace.

The second most frequently reported theme was the marketing of the PA. Three of ten respondents, 30%, felt that marketing early and frequently to parents would result
in more parents participating. The third most frequent theme was workshops. It received two of the ten responses (20%). One business partner suggested that the district’s PA continue to offer a wide variety of workshops for all grade levels. The partners further stated that along with the workshops, it would be good if the district kept the free lunches, door prizes, and daycare program, so that parents would be motivated to participate. The next most frequently reported theme (two of ten responses) dealt with where the events should be hosted (20%). One partner suggested hosting the events at schools in areas of the county where struggling families could have better access. The partners suggested that the PA focus on Title 1 schools where the partners felt the needs were greater for parental involvement for the child’s education.

The fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth themes all received one response (10%). The fifth theme was transportation. The partners suggested with a different twist. A business partner suggested the need for the community coming together to provide transportation for members of the community. The sixth theme was parents using the techniques offered from the PA. One partner proposed that parents who attended gained anchors and techniques that would help them to increase their children’s learning. The seventh theme was the expansion of partnerships. This unique strategy suggested that the district research when other events were scheduled to take place and to partner with them to run the event simultaneously, allowing the district to offer more. The last theme was the encouragement of attendance of the entire faculty and staff. One business partner encouraged every staff member to attend at least one PA in its entirety for awareness and attainment of aptitude to better advocate for it. Having staff members, especially teachers, to attend PA would have to be on a volunteer basis unless one negotiate such a
mandate through the collective bargaining process. Their required attendance assumes it is a legitimate bargaining issue.

The partners offered some new suggestions. There were some unusual thoughts that were generated by the business partners that they were genuinely thinking about how they could play a role in the betterment of the district’s PA. Based on these data, I believe the district would need to further examine the improvement suggestions in my study as part of its future planning to improve PAs.

Seven (70%) of the 10 business partners responded to Question 15, which asked “As a participating business partner of the District’s Parent Academy, what do you think would be the best recruiting effort(s) in getting business partners to participate in the Parent Academy?” I identified five themes from the respondents who participated in the survey. The most frequent theme with 57% (four) of the respondents indicated that the district’s PA needed to schedule a time where parents have more face-to-face time with the vendors. One business partner indicated that the district should have allowed more time for parents to visit the exhibit areas freely.

The second most frequently reported theme was to provide clear goals for the business partners. Three of seven respondents, 43%, did not feel that the goals were clear for those who were first-time participants. One business partner shared that partners needed to know the purpose of the PA. The business partners expressed if they had clear, definitive goals, it would help them to recruit other business partners.

The next most frequently reported theme was the sharing of success with the partners. It became apparent that partners were interested in the success of the PA. One respondent (14%) indicated that if he and others knew about the success of the PA, they
could have shared and enticed other business partners to participate. The last two themes, fourth and fifth, had one response (14%) each. The fourth theme was sponsorship. One partner wrote that sponsorships and foundation grants were options, but not all sponsors should be presenters or participants. The partner felt that it would help build external support. The sixth theme was incentives. One partner suggested that the district’s PA staff offer incentives for participating. These data were important for this study and the current PA team because it provided information that otherwise might be considered.

Nine (90%) of the 10 business partners responded to Question 16, which asked “Is there anything else that I may not have touched on that you would like to share with me regarding the Parent Academy?” There were no identified themes where the business partners provided additional information. Six of the partners provided positive comments about the PA like the following: (a) honored to be a partner, (b) PA was a wonderful initiative, (c) PA was very successful, and (d) kudos to the PA.

The reoccurring themes indicated certain elements seemed to help the respondents feel that the PA was productive. Based on the data collected, I determined that the PA was effective for the business partners as it was operating; however, there was a need for improvement as the district continued it and its programs.

**Interviews**

I interviewed six school board members, and they all responded to the questions on the interview protocol. There was a rather short-time range for the interviews. I interviewed the board members individually because I did not want them to talk to each other because I wanted their responses without collaboration. It took a week to complete the interviews. I scheduled each interview for 30 minutes; two came close to that time,
and others were shorter, about 10-to-18 minutes. The interviews were all held at the district school board offices. There were 12 questions on the survey, but I duplicated one of the questions: Questions 8 and 11. Tables 22 through 33 depicted a summary of the responses to the open-ended qualitative questions.

In response to interview Question 1 of the school board member interview protocol that asked, “What is working well in the Parent Academy?” eight themes evolved (see Table 22). The most frequently reported theme identified was program content. Four of six school board members (67%), School Board Members 3, 4, 5, and 6, discussed that the program content of the PA was pertinent, relevant, and informative. The second most frequent theme was parent benefits. Three of the six school board members (50%), School Board Members 1, 2, and 4, stated that parents were able to find ways to help their children. School board members indicated that the district supported parents in their children’s education. Four of the eight themes had two responses each (33%). The themes were as follows: (a) parent involvement, (b) quality of the program, (c) administrative attendance, and (d) staff presence.

Regarding parent involvement, school board members noticed that parents were trying to be involved. With the quality of the program, they felt that the logical structures were well-done. Administrative attendance evoked two responses, and it emphasized that having administrative personnel on-site was valuable. Having the district’s PA staff present during the breakout sessions helped to make the transitions run smoothly. The last two themes had one response each (17%). The themes were school sites and community acceptance.
Having the PAs scheduled at new school sites enabled parents to attend in a productive learning environment. One school board member felt that the community had accepted the PA because of the community participation in the PA. These data reflected that the school board members placed a high-value on program content and parent benefits because it indicated that certain elements like the structure, sessions, and the presence of the staff throughout the campus seemed to help the PA to be productive. This information may help plan future PA agendas and activities as well as attracting more parental attendance in the future.

Table 22

*School Board Members Interview Responses to Question 1*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number of Respondents.</th>
<th>Board #1</th>
<th>Board #2</th>
<th>Board #3</th>
<th>Board #4</th>
<th>Board #5</th>
<th>Board #6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Content</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Benefits</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Involvement</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of Program</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Attendance</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff Presence</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>School Sites</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Acceptance</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to interview Question 2 of the school board member interview protocol that asked, “What is not working well in the Parent Academy?,” seven themes advanced (see Table 23). The most frequently reported theme identified was differentiated training for parents. Four of six school board members (67%), School Board Members 1, 3, 4, and 5, discussed the need for professional development training
for parents. Because of the diversity of the parents and students, there was a difference of need as it related to the level of learning. One board member stated that the district had parents who had less parenting and child supporting skills because of family history and background. Because of the varying skills of the parents and many having their first child in school, one board member indicated that there should be a boot camp of what parents should have expected in the PA training.

The second most frequent theme was the inability to reach all parents. Three of the six school board members (50%), School Board Members 1, 3, and 4, cited that the district was not reaching all parents in the various communities and on their various levels. One board member indicated that the value of the PA, in its present form, was not for everyone. That board member indicated that the parents needed a different level of content because they were on a higher educational level and more sophisticated in their leadership skills. Another board member thought that it was hard for the PA to be all things for all parents.

Five of the seven themes had two responses each (33%). The themes were as follows: (a) attendance, (b) family obligations, (c) support, (d) community conflicts, and (e) scheduling. Regarding attendance, school board members noticed low attendance depending on the location of the PA. With family obligations, one board member indicated that there were so many family responsibilities on Saturdays that impeded on their involvement in the PA. A board member stressed a need for more funding and staff support at the PA. One board member stated that parents were busy attending community events or garage sales. According to a board member, some parents emphasized that they would love to attend the PA; however, they had to choose
community activities instead of the PA. The last theme that received two responses was scheduling. A board member cited a parent stating that the dates and times of the PA programs conflicted with parents’ schedules.

I gleaned that many efforts were needed to be put in place to fine-tune its offering for a wider range of participation. It was obvious that some parents found it difficult to navigate the school system while others felt that the PA was for certain families. The district needs to explore these issues as well as future funding and staffing needs to ensure the PA is more functional and relevant for all families.

Table 23

*School Board Members Interview Responses to Question 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Board #1</th>
<th>Board #2</th>
<th>Board #3</th>
<th>Board #4</th>
<th>Board #5</th>
<th>Board #6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Differentiated Training for Parents</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reaching all Parents</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Obligations</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Conflicts</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to interview Question 3 of the school board member interview protocol that asked, “What are your perceptions regarding the District’s Parent Academy?,” six themes emerged (see Table 24). The most frequently reported theme identified was a quality program based on the offering. Five of six school board members (83%), School Board Members 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6, indicated that they perceived the PA as being wrought with quality programs. One board member stated that the PA
was invaluable because of the content presented. Another board member perceived the content of the PA as supportive.

The second most frequent theme tied to the first. It was the perception of the PA that it was beneficial to parents. Five of the six school board members (83%), School Board Members 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6, cited that if parents were to attend, their children would be more prepared. One board member shared that the PA was the perfect venue for the hard-to-reach parents because it would help them understand why it was important to be involved in their children’s education. The third most frequent theme was having access to district personnel. Three of six school board members (50%), School Board Members 1, 3 and 5, indicated that they perceived the PA as a good beacon for providing parents with access to district personnel. The PA gave the parents opportunities to speak with district personnel since this venue provided open access and no appointments were necessary for parents to attend.

The fourth and fifth themes tied with two (33%) responses each. The themes were (a) beneficial to children and (b) parent involvement in school organizations (e.g., PTA, SAC, booster, and parent leadership organizations). One school board member felt that the PA was a place for parents to receive contact information that would help their child to succeed. Another school board members cited that she perceived that parents were knowledgeable and involved in their schools’ organizations. The last theme with one (17%) response was there was no parental involvement in school. One board member stated that the PA would be a good vehicle for those parents who were not avidly involved in the school. The board member indicated that these parents would gain more by attending the PA.
Based on the data gathered from Question 3, “What are your perceptions regarding the District’s Parent Academy?,” I surmised that the district must continue to increase parent involvement in schools. The involvement of the total administration from each school would be important to the growth of the students in the district.

Table 24

*Board Members Responses to Interview Question 3*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Board #1</th>
<th>Board #2</th>
<th>Board #3</th>
<th>Board #4</th>
<th>Board #5</th>
<th>Board #6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality Program Based on Offering</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial to Parents</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having Access to District Personnel</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial to Children</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in School Organizations</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Involvement in School Organizations</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

In response to interview Question 4 of the school board member interview protocol that asked, “What advantages have you observed at the Parent Academy?,” six themes evolved (see Table 25). The most frequently reported theme identified was the district or staff presence. Four of six school board members (67%), School Board Members 1, 4, 5, and 6, discussed that having the staff or district representative present at the PA was advantageous. One board member stated that the district was large and that parents could talk with their school representatives without having to make an appointment. The second most frequent theme was assistance parents received from the PA. Three of the six school board members (50%), School Board Members 1, 2 and 3, stated that parents were able to get the help they needed at a *one-stop-show place*, the PA, and they do not have to go from place-to-place to find assistance. The third most
frequent theme was resources. Two of the six school board members (33%), School Board Members 5 and 6, shared that resources observed were advantages. They saw that parents had a great deal of expert advice at their disposal.

Three of the six themes had one response each (17%). The themes were as follows: (a) college-and-career information, (b) current information, and (c) face-to-face interaction. In regards to college-and-career information, school board members noticed that there was a plethora of information, especially information about FASFA, where parent learn the importance of completing the FASFA application for funding their child’s education. Current information was cited by a board member who stressed that parents could learn about digital curriculum in the school and information about legislative issues or policies.

Last, one board member felt that face-to-face interaction was quite advantageous. The board members emphasized that Facebook and other social media could not compare to the power of face-to-face interaction. These data reflected that the school board members placed a high-value on district or staff members’ presence at the district’s PA. The information indicated that certain norms like district staff presence and other administrators’ attendance seemed advantageous for attracting more parent participation in the PA. This information may help plan future PA agendas where all of the potential programming suggestions from my study might be incorporated. These actions should attract more parental attendance in the future.

Table 25
In response to interview Question 5 of the school board member interview protocol that asked, “If there are any, what challenges you have observed with the District’s Parent Academy?,” ten themes evolved (See Table 26). Two themes tied as the most frequently reported themes. The first theme was time and access. Three of six school board members (50%), School Board Members 3, 4 and 5, discussed that time scheduled and access was challenging. One board member offered to have the PA during the week and not Saturdays as a viable option. The other tied theme was location. School Board Members 2, 3 and 4 indicated that location was a challenge. The PAs held on the east side of town were difficult to attend for those who lived on the west side of town.

Three other themes evolved and had two responses each. The three themes were (a) perception, (b) transportation, and (c) diversified offerings. The perceptions of the different groups that wanted to attend the PA were conflicting for some because many thought the PA was only for parents from Title I schools. Transportation may have hindered participation because geography may have played a role. One board member stated that to attract the parents, the district needed to ensure that its programs met the need for a wider variety of parent needs.
The sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and 10\textsuperscript{th} themes all had one response (17%). The five themes were as follows: (a) large school district, (b) principals’ lack of attendance and their lack to motivate parents, (c) communication, (d) non-degreed parents, and (e) attendance. One board member stated that principals need to bring their parents to the academy and remain there. Another board member agreed that because of the immense size of the district, it proved to be a challenge. Parents could be an hour away from an academy program because the district is 1,000 square miles. Finally, another challenge was fluctuating attendance, which depended on the location.

These data reflected that the school board members placed a high-value on time, access, and location of the district’s PA. The data indicated that certain patterns seemed to be challenging in scheduling of the PA. These challenges could help plan future PAs.

Table 26

\textit{School Board Members Interview Responses to Question 5}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Board #1</th>
<th>Board #2</th>
<th>Board #3</th>
<th>Board #4</th>
<th>Board #5</th>
<th>Board #6</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time and Access</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversified Offerings</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Large School District</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals’ lack of attendance and their motivation of parents</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Communication</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Non-degreed Parents</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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In response to interview Question 6 of the school board member interview protocol that asked, “How these might observed challenges with the District’s Parent Academy be overcome?,” eleven themes advanced. The most frequently reported theme
identified was transportation (see Table 27). Five of six school board members (83%), School Board Members 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, discussed that most of the challenges could be solved simply by providing transportation to the PAs. School board members indicated that more would probably attend future meetings.

The second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth most frequently reported themes received two responses (33%). They were as follows: (a) use of five learning communities, (b) advertising and marketing, (c) media, (d) timing modules, and (e) design tracks. One board member indicated that holding meetings in the community could be less stressful for parents. Another board member stressed the upcoming advertising meeting using public service announcements. School board members shared that the use of the media (i.e., videos) would encourage more parent to attend. A board member indicated that more parents might participate if the district were to scale down the time. Having the training last less than four hours and involving professional parents as facilitators would help.

The last five themes all received one response (17%), and they were (a) principals’ attendance, (b) location, (c) focus topics, (d) data gathering, and (e) train-the-trainer. One board member emphasized that having the principal attend more frequently and motivating parents to come along could help improve attendance. Another board member mentioned that scheduling the meetings in a centralized location would be a positive remedy for attendance. A board member offered an additional suggestion that some parents may not care about the location of the meetings if the topics were of interest to them. Under data gathering, a board member recommended that the district review the data from the previous meetings and develop ways to rectify the challenges. Finally, a
board member proposed training parents and business partners, so they can offer some of the sessions.

These data revealed that the school board members possessed many suggestions in overcoming challenges they viewed with the PA. The data indicated that the school board members placed a high-value on transportation (see Table 27). The district should consider making transportation a vital element or higher priority in their plans.

Table 27

**School Board Members Interview Responses to Question 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Board #1</th>
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<th>Board #3</th>
<th>Board #4</th>
<th>Board #5</th>
<th>Board #6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>83%</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Five Learning Communities</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertise and Marketing</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing Modules</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involve Professional Parents</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals’ Attendance</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Topics</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Gathering</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Train the Trainer</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to Interview Question 7 of the school board member interview protocol that asked, “What would be some suggestions for increasing more parents to the District’s Parent Academy?,” 12 themes evolved (see Table 28). Two themes, sponsorship and principal involvement, were the most frequently reported theme. Three of six school board members (50%), School Board Members 3, 5 and 6, suggested getting sponsors to help with door prizes that could be used to incentivize parents to participate.
Three of the six school board members (50%), School Board Members 1, 3 and 5, believed that more visible principal involvement would be a positive strategy for enticing parents to get involved. One board member specified that it would be nice for principals to hear the messages of the sessions.

The third, fourth, and fifth themes diversifying the offerings, transportation, and marketing, respectively, all received two responses (33%). School Board Members 3 and 6 felt that having a different offering at different sites would pull the right parents for the specified sessions. Also, School Board Members 3 and 4 focused on transportation, pointing out that many would come if the district provided transportation. Board Members 3 and 5 felt that the district should market the PA better.

Several single themes surfaced and warranted acknowledgment. They were the sixth through 12th themes, which received one response (17%) each. The sixth theme was communication; the board member suggested that communication needed to be more focused on specified groups. The seventh theme, student leaders, stressed having student leaders in the schools play an active role at the PA. Theme eight, parent attendance, would generate more parents to attend if parents who attended would go out and speak about the activities, serving as recruiters or announcers. The ninth theme, virtual home meetings, required videotaping sessions for parents convening at one location near their homes. They could have a party of neighbors close to their homes to view the videotapes or experience a simulcast program.

One board member stressed the program content. This 10th theme stressed that the district must select great content that was appealing and met the parents’ needs. The next theme was training. One board member indicated before having a large district
meeting; the district should establish an opportunity where parents were frontloaded information to review before the actual general PA. The 12th theme was refreshment.

One board member felt that food was a good attractor to get more parents to attend.

The data gathering for this question yielded a wealth of information. These data revealed that the school board members had many proposals to increase parental participation. This information should help in my study as I further develop strategies for improvement.

Table 28

School Board Members Interview Responses to Question #7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Board #1</th>
<th>Board #2</th>
<th>Board #3</th>
<th>Board #4</th>
<th>Board #5</th>
<th>Board #6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorship</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Involvement</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversifying the Offerings</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Leaders at the Parent Academy</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Attendance</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual Home Meetings</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Content</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refreshment</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to interview Questions 8 and 11 of the school board member interview protocol that asked, “How would you describe the level of impact the District’s Parent Academy has had on student achievement throughout our school?,” nine themes arose (see Table 29). The most frequently reported theme identified was data tracking.

Four of six school board members (67%), School Board Members 1, 2, 3 and 6, discussed the empirical data gathered from this study and studies like this would help to determine
the impact the district’s PA has had on student achievement. Also, they suggested having the Research, Accountability, and Grants Department research and support my study.

The second most frequently reported theme was resources. Two of six school board members (33%), School Board Members 1 and 2, suggested that the district should provide more financial support, particularly for staffing. With more financial support, the board member believed the program could expand through an additional focus on preschool education.

The last seven themes received one response (17%). They were as follows: (a) attendance related to achievement, (b) increase in adult mentors, (c) scheduling, (d) impact on manners and social skills, (e) scholarships, (f) special needs, and (g) career-and-college opportunities. A board member recommended reviewing the parents’ attendance and compare that data to the students’ performance on the standardized test to see if there is a correlation. One board member noted that increasing the number of adults with the students and who help with school work will have a direct and positive impact on student achievement. Another board member suggested having an annual meeting at the students’ school site. With the addition of teaching etiquette and social skills at the PA, there should be greater potential for having fewer suspensions and improved academic skills. Through the PA, one board member shared that children learned that they could go to college with scholarships. That same board member stressed that the parents received specialized support for their special needs child. One board member observed that parents have discovered that there were career pathways for students to become certified graduates in many career fields.
School Board members shared that the level of impact from the PA on student achievement varied. With this data, school board members were able to spotlight many other impacts that would assist with the development of a possible change in the PA. With additional resources, staff could provide other strategies and add others to develop other content. This information could strengthen my study and result in positive improvements for the district’s PA, which will be discussed in the change portion.

Table 29

*School Board Members Interview Responses to Questions 8 and 11*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Board #1</th>
<th>Board #2</th>
<th>Board #3</th>
<th>Board #4</th>
<th>Board #5</th>
<th>Board #6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data Tracking</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in Adult Mentoring</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Manners And Social Skills</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Needs</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Career and College Opportunities</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to interview Question 9 of the school board member interview protocol that asked, “What role can you suggest schools play in enhancing the District’s Parent Academy?,” 10 themes evolved (see Table 30). The most frequently reported themes identified were serving as communicators, meeting the needs of students, and providing transportation. Each received three responses (50%). School Board Members 1, 3 and 5 suggested that the individual schools’ leaders serve as communicators, especially at the SAC or PTA meetings, to motivate parents to attend. School Board Members 4, 5 and 6 expressed that school leaders could play the role of meeting the
needs of parents and students, especially if they require language translation support. School principals could hire individuals to serve in that capacity. The third most frequently theme was transportation. Schools, where the principals arranged transportation for parents and students, had the greatest number of attendees. School Board Members 3, 4, and 6 shared these sentiments. The fourth most frequent theme was school serving as recruiters with two responses (33%). School Board Members 4 and 5 suggested that schools through motivation, persuasion, and admiration recruit parents to attend the PA.

The fifth through 11th themes received one response (17%). These themes were specific to the role of the school. They were as follows:

1. Host a PA at the local school site. Parents would be more willing to participate because the school was in their community.
2. Conduct webinars. If parents could not physically attend the site meetings, there would be an opportunity for them to attend through webinars and not miss important information.
3. Principals’ attendance at the meeting. Parents would probably be encouraged to attend if they knew that they would see their principals were at the meetings. Principals’ attendance would serve as an indication that it was important to them and that they value the meetings.
4. Administrators survey parents. One board member suggested that the school administrators survey parents to find out what parents want to learn. One board member further discussed that administrators should ask because the district may miss the mark of meeting parents’ need.
5. Train the leaders. One board member suggested that the district should train the principals and leaders of the PTAs and SACs to convey important facts and information back to the parents at the school site.

6. Provide incentives. A board member advocated the schools’ leadership teams should establish incentives for parents to attend.

7. Build stronger relationships. One board member suggested that principals already have relationships with their teachers, community, and students. One board member proposed that they hone their relationship skills with their parents. In doing so, they could better entice attendance at the PA.

These data reflected that the school board members placed a high-value on the principal’s role in facilitating the enhancement of the PA. Whether principals were serving as communicators, the manipulator (meeting the needs), or a provider of transportation, the board placed a high-value on the role. The information indicated that certain actions based on data gathered would enhance the PA. This information should be considered as the district continues with the operation of the PA and strives to improve its programming.

Table 30

*School Board Members Interview Responses to Question 9*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Board #1</th>
<th>Board #2</th>
<th>Board #3</th>
<th>Board #4</th>
<th>Board #5</th>
<th>Board #6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role of Communicator</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting the Needs</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Transportation</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A host of Parent Academy 17% 1 1
Conducting Webinars 17% 1 1
Principals’ Attendance 17% 1 1
Role of a Surveyor 17% 1 1
Train the Leaders 17% 1 1
Provide Incentives 17% 1 1
Build Relationships 17% 1 1

In response to interview Question 10 of the school board member interview protocol that asked, “What role can you suggest business partners take in becoming more involved in recruiting other business partners?,” nine themes evolved (see Table 31). The most frequently reported themes identified were serving as speakers and recruiters. Each theme received two responses (33%). School Board Members 1 and 3 suggested that business partners serve as speakers. Instead of simply coming to the PA and providing a service as a vendor (e.g., distributing pamphlets, displaying products, or providing treats), these school board members believed that vendors should be speakers at the event. School Board Members 1 and 2 expressed that business partners could perform the role of recruiter, getting in the community, and connecting with other business partners to serve with them at the PA in different capacities.

The third through ninth themes received one response (17%). These themes were specific to the role of the business partners in how they could become more involved in the recruitment of other business partners. Those roles were as follows:
• Helping with advertisements. The business partners can play a big role in helping to advertise upcoming PAs. A board member suggested that business partners could place notices throughout the district sharing the upcoming event.

• Giving testimonies. The business partners could spread the news of their experiences at the PA. That way other partners will come on board and participate.

• Providing resources. One board member suggested that the district continue to encourage business partners to provide resources (e.g., capital), like funding for transportation and charities and (e.g., human), hands-on support like a day of service.

• Serving as vendors. Because there has not been an overabundance of vendors that participated in previous PAs, business partners can seek out new vendors for future meetings.

• Encouraging visitation. According to one school board members, business partners could encourage other business partners to attend meetings and explore the possibilities of becoming involved.

• Serving as trainers. A board member was excited about the possibilities of vendors serving as trainers themselves. The board member expressed that it would encourage others to play a role in the process.

• Serving as mentors. Current business partners can serve as mentors to the newly participating business partners. As they come in as vendors the first year, the mentors could help prepare them to become trainers or recruiters. A
board member felt that this could be a win-win situation for the PA, mentee, and mentors.

These data reflected that the school board members valued business partners playing different roles like speakers and recruiters. The district should explore other ways to involve business partners rather than looking only for monetary support. It was the belief of the school board members that the district look for other means for the business partners to serve. The information indicated that certain actions based on data gathered that alternative strategies should be utilized to involve business partners. This information should be considered as the district continues with the planning and operation of the PA.

Table 31

School Board Members Interview Responses to Question 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Board #1</th>
<th>Board #2</th>
<th>Board #3</th>
<th>Board #4</th>
<th>Board #5</th>
<th>Board #6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serving as Speakers</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving as Recruiters</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping with Advertisements</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving Testimonies</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing Resources</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving as Vendors</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging Visitation</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving as Trainer</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving as a Mentor</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to interview Question 12 of the school board member interview protocol that asked, “What role can you suggest business partners take in becoming more involved in recruiting other business partners?”, seven themes advanced (see Table 32). The most frequently reported themes identified were train-the-trainer with pay and grants. Each theme received three responses (50%). School Board Members 1, 3, and 4
suggested that the district pay parents for attending and for serving as trainers. One even suggested that the PA serve as a venue where parents can be trained to become tutors and even could serve for pay. School Board Members 2, 3, and 5 indicated that the district should seek out grants to help subsidize the PA and seek out grant monies where they can pay parents to attend (i.e., incentivize) or pay parents to train.

The third, fourth, and fifth themes each received two responses (33%). These themes are form clubs, continue with the PA, and catalog topics. They were specific to actions these school board members felt that needed attention. The third theme, form clubs, came from School Board Members 4 and 5. They suggested that neighborhoods could form clubs where parents can get together and participate in webinars and watch PA related videos. This form of conferencing would allow for collaboration and good friendly relationship building. The fourth theme from School Board Members 3 and 6 advocated keeping the operation of the PA. One of the school board members emphatically stressed that the district keep the PA and rejuvenate it. They agreed that there were essential components that parents could find beneficial. The fifth most frequent theme suggested cataloging topics. These school board members expressed concern that the district had collected a massive amount of information on different topics like colleges, careers, special needs, and acceleration programs. They should be kept in one place where parents could go to ascertain that information. The board member further mentioned creating a virtual library that could have a YouTube look, and parents could view the information through the videos. The sixth theme that came from one board member (17%) suggested offering preschool sessions to inform and train the
parents. I gathered the information and determined that there was no or little information available for parents at the preschool level.

These data reflected that the school board members favored paying parents to train and tutor and writing for grants. Also, it indicated that the district explore other ways to involve parents. I gathered that the engagement of the parents differed based on individual parent needs and capacities, like languages spoken. I believe my research along with its research results will be valuable to district leaders as they seek ways to improve and bolster attendance at the PA.

Table 32

*School Board Members Interview Responses to Question 12*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Board #1</th>
<th>Board #2</th>
<th>Board #3</th>
<th>Board #4</th>
<th>Board #5</th>
<th>Board #6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Train-the-trainer, a tutor with Pay Grants</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forming Clubs</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue Parent Academy</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalog all Topics</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer pre-school</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The 4Cs AS-IS Chart of the Parent Academy

Because I proposed a change to the district’s PA, I developed a comprehensive diagnostic chart, 4Cs AS-IS Chart, that reflects the existing problem facing the PA (see Appendix I). According to Wagner, Kegan, Lahey, Lemons, Garnier, Helsing, and Rasmussen (2006), the as is section focuses on the current competencies, conditions, context, and culture of an organization. I have attended the PA for three years, met with parents, surveyed them as well as administrators, business partners, and school board members. I sat with six board members individually and independently for a 30-minute
interview. The details below depict the existing context, culture, conditions, and competencies of SSSD and the state of the SSSD PA.

**Context**

Context, as defined by Wagner et al. (2006), referred to the skill demands students must meet to succeed and related concerns of the family and community the school serves. Additionally, context referred to the larger organizational system within work, informal and formal (Wagner et al., 2006). The context was the fundamentals. There are three context issues I need to address when it comes to the SSSD PA. First, there is a lack of transportation for parents, especially those from the most humble of school attendance areas to get to the PA’s programs. Second, there is a lack of some principals’ interest in the academy. Third, student performance impacted negatively because their parents are not involved in the academy’s activities that can positively impact learning.

Many parents who attended the SSSD PA live in high-poverty, crime-infested areas. This context has hurt the attitudes and behaviors of parents and students who at times expressed it in the schools. Because the PA operated in different schools throughout the district, some parents from some of the humblest areas had difficulties attending, especially when schools did not provide transportation to the different sites and back into their communities after the program.

To compound this situation of parents not attending, some principals did not show an interest in the PA and did not encourage parents to participate. The few principals who encouraged participation were those who provided bus transportation for the parents. It was those principals’ modus operandi to do everything for their parents because they understood the benefits to the children. Several school board members expressed
concerns about this context. They would love to see the principals more actively recruiting parents to attend. The traditional African proverb is, “It takes a village to raise a child.” The PA can be part of that village. I believe students’ poor academic performance can be reflective in a parent’s lack of involvement with the district’s PA.

The business community had a concern because poorly educated students and parents affect the quality of life of the community. The community became alarmed because of problems in the community that emerged from a lack of training and led to problems in the neighborhood in my study and others throughout the school district, which included criminal activities. The data showed that students’ performance tied in some way with the parents’ lack of involvement with the schools and their lack of knowledge of the training provided in the district’s PA.

Culture

Wagner et al. (2006) defined culture as the shared values, beliefs, assumptions, behaviors, and the quality of relationships within and beyond the school. The culture was a reality. It was how things were done. It was about attitude, values, and ongoing practices. Being accountable for one’s action, having a great attitude, helping children to perform well academically and socially as reflected in the culture of highly-attentive parents (Campos, Delgadom, & Soto Huerta, 2011). These shared values and beliefs are the same as they grew up with and shared with their children. However, the communication with the district, its administrators, the school staff, and the parents or guardians within the community were not congruent. There are three culture issues I need to address when it comes to the SSSD PA. First, there was not a shared responsibility of getting more parents to attend the parent academy. Second, school staff
felt that the district personnel showed a lack of interest in their individual needs. The third area of concern is the organizers of the PA were not sensitive to a parent’s sense of family time needs in their scheduling activities or events.

The schools’ staff in the district in my study felt that it was the responsibility of the district to recruit parents and build attendance for the PA. Staff members felt that they did not have time, nor expertise to get parents to attend. They believed that they had not been adequately trained to do so. Some indicated that they did enough to get parents to participate in their schools at night, so consequently, they felt that it was not their responsibility to have parents come to a Saturday morning event. Staff indicated that they labored during the week with the supervision, instruction, and evaluation processes.

Moreover, staff members indicated that the PA program was not explained well enough for them to determine that parents should play a more vital role. They felt that they encouraged parents to come to their evening programs at the school and that should be sufficient. The school personnel shared with the essential district personnel that they often labored with satisfying the requirements of their performance evaluation process, and it alone was extensive enough to leave little time for additional responsibilities.

School staff felt that district personnel did not have a sense of their need for family time because the district frequently pressured schools to engage in Saturday activities—though they were often at school at nights during the week. According to Henderson, et al. (2007), research revealed the importance of building community partnerships with schools and building relationships with parents and school children produced great rewards, particularly in the area of student achievement (Crew, 2007; Chebbi, 2008).
The PA at the district level was successful if the academies were guided right by properly functioning parent-sense of family time. As Bolman and Deal (2017) described organizational culture, it was *the way things get done around here*. In other words, an organizational chart might outline the responsibilities of people in the organization. However, persons leading those various bureaus determine what and how things *should* get done. Culture is about this latter reality. It is the shared assumptions and behavioral interpretations that shape an organization.

**Conditions**

According to Wagner et al. (2006), conditions are defined as “the external architecture surrounding student learning, the tangible arrangements of time, space, and resources” (p. 101). The conditions are how people make sense of the surface-level health of an organization. They include financial issues, leadership, and human resource issues. Many internal conditions existed in the district and school in my study that added to the problem of getting parents to take advantage of the possibilities and opportunities offered to them by attending the SSSD PA. Three conditions stand out as needing to be addressed. The first is that the PA attendance was not representative of the district. The second is some parents cannot attend when academy events are at remote locations. The third condition of concern is that some school administrators never attend the PA.

According to the school personnel and the district’s PA staff members, there was little time for encouraging and recruiting the parents to attend on Saturdays, the only day used for academy programs. Often, the parents who attended were parents who had the wherewithal to do so. Frequently, parents with the means and some knowledge about the content of the PA were there. They learned more than those who did not attend to make
themselves and their students more knowledgeable and successful—the parents who would have benefited more from attending than those who did not. Principals could have played a role in solving this problem and helped their parents get to and participate in PAs.

The parents from low-income families were there when schools provided transportation for them to come or if the events were held at the school that was on the city transit bus line. According to Drummond and Stipek (2004), it was evident that many parents, even low-income parent, will get involved in their children’s lives and education with the right encouragement and assistance. Even with the lack of transportation, some still will come. When parents offer solutions, it is imperative for district personnel to listen.

In the school of my study, school leaders assigned staff members to attract the parents to the PA; they indicated that they had other job responsibilities that pulled them away from the recruiting responsibilities or even attending themselves. There were some school administrators and district personnel who never attended the SSSD PA. I believed that there was a remedy to this situation, and it required addressing. Upon visitation at a selected school, it appeared that there were concerns for the parents who could not attend because of transportation and family concerns; however, some school leaders did not see attendance to the Saturday PA as a priority because the schools offered parent training at night during the week.

**Competencies**

Competencies are the last of the 4Cs. Wagner et al. (2006) described competencies as “the repertoire of skills and knowledge that influences student learning” (p. 99). Competencies deal with the people within the organization. These persons
include both district-level leaders of the academy and school principals. Their competencies were most seen as critical ones because actual skills and knowledge were required to carry out a change. Their less critical competencies were few because the people within the PA only needed some support with leadership and communication skills. They lack many of those competencies to become more effective in getting attendance at the PA.

Consequently, it had a significant effect on the academics and social growth of students. There are three competency issues I need to address when it comes to the SSSD PA. First, principals must become proficient in recruiting parents to attend. Second, the district staff should become better able to recruit as well. The third competency issue is the capacity of both principals and parents to relate and communicate with one another.

The school leaders need to be proficient in recruiting and encouraging parents to participate in the PA and at the schools (Giles, 2006). The principals had to develop those personal skill sets to cultivate parents’ interests. Principals had to let the parents know that their attendance and involvement in the course will able them in helping their children. Principals had to convey to their parents that it was for the children’s future. Parents want their children to succeed (Mapp, 2003; Devine, 2003; Epstein & Salinas, 2004).

The principals knew how to lead students to success through their leadership of staff training, but the skill set of encouraging parent attendance lacked in most of the schools. Some administrators lacked knowledge about the PA. Also, for the district’s PA program, the principals did not assume the recruiting responsibilities and left that task to the district’s PA Department.
Many district personnel selected to oversee or manage the district’s PA program had little or no training with encouraging and recruiting parents to attend. These district leaders felt that the principal fell short in providing their parents with proper training and encouragement to attend. Some principals lacked the skills in cultivating parents’ interests in the district’s PA, or they did not want to deal with it.

A major deficiency was the communication between the school principals and their parents. They failed to understand the connection of how a well-run school parent program involved at the district level would assist them with student achievement or were just disinterested. Principals’ lack of knowledge or neglect of the direct correlation of parental involvement or engagement and student achievement academically was earthshattering. According to Crew (2007), parents must show involvement in their child’s educational experiences throughout the student’s elementary, middle, and high school life. The district must ensure that principals understand how crucial the connection is and must stress to principals the need to be active in making that connection to parents. Then, parents could take advantage of the possibilities and opportunities offered to them by attending the PA.

**Organizational Changes**

As I reviewed the data and worked on my analysis, I realized that modifications to the processes and program of the PA in SSSD were necessary. Conceptually, the parent academy as it operated was a great program or initiative, and it offered the parents in the district valuable information and best practices that they could use to enhance their skills as they work with their children; however, more tools and strategies would enable parents to be more successful with their children. It would require some adjustments to the
planning and operation of the current PA; moreover, policy changes could completely eradicate many of the concerns.

Again, the organizational change in my study focused on the information gathered from parents, administrators, school board members, and business partners. They believed that the PA was effective because (a) they liked the structure of the sessions, (b) they enjoyed and learned from the information provided, (c) parents were impressed by the facilities, especially having them on high school campuses, and (d) they loved seeing when the principals and assistant principals were involved. Even though there were things that they enjoyed, they shared some needs and challenges.

The challenges included (a) the relatively low attendance, which they attributed to the program’s location and transportation, (b) meetings during an early morning time slot and only on Saturdays, and (c) some session offerings not appealing to some parents. The organizational change was to address the adaptive challenge needed: a change to the system of operation. This change required a four-fold process: (a) revisiting the planning sessions, initial, mid-year, and end of the year, (b) involving stakeholders on the planning team, (c) addressing recommendations from the respondents, and (d) readjusting the system of operation in response to the results. This change involved keeping those principles and operations that made the PA successful, even with the existing challenges.

Sharing the information gathered from the research was vital. At the time of this research, I was a member of the school board. As a school board member, I have supervisory duties regarding the work of the superintendent and the general counsel of the school board. The superintendent is the executive officer responsible for the leadership and management of the district, and my responsibility relates to setting policy
development. It is important for me to take issues and concerns to the superintendent and attorney if necessary instead of directly addressing them to any other school district employees. In doing such, initially, I would initially sit the superintendent and share the data: survey information from the parents, administrators, other school board members, and business partners. I would present it in terms of its potential benefit to the district. From this discussion, the superintendent or I would then proceed to the general counsel for discussion on the district policy development procedures relative to this topic.

Also, I will review the information with the principal and seek support in calling a community meeting at CAES to communicate and present those aspects of my study as related to the school. With the support of the superintendent and school principal, I will invite to the meeting the school board members, business partners, and PA staff members. According to the Kansas Association of School Boards (2014), a school board member should be a visionary, capable of understanding the forces of societal change and plan. In doing so, as a school board member, I must be able to help develop a commitment to a shared vision for my change proposal and communicate it to the community (Hilliard & Newsome, 2013) within what I would like to be a culture of collaboration and service (Lee & Eadens, 2014).

At this meeting, I will provide the attendees with an explanation of my dissertation processes and results. With that, I will have the poster papers I used during the process and post them around the room. This way, they will be able to peruse the pages and see that I captured their information in the process. I will explain that I had to separate some of the statements because what they provided may have had two or three different and separable thoughts. They will see how I chunked the information together
and how I developed the themes. I will share how I addressed the interviews. The study details are available in my dissertation—a copy will be made available in the library.

**Interpretation**

The results of this study were simple. The data indicated that the district ran a program, the PA, that was superior to what was done in the past. It now had a venue for parents to acquire more and better information than what they received previously. However, the data shed light on the need for improvement. Participant groups in my study shared challenges for the program, and it was through the challenges that the groups shared their concerns. I felt that many of the participants in the groups did not want others to perceive them as being negative. One of the board members indicated such in the interview. Nonetheless, they had concerns that they wanted to express.

The parent group was rather innocuous. They loved everything about the PA because they did not have anything previously to which to compare the PA. The parents freely presented ways to address the challenges they observed that hindered the success of the PA. Parents identified concerns and offered appropriate possibilities. Based on the respondents’ recommendations to addressing the challenges to improve the PA, the parents provided relevant, possible solutions that would address their perceived challenges. The principal and assistant principal were concerned about the low numbers of participants from their school. They felt that the district did not handle the registration process well or appropriately.

The board members were politically correct. They held the epitome of proper decorum of a person representing groups of people. The board members avoided saying anything negative about the PA; however, they provided quality information that could
be used to improve the academy. Their suggestions were thought-provoking and forced me to contemplate why the district failed to involve them more.

The findings of my research are of interest to school board members, district personnel who participated in the development of the PA programs, and district leaders. District’s staff members were concerned with the operation of parent engagement programs and PAs, especially how to enhance or increase parent participation because they were aware of its positive relationship to student achievement. My research focused on improving the PA in SSSD by determining why attendance was low and what strategies might be used to increase it. My study’s results may have fallen short of ascertaining definitive reasons for the attendance problem, but they offered several significant problems that required attention like transportation availability, the location of the academy meetings, and if the focus was on the neediest parents (i.e., relating to socioeconomic status).

Transportation was a concern for many participants. Many stated that transportation was a concern and thought that, if the parents and students were bussed from the school to the location of the PA and back to the school, it would resolve the issue. The principal and assistant principal at CAES realized that many could not get to the school, which was a problem itself. Because it became the responsibility of the principal to secure a bus for parents to attend the Saturday events, the principal found that providing transportation to and from the different sites from their homes to be cost-prohibitive. The principal felt that it was possible to pay the cost for transportation for families to the different sites only if parents would be able to get to the home-school. The principal and assistant at CAES had quickly recognized that it might not happen. I
believe my study could be an important step to address this problem by first sharing it with the superintendent and board members and having the district absorb the cost even to their homes or near them if parents were willing to come.

Location was another issue, but I believe that it was because of the people’s belief system. It seemed to me that most of the concerns about location centered on having PA meetings in schools in remote locations, not in a central location, and not in poorer areas of the school district where many of the students who receive free and reduced-price meals live and attend school. The concern seems to be for those families board members perceived as having difficulties attending the meetings in those schools.

The third major finding of this study was that some participants felt that the PA was for certain groups of people—only low-socioeconomic (SES) families. They believed that some parents who attended would better serve as the teachers at the meetings instead of attendees because they did not need that information. Even though the meetings were for all families, I believe they felt they catered to those who would benefit most. A board member indicated that some parents would have rather been home, attending baseball and soccer games, or operating garage sales.

Five school board members expressed their feelings about the PA. These members provided data that I will able to use as I further examine, evaluate, and determine change improvements for the PA. They provided me with valuable information. That information dealt with funding, the location of PA and determining the audience. As mentioned earlier, they questioned if the district was addressing the right families.
I gleaned valuable information from the data in my study that caused me to question some of the following: (a) why were the parents not involved in the planning? (b) why were the parents not trainers at the events? (c) what were the responsibilities of the administrators and were those roles delineated? (d) why were school board members not included in the planning? (e) why were the business partners not involved initially, instead of just participating? and (f) was there an advisory board developed? As I disclosed earlier, I was a school board member. I was the one who passed out the surveys and conducted the interviews. Of course, my direct involvement may not have impacted the board members, but I question if it affected the results from the parents and administrators knowing that I was active in the process and reading the information they provided. The results were positive, while I garnered valued evidence that would lead to change.

Judgments

In this section of the study, I provided my judgment and responses to the primary and secondary research questions in this study. Here I show how the data answered the research questions. Also, I made judgments about if the results, regardless of what I might have thought, were positive or negative. I aimed to report honestly and judge all results. The questions on the survey and the interview protocol prepared the groups well for answering the questions (see the results below).

Question 1 primary question asked, “What did parents and district school leaders perceive as working well in the Sunny Side School District Parent Academy?” The parents and district school leaders provided useful data for this question. Their response that the district offered good sessions that focused on developing parent skills to enhance
student learning, especially in core coursework (Levitt et al., 2016), addressed one of the initial district’s purposes for establishing a PA. Parents themselves appreciated the level of involvement and communication (Thompson, McDonal, & Sterbinsky, 2005) that they saw at the academy. Three of the groups, parents, board members, and partners, indicated that they thought the parents’ involvement at the meeting struck them as a positive indicator of the PA. Seeing other parents from other schools throughout the district was positive for the parents. The groups felt that the structure of the academy worked to the parents’ advantage.

The second primary question asked, “What did parents and district school leaders perceive as not working well in the Sunny Side School District Parent Academy?” According to the respondents, the themes indicated that the PA was not working well. The data gathered determined that communication, resources, and scheduling were major concerns for parents. Based on the data collected, I determined that the parents felt that there was a lack of awareness and participation. The parents and the district school leaders provided several issues that they felt did not work well at the district’s PA. Though they liked seeing parents from other communities navigating themselves from session-to-session, they did not see the number of parents they were expecting. They were expecting to see more parents attend the meetings. They indicated that they were happy to see the faithful ones come frequently, but they did not feel that those who did attend mirrored the population of the school district. Both time and scheduling were issues because the parents did not like either the early morning sessions or the meetings held on Saturdays only. They felt that it conflicted with work and weekend schedules.
Also, based on my findings, it is apparent that more administrators and other school staff members should have attended more frequently. The results of this question were positive. I learned information that led me to develop change ideas for improving the SSSD PA.

The principal and assistant principal focused on registration. Principals were quite competitive and wanted to be the school recognized for having the most number of parents who participated at the academy. They felt that the registration process robbed them of winning the first-place trophy that the coordinator provided at every academy meeting. Even though they focused on registration, they addressed attendance. It was clear that both the parents and the administrators had issues, and I felt that they were clear in articulating their concerns.

Primary Question 3 asked, “What did parents and district school leaders perceive as the biggest challenges faced by the Sunny Side School District Parent Academy?” This question was one of the pivotal questions in evaluating and developing change for improvement. The responses from these two groups were helpful; however, some of their responses were not clear. Many parents mentioned culture. I was not sure if they were talking about if the district was not culturally responsive or if there were different cultures represented at the PA and how that might be a challenge.

Also, the location was a concern for the parents. Because the PA offered training throughout the district, some parents had to travel from one side of the district to the other to participate in PA programs. While many of the parents were concerned with location, the administrators supported that concern and felt that transportation was a challenge. Though the question focused on the parents and the administrators, the school
board members and the business partners focused on transportation because the location was an impediment and, if available, could have produced better attendance. The results were positive.

Primary Question 4 asked, “What did parents and district school leaders perceive as the best ways to address these challenges facing the Sunny Side School District Parent Academy?” This question was probably the only one where I felt the parents and the administrators failed to address this question; consequently, the results were negative. They offered suggestions, but they did not address their challenges. The board members and a business partner responded to the challenges of the parents and administrators more positively. To better address the challenges indicated from the surveys by the parents and the principal and assistant principal, a board member suggested that the district provide transportation for parents to attend and to advertise better and alert parents of the event. Another strategy board members and business partners posited was increasing funding for the PA. The results were positive, especially when considering the input from the board members and business partners.

The four secondary exploratory questions for this research included the board members and the business partners more. The first secondary exploratory question asked, “How did participating business partners at the Sunny Side School District Parent Academy increase awareness to other businesses partners and parents in the community?” I believe the results from the data gathering instruments were positive in answering this question. Business partners believed the PA was successful. Selections on the survey indicated that they agreed with the functions of the PA. Their functions addressed were (a) provided classes and workshops for parents, (b) coordinated family
learning events, (c) inform parents of the school and community resources, and (d) form partnerships between families, schools, and the community. According to the results of the data, the overall impact of the respondents who completed the survey indicated that the PA was a success. The business partners were quite aware of what they would need to do to increase awareness. The business partners were clear about implementing strategies that would bring awareness and attract other business partners and parents. They believed that they could play definitive roles in attracting other partners and parents to the PA through advertisement and actively recruiting. They believed that better advertisements from the district could generate more parent attendance as well. They mentioned providing transportation to and from the PA.

Regarding attracting other business partners or making them aware, they would like to be at the table during discussions of the PA. They would have liked playing a role in the planning. To do that, they wanted to ensure that they understood the goals of the PA, so that they could better explain them to other partners. They felt that the district should have shared the district’s successes with the PA.

The second secondary question was “What role did school board members play to increase attendance at the District’s Parent Academy?” The board members have suggested that they too should advertise on social media to parents. They suggested that the district advertise and provide transportation for parents. Board members suggested that the district increase funding, so the PA could grow. Though there were few suggestions relative to this question, I believe the results were positive.

The third secondary question was “What did parents, district administrators and school leaders think as the best methods to use to increase parent and community
awareness of the Sunny Side School District Parent Academy to enhance teaching and learning?" This question was probably the most difficult question for groups to address. They provided suggestions on how to increase awareness through advertisement, through training, and how to incentivize parents to attend. When addressing the latter part of the question, I am not sure if they knew how to address it or if they did not realize the latter portion of the question. The question could have been unclear as well, which is why I think the answers were unclear in addressing the question.

The last question of the secondary questions in this research was, “What did parents and district and school leaders perceive as the most effective ways to increase attendance and involvement in the Sunny Side School District Parent Academy?” The groups were knowledgeable of ways to increase attendance and involvement. The data for this question received extensive information. The suggestions included: (a) provide attendance incentives, (b) increase communication, (c) provide transportation, (d) provide administrative motivation, (e) emphasize the student performance relationship, and (f) provide targeted training. Overall, the judgment that I made about my study is that the groups provided quality information about the SSSD PA. Their input helped the evaluation of the PA to be successful; however, I see areas for improvement and different groups that participated in my study confirmed my conjecture. The results of this question were positive.

**Recommendations**

This section required a separation into two groups. The first part discusses recommendations for practice. The other section contains recommendations for organizational change.
Recommendations for Practice

To continue to better serve the parents at the SSSD PA, I suggested that the district continue to explore ways to improve the academy better. Stakeholders in the district see the value of the program, and it would behoove the district to review yearly ways to improve. I recommend that the leadership team at each school site play an active role in motivating and encouraging parents to participate in the academy and that they make a concerted effort of being present at each PA within their learning community.

Business partners suggested that staff members attend at least one PA, and I would like to go a step further and suggest that every staff member attends at least one PA per year. The people at the school site need to know what is offered at Pas, so they can better encourage parents to attend. More research is necessary regarding PA and the effect on student achievement. Much of what was available at the time of this dissertation was limited and did not delve deeply into the effects with several proven data points. The research that was available about parent involvement and its effect on student achievement indicated that there was a direct correlation, but that too was inconclusive and vague.

Recommendations for Organizational Change

I am intrigued by this study. As I delve more and more into the data from the surveys and interviews, I begin to question why certain actions did not take place when planning for the district’s PA in the beginning. As I mentioned earlier when I discussed the significance of the three essential findings, transportation, location, and belief, I am recommending that the organizational change of the PA take place as part of the strategic planning for the academy, and it incorporates each significant finding. I have chosen
strategic planning because it is an active extensive process that guides, authentically, the
determination of where the PA is going and how it will get there (Hinton, 2012). This
information would provide the SSSD with a focus and would address issues that will
strengthen the district’s PA. Strategic planning provides a consistent outline of
objectives and activities that move the organization toward its intended future (Shah,
2013).

Through a common determining and understanding of the mission, vision, values,
and broad strategic goals, strategic planning adds to the PA of the SSSD and provides a
congruent framework of objectives and actions that will move the PA toward its intended
future. This choice adjusts what parents, school board members, and business partners
already see as a successful PA to become an even better one. Based on the research,
parental involvement and parental engagement will play a significant role in student
achievement, and the primary purpose of this change was to improve student learning.

In doing so, I plan to address four things that need to take place specifically as
part of my suggested change process. The first area is to involve essential parents as
members of the planning committee. I suggest that board members from the different
sections of the community they represent to suggest two parents from their respective
single-member districts and have district staff chose one parent from each district to
represent the parent group. Those parents should play an essential role in suggesting
topics of interest, and they should solicit parents to participate as trainers in different
meetings. Their presence would provide a source of support and information that will
help with recruiting more participation at the district’s PA (Hulsebosch, Logan, &
Rickley, 1977).
My second recommendation is that administrators become involved in the planning of the PA. Principals placed on the team could foster better relationships between the parents and schools. According to Barr and Saltmarsh (2014), parents were likely to be more engaged with schools and programs when they perceive the principal as hospitable and supportive, and they were likely to encourage other parents to participate more.

In continuing with the planning phase of this change, I recommend that the PA embrace the business partners as the third part of their planning committee. Business partners’ involvement could bring about many positive returns—namely the recruitment of other business partners, funding, and job opportunities for students and parents, specialized expertise, and in-kind support of services, products, equipment, and program activities (Lind, Crocker, Stewart, Torrico, Bhat, & Schmid, 2009). Having them on the team would accentuate stronger connections with other businesses.

For the fourth part, I recommend the board allocate additional funding or reallocate current funding to support the PA. Many of the board members suggested expanding the program offerings and provide transportation for some parents who wanted to attend and did not have the means of getting to and from the academies across the district. Securing more funding for the PA could be one of the ways for the district to sustain a program that many found to be of value for the parents and the children the district serves.
CHAPTER FIVE: TO-BE FRAMEWORK

Introduction

In Chapter Four of my research, I identified issues related to the operation of the SSSD PA, and I proposed an organizational change. In Chapter Five, I focused on a change leadership plan for the PA based on a strategic planning process. The issue I raised in the last chapter was that few people, district staff people, were involved in the initial stage of the planning process; consequently, there was less buy-in, and it did not generate the desired results of a high amount of parental support, involvement, or engagement at the different PAs. Ultimately, if the district had planned the academy more effectively in the beginning, it would have had more parental support and attendance. The information was supported by researchers like Kuh, Cruce, Shoupe, and Kinzie (2008), Fan and Williams (2010), and Fan (2001). They indicated that better planning would yield better student achievement. Initially, improved learning was my motivation and remains to be true. Therefore, I want it to continue to be my motivation as I continue to fortify my own and others’ understanding of the relationship of parent involvement and student achievement through the academy.

I want to enhance the attendance at the PA to build the personal capacity for parents to assist their students by ensuring homework is done, assuring the children have proper nutrition, and guaranteeing a quiet place to study, so students might improve academically. Moreover, I found through my initial research that the lack of parental attendance could have a reflection on the parents’ lack of understanding of the mission and goals of the academy and the need to have more players at the table who might be more helpful to parents in addressing their needs. It could be rectified by having other
people at the table like business partners and administrators. This was the basis for my change leadership plan. To be clear, I will explore other strategies or information relative to parent engagement as it relates to student achievement. Then, I will use this information as I further develop and present my change plan to the SSSD PA.

I plan to have further discussion with the superintendent and share my findings. Sharing this information will then allow me to continue discussions with the board members in a public meeting, duly noted, to get their buy-in for selecting two possible candidates per board member to serve on the planning committee. After getting the superintendent’s support for moving ahead, I will involve the PA current district team to start a discussion about the involvement of other participants, including parents, administrators, and business partners.

**Review of Literature Related to Change**

According to Henderson and Mapp (2002), parents and community involvement play a vital role in impacting student achievement. In their research, they reviewed several studies that discussed successful practices in parent engagement or involvement along with members of the community and their impact on student achievement. Many of the studies they reviewed were programs that took place from 1974-1995. This study helped me understand how researchers defined family engagement and family involvement. Henderson and Mapp (2002) explored many programs and found family or parent engagement described as:

1. engaged or involved in learning events at home, including assisting with reading skills and checking homework,
2. supervising children and monitoring how children spend their time out of school,
3. talking about school and what children were acquiring in their learning,
4. attending school events, going to parent-teacher conferences, meeting with teachers, and volunteering in the classroom or school (Ho Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996),
5. conversing about school activities,
6. contacting school staff about any issues or celebrations, and
7. volunteering and participating in parent-teacher conferences and other school activities.

According to Henderson and Mapp (2002), student achievement entailed (a) higher grade-point-averages and scores on standardized test or rating scales, (b) more classes passed and credits earned, (c) better social skills and adaptation to school, (d) better attendance, (e) improvement in report card grades, (f) staying in school and promotion to the next grade, (g) enrollment in more challenging academic programs, (h) improved behavior at home and at school, and (i) healthy development—less substance abuse. This study helped to bolster my understanding of the extensiveness and complexity of what student achievement includes. Also, it piqued my interest in finding other related studies and their results.

Student attendance, their active engagement in their school work, and good behavior habits were critical factors in impacting students’ academic growth. Earlier research demonstrated that students’ school attendance and their assigned classes, their concentration on classwork and learning, and adherence to the schools’ rules and
regulations largely generated achievement of higher grades (Caraway, Tucker, Reinke, & Hall, 2003). If parental engagement or involvement were the keys to children’s academic accomplishments, the activities above would be what schools and parents should focus on to get the best return (Wang & Holcombe, 2010).

**Parental Engagement or Parental Involvement and Student Achievement**

According to Emerson, Fear, Fox, and Sanders (2012), the terms parental engagement, parental involvement, and parental participation were often used interchangeably by researchers. However, Harris and Goodall (2007) made a distinction between parent engagement and parent involvement. They indicated that parental involvement can encompass a range of activities with or within the school and may not directly have a connection to learning. They further stated that those activities might have little impact on student achievement. However, parental engagement yielded greater achievement in schools where parents and teachers worked together to improve learning. Harris and Goodall suggested that parents have the most influence on achievement by supporting learning at home. Data from their study indicated that students with more involved parents experienced higher achievement than the students of disengaged parents.

Al-Alwan (2014) suggested that there was a model that explained how parental involvement and school engagement affected academic performance. The involvement included the degree to which parents assisted their children with homework, attended extracurricular events, and helped with class selection. Exactly 671 students, 359 girls and 312 boys, in Grades 9 and 10 participated in the study. The average age of the students was 15.89 years. The results and their analysis suggested that parental
involvement influenced school engagement directly or indirectly and there was an improvement in student academic achievement.

According to Argentin, Barbetta, and Marci (2016), socioeconomic levels mattered in determining student performance, and successful interventions in education frequently have parental engagement as a key ingredient. There was a study conducted in Italy that assessed the impact of family group conferences as a precautionary tool in the school environment. I must note the outcomes of family group conferences were not well documented and measured with long-term projects (Blekesaune & Holtan, 2005).

According to Hayden (2009), other studies tried to assess the impact of family group conferences and ended with mixed results (Brown, 2003; Marsh & Dawn, 2007; Wheeler, 2003).

Used with at-risk students, the researchers wanted to see if increased parent involvement would improve student performances in school. Researchers designed and implemented a randomized controlled trial (i.e., a study designed that randomly assigns participants into an experimental group or a control group) with nearly 252 students in Grades 6 and 7 who could benefit from the family group conferences. The collected data at the end of the first year revealed that the intervention showed to be effective on parental involvement as perceived by students (Argentin, Barbetta, & Marci, 2016).

Flores de Apodaca, Gentling, Steinhaus, and Rosenberg (2015) examined parental involvement or engagement as a mediator of the performances of middle school students with special needs. This study used a questionnaire with 82 parents of children enrolled in a special education program in a diverse, urban community, and it rated them on the extent of their engagement in their children’s schoolwork. The ratings were then
compared with their children’s grades in four core classes for one year. They found a significant relationship between parental expectations and overall GPA (Msengi, 2007). Also, it suggested further investigation would be helpful with different groups of children in different grade levels, ethnic groups, and students with other disabilities.

Another interesting and relevant study reviewed the associations of methods of parental assistance (i.e., parental provision of structure and direct assistance) with Mathematics homework for low-achieving and high-achieving students and their achievement in mathematics in low-income families (O’Sullivan, Chen, & Fish, 2014). Homework was considered an effective supplement to in-school learning (Truatwein, 2007). The latter study considered the impact of parental efficacy on the findings. The study examined 79 students, 48 from Grade 7 and 31 from Grade 8, from low-income families and their parents. There were no African-American students represented in the sample, and none of the students received any special education support. Mathematics teachers from an urban junior high school participated in this study.

The study indicated that parental provision of structure, in which the environment facilitate organization to enable competency and it supports controls for the children, (Grolnick, Raftery-Helmer, Marbell, Flamm, Cardemil, & Sanchez, 2014) is the most prevalent method of involvement in Mathematics homework among low-income parents regardless of their child’s achievement level. When it came to Mathematics, parental provision of structure contributed significantly to children’s performance and grades. The importance to helping low-income parents realize they could help their children be successful in Math by providing structure for homework learning even if they could not
provide direct assistance with their homework was the significant finding in this study (O’Sullivan, Chen, & Fish, 2014).

Drs. Lawrence and Barathi (2016) were assistant professors in the School of Education at Tamil Nadu Open University in India. They conducted a study proposed to probe the relationship between parental encouragement and academic achievement of secondary students. They wanted to know the effects of parental involvement, parents encouraging, or motivating students to learn at home. According to Lawrence and Barathi (2016), the encouragement and involvement of parents included: (a) getting better grades and test scores, (b) attending school regularly, (c) completing homework assignments, (d) increasing good behavior at school and at home, (e) encouraging better grade point averages, (f) having a good attitude toward school and subject areas, (g) spending more time on homework and studying and (h) having a better self-concept.

Researchers used the stratified random sampling technique and surveyed 350 secondary school students from 10 schools at Thanjavur district. The instruments they used were the Parental Encouragement Scale and academic achievement constructed by investigators. The Parental Encouragement Scale contains 40 items of parents’ encouragement in studies, school homework, problem-solving, hobbies, selecting the right career, reducing tensions, and inspiring them to do right. The results show that there is a significant relationship between parental encouragement and academic achievement of higher secondary school students.

According to Huang and Mason (2008), researchers have studied parental involvement in children’s schooling to include elementary through middle school aged students (DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2005). There have been some studies that
explored the involvement of preschoolers (Fogle & Mendez, 2006; Reynolds, Ou, & Topitzes, 2004). However, few studies have examined the African-American parents’ motivation for involvement in their younger children’s education. This research explored parents’ motivation to be involved in a family education program and examined the parents’ views about their children’s education. The 15 parents who participated in this study were those who attended family literacy workshops, received the family literacy packages, and had participated in the one-on-one support from the family literacy specialists.

The methodology involved interviewing the focus group. It was a group interview guided by a skilled interviewer who facilitated a discussion on a topic among a selected set of people (Call & Borg, 2005). The researchers gained insights into people’s understandings of everyday life and the ways that individuals are influenced by others in a group situation. According to Huang and Mason (2008), two questions guided the focus group:

1. “What brought you to become involved in the Project LEAPS family literacy program?”
2. What is your view regarding your children’s education?” (p. 21).

The participants were comprised of parents of preschool children who attended the head start programs in a mid-western urban city. The parents participated in Project Literacy Enrichment and Achievement for Preschool Success (LEAPS), a federally funded early reading program.

Parents indicated they were motivated to seek educational opportunities for their children’s achievement. Based on the results, the researchers made recommendations to
further program effectiveness and practice by increasing the number of programs and provide funding for effectiveness and sustainability. They encouraged parental involvement.

With the review of the relationship between parental involvement or parental engagement and student achievement, I have developed a better understanding of the value and the role played on student achievement. Because I have explored the relationships involving students of low-SES backgrounds, high-SES backgrounds, students with disabilities, regular education students, students from different ethnic groups, and how they can benefit from parental intervention especially at home, I am encouraged. I will continue to motivate parents to be more active in their children’s lives at home by encouraging parents to inspire their children to focus on their homework, school work, attending school regularly, and their own learning needs. I was inspired to improve the PA because it was a great vehicle to share this kind of information with the parents. Next, I further explored the planning aspect of the PA. Improving the PA was one of my main aims for change.

**Planning Strategically**

According to Sevier (2003), strategic planning is multifaceted, confusing, and often disconnected from daily activities and decision-making. Planning is a core capability of successful organizations (Pryor, Anderson, Toombs, & Humphreys, 2007). According to Albrechts (2006), planning is ongoing, at different time frames, including during and after implementation of a program or organization.

Albon, Iqbal, and Pearson (2016) presented an essay based on their experiences of developing a strategic plan for their department at the University of British Columbia.
They began with a literature review highlighting the areas that help build the researchers’ current understanding of strategic planning and for framing their planning efforts. Akbibm et al. (2016) suggested that planners take time to familiarize themselves with the literature and establish and define the terms to use for their process. They outlined the stages of their planning process and draw attention to elements of their academic background and culture that hindered support. They emphasized the complexities and the planning and ended by offering recommendations.

Dolence, Rowley, & Lujan (1997) wrote a workbook on basic strategic planning models. The workbook provided a step-by-step guide for people who were involved in a college or university’s strategic planning process. The model’s 10 steps were not too different from other strategic planning models. They included 10 essential steps for effective planning like (a) analyzing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT), (b) generating ideas, (c) testing ideas, and (d) formulating strategies, goals, and objectives. The workbook provided several guidelines, suggestions, hints, and worksheets that committees could use to develop a successful strategic planning process.

Donald Norris and Nick Pulton (2008) provided prospective planners with a guide to planning. The writers purported that the book’s primary purpose was to serve as a road map, “guiding the planning and execution of strategy” (p. 3). Even though this guide was intended for higher-education, there were several nuances in these processes that could serve as resources for any planning, especially the planning for the PA.

**Empowered Parents Involved in the Planning and Their Roles**

Planning for programs designed for parents should involve parents in the process, initially (Pena, 2000). According to Comer and Haynes (1991), parents could contribute
perceptions and information that complement the professional skills of schools or districts’ staffs in ways that enhance academic and social programs. For parent involvement initiatives to be successful, parents should be part of a contextually focused process designed to create a climate for parent involvement (Kohn, Lengua, & McMahon, 2000). Comer and Hanes (1991) and Jeynes (2012) suggested that parent involvement or engagement programs, like the PA, that started in traditional administrative and stubborn school environments were less likely to yield positive results. Negative results were not the case where parents were part of a more collaborative structure.

According to DesGeorges, Kennedy, and Opsahl (2010), the power of strong-minded parents driven by the love of their children are powerful advocates at all levels of society. With this kind of thinking, it would be prudent to have parents involved early in the planning process. When parents were invited to participate as active and meaningful contributors, districts still need to ensure that they continually assess if they can represent the needs of all families, which will require learning about the cultural and linguistic variety represented in communities (Graham, Kennedy, & Lynch, 2016). The SSSD PA must consider the culture of the community, ensuring that stakeholders or participants in the planning process mirror a microcosm of community’s wide continuum of languages, cultural multiplicities, and experiences.

Monique Fletcher (2016) presented a good example of parent leadership and how it played a vital role in the learning process of their children. This review depicted how parents, after given proper training and support, could help to build capacity within the community. Fletcher described the function of parent engagement coordinators. She
indicated that they provide the foundation for family involvement or engagement by demonstrating shared leadership, facilitating trust, and generating space to build partnerships with parents and schools. Fletcher (2016) further shared that in 2014, the Children’s Aid Society joined forces with the New York City Department of Education, schools, and community to provide resources and supports to students and their families using the Family Success Network, a team of four parent engagement coordinators who lived and grew up in the community.

They found a platform for successful parent engagement based on shared leadership, space, and cultural competence and trust. The first step is to prepare parent engagement coordinators. They are needed to lead on their campuses by developing a culture of shared decision-making, and they established a model in the Washington Heights community schools and South Bronx. Establishing parent leaders was central to the work of parent engagement (Fletcher, 2016). With the established culture of shared leadership, parent leaders served as important models to show the community how powerful parents can be. The next piece of research information depicted the parents’ strong ambition for their children.

Bridges, Awokoya, and Messano (2012) offered a glimpse of the American system of public education from the perspective of those with the biggest stake in better schools: African-American parents who feel their children were well-served by the system. Their report was a meta-analysis of a two-part research program involving both a quantitative survey of 753 respondents and qualitative focus on eight groups with 52 individuals. The study was conducted in Atlanta, Detroit, Memphis, New Orleans, and Washington, D.C because these cities have large African-American populations. These
cities face many of the educational issues that prevent many African-American children from fulfilling their potential.

Findings from this study reinforced and added greater details about African-American parents and their involvement in the education of their children (Bridges, Awokoya, & Messano, 2012). Most important, despite how low-income African-American parents were viewed (Harper & Davis, 2012), a substantial percentage of low-income African-American parents who participated in the study, 87%, had high aspirations for their children and wanted them to graduate from college. Also, the parents viewed engaged parents as the key to children’s success in education.

Parents can be relentless when they are charged and allowed to participate in their children’s educational lives. Therefore, school staff must empower parents to take part in all the components of the PA. When parents and professionals, school staff and district representatives, have high-expectations for their students and work together to create opportunities for them, children will “more likely...achieve more, to have higher levels of self-esteem, and thrive” (Szarkowski & Fournier Eng, 2014, p. 1).

**Envisioning the Success To-Be**

As I determine how to define the SSSD PA program to increase parents’ attendance at PAs, Wagner’s (2006) 4Cs Diagnostic Tool-To Be will apply to establish a vision of success building on my previous as-is descriptions. Further, in this chapter, the reader will see how the district’s PA program will be redefined and redesigned to prepare parents for success in gaining skills that would assist them in preparing their children for success in each of the four components of the 4Cs. I will use this model to help me better see the related issues that need to be addressed in planning and implementing the SSSD
PA program. It will be necessary to ensure the growth of parents’ self-efficacy, administrators’ confidence in building parental support in schools, school board members’ recognition of the need for fundamental change in how the school board can provide community support for parents, and business partnership development in a shared vision of success for the academy and the students.

I will include an analysis of the culture, context, competencies, and conditions in the district in this plan for increasing student learning and stakeholder groups: parents, students, teachers, higher-education leaders, school board members, and business partners. They need to believe in their ability to achieve a targeted-driven project that will yield intended results for increased student learning by working together through partnerships and some targeted supported teams.

I now will share some forward thinking about what success will look like if the identified problems are solved. I identified in Wagner’s 4Cs Diagnostic Tool As-Is challenges that need to be overcome to solve my problem. Everything that I can imagine that will assist me in identifying and solving the problem about my future-state of thinking allows me to begin the movement toward my goal.

The central problem is that parents were not attending in sufficient numbers the district’s PA. The PA provides parents with knowledge and opportunities to participate in their children’s learning. My change is to make the PA more successful. To get there, I will need to help the district develop the district’s PA to include strategies like improving strategic planning and involving parents in planning and building a program that focuses on parent engagement for improving student learning. I will focus on planning to improve the district’s PA because I want to intensify parental engagement
ultimately to enhance student achievement. It seems that much has been put in place previously; however, parents still are not attending in sufficient numbers. The involvement of several essential people in the planning can impact the parents’ attendance and the PAs in ways that yield positive student achievement and opportunities for more students going to colleges with scholarships. The district wants more students attending continuing education institutions and more students going into the workforce prepared and landing positions that can lead to living meaningful lives.

**Contexts**

Wagner et al. (2006) defined contexts as to the skill demands that students must meet to succeed and related concerns of the family and community the school serves. Also, it referred to the larger organizational system within work, informal and formal. The 4Cs To-Be is what each of the four will look like when the PA meets my vision of what an improved PA will look like with adjustments. I will begin with the context.

Three major contexts will require addressing. The first is to provide transportation to and from the PA. The second is establishing a highly-collaborative culture towards PA in which principals participate. The third is the expectation of parent participation to include a train-the-trainer model for parents. The context To-Be will find the district’s PA program serving parents, including parents of special education students. It provides professional development and individualized services through vendors and business partners that focus on academic skills and social and emotional needs of children. It provides parent training for what is best for their children’s academic success.

Information from the PA will be shared and communicated to stakeholders: parents, administrators, school board members, and business partners. There will be
high-parental involvement that includes a train-the-trainer program and a well-defined volunteer program geared toward parents and business partners. The district’s PA will provide many opportunities for parents to attend the various sessions offered.

Transportation will be offered with a collaborative effort with business partners sharing the cost with the SSSD General Budgeting Department. A highly-collaborative culture towards the PA will exist in which select principals participate and get a commitment from other principals throughout the district. Because of this action by the lead principals, the PA will be well-attended by representative administrators, along with their parent representatives. The principals, as motivational leaders of the PA, will be involved with business partners and vendors that provide services to the families and school communities. There will be a shared vision for services. Business partners will be supporting parents and parents supporting the business partners. The parents’ expectation for participation in the district’s PA train-the-trainer program will exceed its goal of having representatives from each school in the district trained as the parent leader or contact.

**Culture**

Wagner et al. (2006) defined culture as the shared values, beliefs, assumptions, behaviors, and the quality of relationships within and beyond the school. For the PA to become the model program, three elements of culture need to be discussed. The first is school staff understands the district needs to handle recruitment for the PA. The second culture will be that district personnel will understand that school staff members have responsibilities and they work with the supervision, instruction, and evaluation processes.
The third culture is school staff will feel that district personnel have a sense of family time.

Expectations for parents attending the PA will rely on the SSSD and the PA-Title I standards and federal guidelines. Parents will understand that when they attend a district PA program, it will not be a program only for parents whose children have been struggling academically and have behavioral issues. Also, parents will understand that the PA is a program for high-achieving students as well. The SSSD PA will be a program for parents who desire success for their child. Parents will attend the district’s PA and learning how to help their children become academically successful. Some parents will serve as leaders to assist the district and school representatives in working collaboratively in planning continuous recruitment ideas of parents by keeping them involved in the district’s PA.

The SSSD staff and the school staff will treat each other with mutual respect. District staff will appreciate the working of the school staff and will work collaboratively to ensure that there will be no confusion about what different persons thought about each other. The school staff will work with each other collegially when asked to recruit parents for the PA because they will feel that the district personnel are playing a role in drafting parents. The district staff will understand that the jobs and responsibilities of the school staff are to supervise students to ensure that the learning process is operating well.

Because of the high level of communication with the district staff and school staff, confusion will be at a minimum. There will be a consideration, and the district staff will avoid conflict by checking in on the school staff when necessary. Scheduling of the
PA on Saturdays will require some discussions and considerations. Learning communities will schedule PAs, and they will not be scheduled monthly.

**Conditions**

According to Wagner et al. (2006), conditions are defined as “the external architecture surrounding student learning, the tangible arrangements of time, space, and resources” (p. 101). Three conditions require addressing for the SSSD PA to become the program to admire. The first condition is to ensure that the focus remains on increasing PA attendance throughout the district. The second condition will be to reduce some of the remote locations to increase parent attendance. The third condition will be that there will be an expectation of a high-volume of school administrators communicating and responding with their PTA and SAC.

The SSSD PA attendance will continue to increase monthly throughout the district because of strategically planned locations. The PA staff and its parent contact leader’s council will schedule locations. This council will plan the generated survey topics for the year. Therefore, parents will have an opportunity to select the location and the topics of interest, and there will be higher levels of attendance. Parents and students will meet expectations and monitor their performance through rigorous training from the district’s PA. Parents will be aware of what formative assessments are required for their children to receive high academic performance. The district’s PA staff will ensure reinforcement to the parents, providing the resources needed to assist the parents in their children’s achievement.

Collaborative meetings with the district’s PA staff for support in monitoring the progress of their child will be a success and well-attended by school board members,
administrators, and business partners. Parents will attend the training sessions they planned and designed with the support of the district’s PA staff. If parents are unable to attend, the district’s PA will provide the parents who cannot attend with a webinar and or a virtual PA that will allow parents to view training and gain the skills needed to help their children succeed. There will be an increase in attendance to the district’s PA webinars and live streaming productions. Children will be able to view information and gain skills from sessions that they will not be able to attend. Parents will build strong working relationships with the PA and will rely on the staff for positive support. Parents will stay in contact with the staff to obtain extra support for their children.

School administrators will be involved in the communication process in working closely with their SAC and PTA chairpersons to respond to the needs of parents and PA parent council team within schools. Parents will monitor the district’s PA expectations by using check-in and-out procedures with staff members each week. The parents, under the leadership of their administrators, will monitor their training levels and process their daily and weekly goals with other parents and staff trainers. Leadership will be evident throughout the PA because expectations will be clear and respect for each other will be mutual among the school board members, administrators, business partners, and students. Administrators and the PA parent council will understand their roles in bolstering the attendance and recruiting process. It will be challenging, yet achievable.

**Competencies**

Competencies are described as “the repertoire of skills and knowledge that influences student learning” (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 99). Four competencies are necessary to address. The first competency is principals must be well-trained on the
goals and vision of the PA. Second, they must use their skills in ways to improve self-esteem for their schools. Third, principals make time to visit PA staff for motivational tips. Fourth, school personnel are required to become well-informed and motivated about PA.

Administrators will have a clear understanding of the goals and vision of the district’s PA. The district’s PA staff will train principals using the PA’s guidelines and procedures for academic expectations. Principals already know what it means to work in a collaborative environment using the state standards. SSSD developed standards and individualized goals set by parents and students working in partnership as a team. The principals in SSSD will be competent in their skills to boost and improve self-esteem and school pride.

Under the leadership of the school principals, parents and students will understand academic expectations coming from the district’s PA and receive positive reinforcement for their children’s high academic achievements. Parents, students, administrators, board members, and business partners will feel successful and understand what it means when it comes to increasing student achievement. Also, parents will plan and monitor their own goals and objectives through the leadership of the principal’s guiding coalition leadership team. Principals and school personnel, with their team of parents, will meet periodically with the district’s PA staff for updates to keep parents motivated and engaged in the PA. The principals’ school personnel will become well-informed, trained, and motivated to assist parents.

Parent attendance will be at an all-time high during the PA training sessions. Parents will have a transition plan to ensure clearly defined goals for their children’s
academic success. Parents will monitor their progress towards meeting their goals and work in collaboration with the staff of the district’s PA to ensure that they are taking the necessary steps towards meeting their children’s academic goals.

**Conclusion**

The organizational change of this study focused on strengthening the PA by providing a better planning process for the SSSD PA. To do this, I needed a robust understanding of the connection between parental engagement or involvement and student achievement. The review of literature helped me increase and solidify my understanding of parent academies and what they can and cannot do. When to involve parents in the process became an issue because parents were not attending as expected, and I realized the involvement of parents is vital for buy-in and sustainability. The *to-be* information is the ideal state of the SSSD. The subsequent chapters are written to bring this utopian PA to a reality.
CHAPTER SIX: STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Introduction

I have conducted a program evaluation on the SSSD PA. In doing so, I have learned several details about the PA that indicated that the district ran a successful program for several years; however, there were program needs that parents, administrators, school board members, and business partners identified as requiring attention. They pointed out concerns that will help improve the PA if addressed adequately. Also, I determined from my evaluation that the parents in the district were trying to address the concerns. Originally, they were not involved in the planning. It further helped me understand the vital role parents can play in improving student learning and achievement.

For this reason, I thought the PA needed a change through a process that involves parents and others as partners in the planning process. With the use of Wagner’s et al. (2006) information on change leadership and the 4Cs—context, conditions, culture, and competencies, I hoped to transfer the As-Is situation (see Appendix H) to the To-Be (see Appendix I) of the SSSD and the PA. To bring about meaningful change, I need to have and use some strategies and actions to bridge the As-Is to the To-Be of the PA.

Strategies and Actions

In this chapter, I will explore the circumstances of the SSSD PA. I will detail my strategies and action plan to bring about a change in the planning and implementation sessions for the district’s PA. As I presented much of this information in the previous chapter, I will now focus on best practices in communication strategies, organizational theory, leadership strategies, and professional development to guide in the organizational
change of the SSSD PA. In my strategies and action chart (see Appendix J), I emphasized concerns that parents, board members, administrators, and business partners expressed as necessary to help bring about changes in the PA that will yield the growth and capacity building in the district’s PA that will help parents learn ways to help their children learn.

As I attempt this change, constantly, I remind myself not to address this adaptive challenge with a technical solution (Heifetz, Linskey, & Grawshow, 2009). Because there were people who have been instrumental in the implementation of the PA for a few years, sensitivity is required to respect their past contributions; however, there is a sense of urgency to improve it because it involves children and their learning. This change will require some major adjustments for members of the district’s PA Department. Also, it will require school administrators to give up some of their supervisory time during the day or evening hours to plan activities related to other required duties. When change challenges people’s familiar reality, it can be problematic, and it can be confusing and conflicting work (Heifetz et al., 2009). People often reject change.

To conduct this change, I will use the 4Cs as a model to present reasons for change (i.e., As-Is) and the optimal vision (i.e., To-Be) I see for the SSSD. Many in my study did not debunk the As-Is of the SSSD and the PA. Also, they appear to be in sync with my To-Be versions for the context, condition, culture, and competencies, which is consistent with what I understand is the district’s vision for the academy. If not, there will be other opportunities in the planning process to have input into the nature of the vision. Below are the protocols for an organizational change of the PA in the SSSD.
The first step in addressing the change will require strong communication strategies. According to Stuart (1996), differentiated communication strategies require incorporation during different points of an organizational change that might have a significant impact on the level of acceptance of that change by the organizational participants. The initial and most crucial discussion will take place with the superintendent of the SSSD. Sharing the To-Be vision with the superintendent is critical to ensure a joint understanding and commitment to it.

The superintendent, along with her staff, will at the appropriate time present the change plan to the board members. However, to make this happen, several internal discussions and conversations with district and school level leaders will take place in cross-departmental meetings to ensure that everyone is on the same page to mitigate any deviation from the plan (Elving, 2005). The superintendent desires effective internal communication because, as Nisbet noted, it is important to the success of any organizational change (Nisbet, 2009). The superintendent will provide the board information on the planning process that the district will be using in the future. District personnel will provide the board with updates on the progress and get the board’s approval for any policy changes.

The second step in the organizational change is the creation of the PA advisory board based on sound theory and common sense. The composition of the advisory board will include parents, administrators, district personnel, and business partners. The planned organizational change will occur through the identification of the undesirable present state, the As-Is, along with the actions needed to bring about the desired To-Be state (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004). Organizational change is probably the most sensitive
change in the change process. Although there will be some bruised egos, it is imperative to get the right people on the bus (Silverman, 2006) to make the change work and improve the overall program. Luckily, two individuals who planned the PA initially are compromised as a revised team; one left the department and another individual replaced her. The replacement will allow for new ideas and changes to be accepted more easily.

After a conversation and communication with the current district team, the new person and the one person who remains in the department, they will establish an advisory board. Having an advisory board takes the burden solely off the small department and provides a brain trust of new ideas and support. School board members will nominate two parents each to serve. Upon receiving the names from the board members, PA staff will choose one parent from the individual nominations to serve. The selected members need to reflect the community in demographics regarding gender, race or ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and religious affiliation, if known. The superintendent needs to select two business partners to serve as ad hoc members to ensure business partners are not alienated because some may feel ignored and not continue to participate. Because the district was looking to increase the program’s impact significantly, it will require an increase in the work as well. This increase in workload merits a discussion regarding the possible addition of supporting staff.

The third and fourth steps work together. The members of the advisory board will need to develop a common understanding of the mission, vision, values, and broad strategic goals. Also, they need to develop a professional development plan to train parents to train other parents. The third step is to institute leadership strategies for essential players in the district’s PA. According to Kezar and Lester (2011), leadership
involves collaborative relationships that lead to a collective action grounded in shared values of individuals who work together to effect positive change. These changes include more effective planning processes to generate increased parental involvement and engagement in the PA, which will yield improvement in student achievement. The changes are the mission of the PA, and it addresses the problem statement in the As-Is model. When the district devises a structural change in the second step, it will change the leadership structure of the PA. Also, leadership responsibilities will discuss paramountly. Each member on the advisory board will play a role in the change process supported by leadership development for those roles for parents, administrators, and business partners.

The advisory board will be an active board, and participants will be active participants. To ensure that the training of parents, administrators, and business partners receive and yield sustainable results, district personnel shall ensure that high-quality professional development is viable. According to Pipere, Veisson, and Satite (2015), the professional development must be relevant to the individual needs and participants must have a shared vision. When these conditions exist, there is a strong possibility for sustainable professional development that can yield sustainable results.

The fourth step addresses the training. The administrators will receive training on how to recruit and inspire parents more effectively to participate in the PA. Principals will be encouraged to recruit their principal colleagues to the PA. Parents and business partners will learn how to conduct sessions at the PA, and they will learn how to train other parents and business partners. That kind of capacity building will strengthen the sessions and encourage participation. The advisory board will meet with the
superintendent and board members and provide them with information about the PA and what they can expect from the entire planning processes.

The above outlined step-by-step procedures addresses the organizational change to the PA. Additionally, in my strategies and action chart (see Appendix K), I provide three essential concerns that participants in the study expressed that support the improvement of parental engagement in the SSSD PA. I propose some important actions to address them. They are: (a) establish a protocol for providing transportation for parents to and from the PAs, (b) review and establish flexible scheduling, time and days, for PAs, and (c) centralize training or use different training locations.

The proposed change for the SSSD PA will bring the To-Be of the district to fruition. Four-C components may become a reality because the administration, parents, business partners, district staff, and board members will be involved in the process, especially the planning. Principals will be extremely active and collaborative with parents, other principals, district staff, and business partners. Parents may feel that they are part of the team instead of standing on the outside looking in and having something done to them. Business partners may feel that the district involved them, and they may be willing to do other things that support the district positively.

**Conclusion**

I have always believed that the SSSD PA had the potential to be more successful than it has been for the last four years. It needs to change. However, nothing will succeed if it does not include the people they were trying to reach. Having essential participants in the planning process is imperative to bring about the sustainable improvement of any project, program, or organization. The SSSD’s leaders understand
the need to involve the parents, administrator, board members, and business partners in
the PA through the advisory board to make that board an active one and improve the
impact of the PA on parent and student education.

I have always wanted the SSSD PA to be a successful program. After doing my
program evaluation and assessing the information from the research, I am encouraged to
see how it can improve. Upon looking at the district and the PA through the As-Is and
To-Be development processes, I am more inspired about the potential of the PA with the
implementation of the strategies and actions I outlined. The SSSD PA can become a
national model.
CHAPTER SEVEN: IMPLICATIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In the Program Evaluation Proposal (PEP) portion of my study, I evaluated the SSSD PA. In the Change Leadership Plan (CLP) portion of my study, I explored the strategic planning process for the parent academy and found that parents and administrators need to be involved in the planning because they play vital roles in student achievement. I reviewed board policies on relevant topics and found a policy that requires some refinement. The policy deals exclusively with parent involvement.

According to the policy Parent/Family Involvement, the school board indicated that a child’s academic success is a communal or collective responsibility between the family and school (Al-Alwan, 2014). Because of this belief, the board members developed parent involvement programs for the K-12 schools. This policy relates to the problem I am addressing. It encompass three major sections:

1. Components of Successful Parent Involvement Program,
2. Tools for Implementing Successful Parents Involvement Programs, and
3. Requirements for the use of Certain Title I Federal Funds for the Purchase of Food.

These Sections are relevant to my study and can address concerns in my study.

In the first section, the school board members delineated six components of a comprehensive, coordinated, and successful parent involvement programs for parents and guardians who are diverse in culture, language, and needs. Such programs must include: (a) regular and meaningful communication between home and school, (b) support of responsible parenting techniques, (c) recognition that parents play a vital role in helping
students to learn, (d) clear communication to parents, (e) recognition that parents are full partners in decisions that impact their children’s education, and (f) an indication that community resources are available to strengthen school programs, families, and student learning.

The second section covers the tools for implementing successful programs. The tool the board identified was professional development opportunities for administrators, teachers, and staff members. The board recognized that professional development for district staff is important to enhance the understanding of effective parent involvement strategies and the acquisition of leadership in setting an expectation and creating a climate conducive to parental participation.

The final section deals with the purchasing of food for family involvement activities. The policy indicates that school or district personnel can use Title I funds for this purpose if a school follows the program guidelines. However, expenses must be reasonable and necessary, and the activity takes place when parents normally eat a meal.

As noted previously, the current policy relates to my study. As I review it in light of my program evaluation proposal and organizational change plan, I have identified where the policy needs some revisions because the last adoption was in 2012. I believe the engagement of community members and the addition of some required approaches to funding need to be an addition to this policy. The district must include community members because they play a role in supporting the schools in their efforts to improve student achievement. Transportation to and from the academies is essential if to have parents involved. The initial impetus behind establishing this board policy was to improve or increase parental participation to have a direct or indirect impact on student
achievement. Therefore, my proposed policy changes will have a greater impact on parental involvement and a stronger effect on student achievement.

**Policy Statement**

The policy I am recommending is to provide district personnel, who are responsible for leading the development of parental engagement opportunities, with a system of engagement to make it happen. My policy will provide a systemic blueprint that school and district personnel use as a part of the process to engage parents on a large scale. Too frequently, schools schedule events for parents, and the turnout is low. As a general rule, few parents attend unless their children are participants in a program. For some critical events like Math Night, Reading Night, Open House, or the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Night, there are few parents. Rarely do they attend when there are topics that school officials alone feel are relevant to them or beneficial for their children. The PA is that major program that fits into that category; it offers resources for parents and students to receive worthwhile information they can use now and in the future.

By making some adjustments to the policy and directing schools and district-level personnel to follow the revised policy, I envision this policy as an effective way to get more parents involved or engaged in their children’s lives. As supported by Mapp (2002), I know there is a positive correlation between engaged parents and student achievement (Chebbi, 2008; Drummond & Stepek, 2004; Fan, 2001; Harper & Davis, 2012). I am advocating for this policy because of the need to increase students’ academic achievement in the SSSD.
As a recommendation to strengthen the policy, I am suggesting that the board consider adding *community members* to the title and throughout the policy, which will now read *Parent-Family and Community Involvement*. With this addition, the policy will capture the essence of family and community engagement that the school board and district leaders expect for the PA. Taking from the African Proverb, *It takes a village…*, the general premise of this policy is to attract more parents to be involved in the school and the lives of their children; however, parents cannot do it alone and may require the help of the community. The community involves businesses, local social organizations, churches, retired teachers, families with or without children, colleges and universities, and other sources of support for children and youth. SSSD needs a policy in place that supports the total community, especially because the mission stresses that SSSD will lead students to success with the support and involvement of families and the community—not just a single area of the community.

I am proposing a change in policy to support the allocation of funds to provide easier access to PA activities. With the policy change, the district will have the ability to provide transportation for families who do not have the ability to attend. My proposed policy will allow the superintendent to ensure that the budget proposed to the school board allocates or reallocates funds for transportation. Limiting the location of the training can control funding. From the program evaluation, parents and board members indicated that some parents who needed to attend did not attend because of the location of the sites. Centralizing the PAs closer to the homes of the needed parents will make it possible for more parents to attend and reduce the amount of funding necessary to get the parents to participate.
Analysis of Needs

In this ever-changing and progressive society, constancy in the form of parental support is needed for students. In the SSSD, the PA is a mechanism for educating parents on strategies and techniques that they can use to help their children. Parents acquire information and tools to assist their children in preparing for continuing educational opportunities or for entering the world of work. Improving or changing the strategic planning for the PA and involving parents in the process will strengthen or build the capacity of the parents to engage more effectively in PA activities. Ensuring that the PA follows the amended board policy will help parents become stronger participants in the quest to improve student achievement. In the section that follows, there is an analysis in six areas: educational, economic, social, political, legal, and moral and ethical. All areas provide insight into the need for this policy in the SSSD.

Educational Analysis

My proposed policy is designed to fortify parent engagement and involvement programs in the SSSD and help improve the attendance of parents at events, specifically the district’s PA. Research in my study indicates that parental or family involvement influences student performance (Fan, 2001; Harper & Davis, 2012). Consequently, SSSD must find ways to address little or no parental involvement at schools in matters concerning their children and the low attendance of parents at the PA. Educationally, the policy is in line with the district’s support for parental involvement.

Some parents feel that they cannot possibly assist students academically because of their limited level of formal education or their knowledge of the higher-level course work like Algebra, Trigonometry, and Calculus. Often, they are intimidated by such
courses or subject matter. If they cannot support students with the classwork, they can be involved significantly in supporting their children’s educational success in a variety of other ways. Namely, parents can monitor their children’s bedtimes, censor television watching and video games, or organize and monitor the children’s homework schedule. My policy would support these activities. According to Suizzo (2007), children excel more when their parents attend school-sponsored events and volunteer at their children’s schools.

Educationally, schools must establish relationships with the families and the greater community: businesses, local social organizations, churches, retired teachers, families with or without children, and colleges and universities. The PA in the SSSD is designed to harvest that kind of relationship with the inclusion of business partners within the community; however, it needs amended policy support.

Epstein (2001, 2009) contends that it reasonable for these relationships to exist. The main reason for such a partnership is to assist students in achieving at school. He cites improving the school climate, and school programs are other reasons. I am impressed that Epstein proposed these activities: (a) developing parental skills and leadership, (b) assisting families in connecting with others in the school and the community, and (c) assisting teachers with their work as reasons for developing this partnership (2001, 2009). He emphasized the importance of parents playing an active role in their children’s education and keeping a strong and positive relationship with schools.

**Economic Analysis**

Today’s parents are often consumed or burdened with the distractions, interferences, and demands of daily life. Fraught by low-income, inflexible work hours, some parents are unable to attend school activities or participate in the schooling needs of
their children regularly (Ho, 2009). In the SSSD, some do not have the transportation to get them to meetings at their community school, and they cannot get to the PAs at remote locations. Lee and Bowen (2006) indicated that cultural norms and insufficient financial resources are barriers to parental involvement in school.

My recommended policy amendments will address these concerns. The current policy only discusses the purchasing of food for PAs. The policy I am recommending will address the transportation needed to ensure that parents who want to come to the PAs will be able to do so. My proposed policy will state that the superintendent will ensure that the budget proposed to the school board allocates or reallocates funds from the general budget to support parent-family and community involvement programs.

According to the US Department of Education (2004), local educational agencies (LEA) and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families that receive a Title I, Part A allocation of greater than $500,000 must reserve not less than one percent of its Title I, Part A allocation to implement the provisions of Section 1118. Specifically, this section relates to family literacy and parenting skills. The percentage reserved for parental involvement must be calculated based on the LEA’s total Title I, Part A. This provision provides support to my proposed policy and allows for supporting the PA and other school parental involvement efforts. It presents a guideline the district can use to support non-Title I schools as well that have needy families and their children.

Social Analysis

Making a public policy or program change requires clear communication with the stakeholders involved in the process. It is imperative that stakeholders see the urgency to
make any such change for the best possible results. Usually, it will motivate the stakeholders to take ownership and see the importance for the policy and related programs to be successful. To ensure that this policy proceeds as proposed, establishing a committee with parents, administrators, and business partners is necessary to ensure persons that need to be involved can participate. Working together to address an issue of such great importance will result in a major social benefit for the parents, community, and students. These include better-educated students from more impoverished areas who are better suited to continue their educations and rising to higher levels of societal success.

My policy amendment is about strengthening parental involvement to yield positive student achievement. With the research to support its implementation as expressed in previous sections, the SSSD must do everything within its power to keep parents involved in their children’s school life. Sometimes it is difficult to get parents to come to schools or district events because of other situations in their lives. Rutherford and Edgar (1999) recognized that parents have increased difficulty in getting involved in their student’s education, especially at the secondary level. They find it overwhelming trying to determine which teacher or other staff members are responsible for which part of their children’s academic program when there are multiple ones involved.

Hill and Taylor (2004) proclaimed that “parents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds face many more barriers to involvement, including nonflexible work schedules, lack of resources, transportation problems, and stress due to residing in disadvantaged neighborhoods” (2004, p. 162). Ascher (1988) indicated that low-income, urban parents can and want to participate in the education of their children as much as
middle-class parents. Also, Ascher conveyed that, single-parent participation at school events, especially during the day, is often hindered by uncompromising work leave guidelines and child-care responsibilities.

The PA in the SSSD is essential to help balance the needs of families in the district. Focusing on parents as vital influencers in children’s lives without accounting for families’ socioeconomic backgrounds is a must. I believe public conversations about good parenting is critical and often too general. Parenting must take into account the special needs of some parents and children from less exalted backgrounds and their issues dealing with inequality and injustice. It is important to develop education programs that offer parents practical support and information about education choices with special attention to parents of children in poverty, exceptional learners, speakers of other languages, and others with children at-risk.

Political Analysis

As mentioned above, parental involvement is one of the most important factors in student performance. According to Curlew and Weber (2009), too many parents experience inflexibility in their work schedules or the leave policies that allow them to attend school functions. As a result, they mentioned that legislators in some states are generating policies to address this issue. They said that these policies “will provide parents with short-term, job-protected time away from the workplace to attend parent-teacher conferences or other school-related events” (p.1). Also, they indicated they will help low-wage workers who took off less because they were concerned about losing funding for their households. Curlew and Weber (2009) indicated that children of low-income families tend to need more support academically.
Currently, there are no federal policies that exist to address school involvement leave. However, the Family and Medical Leave Enhancement Act of 2009 (HR 824) amended the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to include parental involvement leave to attend school activities or accompany a child to doctors’ appointments (Curlew & Weber, 2008). According to A Better Balance (2007), 12 states and the District of Columbia approved school involvement leave laws: CA, DC, HI, IL, LA, MA, MN, NC, NV, RI, TN, TX, and VT. The statutes vary in if the parental engagement is a paid or unpaid leave, if it was for state employees only, or if it is grouped with other types of family leave such as doctors’ appointments. These statutes help parents to be available for their children when the children might need parental assistance the most.

A large contingency among federal policymakers is looking to reduce dropout rates, overall and predominantly among subgroups. The policymakers encourage school leader to improve family-school relations and increase parental involvement in education (DeCastro & Catsambis, 2009). The 2002 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), better known as the No Child Left Behind Act, mandated that states seeking funding for Title I schools (i.e., low-income) must identify and implement practices for involving parents. The Every Student Succeed Act (ESSA) includes a component for active parent and community engagement. It encourages schools to engage parents and making the school a neighborhood hub providing adults with educational opportunities (Oakes, Maier, & Daniel, 2017).

I believe SSSD board members will unanimously support my proposed policy because they believe in parental and community involvement in schools. As stated earlier, currently, the SSSD has a parental involvement policy. In theory and practice, the
board members embrace it. At every school board meeting, members of the board mention parental or community engagement opportunities. They do it when they discuss an event at their school that they have been invited to and attended. The only amendment to my policy will be adding the word *community* throughout the policy at appropriate places. Community includes businesses, churches, families with or without children, and colleges and universities. Also, it includes the superintendent being accountable for drafting a budget for these kind of activities, especially for the PA. A policy approval process like this one will have some political opposition. However, the persons engaged in the PA now will provide strong political support to the policy’s passage.

**Legal Analysis**

Federal, state, and local officials responsible for enacting and implementing current educational laws have an appreciation for the role that parental involvement must play in helping improve instruction and learning. Federally, the government understands that parental involvement or engagement is an essential component in the achievement of students and their schools. This notion is inclusive in the federal law known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). It established state, district, and school requirements intended to encourage more effective parental involvement. Also, the law reflects the theory that effective parental involvement can bring about improvements in student learning. The focus on effective parental engagement to enhance student achievement is more than just a federal requirement, it is supported by research and by the stories of schools that indicate its positive effects on student learning.

The Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) law recognizes that parents must know that true partnership must occur between schools and parents (Gomez &
A teaching and learning partnership includes recognition of parents as authentic participants in school governance, nurturing a sense of community and supporting the development of parenting skills (Kalyanpur & Harry, 1999). The law is clear; it mandates that the role of parents in school districts is at the discretion of the individual school. Unfortunately, when schools and teachers are the decision makers, parents in many cases do not feel empowered.

Title I, Part A provides for parental involvement or engagement at every level of the program, specifically in the development and implementation of the state and local plans and in carrying out the LEA and school improvement provisions. Section 1118 contains the main Title I, Part A requirement for state education agencies (SEAs), LEAs, and schools related to involving parents in their children’s education. It is this section that recognizes essential points in the process of improving teaching and learning where parents and the community can assist in school improvement. Although Section 1118 is broad in scope and has many stipulations for LEAs and schools, the intent is to provide helpful guidelines. These requirements reflect good practices in engaging families in helping to educate their children because research shows students perform better at home and school when parents are actively involved in the education process (Oakes, Maier, & Daniel, 2017).

The SSSD believes and attempts to follow the law as proposed by incorporating the current policy. The policy is short as written by not including the community, that is, people in and out of the schools who can help students succeed in school and life. The school district’s mission statement says it explicitly. My proposed policy adjustments will rectify this problem and ensure that the district follows the letter and spirit of the
policy and provides for the families and district personnel the support they need to fortify the district’s PA.

**Moral and Ethical Analysis**

The PA in the SSSD is an equalizer for many parents. Many parents cannot take part in their children’s education during the week by showing up and volunteering or attending parent conferences, especially working parents or single-family parents who work. Former State Assemblyman Dr. Joel M. Miller of New York said it eloquently when he noted there should never be a situation where parents have to choose between supporting their children’s future and putting food on the table. Parents need not fear losing their jobs or parts of their salaries when supporting their children’s educational needs. A child’s success is dependent on parental involvement. Miller indicated that working parents need support (Curlew & Weber, 2009).

Equity is a moral imperative, and the SSSD understands this clearly and established the PA, especially for those who cannot participate in school week activity. These parents have opportunities to learn from district leaders and school staff more effective ways to support their children. It is not fair or ethical to deprive working parents of opportunities to learn from their schools’ various practices and techniques to help their children.

As an educator and a school board member, I have a moral responsibility to encourage parents to take advantage of learning opportunities like the PA because I know the benefits of the programs. I think I have an ethical responsibility to advocate for and promote policies to ensure such programs continue and improve. My advocacy for parents is the purpose for choosing this study topic, and I feel that other educators need to
have the same passion for improving the PA or making sure that schools have something in place at their school sites that supports parents, especially working parents.

It is the moral and ethical duty of educational leaders to help strengthen parent involvement or engagement. Teachers and administrators need to change that paradigm where they sometimes view parents as troublesome or burdensome instead of partners. Educational professionals need to open the doors to parents and welcome them as they attempt to assist in their children’s learning. I realize that some parents are involved in their children’s education because of their positive or negative impression of the school and sometimes based on their experiences when they were students. According to Lee and Bowen (2006), “different levels of parent involvement may reflect differences in parents’ habitus for educational involvement” (p. 199). Habitus refers to the characters that indicate that parent indoctrinates in the family of educators and parents who manifest themselves in different ways, such as gender playing an important role in parental involvement. Even though parents support the education of both their sons and daughters, they engage in by deep-seated assumptions such as after the children grow up, their children will live different lives.

It behooves schools to develop different plans or strategies to ensure the involvement of different categories of parents. Lee and Bowen (2006) suggested schools include: (a) starting training programs for parents in need, (b) recognizing the different languages within the school and provide interpreters to attract parents, (c) sending newsletters in different languages to parents as often as the resources of each school will allow, and (d) avoiding any form of discriminatory practices capable of discouraging the disenfranchised or disadvantaged parents.
The policy I am advocating is that something needs to happen for students. It will ensure that the district has a guideline that mandates certain components in building a relationship with parents and the community. It will provide for the school’s minimum requirements as they focus on building family, parental, and community involvement. These involvements are the moral thing to do.

Implications for Staff and Community Relationships

Given the policy I am advocating, there are important implications for staff relationships. Parental engagement or involvement sparks different feelings from different staff members depending on where they are in the system and which schools they are serving. Generally, some principals and staff members are complacent about low-parent involvement because some parents who are at times disrespectful and argumentative. District level staff members who currently run the district’s PA may see this policy as a positive move for them, especially if they find themselves solely responsible for such initiative. They will embrace the community and parental involvement as they plan and prepare for major events like the PA.

With the enforcement of this policy, schools in the district will have more effective ways of engaging parents in their children’s learning. Stakeholders who may not know a policy exists may question the emphasis on a revised parental involvement policy. However, several schools stressed that they need more participation while others are doing little to attract the parents in their schools. My policy amendment will encourage staff to incorporate a nurturing environment where parents feel welcome and will engage more in the school (Wanat, 2010). According to Jeynes, (2010), schools should capitalize on the participation of families by presenting a sincere interest in their
lives before asking them to participate in the school community. Schools need to let parents know they are valued and their help is welcomed and needed.

With this policy, schools may need flexibility in implementation. They may not be ready for implementation simultaneously throughout the district, and it may require their implementing programs when they feel that the school, staff, and parents are ready for doing so. Some schools need to have the freedom to reflect and change course in response to developing needs and priorities of families and the school. Changing course is not necessarily an indication of dysfunction, but rather an expression of reflection and responsiveness (Geller 2006).

For teachers, especially elementary teachers, there are many implications for their interaction with parents because there are six types of parental involvement: (a) parent as an audience, (b) parent as a volunteer, (c) parent as a paraprofessional, (d) parent as a teacher of own child, (e) parent as a learner, and (f) parent as a decision-maker. Teachers, especially new ones, receive no training for this kind of situation. It will require some professional development for the teachers because parent involvement is not inclusive in preservice programs (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). Principals will need to provide teachers with practical professional development opportunities to bring up-to-date skills or knowledge, so they are better equipped to adapt to parents’ changing beliefs and desires in parent engagement or involvement. Also, they may need some training on how to communicate best with parents (Bower & Griffin, 2011).

The policy I am advocating has implications for new relationships with parents and others. My Change Leadership Plan calls for the active participation of parents and community members to be a part of the planning committee and serving as team
members on the active advisory board. My proposed policy amendment does include parent and community involvement. Rather than merely being members of decision-making teams, parents are essential players whose ideas are valued and who need to be equal participants in a shared decision-making process. Williams (2010) referred to parents being part of the team who *invest in the school* and used words such as *co-creating* and *owning* for parent relationships with the school. Parents participating in the implementation of the policy will ensure that they have the input and responsibility necessary to improve their children’s academic success.

Because some principals and teacher have reservations about parental engagement, parents will have to self-regulate by engaging in ways provided for in district policy and become cooperative partners with teachers and administrators. Some schools have experienced parents coming into the schools and causing havoc and going beyond their expectation. As Greenwood and Hickman (1991), indicated, parental involvement can include in six forms. Parents need to determine which role they want to play and make sure that it is congruent with the wishes of the teachers and the school administrators. Parents want to be involved in their children’s education, but they do not know where to begin.

My dissertation includes local business partners supportive of the parental engagement policy. When community members are involved in the decision-making process, they are usually less critical because they have a clear understanding of the rationale behind the decision-making process and its outcomes. Having the business partners on the governing body planning the PA, will be a great benefit to the district and parents.
Implications for students themselves are tremendous; they can benefit from the involvement of their parents, especially when there are good relationships or collaboration between their parents and teachers. Parents’ culture, values, and beliefs will have an impact on how their children respond to their learning environment. Students will glean wonderful outcomes from this entire process by earning good grades, matriculating from grade-to-grade and eventually graduating from high school. This places them in a good position to either go to college, other post-secondary educational institutions, the armed forces, or the world of work.

Given the policy I am advocating, there are implications for other stakeholder relationships. Board members will have to be supportive of this policy and will have to support ways to promote parental engagement or involvement. The SSSD’s school board members already understand and believe that parental involvement is important and plays a vital role in student achievement. It will not take much encouragement or convincing for them to vote for the sound amendments to the current policy. School board members must continue to advocate their beliefs. A school board member is aware that current school practices to facilitate parent involvement tend not to encourage interactions among parents, and they focus almost solely on teacher-parent relationships (Kessler-Sklar & Baker, 2000). Therefore, the promotion of the PA and funding for it and other such programs will require intensity from the board members.

The superintendent, naturally, is one of the stakeholders who must recommend and implement the policy. The superintendent did sit with me as I discussed my dissertation with her. She embraced the topic. Also, she understands the value potential
of parental involvement. This policy will support the superintendent to ensure proper fulfillment of my proposed amended policy regarding parental involvement.

**Conclusion**

Parental involvement or engagement in the SSSD is capacity building for stakeholders—students, parents, teachers, administrators, superintendents, school board members, local business partners, local social agencies and other institutions, and interested local citizens. After the thorough examination of my parental engagement study results, my change plan and the policy amendment of the current PIP are essential to the success of the PA in the SSSD. The impetus for strengthening parental and community engagement centered on increasing student achievement is strong. This project has the potential to achieve this goal.
CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

Introduction

The issue addressed in the project study discussed concerns relating to low-parent attendance to the district’s PA relative to the student population in the SSSD. Issues surrounding the complexity of parent engagement and involvement often touch parents, administrators, and the community at the core of their belief systems. According to Brown and Moffett, 1999, when belief systems differ, the conversation becomes more difficult, and constructive dialogue often becomes more difficult. I believe that this study and the questions raised can catalyze substantive discussions in parent groups in every school district. The issues of parent attendance, transportation and location addressed throughout this document can be addressed in the SSSD by using the strategies in my change leadership plan and establishing a substantial policy is mandatory for schools to implement because student achievement is directly correlated.

Discussion

This study acquired information from parents, administrators, board members, and business partners through surveys and interviews. PEP process indicated that the problems centered on parent involvement because transportation was a major impediment to parents getting to the event. Also, throughout my study, I found that many stakeholders felt that there was a disconnect with the district’s PA and its inclusion of essential stakeholders with the planning and their vital roles in training.

The dominant remedy of my CLP was to improve the strategic planning process of the district’s PA by including parents, school administrators, and business partners on an advisory board. In doing so, the advisory board may develop a common
understanding of the mission, vision, values, and broad strategic goals, and they will tackle the concerns of the stakeholders: transportation, location of the Pas, and attendance of parents. Ultimately, their involvement will garner buy-in from the parents and administrators and will intimately champion the cause and encourage parents and their colleagues to become more active in the PA. More and more businesses partners will understand the purpose of the meetings, and they can be influential in gathering more business and community support.

Currently, there is a district parent engagement policy. However, I plan to fortify the policy by an amending it to address funding and some targeted support to address issues my study revealed. The policy, with my proposed amendment, emphasizes the district’s understanding of parent involvement or engagement, how it can impact student achievement, and some specific areas of needed support.

The purpose of conducting this evaluation was to investigate the efficacy of the PA and to increase awareness of the district’s PA to the business community and others. The awareness of how the PA was meeting its own goals through parent involvement was a concern. This study evaluated the effectiveness of the PA in the SSSD. I suspected that fewer parents were taking advantage of the strategies and techniques offered to them in the SSSD. Nearly 6% of the parents were attending the district’s PA. Many of them were parents from the low-socioeconomic families. Data gathered from parents, school board members, and community partners from surveys and interviews confirmed my suspicion.

My organizational change plan addressed the involvement issue of the parents and business partners who felt somewhat alienated in the planning and direct participation of
the PA process. Through the evolution of a strategic planning process, stakeholders are part of the advisory board who are intimately involved in the development of the district’s PA. These stakeholders will play a major role in attracting more parents to the meetings. They will develop a common mission and vision and address the concerns of, transportation, the location of the training, and attendance of parents, that the parents, board members, and business partners identified in the program evaluation process.

The Parent Engagement and Community Policy for which I advocate addresses the parent involvement issues my program evaluation and organization change plan discussed and support. With the current support, the board members express for improved parent engagement in the education of children. I do not feel there will be much opposition in getting the board to pass my proposed changes to the policy. The initial motivation behind creating this board policy was to improve parental participation, so that it will have a direct or indirect influence on student achievement. I believe my proposed policy change will have a greater impact on parental involvement given the stronger potential effect my research shows that it can have on student achievement.

Leadership Lessons

Leadership lessons that I have learned in this process are numerous. There are seven key lessons learned: (a) to persevere, (b) to seek out credible and meaningful advice, (c) to honor leaders who have trailed the doctorate pathway before, (d) to listen, analyze, and interpret data, (e) to schedule effectively for the greatest effects, (f) to work collaboratively with others, and (g) the importance of research to make decisions. The process of writing this study has impacted me greatly. Along the way, I have learned the
importance of perseverance and strength. I gained so much educationally and scholarly that I am now more fearless in taking risks.

I learned the importance of perseverance and of attending the NLU scholarly writing classes that prepared me to write my dissertation. The lessons learned included starting early, collecting data points, remaining on task, and putting together and organizing research information that was relevant to my dissertation. Also, I was better prepared to focus on my writing, build the determination to remain on task, and to follow the professor’s timeline for submission even when it was difficult. I learned to never give up throughout the process.

I learned that I could learn much more, by seeking advice from others who have traveled the pathway of attending graduate school and attaining a doctorate. Speaking with graduate students about how they chose their topics, analyzed their data, and selected their themes was helpful. I gleaned much from their mistakes; it helped me to avoid those pitfalls. They guided me and kept me focused on the requirements of my professors, especially on how to collect quantitative and qualitative data. From their guidance, the leadership lesson learned, as the time moved closer to the submission of my dissertation, was to remain on-task and follow instructions.

Another lesson learned was to value the knowledge, wisdom, and expertise of the professors when they offer support and not chalk it off as frivolous. The professors were there to assist me in the dissertation writing process in many ways. They were available after hours and vested in my success and guided me to the finish line as they honestly answered my questions and saw my weaknesses as they continued to offer their
assistance. They supported me in choosing a topic. I am very passionate about parent involvement and engagement in SSSD.

Moreover, throughout the survey and interview portion of my data gathering, I learned to listen and reserve jumping to conclusions before gathering and analyzing the data. Also, these processes helped me employ diplomatic skills as I listened to the responses in my interviews. I learned that people think differently, and when they feel comfortable, they say things that hedge on unconscious or implicit biases. Writing on a topic that I care about gave me energy and empowered me to want to continue to explore more on the topic, so I listened and practiced constraint and controlled my biases from influencing my writing of this dissertation. I brought forth the thoughts of my participants that were involved in the process and was able to move through the writing process without missing the points that each participant wanted to share. Their thoughts brought out many concerns that helped me assess more objectively my arguments and thus strengthening them.

I learned that I need to become a better scheduler and practice self-restraint. As a board member, I charged myself with being involved in many night school activities. Having my day jobs and board member professional responsibilities, I consumed myself, and I was writing something every day on my dissertation. I wish I could have done more. I encourage anyone attempting such a complex task as pursuing a doctorate to be a good scheduler and keep a daily focus on the data project and research. I hope I can instill this in others, so they do not have a situation as I did with my home in disarray. Procrastination is a hard attitude to avoid. It will keep an individual from moving forward.
I have always approached matters independently. However, I learned earlier that I cannot always do things on my own. When the professors suggested seeking out others or work collaboratively with the cohort members, I sought out a mentor. Finding a mentor and staying in touch with my colleagues and professors helped me to move forward. Having a mentor to read each chapter as I completed writing them took a great deal of pressure off my shoulders. Using my mentor, professors, and cohort team members as editors and proofreaders has proven most valuable.

I learned the importance of research to help in making better decisions. I plan to use the information and knowledge that I have gained through this study to explore where I can make a difference in my scholarly career. I believe that this study and research can lead to an array of jobs or careers, and I want to see where I can go from here.

I see myself doing additional research on other phases of the PA and researching information on how to become a better school board member, possibly writing a pocket guide book on the topic—one that school board members can frequently pull out and reference when working in the community with parents, administrators, business partners, and other stakeholders. Writing scholarly articles for education journals has interesting implications. Also, I can see myself seeking grants that will benefit and generate funds and resources for the district’s PA as a possible next step in moving forward as a leader.

**Conclusion**

In my conclusion, I focus on supporting parental engagement or involvement. I believe it is important to enhance the quality of learning support that parents provide their children to sustain a culture of learning across their children’s primary and secondary
school years. The overarching motivation for my study is to attract more parental participation to the SSSD, so their engagement or involvement will facilitate parenting skills that will increase student achievement.

The journey in educational systems is a shared experience; therefore, many stakeholders will always involve themselves in this process. It is a never-ending process in which stakeholders must work together. It is a journey, not a destination (Brown & Moffett, 1999). The Bible extols the virtues of giving; “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Matthew 7:7-8 King James Version). I asked, and I received; I sought, and I found; I knocked, and it was opened unto me—a whole new educational world to explore.
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Appendix A: Parent Survey

Dear Parent:

I am a doctoral student at National-Louis University completing my dissertation: A program Evaluation of One Parent Academy. As a part of my research, I would like to survey your responses as it relates to the Parent Academy. Your participation is voluntary, and you may discontinue at any point. All respondent information will be kept confidential.

Section A

Directions: Please read each statement, then place an X in the appropriate column for each item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Parent Academy …</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<td>1. Is an effective program for parents</td>
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<td>2. Can help prepare my child for college</td>
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<td>4. Can Help me to understand better and navigate the school system</td>
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<td>5. Can help me better support my child in general</td>
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<td>6. Can better help me to support my child’s future</td>
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Section B

Directions: Please completely answer the questions below:

13. What is working well in the Parent Academy?

14. What is not working well in the Parent Academy?

15. Are there any challenges with the Parent Academy? Yes No
    If yes, what are they?

16. What are the best ways to address the challenges you mentioned above?

17. What are some of the best ways to increase parent awareness of the District’s Parent Academy as a means to increase teaching and learning?

18. What do you perceive as the most effective ways to increase attendance and involvement in District’s Parent Academy?
19. Is there anything else that I may not have touched on that you would like to share with me regarding District’s Parent Academy?
Appendix B: Administrator Survey

Dear Administrator:

I am a doctoral student at National-Louis University completing my dissertation: A program Evaluation of One Parent Academy. As a part of my research, I would like to survey your responses as it relates to the Parent Academy. Your participation is voluntary, and you may discontinue at any point. All respondent information will be kept confidential.

Section A

Directions: Please read each statement, then place an X in the appropriate column for each item.

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<th>The Parent Academy</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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Section B

Directions: Please completely answer the questions below:

12. What is working well in the Parent Academy?

13. What is not working well in the Parent Academy?

14. Are there any challenges with Parent Academy? Yes No
   If yes, what are they?

15. What are the best ways to address the challenges you mentioned above?

16. What are some of the best ways to increase parent awareness of the District’s Parent Academy as a means to increase teaching and learning?
17. What do you perceive as the most effective ways to increase attendance and involvement in the District’s Parent Academy?

18. Is there anything else that I may not have touched on that you would like to share with me regarding District’s Parent Academy?
Appendix C: School Board Member Survey

Dear School Board Member:

I am a doctoral student at National-Louis University completing my dissertation: A program Evaluation of One Parent Academy. As a part of my research, I would like to survey your responses as it relates to the Parent Academy. Your participation is voluntary, and you may discontinue at any point. All respondent information will be kept confidential.

Section A

Directions: Please read each statement, then place an X in the appropriate column for each item.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>The Parent Academy …</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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Section B

Directions: Please completely answer the questions below:

13. What is working well in the Parent Academy?

14. What is not working well in the Parent Academy?

15. Are there any challenges with the Parent Academy? Yes    No
   If yes, what are they?

16. What are the best ways to address the challenges you mentioned above?

17. What are some of the best ways to increase parent awareness of the District’s Parent Academy as a means to increase teaching and learning?

18. What do you perceive as the most effective ways to increase attendance and involvement in the District’s Parent Academy?
Appendix D: Business Partner Survey

Dear Business Partners:

I am a doctoral student at National-Louis University completing my dissertation: A program Evaluation of One Parent Academy. As a part of my research, I would like to survey your responses as it relates to the Parent Academy. Your participation is voluntary, and you may discontinue at any point. All respondent information will be kept confidential.

Section A

Directions: Please read each statement, then place an X in the appropriate column for each item.

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<th>The Parent Academy that I have participated in …</th>
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Section B

Directions: Please completely answer the questions below:

10. What is working well in the Parent Academy?

11. What is not working well in the Parent Academy?

12. Are there challenges with Parent Academy? Yes No
   If yes, what are they?

13. What are the best ways to address the challenges you mentioned above?

14. What do you perceive as the most effective ways to increase attendance and involvement in the District’s Parent Academy?

15. As a participating business partner of the District’s Parent Academy, what do you think would be the best recruiting effort(s) in getting business partners to participate in the Parent Academy?
16. Is there anything else that I may not have touched on that you would like to share with me regarding District’s Parent Academy?
Appendix E: School Board Member Interview Protocol

This will be a face-to-face interview process approximately 30 minutes in duration. The interview will take place during non-instructional school hours. All names will be held in confidence, and only the researcher will hold a copy of the verbatim interview responses. I will use a pseudonym during the interview to protect your anonymity. I will use both a tape recording device and paper/pencil for notetaking purposes.

1. What is working well in the Parent Academy?

2. What is not working well in the Parent Academy?

3. What are your perceptions regarding the District’s Parent Academy?

4. What advantages have you observed at the Parent Academy?

5. If there are any, what challenges you have observed with the District’s Parent Academy?

6. How might these observed challenges with the District’s Parent Academy be overcome?

7. What would be some suggestions for increasing more parents to the District’s Parent Academy?

8. How would you describe the level of impact the District’s Parent Academy has had on student achievement throughout our school?

9. What role can you suggest schools play in enhancing the District’s Parent Academy?

10. What role can you suggest business partners take in becoming more involved or recruiting other business partners to take?

11. How would you describe the level of impact the District’s Parent Academy has had on student achievement throughout our school?

12. Is there anything else that I may not have touched on that you would like to share with me regarding District’s Parent Academy?
Appendix F: Informed Consent: Adult Participant Survey

My name is Kathleen Gordon, and I am a doctoral student at National Louis University, Orlando, Florida. I am asking for your consent to participate in my dissertation project voluntarily. The study is entitled: “A Program Evaluation of One Parent Academy.” The purpose of conducting this evaluation is to investigate the efficacy of the parent academy and to increase awareness of the District’s Parent Academy to the business community and other parents.

You may participate in this study by signing this consent form indicating that you understand the purpose of the study and agree to participate in a printed survey. It should take approximately 30 minutes for you to complete the survey. All information collected in the survey reflects your experience and opinion either as a parent, administrator, school board member or a business partner who has already participated in the Parent Academy.

Your participation is voluntary and you may discontinue your participation at any time with no negative consequences. I will keep the identity of you, the school, the district, and all participants confidential, as it will not be attached to the data, and the results will be reported in aggregated form only and cannot be identified individually. I will use pseudonyms for all participants in the report. Only I will have access to all survey data that will remain locked in a cabinet at my home or on a password-protected hard drive for up to 5 years, at which time I will shred all data. Participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk beyond that of everyday life. While you are likely to not have any direct benefit from being in this research study, you're taking part in this study may contribute to our better understanding of the parent academy at your school or district and what changes, if any, need to be made.

While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, your identity will in no way be revealed. You may request a copy of this completed study by contacting me at Kgordon15@my.nl.edu.

In the event you have questions or require additional information, you may contact me by email at Kgordon15@my.nl.edu. If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that you feel I have not addressed, you may contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Carol A. Burg, email: cburg@nl.edu; or the EDL Department Chair: Dr. Stuart Carrier scox@nl.edu 847-947-5017; or the NLU’s Institutional Research Review Board: Dr. Shaunti Kauth, NLU IRRB Chair, shaunti.kauth@nl.edu, 312.261.3526, National Louis University IRRB Board, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603.

Thank you for your participation.

Participant Name (Please Print)

__________________________________________________________
Participant Signature    Date

Kathleen B. Gordon

Researcher Name (Please Print)

__________________________________________________________
Researcher Signature    Date
Appendix G: Informed Consent: Adult Participant Interview

My name is Kathleen Gordon, and I am a doctoral student at National Louis University, Orlando, Florida. I am asking for your consent to participate in my dissertation project voluntarily. The study is entitled: “A Program Evaluation of One Parent Academy.” The purpose of conducting this evaluation is to investigate the efficacy of the parent academy and to increase awareness of the District’s Parent Academy to the business community and other parents.

You may participate in this study by signing this consent form indicating that you understand the purpose of the study and agree to participate in one 30-minute interview. I will be using both a tape recording device and paper/pencil for notetaking purposes. There may be up to 5 email exchanges to clarify any questions I may have regarding your interview data. All information collected in the interview reflects your experience as a school board member who has already participated in the Parent Academy.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may discontinue your participation at any time with no negative consequences. I will keep the identity of you, the school, the district, and all participants confidential, as it will not be attached to the data, and I will use pseudonyms for all participants in the report. Only I will have access to all interviews data and recordings that will remain locked in a cabinet at my home or on a password-protected hard drive for up to 5 years at which time I will shred all data. Participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk beyond that of everyday life. While you are likely to not have any direct benefit from being in this research study, you're taking part in this study may contribute to our better understanding of the parent academy at your school or district and what changes, if any, need to be made.

While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, I will not reveal your identity. You may request a copy of this completed study by contacting me at Kgordon15@my.nl.edu.

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Thank you for your participation.

______________________________  ______________________________
Participant Name (Please Print)  Date

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Participant Signature  Date

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Kathleen B. Gordon  Date

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Researcher Name (Please Print)  Date

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Researcher Signature  Date
Appendix H: Letter to Business Partners

Kathleen “Kat” Gordon  
4635 Patricia Ann Court  
Orlando, FL 32839

Dear Business Partner Participant:

I am Kathleen Gordon and a graduate student at National Louis University. For my dissertation project, I am examining the District’s Parent Academy in SunnySide School District. Because you are a business partner of the District’s Parent Academy, I am inviting you to participate in this research study by completing the attached survey. Included with the letter are two consent forms and a survey. The consent form explains thoroughly what my intentions are and how you can participate. The business partner survey will require approximately thirty minutes to complete.

In order to ensure that all information will remain confidential, please do not include your name on the survey. Answer all questions as honestly as possible and return the completed business partner survey and one of the signed consent forms. I am providing you with a self-addressed stamped envelope. Participation is strictly voluntary, and you may refuse to participate.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors.

With warmest regards,

Kathleen “Kat” Gordon  
School Board Member  
District 5
Appendix I: 4Cs AS-IS Chart of the Parent Academy in SSSD

**Context**
- Lack of transportation for some parents hinders their ability to attend
- Some principals are not showing interest in the Parent Academy
- Students' performance is reflective of parent lack of involvement with and knowledge of the Parent Academy

**Culture**
- School staff feels that the district should handle recruitment for the Parent Academy
- School feels the district doesn't understand school's responsibilities because the school staff is labored with the supervision, instruction, and evaluation processes
- School staff feels that the district does not have a sense of family time for staff since the district frequently pressure schools to engage in Saturday activities

**Conditions**
- The parent academy attendance is not representative of the district
- Some parents cannot attend when the Academy is held at a remote location
- Some school administrators never attend

**Competencies**
- Some principals lack knowledge about the Parent Academy.
- Some principals lack skills in cultivating parents' interest about the Parent Academy
- Some principals lack skills in promoting attendance to the Parent Academy
- School personnel fail to understand the connection the Parent Academy and student performance.

**Appendix I:** 4Cs AS-IS Chart of the Parent Academy in SSSD
Appendix J: 4Cs TO-BE Chart of the Parent Academy in SSSD

Context
✓ Transportation provided
✓ Highly collaborative culture towards Parent Academy in which district principals participate
✓ Expectation of parent participation to include train-the-trainer model for parents

Culture
✓ District and school staffs collaboratively planning with parents for academy meetings
✓ District and school staffs understand and embrace each other’s responsibilities.
✓ Communication about scheduling on Saturdays with regards to the families of the school staff.

Conditions
✓ Focus is on increasing Parent Academy attendance throughout the district
✓ Reduce some of the remote locations to increase parent attendance
✓ Expectation of high volume of school administrators communicating and responding with their PTA and SAC

Competencies
✓ Well trained principals on the goals and vision of the Parent Academy
✓ Principals skills are used in ways of improved self-esteem for their school
✓ Principal make time to visit Parent Academy staff for motivational tips
✓ School personnel well informed and motivated about Parent Academy

Parent Academy provides parents with knowledge and opportunities to participate in their children learning.
### Appendix K: Strategies and Action Chart

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Action</th>
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| **Create a communication proposal for change with Parent Academy** | ✓ Present to District Superintendent  
✓ Collaborate and plan for Work Session (Staff)  
✓ Present to Board in a Work Session (Superintendent and Staff)  
✓ Moves for approval for a change with the Parent Academy (District Board of Education) |
| **Establish an organizational structure for a Parent Academy Advisory Board** | ✓ Devise a plan for board members to nominate possible members to serve on Parent Academy Advisory Board  
✓ Appoint three business partners (ad hoc, and by Superintendent)  
✓ Include four members of the Parent Academy staff  
✓ Establish meeting times and locations |
| **Institute a leadership development for key players in the district for the Parent Academy** | ✓ Provide leadership training for principals. Here principals will be equipped with strategies to become stronger in leading parents to maximum engagement.  
✓ Offer parents the train-the-trainer workshops where they can lead other parents to parent-to-parent discourse.  
✓ Provide business partners with interactive sessions with parents and other business partners. |
| **Provide professional development for stakeholders** | ✓ Offer professional development sessions for administrators, provide them with strategies to engage and recruit involved parents. Principals were also provided training on how to encourage their colleagues  
✓ Train parents on the Parent Academy and the possible sessions and offer follow-up training  
✓ Train business partners on building partnerships with parents and the school and offer follow-up training  
✓ Offer cursory informative meetings to school board members |
| **Focus on addressing District’s Parent Academy’s concerns** | ✓ Establish protocol for providing transportation for parents to and from the Parent Academy meetings  
✓ Review flexible scheduling (time and days) for meetings  
✓ Consider centralized training place or use of different locations through the district. |