South Carolina Parent Involvement Instrument Project

Final Report

Submitted to
South Carolina Education Oversight Committee

Institute for Families in Society

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SECTION ONE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The federal government has recognized parent involvement as an important aspect of a child's education. Parent involvement is the eighth goal of the National Education Goals of 2000. Goal eight mandates that schools need to promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting students' social, educational, and academic growth (Carey, Lewis, Farris, & Burns, 1998). One of the objectives of this goal is that schools must assist parents in providing learning activities at home and must facilitate parent involvement in decision-making at the school (Moles, 1997).

The state of South Carolina has enacted two laws to monitor parent involvement programs in public schools. In 1998, the *Education Accountability Act* charged the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) to work in conjunction with the State Board of Education to report on the performance of public elementary, middle, high schools, and schools districts within the state. This report, known as the school report card, is mandated to include information on community and parent support as well as evaluations of the school by parents, teachers, and students. In September of 2000, the *Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act* was approved which stated that the EOC should survey parents to "determine if state and local efforts are effective in increasing parent involvement." The information gathered from the survey will be used as part of a public education campaign to promote the importance of parent involvement.

These examples highlight the importance of parental involvement in a child's education. Districts need to have solid parental involvement programs if they want to adhere to the federal and state legislation. A parent involvement survey is critical to the success of a program to increase parental participation because it can help school districts identify areas of strengths and weaknesses.

The two major goals of this report are to:
1. establish what the literature says about:
    - a) parent involvement and its effects;
    - b) what works to increase parent involvement; and

2. report on the development and piloting of the South Carolina Parent Survey that will be given statewide to parents of fifth, eighth, and eleventh grade students attending public schools. Please note that the survey will be given to parents of third graders in K-3 schools.

Definition of Parent Involvement

Based on a review of the literature the following definition of parent involvement guided this work:

> *Parent involvement* is a multi-dimensional construct that involves the participation of parents in both school- and home based activities that are designed to promote the optimal development of students. Parent involvement can include, not only parent behaviors (e.g., going to PTA meetings, helping with homework), but also attitudes about involvement (e.g., I believe my child's teacher wants my participation; I believe it is a part of my role as a teacher to work with parents), barriers to (e.g., language differences, parent literacy), and facilitators of (e.g., flexible meeting schedules, location of the meeting) involvement.

Benefits of Parent Involvement

The benefits of parent involvement have been investigated and documented by a number of researchers. It is important to keep in mind that the benefits of parent involvement have synergistic effects (i.e., what benefits students, benefits parents and schools as well). For the sake of simplicity, the findings are listed below according to whether the benefit most directly relates to students, parents, schools, or communities. The results below present relationships between involvement and benefits.

Benefits of parent involvement for students include:
- higher academic achievement, regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnic/racial background, and/or parent educational level;
- better school attendance;
- lower dropout rates; and
- improved social functioning and self esteem.

Benefits of parental involvement for parents include:
- increased understanding of the school;
- greater interaction between parent and child;
- better access to needed services; and
- improved levels of self-esteem, self-efficacy and empowerment;

Benefits of parental involvement for schools include:
- improved teacher morale;
- additional resources (e.g., parents) for teachers;
- higher levels of teachers' sense of effectiveness; and
- greater educational program success.

Benefits of parental involvement for communities include:
- increased community access to school resources and facilities;
- increased community pride;
- improved quality of life in the neighborhood; and
- additional skills to address community needs.

Describing Parent Involvement

The following sections report findings of parental participation with parents who are often cited as having low levels of involvement: parents of middle and high school students, culturally and linguistically diverse parents, low-income parents, and fathers. Schools need to understand why these parents may have lower levels of involvement in order to create programs to meet the needs of these parents.

Parental Involvement Across Grade Level

Findings of parent involvement across grade level suggest that:
- levels of parent involvement typically decline when students enter the fifth and sixth grades;
- high school students benefit from parental involvement; and
- schools need to find ways to encourage high school parents to become involved in their children's education.

Parent Involvement of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Parents

Findings of parent involvement of culturally and linguistically diverse parents suggest:
- parents of color want to be involved in their children's education;
- parents of color believe it is important to participate in their children's education; and
- school staff needs to appreciate the customs, expectations, and beliefs of minority parents.

Suggestions to increase parent involvement of diverse parents include:
- principals ensuring that parents from all backgrounds are represented on various school committees;

- schools providing workshops/educational programs for parents who are not fluent in English;
- schools translating materials and communications into primary languages of parents not fluent in English

The Effects of Socioeconomic Status on Parent Involvement

Findings of parent involvement of low-income parents suggest that:
- socio-economic status is more likely to affect school-based rather than home-based parent involvement;
- low-income parents want to be more involved in their children's education;
- low-income parents may have more inflexible work schedules and may have doubts about their abilities to help their children; and
- school staff and teachers may feel that lower income parents have less to contribute to the child's education.

Suggestions for increasing the involvement of lower income parents include:
- school staff using home visits and telephone calls for communicating with parents;
- school staff focusing on family strengths; and
- school districts providing school staff and teachers with training on how to work with lower income parents.

Father involvement

Findings of fathers' involvement suggest that:
- in two parent families and in non-resident father households, fathers are less involved than mothers in their children's education; and
- where fathers head a single-parent family, fathers are as involved as single-parent mothers

How Schools Can Increase Parent Involvement

Research typically reports low levels of parental participation or that participation is confined to certain roles such as an audience member or fan at sporting events. In order to increase parental involvement, schools need to understand factors that might inhibit parents from participating in their children's education.

Barriers to parental involvement can be classified as: a) practical; b) personal; and/or c) institutional.

Practical barriers to parent involvement are issues which surround the logistics of parents and teachers devoting time and energy to home-school relations.

Personal barriers are factors that influence parents' and school staffs' individual decisions to participate.

Institutional barriers are beliefs or actions taken by the school that inhibit parental involvement.

Potential solutions to personal barriers include:
- creating an environment where parents feel welcome;
- educating parents about the importance of their involvement;
- encourage parents to become involved;
- training teachers on how to effectively involve parents; and
- providing opportunities for parents and teachers to interact in informal ways

Potential solutions to practical barriers include:
- giving parents plenty of notice for parental involvement activities that occur during the school day;
- offering transportation and childcare;
- providing food during evening meetings;
- providing multiple methods of communication between school and home;
- scheduling performances and meetings during times when more parents can attend (e.g., evenings); and
- providing a variety of parent involvement activities.

Potential solutions to institutional barriers include:
- increasing the frequency of communication with parents;
- sending information by mail (rather than book bags);
- contacting parents by phone or memo on a regular basis;
- giving parents information about their children's successes; and
- ensuring that the principal and teachers have a shared vision for parent involvement.

Pilot and Final Survey Development

Pilot Survey Development

The pilot survey consisted of several phases each with a unique set of activities of assistance in moving the project forward toward the development of a final survey.

Item Selection included a review of the literature, discussions with key stakeholders, and a review of South Carolina Accountability legislation. Items were selected from validated existing surveys on parent involvement.

Survey Review included feedback by multiple stakeholders including national, state and local experts on parent involvement as well as focus groups with parents of school age students.

Pilot Data Collection from families of 5th, 8th and 11th grade parents from five different school districts from across the state (with the assistance of the EOC).

Final Survey Development

Responses from the 907 parents who participated in the pilot survey were compiled, coded, and entered.

- Individual item responses as well as reliabilities of groupings of items were reviewed.
- Results of the analyses indicated very high reliabilities for a tool of this nature.
- Items that indicated somewhat lower reliabilities were reviewed in the context of their discriminate validity and importance in assessing constructs set forth by the EOC and State Department of Education.
- Based on the analyses and subsequent discussion with the project core staff, the pilot survey was reduced and the South Carolina Parent Survey was developed.

SECTION TWO

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLS:

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

National Importance of Parent Involvement

The federal government has recognized parental involvement an important aspect of a child's education. Parent involvement is the eighth goal of the *National Education Goals of 2000*. Goal eight mandates that schools need to promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting students' social, educational, and academic growth (Carey, Lewis, Farris, & Burns, 1998). One of the objectives of this goal is that schools must assist parents in providing learning activities at home and must facilitate parent involvement in decision-making at the school (Moles, 1997).

The United States Department of Education is also involved in a partnership between families, schools, communities, businesses, and religious organizations. The goal of this partnership is to "help families with their children's learning through the development of positive home-school collaborations on a national and local level" (Moles, 1997).

Quality Counts 2002, a publication distributed by *Education Week*, reports on education policy in the United States. *Quality Counts 2002* provides data on "the percent of students in schools where a school-level official reports that…lack of parent involvement is not a problem or is a minor problem and more than half of parents participate in parent-teacher conferences" (www.edweek.org/sreports).

Recently, President Bush signed the *No Child Left Behind Act* into law. While the primary focus of the legislation is on accountability and research based methods of instruction and evaluation, the plan recognizes that all parents need the information and options to get involved in their children's education (Paige, 2002). In April 2002, US Secretary of Education Paige embarked on a nationwide tour to seek active participation of parents in improving the nation's schools.

Importance of Parental Involvement in South Carolina

The state of South Carolina has enacted two laws to monitor parent involvement in public schools. In 1998, the *Education Accountability Act* charged the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) to work in conjunction with the State Board of Education to report on the performance of public elementary, middle, high schools, and school districts within the state. This report, known as the school report card, is mandated to include information on community and parent support as well as evaluations of the school by parents, teachers, and students. In September of 2000, the *Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act* was approved which stated that the EOC should survey parents to "determine if state and local efforts are effective in increasing parent involvement." The information gathered from the survey will be used as part of a public education campaign to promote the importance of parent involvement.

These national and state examples highlight the importance of parental involvement in their child's education. If school districts want to adhere to the legislation and have positive reports in national publications, districts need to have a solid parental involvement program. A parent involvement survey is critical to the success of efforts to increase parental participation because it can help the district identify areas of strengths and weaknesses.

Goals of the Literature Review

The four main goals of this literature review were to:

1) establish what the literature says about parent involvement and its effects;

2) provide information to the Education Oversight Committee, the South Carolina State Department of Education, school personnel, School Improvement Councils, and to other stakeholders about what does and does not work to increase parent involvement;

3) inform the selection, creation, and prioritization of items that should be included in the South Carolina Parent Survey; and

4) inform the survey design and methodology for administration.

Defining Parent Involvement

A review of the literature on parent involvement reveals that there is not consistent agreement on what is meant by the term "parent involvement" (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2001). Several different terms (e.g., home-school relationships, home-school collaboration, family-school involvement, home-school partnerships) are

often used interchangeably to describe the relationship between the parent and the school (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Christenson, 1995; Christenson, Rounds, & Gorney, 1992; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Epstein, 1996). Furthermore, there is not one operational definition of parent involvement consistently used in the professional literature (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Christenson, 1995; Dunst & Paget, 1991; Epstein, 1996) or practice (Simmons, 2001). However, there are several elements that are common across definitions, theories, and empirical studies. These common elements, which are listed below, serve as the foundation for our definition of *parent involvement.*

1. Parent involvement is a complex issue with multiple dimensions that include both parent and school behaviors.

2. Parent involvement exists on a continuum from school-centered activities to home-centered activities.

3. The philosophy of parent involvement entails parents, educators, and the community working toward the common goal of optimal education and development of the students with shared responsibility for student outcomes.

A review of the literature on parent involvement indicates that parent involvement can be organized into two primary categories: a) school-centered parent involvement, and b) home-centered parent involvement.

School-centered parent involvement is characterized by parent activities at a systems level and includes activities such as participation in classroom social and service events (classroom level), attending PTA meetings (school level), and attending and participating in school board meetings (district level). These are activities, which often first come to mind when school personnel define parent involvement and typically take place at the school building.

Home-centered parent involvement is characterized by activities parents do directly with their child, such as helping with their homework, providing a good breakfast in the morning, and attending one-on-one meetings with their child's teachers. These are activities often identified by parents as ways in which they are involved and typically take place away from the school building.

Within each of these two broad categories, several primary themes, which are helpful in organizing the literature on parent involvement and the subsequent measurement of parent involvement practices, emerge: a) *attitudes* about parent involvement; b) parent involvement *behaviors*; c) *barriers* to parent involvement; and d) *facilitators* of parent involvement. With these issues, assumptions, categories, and themes in mind, the following definition of parent involvement will guide this review:

> ***Parent involvement*** is a multi-dimensional construct that involves the participation of parents in both school- and home-centered activities that are designed to promote optimal development of students. Parent involvement can include not only parent behaviors (e.g., going to PTA meetings, helping with homework), but also attitudes about involvement (e.g., I believe my child's teacher wants my participation, I believe it is a part of my role as a teacher to work with parents), as well as barriers to (e.g., language differences, parent literacy), and facilitators of (e.g., flexible meeting schedules, location of the meeting) involvement.

Benefits of Parent Involvement

The benefits of parent involvement have been investigated and documented by a number of researchers and educational theorists (e.g. Chavkin 1989; Heid & Harris, 1989; Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms, 1986; Leitch & Tangri, 1988; Newman, 1997; Sutherland, 1991). It is important to keep in mind that the benefits of parent involvement have synergistic effects (i.e., what benefits students, benefits parents and schools as well). However, for the sake of simplicity, the findings are listed below according to whether the benefit most directly relates to students, parents, schools, or communities.

Benefits of Parent Involvement for Students

- Higher academic achievement, regardless of socio-economic status, ethnic/racial background, or parent educational level (Chavkin, 1989; Christenson, 1995; Christenson, Rounds & Franklin, 1992; Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Dornbusch & Ritter, 1998; Drake, 1995; Griffith, 1996; Henderson et al., 1986; Ho Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996; Keith, Keith, Quirk, Cohen-Rosenthal, & Franzese, 1995; Prosise, 1990; Reynolds, 1992; Riox & Berla, 1993; Schurr, 1992; Simon, 2000). Gains in academic achievement are most likely to occur when parents help students in specific subject areas (Brandt, 1989).

- Better student attendance (Henderson et al., 1986).

- Lower drop out rates (Drake, 1995; Southwest Educational Laboratory, 2000).

- More successful transitions to higher grades (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2001; Trusty, 1999).

- Higher rates of homework completion (Brandt, 1989; Christenson, 1995).

- Improved student motivation (Christenson, Rounds, & Gorney, 1992).

- Improved social functioning (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2001).

- Increased self-esteem (Christenson, Rounds, and Gorney, 1992).

- Greater perceived competence (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994).

Benefits of Parent Involvement for Parents

- Increased understanding of the school (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2001).

- Increased interaction between parents and their child (e.g., improved communication about schoolwork) (Christenson, Rounds, & Franklin, 1992; Epstein & Dauber, 1991).

- Positive changes in parenting styles (Hornby, 2000; Prosise, 1990).

- Increased access to needed services like health and social services (Wynn, Meyer, & Richards-Schuster, 2000).

- Increased levels of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and empowerment (Batey, 1996; Davies, 1989; Griffith, 1998; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Burrow, 1987; Hornby, 2000; Sutherland, 1991).

- Participation in their child's education may lead parents to further their own education (Haynes & Comer, 1996; Hornby, 2000).

Benefits of Parent Involvement for Schools

- Improved teacher morale (Leitch & Tangri, 1988; Prosise, 1990).

- Additional resources (e.g., parents) are available for teachers so they can spend more time educating children (Chavkin, 1989; Davies, 1989; Prosise, 1990; Sutherland, 1991).

- Sustained school reform efforts (e.g., increased accountability and design of school improvement plans) (Lewis & Henderson, 1997).

- Higher level of teachers' sense of effectiveness (Desimone, Finn-Stevenson, & Henrich, 2000; Haynes & Comer, 1996).

- More successful educational programs (Christenson, Rounds, & Franklin, 1992).

- Mediated tensions between schools and communities (Edwards & Young, 1992).

Benefits of Parent Involvement for Communities

- Increased community access to school resources and facilities (Davies, 1989).

- Increased community pride (Davies, 1989).

- Improved quality of life in the neighborhood (Lewis & Henderson, 1998).

- Transfer of skills to address community needs (Davies, 1989; Shirley, 1997).

- Increased exchange of physical and human resources among organizations (Wynn et al., 2000).

- Increased connections supportive of community development (e.g., economic support, physical redevelopment and community building) (Wynn et al., 2000).

- Changes in local power and politics (Lewis & Henderson, 1998), reflecting student, teacher and parent engagement in learning activities that are relevant to local issues (Lewis & Henderson, 1998).

How Schools Can Increase Parent Involvement

Research typically finds low level of parental participation or that participation is confined to certain roles such as audience members or fans at sporting events (Carey et al., 1998; Christenson et al., 1992; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000). In order to increase parental involvement, schools need to understand factors that might inhibit parents from participating in their child's education. Barriers to parental involvement can be classified as: a) practical; b) personal; and/or c) institutional (Adelman, 1994). In this section, barriers to participation and solutions are discussed.

Practical barriers to parent involvement are issues which surround the logistics of parents and teachers devoting time and energy to home-school relations.

Personal barriers are factors that influence parents' and school staffs' individual decisions to participate.

Institutional barriers are beliefs or actions taken by the school that inhibit parental involvement.

Better understanding of the potential barriers to parental involvement can assist schools in facilitating parent involvement. The following is an explanation of each of the barriers along with suggestions for schools on how to address each of these barriers. The identified solutions are also in accordance with the guidelines recommended by the National Parent Teacher Association to create effective parent and family involvement programs (www.pta.org).

Practical Barriers

Parents often encounter practical barriers to their involvement, and may lack the resources to overcome these obstacles on their own. The following is a list of barriers frequently cited in the literature (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Adelman, 1994; Davies, 1989; Edwards & Young, 1992; Finders & Lewis, 1994; Henderson et al., 1986; Leitch & Tangri, 1988; Moles, 1993; Moles, 1997; Patrikakou, Weissberg, & Rubenstein, 1999; Peña, 2000; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000; Stough, 1982).

- Lack of time.
- Economic constraints.
- Lack of transportation.
- Neighborhood safety.
- Lack of appropriate childcare.
- Language-communication barriers.
- Diverse linguistic and cultural practices.
- Work schedules of parents limit ability to attend meetings during school hours.

Solutions to Practical Barriers

- *Give parents plenty of notice, or plan around their work schedules and other obligations.* Parents are more likely to participate if schools are flexible in planning conferences, meetings, and events (Mannan & Blackwell, 1992; Moles, 1997; Leitch & Tangri, 1988; Stough, 1982).

- *Offer transportation and childcare.* Provide school buses to transport parents to school for evening meetings (Batey, 1996). Collaborate with parents to offer childcare in the kindergarten classroom during meetings and events (Griffith, 1996; Henderson et al., 1986; Tomlinson, 1996).

- *Link parents to programs and resources for their families*. Schools need to become knowledgeable about resources available to parents (Simich-Dudgeon, 1993) and help parents identify resources outside the school that can help them solve problems and manage competing demands (López et al., 2001; Mannan & Blackwell, 1992; www.pta.org; Simich-Dudgeon, 1993).

- *Provide multiple methods of communication* (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Hornby, 2000; Peña, 2000). Communicate with parents in print and verbally because some parents may not take the time to read something sent home or may have low levels of literacy (Hornby, 2000; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000).

- *Meet with parents away from the school.* Conduct school meetings at settings that may be more comfortable to parents such as at home, churches, or community centers (Batey, 1996; Davies, 1991; Haynes & Comer, 1996; Moles, 1997; Olion, 1988; www.pta.org; Schurr, 1992; Tomlinson, 1996).

- *Schedule performances, workshops, and conferences during times when more parents can attend such as during the evenings or weekends* (Lindle, 1989; Schurr, 1992; Tomlinson, 1996).

- *Provide a range of parental involvement activities* (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Regin, 1993; Tomlinson, 1996). Parents have traditionally been asked to participate in fund-raising or volunteering in the classroom (Batey, 1996). Parents will differ in the parts they are able to play in their children's education, both in terms of frequency and level of involvement (Mannan & Blackwell, 1992). A higher level of commitment will come from parents who are encouraged to participate in the school decision-making process (Batey, 1996).

Personal Barriers

Parents may be hesitant to become involved with their child's schooling because of their personal fears, frustrations and apprehensions. This is especially true if a parent had a negative experience with school, is anxious about their child, or dropped out of school. The following barriers have been identified in the literature (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Coleman & Churchill, 1997; Comer, 1980; Davies, 1989; Finders & Lewis, 1994; Haynes & Comer, 1996; Henderson et al., 1986; Moles, 1997; Regin, 1993):

Parent-Related Personal Barriers
- Reminders of their own past negative school experiences.

- Reawakening of old fears and frustrations.
- Anxiety about their child's performance or behavior.
- Mistrust of the educational system.
- Anxiety and apprehension of what the school expects of them.
- Lack of knowledge about how to become involved.
- Lack of support from partners or spouses.
- Limited parental education, making it more difficult for parents to assist their children in schoolwork.
- Financial concerns that limit participation in activities requiring them to donate money to the school.

Parents are not the only ones affected by personal barriers. School staff might also have attitudes and beliefs that would inhibit them from promoting parental involvement in their schools. Personal barriers related to school staff include:

School Related Personal Barriers
- Teachers may be unaware of how they can encourage parent involvement (Leitch & Tangri, 1988).
- School staff may believe that promoting parental involvement is too time-consuming (Adelman, 1994; Leitch & Tangri, 1988; Mannan & Blackwell, 1992; Patrikakou et al., 1990; Peña, 2000).
- Teachers may believe that parents are troublesome in the classroom or that they do not have the skills to assist in their child's education (Comer & Haynes, 1991; Prosise, 1990; Rameriz, 2001).
- Educators may equate parents' lack of involvement with lack of interest in their child's education (Finders & Lewis, 1994; Heid & Harris, 1989; Letich & Tangri, 1988).
- Educators may have limited views of the ways in which families can be involved (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001).

Solutions to Personal Barriers

Parent-Related Solutions to Personal Barriers
- *Create an environment where parents feel welcome,* starting when parents walk through the school door (Adelman, 1994; Batey, 1996; Chavkin & Williams, 1989; Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Drake, 1995; Henderson et al., 1986; Mannan & Blackwell, 1992; Peña, 2000; Rich, 1996; Tomlinson, 1996). When parents feel welcome in a school they are more likely to return to events at the school (López et al., 2001; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000). Furthermore, a welcoming environment is significantly associated with high parental involvement

in their child's school (Nord, 1997). Suggestions for improving school climate are listed below.

> ⇒ Post a sign reading, "Welcome. We are glad you have come to visit. Please check in at the office."
> ⇒ Encourage the secretary to respond warmly to phone calls and school visitors.
> ⇒ Encourage school staff to greet parents with friendly smiles.
> ⇒ Designate a parent room and a parent coordinator in each building.
> ⇒ Provide frequent opportunities for parents to come to school.

- *Educate parents on the importance of their involvement.* Once parents understand the value of parental participation, they are more likely to become involved in activities in the home and in the school (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Heid & Harris, 1989).

- *Encourage parents to become involved.*
    > ⇒ Build on what parents may already be doing with their children (Finders & Lewis, 1994).
    > ⇒ Encourage and support home involvement, even if parents cannot be involved at school (Adelman, 1994; Bempechat, 1992; Tomlinson, 1996).
    > ⇒ Provide teacher-prepared materials that are easy for the parents to use at home (Simich-Dudgeon, 1993).
    > ⇒ Help parents understand the various ways they can become involved in their child's education (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000).

- *Address parental expectations of their child's educational attainment*. Parental aspirations for their children's educational achievement have a significant positive effect on their child's academic achievement (Fan, 2001; Leitch & Tangri, 1988).

Teacher-Related Solutions to Personal Barriers
- *Train teachers how to effectively involve parents* (Batey, 1996; Chavkin & Williams, 1985; Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Moles, 1997; Patrikakou et al., 1999; Schurr, 1992; Simich-Dudgeon, 1993; Tomlinson, 1996). The strongest and most consistent predictors of parent involvement are school programs and teacher behaviors that encourage and guide parent involvement (Dauber & Epstein, 1987).

- *Provide opportunities for parents and school staff to interact in informal ways*. Foster opportunities to build partnerships based on mutual trust and respect (Chavkin & Williams, 1989; Koch & McDonough, 1999; www.pta.org).

Institutional Barriers

Institutional barriers occur when there is a lack of resources needed to promote parental involvement or when the school staff is not interested in promoting parent involvement at the school (Adelman, 1994; Dauber & Epstein, 1993). Institutional barriers typically occur when a school does not have a policy supporting parental involvement or when school resources are not allocated to the parent involvement program (Adelman, 1994). Below are some limiting practices and stereotypes.

- Parent involvement programs are developed according to the needs of the school rather than the needs of the parents or students. (Heid & Harris, 1989; Mannan & Blackwell, 1992; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2001).
- Failure to examine current school practices that are not effectively promoting parental involvement (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001). For example, school policies such as locking doors when school is in session might unknowingly discourage parental involvement (Henderson et al., 1986).

Solutions to Institutional Barriers

- *Increase communication with parents.* Parents prefer frequent and informal communications with teachers (Hornby, 2000). Furthermore, research indicates that parents want to receive information about programs and activities at school, information about the school itself (Elam, Rose, & Gallup, 1993; Mannan & Blackwell, 1992) and information on ways they can positively respond to the educational process (Schurr, 1992).
  - ⇒ Communicate with parents using these methods (Haynes & Comer, 1996; Hornby, 2000):
    - ♦ Informal contacts
    - ♦ Telephone contacts
    - ♦ Written communication
    - ♦ Parent-teacher meetings
    - ♦ Home visits
  - ⇒ Consider sending information by mail to make sure it arrives in parents' hands (Epstein, 1996; Stough, 1982; www.pta.org).
  - ⇒ Reach out to parents through school invitations, initiatives, or programs to support student success (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2001).

- *Give parents information about their children's successes*. (Chavkin & Williams, 1989; Chavkin & Williams, 1993; Christenson, 1995; Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Tomlinson, 1996). Teachers should send parents notes that report their

children's accomplishments instead of only contacting the home when problems arise (Epstein, 1996; Henderson et al., 1986).

- *Ensure that the principal and teachers have a shared vision for parent involvement* (Chavkin & Williams, 1985; Christenson & Sheridan, 2001).
    - ⇒ Schools with strong parent involvement programs have teachers who report strong similarities between their views and others' views about the importance of parent involvement (Epstein & Dauber, 1991).
    - ⇒ If a teacher senses that the school principal or other teachers do not view reaching hard-to-reach parents as important, the teacher is less likely to put his/her efforts into involving these parents (Epstein & Dauber, 1991).
    - ⇒ Ask parents how they want to be involved in their child's education and (Chavkin & Williams, 1985).

- *Outline specific ways parents can become involved.* Successful parent involvement programs are ones that are carefully planned, coordinated (Batey, 1996; Haynes & Comer, 1996) and have clear and focused goals (Simich-Dudgeon, 1993).
    - ⇒ Develop parent involvement contracts that detail the responsibilities of the home and school for educating children (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Mannan & Blackwell, 1992).
    - ⇒ Work with parents and students to set reasonable standards for home-school partnerships (Adelman, 1994; Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Henderson et al., 1986; Stough, 1982).
    - ⇒ Create school-sponsored programs with a consideration of parents' strengths, needs, and interests (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Edwards & Young, 1992; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2001).
    - ⇒ Provide parents with a person to contact if they encounter a problem as well as the most efficient way to make this contact (Hornby, 2000).

- *Make the appropriate resources for parent involvement readily available.* Provision of resources will show the importance the school places on parent involvement and that the school is committed to including parents in their child's education (Chavkin & Williams, 1985).

Describing Parental Involvement

The following sections report findings of parental participation with parents who are often cited as having low levels of involvement: parents of middle and high school students; culturally and linguistically diverse parents; low-income parents; and fathers. Schools need to understand why these parents have lower levels of involvement in order to create strategies that would meet these parents' needs.

Parental Involvement Across Grade Level

Most of the research pertaining to parent involvement focuses on parents of students in elementary and middle school (Carey et al., 1998; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Epstein, 1991; Feuerstein, 2000; Griffith, 1996; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Ho Sui-Chu & Willms 1996; Izzo, Weissberg, Kasprow & Fendrich, 1999; Leitch & Tangri, 1988; Peña, 2000; Reynolds, 1992; Smith, Connell, Wright, Sizer, Norman, Hurley, & Walker, 1997), while fewer studies focus on parent involvement in high school (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Hickman, Greenwood, & Miller, 1995; Simon, 2000; Simon, 2001).

Findings of parental involvement across grade level
- Levels of parental involvement typically decline over time (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Dornbusch & Glasgow, 1996; Izzo et al., 1999).

- Parent involvement usually drops when students enter the fifth and sixth grades (Griffith, 1998).

- High school students benefit from their parents' participation in their schooling through increased academic achievement, lower dropout rates and increased student attendance (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000; Simon, 2000; Simon, 2001).

- Schools need to find ways to encourage high school parents to become involved in their child's education (Ramirez, 2001; Simon, 2000).

Reasons for decline in involvement
- Adolescents are more independent than younger students (Hickman et al., 1995; Prosise, 1990; Simon, 2000).

- Parents may feel that adolescents do not want them to be as visible at the school (Eccles & Harold, 1996).

- The organizational structure of a high school mandates that parents have to work with several teachers (Dornbusch & Glasgow, 1996; Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Eccles & Harold, 1996; Simon, 2001).

- Parents may not understand their child's coursework as their child takes more advanced classes (Chavkin & Williams, 1985; Eccles & Harold, 1996)

- There are fewer opportunities for relationship building between parents and teachers as a child moves from elementary to middle and high school (Adams & Christenson, 2000).

- Schools offer fewer opportunities for parent involvement as children move towards high school (Nord, 1997).

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Parent Involvement of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Parents

One group of parents that are at risk for becoming the least involved in their child's education is parents who are culturally and linguistically diverse (Moles, 2000). This lack of involvement may be due to cultural differences between school and home (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001). School staff may have the misconception that parents of color are apathetic, disinterested, or indifferent to their child's education (Chavkin, 1989; Winters, 1993) and may not work to engage these parents in activities at the school. Alternatively, these parents may feel as if they do not have anything to offer. However, when their participation is sought, they gain a sense of ownership about taking part in their child's education (Batey, 1996). Parents of color want to be involved in their child's education and they believe it is important to be involved in their child's education (Chavkin & Williams, 1993).

Lack of continuity between the culture of the home and that of the school may discourage parent involvement of parents from ethnically and racially diverse backgrounds. Many administrators, teachers and school staff are from middle-class backgrounds. Thus the school's customs, expectations, and experiences might not fit with parents from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds (Coleman & Churchill, 1997; Moles, 1997). For example, parents from a different cultural background may believe that parental participation in their child's school is inappropriate because they believe that school staff has the sole responsibility of educating their children (Simich-Dudgeon, 1993).

The school environment is an important factor in deciding whether parents of color are involved in their child's education. A study conducted to determine how parents of color felt towards their child school found that parents believed they were not welcomed in their child's school. The parents reported that there was a "lack of friendliness" at the school and felt that teachers related to them in a hostile manner. Parents responded to the

school environment by choosing to withdraw their participation from school-related events (Calabrese, 1990).

Below are suggestions on ways schools can help to increase the parental involvement of parents who are culturally and linguistically diverse. It is important to realize that schools need to pay attention to the customs, expectations, and beliefs of culturally diverse parents. Furthermore, schools should commit themselves to involving all parents in their child's education.

Suggestions to increase parent involvement of minority parents
- Ensure that parents from all backgrounds are represented on various school committees (Batey, 1996).
- Provide workshop/educational programs designed for needs of parents who are not fluent in English (López, Scribner, & Mahitivanichcha, 2001; Batey, 1996).
- Develop a "telephone tree" (Peña, 2000) to disseminate information in the parents' primary language (Batey, 1996).
- Translate materials and communications to assist non-English speaking families. (Batey, 1996; Peña, 2000; www.pta.org).
- Provide translators during parent-teacher meetings and school events (Moles, 1997; Simich-Dudgeon, 1993; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000).
- Address the range of backgrounds and experiences found among parents (Edwards & Young, 1992; Voltz, 1994).
- Create relationships with parents based on trust and respect (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Voltz, 1994) by listening to parents and developing genuine interpersonal relationships with parents of color (López et al., 2001; Olion, 1988).
- Become knowledgeable about cultural differences and how differences may impact parents' perspective on education (Olion, 1988; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000; Voltz, 1994)
- Train school staff on how to appropriately work with parents from culturally diverse backgrounds (Moles, 1993; Simich-Dudgeon, 1993).
- Coordinate district-level parental involvement programs for diverse parents (Simich-Dudgeon, 1993).
- Address the social, economic, and physical needs of migrant families (López et al., 2001).

The Effects of Socioeconomic Status on Parental Involvement

Low-income parents are less likely to become involved in their child's education than middle and upper class parents (Lareau & Shumar, 1996). Socioeconomic status is more likely to affect school-based rather than home-based parent involvement (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1989; Hickman, Greenwood, & Miller, 1995).

Issues regarding the involvement of low-income parents
- Low-income parents want to become more involved in their child's education (Chavkin & Williams, 1989). Specifically, these parents want more contact with their child's teachers (Ascher, 1988; Chavkin & Williams, 1989).

- Some school staff believe that the economic difficulties with which poor parents contend make it difficult to engage these parents in becoming involved in their child's education (Ascher, 1988). It is hypothesized that poor parents might not have high levels of involvement because they need relief for their immediate needs before they can assist their child in school (Ascher, 1988).

- Teachers may have a deficit view of families from lower socioeconomic groups, believe that low-income families do not value education, and assume these parents do not have much to offer to the education of their children (Davies, 1989).

- School staff may treat low-income parents as if they lack the knowledge to contribute to their child's education (Bloom, 2001) therefore making low-income parents feel as if they cannot contribute to discussions regarding their child.

- Low-income parents may have doubts regarding their educational abilities (Chavkin & Williams, 1989; Lareau, 1987) and rely on teachers to educate their child (Lareau, 1987).

- Parents' limited education may impede their ability to assist their child with their schoolwork (Moles, 1993).

- Parents might feel as if their economic situation is considered by the school as one reason students are not performing well in school (Bloom, 2001; Christenson & Sheridan, 2001).

- Low-income families might have inflexible work schedules that preclude them from being able to participate at events during school hours (Finders & Lewis, 1994; Leitch & Tangri, 1988; Norman & Smith, 1997).

Suggestions for increasing the involvement of low-income parents:
- Utilize home-visits and telephone calls to provide parents with the opportunity to ask teachers and other school staff questions in a personal setting (Moles, 1993).

- Focus on the family's strengths such as parents' knowledge about their child and their own interest in becoming involved in their child's education (Moles, 1993).

- Provide training for school staff on working with low-income parents (Moles, 1993). School staff should be made aware that schools do not adequately support low-income parents (Bloom, 2001).

Father Involvement

There are few studies which examine the individual contributions mothers and fathers make to their children's education (Nord, 1997). In 1996, parents of kindergartners through 12th graders were asked the extent to which both mothers and fathers were involved in their children's schools. The data were analyzed to determine the influence of the individual contributions of mothers and fathers to their child's academic achievement (Nord, 1997). Below is a summary of the key findings.

- In two-parent families, fathers are much less likely than mothers to be highly involved in their child's school. (Note: This study defined involvement as participation in at least three activities at the school). When fathers from two parent families are involved, the strongest influence affecting father involvement is the mother's involvement. A father is more likely to become involved in his child's education when the mother participates in her child's education.
- Nonresident fathers are least likely to be involved in their child's education.
- Fathers who head single-parent families have levels of involvement similar to single-mothers.
- Father involvement in schooling declines as children become older.
- In two-parent families, father involvement is associated with higher reports of the children getting mostly A's, compared to when mothers are the sole participants in their child's education.
- When fathers head single-parent families, their involvement is related to improvement in student behaviors in the classroom, as evidenced by a reduction in reports of students being suspended or expelled from school. This is also true when nonresident fathers become involved.

Findings from other studies
- Families with an active male role model are more involved in their child's education (Leitch & Tangri, 1988).

- Father involvement is facilitated when they have a social network (DeMoss & Vaughn, 1999).
- Fathers are more likely to be involved in their child's athletic development (Eccles & Harold, 1996).

Implications of The Literature Review for Survey Development

One goal of the Parent Survey is to gather data from parents that will be included in the South Carolina school report card. The existing *South Carolina Teacher and Student Surveys* gather teacher and student satisfaction information related to three domains: (1) home-school relations, (2) social and physical environment, and (3) learning environment. Questions related to all three of these domains were asked on the parent survey so that data from parents can be triangulated with data from teachers and students.

Home-school Relations
Parent satisfaction with home-school relations is associated with levels of parent involvement, and research demonstrates that when parents think the school is trying to involve them, they are more likely to be involved in their child's education (Dauber & Epstein, 1993). Therefore, it is critical that parents perceive their child's school as working to involve them. A significant percentage of the Parent Survey has questions relating to home-school relations.

Social and Physical Environment
Social and physical environments are two separate constructs. However, they are grouped together on the Parent Survey because they are presented together on the Teacher and Student Surveys.

A study by Griffith (1998) found that parents who perceived their child's school climate as safe, empowering, and positive had higher rates of parent involvement. However, aside from safety and the degree to which the school feels welcoming, no studies were located that established a relationship between parents' perceptions of the school's physical environment and levels of parent involvement. This may be due, at least in part, to the fact that few parents are familiar with the physical aspects of the school facility or classroom set-up. Therefore, there is some support for assessing parent satisfaction with the social environment, but no support for assessing parent perceptions of the physical environment. For consistency with the Teacher and Student Surveys, a limited number of questions about the social and physical environment were asked so that data from parents can be compared to student and teacher data.

Learning Environment

No studies were reviewed that identified a direct relationship between parents' perceptions of the learning environment at their child's school and parents' levels of involvement. This may be due to the fact that very few parents are able to visit their child's classroom during the day in order to observe the learning environment. Even though there is not much support for asking questions about the learning environment, a few questions commonly used on surveys were added so that parent data could be compared to teacher and student data.

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Measuring Parental Involvement

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A review of the procedures used in previous parent involvement studies provided a framework for the design of both the pilot study and subsequent statewide parent involvement survey. The review of psychometric properties of existing survey instruments helped guide domain and item development.

Procedures Used in Parent Involvement Surveys

The review of survey administration methodology revealed that while general survey research has examined how specific methods relate to response rates, the application of these procedures directly to parent involvement research is not readily apparent. Very few parent involvement studies (Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Griffith, 1998) provide detail of the procedures utilized in their studies. If included at all, most parent involvement studies do not report the relationship between survey administration and response rate. Therefore, there is no empirical support for one procedure over another in parent involvement survey administration. A review of the general survey literature provided guidance for the procedures used for the pilot survey.

The following methods are often cited in the literature for survey distribution.
- Mail surveys directly from the school to the parents (i.e.; parents of middle and high school students) with a return by mail to a third party.
- Send surveys home with students (i.e., elementary students) with a return by mail to a third party.
- Send surveys home with students or mail surveys to parents with a return to the school.
- Distribute short surveys in conjunction with other school events (e.g., parent-teacher nights; family-school fun-days; student enrollment).

- A letter of support from the school is recommended to increase parent response rates whenever a third party is administering the survey (Dillman, 2001).

- The use of incentives (e.g., entry into a drawing, gift certificate) for parents and students (e.g., candy for individuals, pizza party for classroom) is commonly reported as a way to facilitate a greater response rate in survey research. (Behr & Murphy, 1991; Dillman, 2001; Tollefson, et al 1996).

- The use of one to three follow-ups (e.g., follow-up postcards, second survey packet) is commonly reported in mail survey research to increase the response rate.

There are several other factors pertaining to the "user-friendliness" of the survey that are mentioned in the literature.
- Length of the survey (shorter surveys are more likely to be completed)
- Attention to aesthetics (i.e., use of stamps instead of bulk rate, font size, and paper color, etc. are important)
- Choice of words, readability, and clarity of directions
- Ease of completion
- Direct relevance of the issue to the person completing the survey

A number of the elements highlighted above were implemented in the development and administration of the pilot survey and are recommended for the *South Carolina Parent Survey*.
- Surveys were mailed to the parents directly from the school but were returned to a third party. Please Note: Sending the surveys home with students is a recommended procedure for parents of students in the primary and elementary grades. However, this procedure is strongly discouraged at the secondary grade levels. While the use of "book bags" may reduce financial costs, this procedure compromises the administration because there is no method to determine whether parents received the surveys.
- Attention was paid to aesthetics (e.g., diversity of font size, use of colored paper).
- Instructions were written at the fifth grade level to ensure readability.
- Bubble-format was chosen to support ease of completion.
- A memorandum of support from the school principal was mailed with the survey.

Psychometric Properties of Instruments Commonly Used in Parent Involvement Studies

The literature points to the great challenge in developing a psychometrically sound survey instrument to assess parent involvement. Many of the studies reviewed do not even mention the psychometric properties of the instrument used and when properties are reported, they are often very poor. It is important to know the psychometric properties of the survey, especially when administering to parents from diverse populations (including

gender, socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic diversity). Several common themes regarding the psychometric properties of parent involvement surveys are presented below.

- Defining the construct of "parent involvement" has proven to be a challenge for many researchers. In their conclusions, many researchers point to the importance of clearly defining the construct for *the study at hand* and interpreting results in light of that definition.
- The variability in the nature of the parent involvement programs themselves make defining the construct challenging yet an important aspect in evaluating the baseline in develop a responsive program.
- While most researchers agree on the multidimensional nature of parent involvement, few have provided strong empirical support for this premise. This does not mean that multidimensional scales have not been developed, rather that while such scales may have been developed, the authors fail to provide the needed empirical support for the dimensions or factors (Adams, 1996; Adams & Christenson, 1998; 2000; Christenson & Carroll, 1998; Driggers, 2001; Simmons, 2001).
- While some preliminary studies and writings lend support to the different nature of parent involvement across grade, age, community size, ethnicity, and SES, more work is needed in this area.

Implications for the Present Survey
While it would be unrealistic to expect the present survey to address all of the psychometric concerns highlighted in the literature review and the subsequent *South Carolina Parent Survey*, there was an opportunity to learn from the work of others and to address some of the concerns directly at the onset of the survey development.

Defining the Construct of Parent Involvement. The development of a comprehensive literature review on parent involvement, including an operational definition of the term and the purpose of the survey helped to establish the construct validity of the survey.

Defining Relevant Dimensions of Parent Involvement. The literature review helped guide the survey development and subsequent domains or "scales" used in the survey. By collecting data from a large and diverse sample, preliminary analyses were conducted to help validate the construct. Dimensions not empirically supported and items that did not have adequate reliability were eliminated.

Understanding Differences across Selected Demographic Variables. The sample size of the statewide survey allowed for an examination of differences in parent involvement across the elementary, middle, and high school grades as well as variations based on racial and ethnic diversity, gender, and socioeconomic status.

Summary

While parent involvement has been of importance to school professionals for many years, recent movements in education including policy, legislation, and increased accountability requirements have resulted in a greater need to explore the involvement of parents in schools today. The construct of parent involvement is complex with many definitions and perspectives on ways parents should be involved in schools. While a review of the literature points to numerous discussions on ways to involve parents, barriers that hinder involvement, and factors that facilitate involvement, surprisingly few empirical studies are reported that discuss parent perceptions of parent involvement. It is our hope that this literature review, which guided the development of the *South Carolina Parent Survey*, will serve as a resource for future efforts to examine parent involvement.

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SECTION THREE

DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTH CAROLINA PARENT SURVEY

Pilot Survey Development

Item Selection Phase

Based on review of the literature, discussions with member of the EOC, review of South Carolina's Accountability Legislation, and the RFP for the survey development, a conceptual framework for the survey was outlined. As a part of the item selection process, a number of existing state and national surveys were also reviewed. Existing surveys were consulted because they included previously validated items, which would increase the reliability and validity of the South Carolina Pilot Survey. State and national surveys reviewed included: *School and Family Partnerships: Survey of Parents in Elementary and Middle Grades* (Epstein & Salinas, 1993); *Measures to Assess Elementary School Climate: Parent and Student Customer Satisfaction with Public Education* (Griffith, 1998); *Parent Survey of School Environment* (Griffith, 2001); *National Education Longitudinal Survey* (USDOE, 1999); *Family and School Partnerships: A Study of Parent Involvement* (Smith, Hurley, Walker, Norman, & Gandy, 1994); *Lowering Barriers to Home-School Communication* (Stough, 1982) the *South Carolina State Department of Education, Parent Survey* (SCSDE, 1999); and the *South Carolina State Department of Education, Teacher Survey* (SCSDE, 2001).

Survey Review Phase

Once a draft of the pilot survey was developed, state and national experts on parent involvement, parents of school age students, members of the EOC and members of the EOC Parent Involvement Subcommittee reviewed the survey. In addition, two focus groups and several individual interviews were conducted with diverse groups of parents who have children in South Carolina schools. At the focus groups/interviews, parents were asked to complete the survey. Time was recorded to better understand how long the survey would take parents to complete. After parents completed the survey, the focus group leader asked parents a series of questions about the survey (see Appendix A). Based on the feedback collected during the survey review phase, the final pilot survey was compiled. A copy of the *South Carolina Parent Pilot Survey* is located in **Section FOUR** of this report.

Pilot Survey Data Collection Phase

Sample Selection

Five school districts within the state of South Carolina were asked to participate in this study. School districts were chosen from a pool of districts that were representative of the four geographic regions of the state: Low Country, the Upstate, the Midlands, and the Pee Dee. School districts reflecting the socioeconomic and racial/ethnic composition of the general population of South Carolina were selected. School districts were also chosen if they had previously expressed an interest in participating in research activities with the Education Oversight Committee. A total of twenty-one schools participated in this project. Parents of fifth, eighth, and eleventh graders were asked to participate in this study. Surveys were mailed to 3,569 parents.

Procedure

In Fall 2001, the Education Oversight Committee wrote letters requesting participation in the project to superintendents from the five school districts throughout the state to inform them that a team of researchers from the *Institute for Families in Society (IFS)* was creating a pilot version of a parent involvement survey. The superintendents were told that the information gathered from the pilot survey would be used to create the *South Carolina Parent Survey* that would be administered to parents of fifth, eighth, and eleventh grade students in the Spring of 2002. The information from the *South Carolina Parent Survey* will be reported on the school report cards.

Superintendents were asked to select one high school and its feeder middle and elementary schools from their districts to participate in the study. The superintendents were told that IFS would obtain addresses of the parents of fifth, eighth, and eleventh grade students from the South Carolina State Department of Education and that the IFS would mail the pilot survey to the parents using the return address of the school. Furthermore, the completed pilot survey would be returned to the IFS in a self-addressed postage paid envelope. Participating schools were also asked to allow the IFS to create a supporting memo from the principal on school letterhead for distribution with the surveys (see Appendix B). The supporting memorandum was written to parents as an endorsement of the project and to describe the purpose of the study. Enclosed with the request of participation were draft copies of the Pilot Survey as well as the memo of support from the school principal.

Permission was granted from the five school districts to seek participation from parents in their district. The superintendents provided the IFS with the names of the schools and the principals. The principals were telephoned and thanked for agreeing to participate in the study. The purpose of the study was reviewed with the principals and they were asked if they had any additional questions. The principals were also provided a copy of the memorandum of support.

Information gathered from the parents was confidential. The self-addressed postage paid envelopes were marked with a school code. This code was transferred to returned surveys for the purpose of data collection only. A brief summary of the results from the school will be sent to the principals in the Spring of 2002.

Final Survey Development

Pilot Survey Data Analysis

The information obtained from the Pilot Survey was compiled, coded, and entered. A total of 907 parents from 21 schools in the five districts completed the survey (290 Grade 5 parents; 322 Grade 9 parents, and 295 Grade 11 parents) resulting in an overall response rate of 25%. A list of the schools that participated in the Pilot Survey and their response rates are located in Appendix C.

Analyses were conducted to determine the reliabilities of the items in the survey and when appropriate the "scales" or groupings of items. The first three sections of the survey (Learning Environment, Social/Physical Environment, and Home-School Relations) were treated as separate "scales" in the data analysis. Reliabilities for the three scales were excellent for a survey of this type and are highlighted in the table below. Descriptive information was compiled on the remaining sections to assist in better understanding pilot survey responses.

Table 1.
Pilot Survey Alpha Levels

	Scale A Items 1-7	Scale B Items 1-12	Scale C Items 1-8
Total Scale	.93	.95	.84
Grade 5	.93	.96	.84
Grade 8	.92	.94	.81
Grade 11	.90	.93	.86

Data analyses were conducted primarily by grade level, however some school level information was analyzed in an effort to determine when items did not discriminate well between the schools. Reliabilities for individual items were conducted. Discriminate variation across different groups (e.g., race, gender, grade) was analyzed.

Final Survey Development.

Selection of items for the final survey was guided by the *South Carolina Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act*, the RFP for the project (issued by the EOC), the data collected from the pilot survey and recommendations from the EOC, and the Parent Involvement Subcommittee. When possible, items were deleted and portions of the survey were reorganized to create a shorter and more efficient survey. A copy of the final survey is located in **Section Six** of this document

Table 2.
Final Survey Alpha Levels for Parent Survey (Using Pilot Sample Data)

	Scale A	Scale B	Scale C
Total Scale	.82	.84	.73
Grade 5	.82	.85	.71
Grade 8	.81	.83	.70
Grade 11	.81	.83	.74

A summary of the descriptive information for the study by grade level and school is located in Appendix D.

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SECTION FOUR
PARENT SURVEYS, PILOT VERSION

South Carolina Pilot Survey for Parents of 5th Graders
2001-2002 School Year

INSTRUCTIONS

· Please use a Number 2 pencil only.   · Erase cleanly any marks you wish to change.
· Please do not use a pen.   · Correct Mark ✦ Wrong Mark ☥ ♏ ✌ ✌
· Make solid marks that fill the circle completely.

In the section below, please mark either "*Strongly disagree,*" "*Disagree,*" "*Agree,*" or "*Strongly agree.*" If you cannot answer the statement, mark "*Don't know.*"

Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the Learning Environment at your child's school.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
1) My child's teachers give homework assignments that help my child learn.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
2) My child's school has high expectations for student learning.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
3) My child's teachers give tests on what they teach in class.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
4) My child is getting a good education at this school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
5) My child's teachers encourage my child to learn.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
6) My child's teachers provide extra help when my child needs it.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
7) I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about Home-School Relations.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
1) My child's teachers contact me to say good things about my child.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
2) My child's teachers tell me how I can help my child learn.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
3) My child's teachers invite me to visit my child's classrooms.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
4) My child's school returns my phone calls and/or e-mails promptly.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
5) My child's school includes me in decision-making (academic placement, discipline issues, etc.).	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
6) My child's school gives me information about what my child should be learning in school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
7) My child's school listens to parents' ideas and then makes changes based on what parents have said.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
8) My child's school schedules activities at times that I can attend.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
9) My child's school tells me about cultural events in the community (free music concerts, festivals, art shows, etc.).	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
10) My child's school treats all parents fairly.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
11) The principal at my child's school is available and welcoming to parents.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
12) I am satisfied with home-school relations at my child's school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓

Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the Social and Physical Environment at your child's school.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
1) There is enough room for students to learn at my child's school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
2) My child's school is kept neat and clean.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
3) My child feels safe at school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
4) My child's school disciplines all students fairly.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
5) My child's school thinks each student is important.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
6) My child's teachers care about my child as an individual.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
7) Students at my child's school are well-behaved.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
8) I am satisfied with the social and physical environment at my child's school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓

The section below asks if you do a variety of school activities/events. Please mark either ● "*I do this*,"
● "*I don't do this, but I would like to,*" ● "*I don't do this, and I don't care to,*" or
● "*The school does not offer this activity/event.*"

Please tell us if you do the following:	I do this	I don't do this, but I would like to	I don't do this, and I don't care to	The school does not offer this activity/ event
1) Attend Open Houses or "Back to School Nights"	↓	↓	↓	↓
2) Attend student programs or performances (band concerts, holiday plays, sports, etc.)	↓	↓	↓	↓
3) Volunteer for the school (bake cookies, help in office, etc.)	↓	↓	↓	↓
4) Help with school fund-raisers	↓	↓	↓	↓
5) Go on field trips with my child's school	↓	↓	↓	↓
6) Participate in School Improvement Council meetings	↓	↓	↓	↓
7) Participate in Parent-Teacher-Student Organizations (PTA, PTSO, etc.)	↓	↓	↓	↓
8) Participate in school committees (textbook committee, spring carnival committee, etc.)	↓	↓	↓	↓
9) Attend workshops that teach me how to help my child with school work (computer class, math class, how to help my child prepare for PACT, etc.)	↓	↓	↓	↓
10) Attend parent workshops (how to talk to your child about drugs, effective discipline, TV watching, etc.)	↓	↓	↓	↓
11) Attend parent-teacher conferences	↓	↓	↓	↓

The section below asks about things you may do to support your child's education. For each statement, mark either • *"I do this,"* • *"I don't do this, but I would like to,"* or • *"I don't do this, and I don't care to."*

Please tell us if you do the following:	**I do this**	**I don't do this, but I would like to**	**I don't do this, and I don't care to**
1) Visit my child's classes	↓	↓	↓
2) Contact my child's teachers about my child's school work or grades	↓	↓	↓
3) Limit the amount of time my child watches TV, plays video games, surfs the Internet, etc	↓	↓	↓
4) Make sure my child does his/her homework	↓	↓	↓
5) Contact my child's teacher when I think there is a problem	↓	↓	↓
6) Encourage my child to read	↓	↓	↓
7) Talk with my child about how important school is to his/her future	↓	↓	↓
8) Help my child with homework when he/she needs it	↓	↓	↓
9) Encourage my child to be involved in community activities such as sports, arts and crafts, and volunteer service projects	↓	↓	↓

The section below asks about a variety of things that may influence your involvement in your child's education. Please mark if each statement is "True" or "False."

Please mark if each of the following is TRUE or FALSE.	**True**	**False**
1) Lack of transportation reduces my involvement.	↓	↓
2) Family health problems reduce my involvement.	↓	↓
3) Lack of available care for my children or other family members reduces my involvement.	↓	↓
4) My work schedule makes it hard for me to be involved.	↓	↓
5) English is not my first language, and this makes it hard for me to be involved.	↓	↓
6) Being involved has been a bad experience in the past.	↓	↓
7) I don't know how to help my child with homework.	↓	↓
8) The school does not encourage my involvement.	↓	↓
9) Information about how to be involved either comes too late or not at all.	↓	↓
10) I don't feel like it is appreciated when I try to be involved.	↓	↓

In the section below, please rate your school in several areas. Please mark either "Very good," "Good," "Okay," "Bad," or "Very Bad."

Please rate your school on…	Very Good	Good	Okay	Bad	Very Bad
1) The school's overall friendliness	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
2) The school's interest in parents' ideas and opinions	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
3) The school's efforts to involve parents	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
4) The school's efforts to **get** important information **from** parents	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
5) The school's efforts to **give** important information **to** parents	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
6) How the school is doing overall	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓

These questions are optional. We are asking these questions because we want to be sure that schools are involving all parents equally. For each question, please mark only one answer.

1) How long has your 5th grade child attended this school?
   ↓ 1 year (this school year)   ↓ 3 years   ↓ 5 years
   ↓ 2 years   ↓ 4 years   ↓ 6 years or more

2) What grades did your child receive on his/her last report card?
   ↓ Mostly A's and B's   ↓ Mostly C's and D's   ↓ Other_____
   ↓ Mostly B's and C's   ↓ Mostly D's and F's

3) What is your racial/ethnic group?
   ↓ African-American/Black   ↓ Hispanic   ↓ Asian American/Pacific Islander
   ↓ Caucasian/White   ↓ Native American   ↓ Other _____

4) Please identify your relationship to this child?
   ↓ Parent   ↓ Grandparent   ↓ Legal Guardian
   ↓ Stepparent   ↓ Foster Parent   ↓ Other _____

5) What is your gender?
   ↓ Male   ↓ Female

6) What is the highest level of education you have completed?
   ↓ Attended elementary/high school   ↓ Earned Associate Degree   ↓ Earned college degree
   ↓ Completed high school/GED   ↓ Attended college/training program   ↓ Postgraduate study or degree

7) What is your family's **total** yearly household income:
   ↓ Less than $14,999   ↓ $25,000-$34,999   ↓ $55,000- $74,999
   ↓ $15,000-$24,999   ↓ $35,000-$54,999   ↓ More than $75,000

Thank you very much for completing this survey! Please return by <u>December 19, 2001.</u>
Please put the survey in the enclosed, self-addressed stamped envelope and mail to:
Parent Involvement Project
Institute for Families in Society
1700 College Street
Columbia, SC 29208

South Carolina Pilot Survey for Parents of 8ᵗʰ Graders

2001-2002 School Year

INSTRUCTIONS

· Please use a Number 2 pencil only.
· Please do not use a pen.
· Make solid marks that fill the circle completely.

· Erase cleanly any marks you wish to change.
· Correct Mark ✦ Wrong Mark ☦ ℳ ✌ ✌

> **In the section below, please mark either "*Strongly disagree*," "*Disagree*," "*Agree*," or "*Strongly agree*." If you cannot answer the statement, mark "*Don't know*."**

Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the Learning Environment at your child's school.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
1) My child's teachers give homework assignments that help my child learn.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
2) My child's school has high expectations for student learning.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
3) My child's teachers give tests on what they teach in class.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
4) My child is getting a good education at this school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
5) My child's teachers encourage my child to learn.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
6) My child's teachers provide extra help when my child needs it.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
7) I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about Home-School Relations.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
1) My child's teachers contact me to say good things about my child.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
2) My child's teachers tell me how I can help my child learn.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
3) My child's teachers invite me to visit my child's classrooms.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
4) My child's school returns my phone calls and/or e-mails promptly.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
5) My child's school includes me in decision-making (academic placement, discipline issues, etc.).	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
6) My child's school gives me information about what my child should be learning in school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
7) My child's school listens to parents' ideas and then makes changes based on what parents have said.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
8) My child's school schedules activities at times that I can attend.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
9) My child's school tells me about cultural events in the community (free music concerts, festivals, art shows, etc.).	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
10) My child's school treats all parents fairly.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
11) The principal at my child's school is available and welcoming to parents.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
12) I am satisfied with home-school relations at my child's school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓

Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the Social and Physical Environment at your child's school.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
1) There is enough room for students to learn at my child's school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
2) My child's school is kept neat and clean.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
3) My child feels safe at school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
4) My child's school disciplines all students fairly.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
5) My child's school thinks each student is important.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
6) My child's teachers care about my child as an individual.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
7) Students at my child's school are well-behaved.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
8) I am satisfied with the social and physical environment at my child's school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓

The section below asks if you do a variety of school activities/events. Please mark either ● "*I do this*,"
● "*I don't do this, but I would like to,*" ● "*I don't do this, and I don't care to,*" or
● "*The school does not offer this activity/event.*"

Please tell us if you do the following:	I do this	I don't do this, but I would like to	I don't do this, and I don't care to	The school does not offer this activity/ event
1) Attend Open Houses or "Back to School Nights"	↓	↓	↓	↓
2) Attend student programs or performances (band concerts, holiday plays, sports, etc.)	↓	↓	↓	↓
3) Volunteer for the school (bake cookies, help in office, etc.)	↓	↓	↓	↓
4) Help with school fund-raisers	↓	↓	↓	↓
5) Go on trips with my child's school (out of town band contest, field trip to the museum, etc.)	↓	↓	↓	↓
6) Participate in School Improvement Council meetings	↓	↓	↓	↓
7) Participate in Parent-Teacher-Student Organizations (PTA, PTSO, etc.)	↓	↓	↓	↓
8) Participate in school committees (textbook committee, spring carnival committee, etc.)	↓	↓	↓	↓
9) Attend workshops that teach me how to help my child with school work (computer class, math class, how to help my child prepare for PACT, etc.)	↓	↓	↓	↓
10) Attend parent workshops (how to talk to your child about drugs, effective discipline, TV watching, etc.)	↓	↓	↓	↓
11) Attend parent-teacher conferences	↓	↓	↓	↓

The section below asks about things you may do to support your child's education. For each statement, mark either • *"I do this,"* • *"I don't do this, but I would like to,"* or • *"I don't do this, and I don't care to."*

Please tell us if you do the following.	I do this	I don't do this, but I would like to	I don't do this, and I don't care to
1) Visit my child's classes	↓	↓	↓
2) Contact my child's teachers about my child's school work or grades	↓	↓	↓
3) Limit the amount of time my child watches TV, plays video games, surfs the Internet, etc	↓	↓	↓
4) Make sure my child does his/her homework	↓	↓	↓
5) Contact my child's teacher when I think there is a problem	↓	↓	↓
6) Encourage my child to read	↓	↓	↓
7) Talk with my child about how important school is to his/her future	↓	↓	↓
8) Help my child with homework when he/she needs it	↓	↓	↓
9) Encourage my child to be involved in community activities such as sports, arts and crafts, and volunteer service projects	↓	↓	↓

The section below asks about a variety of things that may influence your involvement in your child's education. Please mark if each statement is "True" or "False."

Please mark if each of the following is TRUE or FALSE.	True	False
1) Lack of transportation reduces my involvement.	↓	↓
2) Family health problems reduce my involvement.	↓	↓
3) Lack of available care for my children or other family members reduces my involvement.	↓	↓
4) My work schedule makes it hard for me to be involved.	↓	↓
5) English is not my first language, and this makes it hard for me to be involved.	↓	↓
6) Being involved has been a bad experience in the past.	↓	↓
7) I don't know how to help my child with homework.	↓	↓
8) The school does not encourage my involvement.	↓	↓
9) Information about how to be involved either comes too late or not at all.	↓	↓
10) I don't feel like it is appreciated when I try to be involved.	↓	↓

In the section below, please rate your school in several areas. Please mark either "Very good," "Good," "Okay," "Bad," or "Very Bad."

Please rate your school on…	Very Good	Good	Okay	Bad	Very Bad
1) The school's overall friendliness	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
2) The school's interest in parents' ideas and opinions	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
3) The school's efforts to involve parents	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
4) The school's efforts to **get** important information **from** parents	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
5) The school's efforts to **give** important information **to** parents	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
6) How the school is doing overall	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓

These questions are optional. We are asking these questions because we want to be sure that schools are involving all parents equally. For each question, please mark only one answer.

1) How long has your 8th grade child attended this school?
↓ 1 year (this school year)   ↓ 3 years
↓ 2 years   ↓ 4 years or more

2) What grades did your child receive on his/her last report card?
↓ Mostly A's and B's   ↓ Mostly C's and D's   ↓ Other _____
↓ Mostly B's and C's   ↓ Mostly D's and F's

3) What is your racial/ethnic group?
↓ African-American/Black   ↓ Hispanic   ↓ Asian American/Pacific Islander
↓ Caucasian/White   ↓ Native American   ↓ Other _____

4) Please identify your relationship to this child?
↓ Parent   ↓ Grandparent   ↓ Legal Guardian
↓ Stepparent   ↓ Foster Parent   ↓ Other _____

5) What is your gender?
↓ Male   ↓ Female

6) What is the highest level of education you have completed?
↓ Attended elementary/high school   ↓ Earned Associate Degree   ↓ Earned college degree
↓ Completed high school/GED   ↓ Attended college/training program   ↓ Postgraduate study or degree

7) What is your family's **total** yearly household income:
↓ Less than $14,999   ↓ $25,000-$34,999   ↓ $55,000- $74,999
↓ $15,000-$24,999   ↓ $35,000-$54,999   ↓ More than $75,000

Thank you very much for completing this survey! Please return by <u>December 19, 2001.</u>
Please put the survey in the enclosed, self-addressed stamped envelope and mail to:
Parent Involvement Project
Institute for Families in Society
1700 College Street
Columbia, SC 29208

South Carolina Pilot Survey for Parents of 11th Graders

2001-2002 School Year

INSTRUCTIONS

· Please use a Number 2 pencil only.
· Please do not use a pen.
· Make solid marks that fill the circle completely.

· Erase cleanly any marks you wish to change.
· Correct Mark ✚ Wrong Mark ✚ M ✌ ✌

> **In the section below, please mark either "*Strongly disagree*," "*Disagree*," "*Agree*," or "*Strongly agree*." If you cannot answer the statement, mark "*Don't know*."**

Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the Learning Environment at your child's school.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
1) My child's teachers give homework assignments that help my child learn.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
2) My child's school has high expectations for student learning.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
3) My child's teachers give tests on what they teach in class.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
4) My child is getting a good education at this school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
5) My child's teachers encourage my child to learn.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
6) My child's teachers provide extra help when my child needs it.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
7) I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about Home-School Relations.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
1) My child's teachers contact me to say good things about my child.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
2) My child's teachers tell me how I can help my child learn.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
3) My child's teachers invite me to visit my child's classrooms.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
4) My child's school returns my phone calls and/or e-mails promptly.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
5) My child's school includes me in decision-making (academic placement, discipline issues, etc.).	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
6) My child's school gives me information about what my child should be learning in school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
7) My child's school listens to parents' ideas and then makes changes based on what parents have said.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
8) My child's school schedules activities at times that I can attend.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
9) My child's school tells me about cultural events in the community (free music concerts, festivals, art shows, etc.).	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
10) My child's school treats all parents fairly.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
11) The principal at my child's school is available and welcoming to parents.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
12) I am satisfied with home-school relations at my child's school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓

Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the Social and Physical Environment at your child's school.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
1) There is enough room for students to learn at my child's school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
2) My child's school is kept neat and clean.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
3) My child feels safe at school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
4) My child's school disciplines all students fairly.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
5) My child's school thinks each student is important.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
6) My child's teachers care about my child as an individual.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
7) Students at my child's school are well-behaved.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
8) I am satisfied with the social and physical environment at my child's school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓

The section below asks if you do a variety of school activities/events. Please mark either ● *"I do this,"*
● *"I don't do this, but I would like to,"* ● *"I don't do this, and I don't care to,"* or
● *"The school does not offer this activity/event."*

Please tell us if you do the following:	I do this	I don't do this, but I would like to	I don't do this, and I don't care to	The school does not offer this activity/ event
1) Attend Open Houses or "Back to School Nights"	↓	↓	↓	↓
2) Attend student programs or performances (band concerts, holiday plays, sports, etc.)	↓	↓	↓	↓
3) Volunteer for the school (bake cookies, help in office, etc.)	↓	↓	↓	↓
4) Help with school fund-raisers	↓	↓	↓	↓
5) Go on trips with my child's school (out of town band contest, field trip to the museum, etc.)	↓	↓	↓	↓
6) Participate in School Improvement Council meetings	↓	↓	↓	↓
7) Participate in Parent-Teacher-Student Organizations (PTA, PTSO, etc.)	↓	↓	↓	↓
8) Participate in school committees (textbook committee, spring carnival committee, etc.)	↓	↓	↓	↓
9) Attend workshops that teach me how to help my child with school work (computer class, math class, how to help my child prepare for Exit Exam, etc.)	↓	↓	↓	↓
10) Attend parent workshops (how to talk to your child about drugs, effective discipline, TV watching, etc.)	↓	↓	↓	↓
11) Attend parent-teacher conferences	↓	↓	↓	↓

The section below asks about things you may do to support your child's education. For each statement, mark either ● *"I do this,"* ● *"I don't do this, but I would like to,"* or ● *"I don't do this, and I don't care to."*

Please tell us if you do the following.	I do this	I don't do this, but I would like to	I don't do this, and I don't care to
1) Visit my child's classes	↓	↓	↓
2) Contact my child's teachers about my child's school work or grades	↓	↓	↓
3) Limit the amount of time my child watches TV, plays video games, surfs the Internet, etc.	↓	↓	↓
4) Make sure my child does his/her homework	↓	↓	↓
5) Contact my child's teacher when I think there is a problem	↓	↓	↓
6) Encourage my child to read	↓	↓	↓
7) Talk with my child about how important school is to his/her future	↓	↓	↓
8) Help my child with homework when he/she needs it	↓	↓	↓
9) Encourage my child to be involved in community activities such as sports, arts and crafts, and volunteer service projects	↓	↓	↓

The section below asks about a variety of things that may influence your involvement in your child's education. Please mark if each statement is "True" or "False."

Please mark if each of the following is TRUE or FALSE.	True	False
1) Lack of transportation reduces my involvement.	↓	↓
2) Family health problems reduce my involvement.	↓	↓
3) Lack of available care for my children or other family members reduces my involvement.	↓	↓
4) My work schedule makes it hard for me to be involved.	↓	↓
5) English is not my first language, and this makes it hard for me to be involved.	↓	↓
6) Being involved has been a bad experience in the past.	↓	↓
7) I don't know how to help my child with homework.	↓	↓
8) The school does not encourage my involvement.	↓	↓
9) Information about how to be involved either comes too late or not at all.	↓	↓
10) I don't feel like it is appreciated when I try to be involved.	↓	↓

In the section below, please rate your school in several areas. Please mark either "Very good," "Good," "Okay," "Bad," or "Very Bad."

Please rate your school on…	Very Good	Good	Okay	Bad	Very Bad
1) The school's overall friendliness	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
2) The school's interest in parents' ideas and opinions	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
3) The school's efforts to involve parents	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
4) The school's efforts to **get** important information **from** parents	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
5) The school's efforts to **give** important information **to** parents	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
6) How the school is doing overall	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓

These questions are optional. We are asking these questions because we want to be sure that schools are involving all parents equally. For each question, please mark only one answer.

1) How long has your 11th grade child attended this school?
   ↓ 1 year (this school year)   ↓ 3 years
   ↓ 2 years   ↓ 4 years or more

2) What grades did your child receive on his/her last report card?
   ↓ Mostly A's and B's   ↓ Mostly C's and D's   ↓ Other _____
   ↓ Mostly B's and C's   ↓ Mostly D's and F's

3) What is your racial/ethnic group?
   ↓ African-American/Black   ↓ Hispanic   ↓ Asian American/Pacific Islander
   ↓ Caucasian/White   ↓ Native American   ↓ Other _____

4) Please identify your relationship to this child?
   ↓ Parent   ↓ Grandparent   ↓ Legal Guardian
   ↓ Stepparent   ↓ Foster Parent   ↓ Other _____

5) What is your gender?
   ↓ Male   ↓ Female

6) What is the highest level of education you have completed?
   ↓ Attended elementary/high school   ↓ Earned Associate Degree   ↓ Earned college degree
   ↓ Completed high school/GED   ↓ Attended college/training program   ↓ Postgraduate study or degree

7) What is your family's **total** yearly household income:
   ↓ Less than $14,999   ↓ $25,000-$34,999   ↓ $55,000- $74,999
   ↓ $15,000-$24,999   ↓ $35,000-$54,999   ↓ More than $75,000

Thank you very much for completing this survey! Please return by <u>December 19, 2001.</u>
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Parent Involvement Project
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Columbia, SC 29208

SECTION FIVE
PARENT SURVEY, FINAL VERSION

South Carolina Parent Survey

Parents in South Carolina who have children in grades 5, 8, or 11 are being asked to complete this survey. This survey asks you how you feel about your child's school. Since this survey will be used to help make your child's school a better place, it is very important to tell us exactly what you think. Your answers will be kept private. The school will get a summary of the survey results.

INSTRUCTIONS	
· Please use a Number 2 pencil only.	· Erase cleanly any marks you wish to change.
· Please do not use a pen.	· Make no stray marks on this form.
· Make solid marks that fill the circle completely.	· Correct Mark ✛ Wrong Mark ✟ ℳ ☿ ☿

Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the Learning Environment at your child's school.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
1) My child's teachers give homework that helps my child learn.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
2) My child's school has high expectations for student learning.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
3) My child's teachers encourage my child to learn.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
4) My child's teachers provide extra help when my child needs it.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
5) I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓

Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about Home-School Relations.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
1) My child's teachers contact me to say good things about my child.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
2) My child's teachers tell me how I can help my child learn.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
3) My child's teachers invite me to visit my child's classrooms during the school day.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
4) My child's school returns my phone calls or e-mails promptly.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
5) My child's school includes me in decision-making	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
6) My child's school gives me information about what my child should be learning in school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
7) My child's school considers changes based on what parents say.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
8) My child's school schedules activities at times that I can attend.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
9) My child's school treats all parents fairly.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
10) The principal at my child's school is available and welcoming.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
11) I am satisfied with home-school relations at my child's school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓

Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the Social and Physical Environment at your child's school.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
1) My child's school is kept neat and clean.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
2) My child feels safe at school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
3) My child's teachers care about my child as an individual.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
4) Students at my child's school are well-behaved.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
5) I am satisfied with the social and physical environment at my child's school.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓

Please tell us if you do the following.	I do this	I don't do this, but I would like to	I don't do this, and I don't care to	The school does not offer this activity/ event
1) Attend Open Houses or parent-teacher conferences	↓	↓	↓	↓

	I do this	I don't do this, but I would like to	I don't do this, and I don't care to
2) Attend student programs or performances	↓	↓	↓ ↓
3) Volunteer for the school (bake cookies, help in office, help with school fund raising, etc.)	↓	↓	↓ ↓
4) Go on trips with my child's school (out of town band contest, field trip to the museum, etc.)	↓	↓	↓ ↓
5) Participate in School Improvement Council meetings	↓	↓	↓ ↓
6) Participate in Parent-Teacher-Student Organizations (PTA, PTO, etc.)	↓	↓	↓ ↓
7) Participate in school committees (textbook committee, spring carnival committee, etc.)	↓	↓	↓ ↓
8) Attend parent workshops (how to help my child with school work, how to talk with my child about drugs, effective discipline, etc.)	↓	↓	↓ ↓

Please tell us if you do the following.

	I do this	I don't do this, but I would like to	I don't do this, and I don't care to
1) Visit my child's classrooms during the school day.	↓	↓	↓
2) Contact my child's teachers about my child's school work	↓	↓	↓
3) Limit the amount of time my child watches TV, plays video games, surfs the Internet, etc	↓	↓	↓
4) Make sure my child does his/her homework	↓	↓	↓
5) Help my child with homework when he/she needs it	↓	↓	↓

Please mark if each of the following is TRUE or FALSE.

	True	False
1) Lack of transportation reduces my involvement.	↓	↓
2) Family health problems reduce my involvement.	↓	↓
3) Lack of available care for my children or other family members reduces my involvement.	↓	↓
4) My work schedule makes it hard for me to be involved.	↓	↓
5) The school does not encourage my involvement.	↓	↓
6) Information about how to be involved either comes too late or not at all.	↓	↓
7) I don't feel like it is appreciated when I try to be involved.	↓	↓

Please rate your school on…

	Very Good	Good	Okay	Bad	Very Bad
1) The school's overall friendliness	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
2) The school's interest in parents' ideas and opinions	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
3) 3) The school's efforts to **get** important information **from** parents	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
4) The school's efforts to **give** important information **to** parents	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
5) How the school is doing overall	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓

Please answer the following questions about your child.

1) What grade is your child in?
↓ 5th   ↓ 8th   ↓ 11th   ↓ Other

2) What is your child's gender?
↓ Male   ↓ Female

3) What is your child's race/ethnicity?
↓ African-American/Black   ↓ Hispanic   ↓ Asian American/Pacific Islander
↓ Caucasian/White   ↓ Native American   ↓ Other

4) What grades did your child receive on his/her last report card?

↓ All or mostly A's and B's   ↓ All or mostly C's and D's
↓ All or mostly B's and C's   ↓ All or mostly D's and F's

Please answer the following questions about <u>yourself</u>. We are asking these questions because we want to be sure that schools are involving all parents. For each question, please mark only one answer. Your answers will be kept private.

1) What is your gender?
    ↓ Male   ↓ Female

2) What is your racial/ethnic group?
    ↓ African-American/Black   ↓ Hispanic   ↓ Asian American/Pacific Islander
    ↓ Caucasian/White   ↓ Native American   ↓ Other

3) What is the highest level of education you have completed?
    ↓ Attended elementary/high school   ↓ Earned Associate Degree   ↓ Earned college degree
    ↓ Completed high school/GED   ↓ Attended college/training program   ↓ Postgraduate study and/or degree

4) What is your family's **total** yearly household income:
    ↓ Less than $14,999   ↓ $25,000-$34,999   ↓ $55,000- $74,999
    ↓ $15,000-$24,999   ↓ $35,000-$54,999   ↓ More than $75,000

Thank you very much for completing this survey!

SECTION SIX
APPENDICES

Appendix A

Parent Survey Focus Group

<u>Focus Group Questions & Discussion Route</u>

1. Let's talk about the survey you have just completed. What are your initial reactions? *(This should generate some of the overall strengths and weaknesses of the survey.)*

2. Let's go thru the survey section by section. Tell me what you think are the strengths and weaknesses of section 1? *(Proceed throughout the entire survey section by section.)*

3. *If this issue is not brought up by the parents while discussing Section 1, be sure to* ask parents if on Question #1 they graded the school on parent involvement only or on everything about the school (e.g., academics, parent involvement, etc.). If parents were not grading the school broadly, ask them to help us reword that section to be sure that parents are thinking broadly about the school, rather than thinking only about parental involvement.

4. *If this issue is not brought up by the parents while discussing Section 4, be sure to* ask parents what they think Question #31 means? We want to give parents an opportunity to voice whether they think they are treated unfairly or whether they think the school is less open to certain types of parents. Does this question get at that?

5. *If this issue is not brought up by the parents while discussing Section 6, be sure to* ask parents if the scale is confusing? Will parents indicate, "I do this, but I don't think it is helpful?"

6. Summarize the points the group makes.

7. What questions were hard to understand? What things (e.g. words, formatting) need to be changed to make the survey easier to understand?

8. What items are the best items? What items need to be taken out of the survey? What items should be in the survey that are not in the survey? What items are missing from the survey?

9. Do you feel that some questions shouldn't be asked because they are too personal or are offensive?

10. Tell me what you think about the different ways you are asked to respond (e.g., sometimes on a 5 point scale, sometimes on 2 point scale? participation questions?) What do you think about the different instructions that occur at each section?

11. The goal of this survey is to
   - gather parent perceptions of the learning, social, and physical environments at their child's school. This information will be included on the South Carolina State School Report Card.

   - gather feedback from parents about how they perceive current school efforts to involve parents.

   - gather basic information about actual levels of parent involvement in their child's education.

   What else needs to addressed on this survey or cut from this survey to help us reach this goal?

12. If you received a survey like this in your child's book bag, how likely are you to complete this survey? (Get a show of hands)

13. If you received a survey like this in the mail, how likely are you to complete this survey? (Get a show of hands)

14. If there are large differences in these responses, get reasons for the differences.

15. Ask parents if there is anything that would make them more likely to complete the survey.

16. Ask parents if they have any comments about the cover letter or the return envelopes.

17. Any other advice you would like to share to help with the final construction of this parent involvement survey?

18. Thank parents for their participation. Give each parent an envelope containing $15. Have each parent sign the sheet indicating receipt of the $15.

Appendix B

Memorandum of Support

TO: Parents of [insert grade] Grade Students at [insert school] School

FROM: [Insert name], Principal

DATE: December 6, 2001

RE: Parent Involvement Pilot Survey

Our school has been chosen by the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC) to be involved in a pilot project to ask parents about their thoughts about schools. It is exciting that our school was selected to help with this important project. Parents of our [insert grade] grade students have been chosen to be involved in the project. We are one of about 35 schools across the state participating in this project. We hope that you will take some time to help out.

Enclosed is a survey. We would like for you to complete and mail the survey back in the enclosed stamped envelope by **December 19, 2001**. The survey will take about 10-15 minutes to complete. Your answers will not be shared and all answers will be kept confidential. They will be used to develop questions for a parent survey that all schools in South Carolina will use this spring. The goal of the parent survey will be to measure how parents feel about their child's school. The results of each school's parent survey in the spring will be printed on its school report card. Your help is very important in helping to learn more about parent involvement in South Carolina. It will also help our school learn about better ways to help work with our parents.

Our school will not see your answers. We will receive a summary of the answers that parents from our school gave. If you have any questions, please contact me at the phone number above or David Potter at the EOC by phone at 803-734-9925 or by email at dpotter@eoc.state.sc.us. We look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your help!

Appendix C
Response Rates by Schools and Districts
The numbers in parentheses reflect an adjusted number based on the number of returned envelopes each school reported receiving, meaning that the parents never received the survey.

District/School	Surveys mailed	Surveys completed & returned	Response Rate
Charleston	**482(480)**	**95**	**19.7%(19.8%)**
James Island High School (JIHS)	291	57	19.6%
Fort Johnson Middle School (FJMS)	142(140)	29	20.4%(20.7%)
Stiles Point Elementary (SPES)	49	9	18.4%
Aiken	**193**	**53**	**27.5%**
Ridge Spring Monetta High (RSMH)	58	15	25.9%
Ridge Spring Monetta Elementary/Middle School (RMEM)	135	38	28.1%
Sumter 2	**872(867)**	**221**	**25.3%(25.5%)**
Crestwood High School (CRES)	252(250)	64	25.4%(25.6%)
Ebenezer Middle School (EMS)	166	38	22.9%
Hillcrest Middle School (HMS)	117	25	21.4%
Rafting Creek Elementary School (RCES)	50(47)	12	24.0%(25.5%)
High Hills Elementary School (HHES)	287	82	28.6%
Horry	**1124(1116)**	**266**	**23.7%(23.8%)**
Conway High School (CHS)	272	59	21.7%
Conway Middle School (CMS)	197	53	26.9%
Whittemore Park Middle School (WPMS)	188(181)	42	22.3%(23.2%)
Conway Elementary School (CES)	122	32	26.2%
S. Conway Elementary School (SCES)	134	30	22.4%
Kingston Elementary (KES)	43	9	20.9%
Homewood Elementary (HES)	98	19	19.4%
Pee Dee Elementary (PDES)	70	22	31.4%
Anderson 5	**898(882)**	**263**	**29.3%(29.8%)**
T.L. Hanna High School (TLHS)	377	98	26.0%
McCants Middle School (MMS)	381(368)	114	30.0%(31.0%)
Calhoun Elementary School (CAES)	140(137)	51	36.4%(37.2%)
TOTAL	**3569(3538)**	**[1]907**	25.5%(25.6%)

[1] Please note that the total number of surveys returned was 907. However, 9 of these surveys were not able to be identified by school. Therefore, the total of this column actually totals to 898.

Appendix D
Pilot Study Descriptive Information

Total Sample- N=907

	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 11
Sample Size	290	322	295
Race/Ethnicity			
• Caucasian/White	165 (56.9%)	195 (60.6%)	194 (65.8%)
• Af-Am/Black	106 (36.6%)	108 (33.5%)	75 (25.4)
• Hispanic	3 (1%)	1 (.3%)	1 (.3%)
• Other[1]	5 (1.8%)	3 (.9%)	6 (2.1%)
Relationship to Child			
• Parent	270 (93.1%)	296 (91.9%)	276 (93.6%)
• Grand Parent	8 (2.8%)	11 (3.4%)	2 (.7%)
• Other [2]	8 (2.8%)	6 (1.8%)	7 (2.3%)
Gender of Respondent			
• Male	27 (9.3 %)	45 (14%)	75 (25.4%)
• Female	256 (88.3%)	267 (82.9%)	211 (71.5%)
Education Level of Respondent			
• Attended Elem/H.S.	53 (18.3%)	37 (11.5%)	24 (8.1%)
• H.S./GED	66 (22.8%)	74 (23%)	44 (14.9%)
• Assoc Degree	23 (7.9%)	31 (9.6%)	37 (12.5%)
• Attend College	69 (23.8%)	61 (18.9%)	54 (18.3%)
• College Degree	40 (13.8%)	52 (16.1%)	52 (17.6%)
• Post Grad	25 (8.6%)	45 (14%)	70 (23.7%)
Family Income Level			
• < $14,999	43 (14.8%)	36 (11.2%)	22 9 (7.5%)
• $15,000-$24,999	45 (15.5%)	47 (14.6%)	26 (8.8%)
• $25,000-$34,999	42 (14.5%)	37 (11.5%)	25 (8.5%)
• $35.000-$54,999	58 (20.0%)	63 (19.6%)	46 (15.6%)
• $55,000-$74,000	45(15.5%)	53 (16.55%)	55 (18.6%)
• > $75,000	36 (12.4%)	58 (18.0%)	97 (32.9%)

[1] Native American, Asian American/Pacific Islander
[2] Stepparent, Foster Parent, Legal Guardian