

**GRADUATION:  
The Measure of Tomorrow**

**Increasing Parental Engagement  
and At-Risk African American  
Male Students**

**Dr. Delvon D. Currie, Ed.D**

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA  
State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction

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**Increasing Parental Engagement  
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65th CONFERENCE ON EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

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**Purpose of the Study**

- The purpose of this study was to investigate African American parents' perception of school leaders as it relates to parent engagement and the African American male student.
- Specifically, this study addressed African American parents' perceptions of the quality of their child's education and the quality of communication they received from their child's school.

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**Significance of the Study**

- According to Epstein et al. (2002), parent engagement increases student achievement in affluent communities; however, in some economically disadvantaged or low-income areas school leaders and teachers often express concerns about the lack of parent engagement.
- Epstein et al. and Kunjufu (2005) noted that most of the contact that schools have with these parents are related to problems or difficulties regarding their children.

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**Literature Review**

- Kuykendall (2004), some economically disadvantaged African American parents tend not to trust school officials who often assume the worst and fail to show genuine interest in their children’s education. Parents tend to avoid contact with school officials if they receive communication from the school on a regular basis pertaining to bad news.
- For instance, Kunjufu (2004) stated that often most of the negative contact African American parents receive from teachers regards male children. He further compiled a list of reasons male students are an endangered species and are subject to an inadequate education when there is a cultural disconnect between schools and parents.

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**Conceptual Framework**

*Epstein’s Framework of Six Types of Parent Involvement (STPI)*

Dr. Epstein is the Director of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships and the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) and Research Professor of Sociology at Johns Hopkins University. In the late 1970’s, Epstein interest evolved in parental engagement as she researched individual groups related to schools: students, parents, teacher, principals, and communities.

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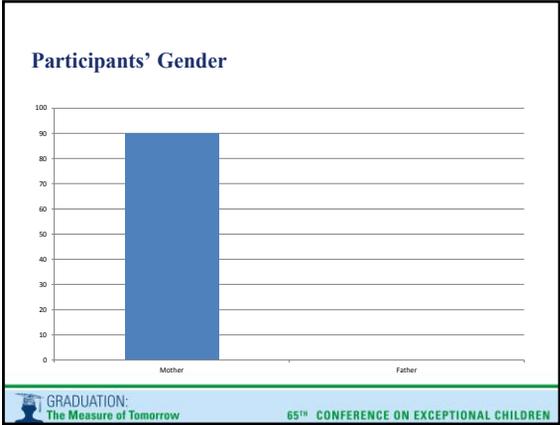
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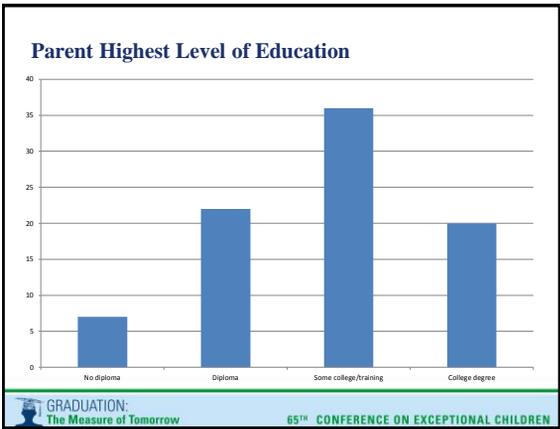
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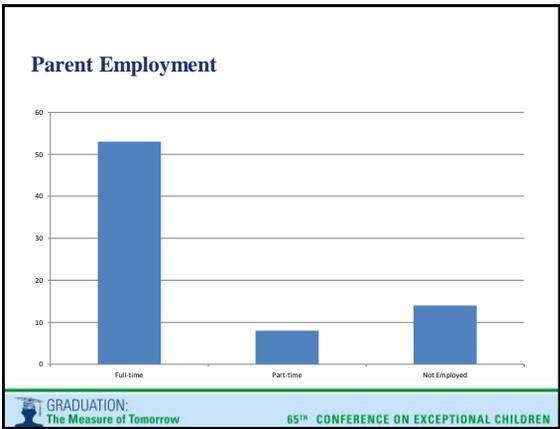
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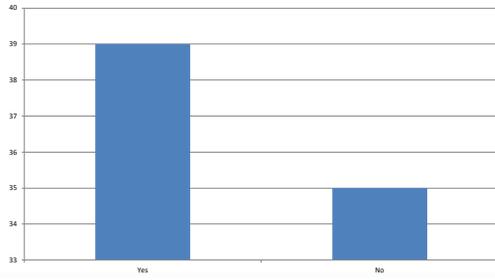
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### Child Attends Remediation/Tutoring




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### Instrument

- Participants completed a modified version of the parent questionnaire of the *School and Family Partnerships: Questionnaires for Teachers and Parents in the Elementary and Middle Grades* (Epstein, J.L. & Salinas, K.C., 1993) designed by Joyce L. Epstein and Karen C. Salinas.

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### Summary of Results

- Overall, findings suggest parents in this district were pleased with the quality of education their child was receiving, communication of school events and their child's progress.
- These parents felt the school cared about their child.
- Lastly, findings reveal the parents felt welcomed and perceived they were viewed as partners.
- Findings indicated parents in this district did not perceive they were viewed as equal partners.
- Findings indicated parents in this school district felt schools could improve their efforts to communicate opportunities to volunteer in the classroom and participate on school decision-making committees.

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**Recommendations**

- Staff development on working with culturally diverse parent.
- Lead staff in developing a Parent Training Program to develop parent leaders to serve in the school community.
- Provide orientation for new parents entering the school community (i.e. Parent Coffee or Parent Pizza Night) to share detailed information on resources and volunteering opportunities.
- Use technology as a way of communicating/parent meetings (i.e. Skyping or teleconferencing)
- Utilize parent leaders to distribute and collect parent surveys regarding policies quarterly.
- Increase and create ongoing new recruitment strategies (i.e. Parent Awards Programs or Parent Day)

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