TRANSITIONAL HIGH SCHOOL PARENT-TEACHER HOME VISITS: EFFECTS ON
PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND STUDENT OUTCOMES

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

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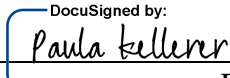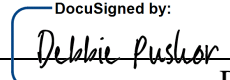
by

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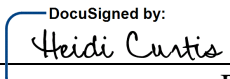May 2020

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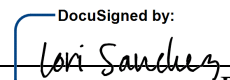
AUTHORIZATION TO SUBMIT

DISSERTATION

This dissertation of Nathan Soule submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with a major in Educational Leadership and titled "Transitional High School Parent-Teacher Home Visits: Effects on Parent Engagement and Student Outcomes," has been reviewed in final form. Permission, as indicated by the signatures and dates given below, is now granted to submit final copies.

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I thank my classmates for sharing ideas, laughter, and new perspectives. Finally, I thank my family for supporting me as I have studied and spent time on this research.

DEDICATION

My family and friends, for all parents, and students who yearn for the best possible school experience, for teachers who are committed to these crucial relationships, and to my wife Rebecca for believing that people can make a difference.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine how the increasingly popular parent engagement strategy of parent-teacher home visits is associated at the high school level with parent-teacher engagement, student attendance, and graduation rates. Research questions include how home visits impact parent-teacher relationships, perceptions of home visit barriers, and home visit associations with student outcomes. Participants were high school teachers who were invited to conduct home visits for rising 9th graders, and the students visited at home. In this explanatory sequential mixed methods study, attendance and graduation data were collected for students participating in home visits, and teacher participants completed a survey, followed by semi-structured interviews. When comparing the relationship scale for teachers who conducted home visits with those who had not, the Mann-Whitney test resulted in a p-value of .18. Furthermore, over three years, the chronic absenteeism rate was nearly 4% higher for students visited at home compared to the whole cohort. Teachers who conducted home visits are far more likely than non-home visiting teachers to report positive parent support. They also meet with parents more in person, and they believe that parents welcome home visits more than non-home visiting teachers. Chronic absenteeism is lower for students who were visited at home, and their graduation rate is higher. The Home visiting teacher group has more positive relationships with parents, and students visited at home by teachers have better outcomes than other students.

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Chapter I

Introduction

When parents and teachers build relationships and work together, their overall experience is more positive, and students are more successful. (Hampden-Thompson, & Galindo, 2017; Santiago, Garbacz, Beattie, & Moore, 2016; Stefanski, Valli, & Jacobson, 2016; Watt, 2016; Wright, Shields, Black, & Waxman, 2018). However, studies show that neither teachers nor parents are generally satisfied in their relationship with one another. Challenges with building and maintaining positive relationships between parents and teachers have existed for decades in the United States, resulting in diminished trust and strained relationships between home and school (Collier, Keefe, & Hirrel, 2015; Miretzky, 2004; Santiago et al., 2016; Soutullo, 2016; Vesely, Brown, & Mehta, 2017). The quality of parent engagement between parents and teachers also varies by community and by individual schools, though research shows that families with students who have recently immigrated, students with disabilities, and families from lower socioeconomic groups experience particular benefits from parent engagement (Collier, et al., 2015; Soutullo, 2016).

While teachers generally express a hope for parents to be more involved with school, parents have expressed conflicting expectations about how and when to engage with teachers and uncertainty about how to connect with the school. (Christianakis, 2011; Evans, 2013; Smith, Smith-Bonahue, & Soutullo., 2014). Furthermore, studies show that teachers have vastly different ideas about what it means for a parent to engage, and many teachers believe parents essentially should be involved by being available to work with the school and to meet teacher expectations (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014; Goodall & Montgomery, 2014; Graue, 2005; Lemmer, 2007). This type of involvement is different than engagement, which is more interactive and

collaborative. While a multitude of studies have demonstrated the positive effects of parent engagement on academic and behavioral outcomes (Adams & Christenson, 2000; Christianakis, 2011; Epstein et al., 2002; Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017; Jeynes, 2010; Vesely et al., 2017), schools do not consistently provide support that is desired by parents; consequently, many parents remain unhappy with their experience engaging with schools (Collier, et al., 2015; Falk, 2017; Kuru Cetin & Taskin, 2016). In fact, according to one current study, family and community engagement is the top driver of overall satisfaction among parents (Falk, 2017). Despite the importance that parent engagement carries with parents across the spectrum, public schools generally continue to rate low in this area (Falk, 2017; Ule, Živoder, & Bois-Reymond, 2015).

Parents have reported feeling more positive about school and experiencing greater satisfaction when they are actively engaged with their children's schooling (Bridgemohan, van Wyk, & van Staden, 2005; Miretzky, 2004). In fact, recent studies show parent engagement is the most significant determinant of parent satisfaction with school (Barge & Loges, 2003; Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014; Friedman, Bobrowski, & Markow, 2007; Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017; Marsh, Strunk, Bush-Mecenas, & Huguet, 2015). Since parent engagement experiences are so important for families, and since schools have struggled to satisfy parent expectations, it is important to examine what is working with parent engagement and what should change. While parent engagement efforts have been at the center of federal initiatives and district policies for years, improving parent and teacher engagement and parent satisfaction still requires schools to face and overcome significant challenges (Henderson, Mapp, & Averett, 2002; Mapp, 2012). Unmet expectations and strained or broken relationships have been reported to be significant barriers to parent and teacher partnerships (Auerbach, 2009; Christianakis, 2011; Graue, 2005;

Hong, 2019; Miretzky, 2004). In response, schools have continued to experiment with creative ways to connect and to build relationships with parents. Teacher home visits have recently gained attention as one way to develop stronger teacher and parent relationships. This study will explore the potential of parent-teacher home visits to positively impact teacher and parent relationships and student outcomes at the high school level.

Statement of the Problem

While parents share a desire to meaningfully engage with teachers, teachers have not effectively reached out to parents in the past (Christianakis, 201; Miretzky, 2004). One reason that teachers do not reach out to parents is that socioeconomic and cultural differences contribute to misconceptions and misunderstandings (He, 2013; Smith, et al., 2014; Vesely et al., 2017). While research has demonstrated the challenges for establishing engaging relationships between parents and teachers, solutions have remained elusive for many schools. Efforts to achieve cooperative relationships between parents and teachers include comprehensive federal mandates such as Title 1 and an active and growing community of nonprofit organizations and district advocates. Despite these efforts and a body of research demonstrating the powerful effects of parent engagement, success with establishing cooperative relationships between parents and teachers has been an ongoing challenge in many schools. (Collier, et al., 2015; Soutullo, 2016). Responsibility for forging the relationship between parents and teachers requires both groups, yet teachers and schools are in the best position to initiate and sustain a meaningful, trusting, and welcoming relationship (Balli, 2016; Rusnak, 2018).

Several different barriers have prevented cooperative relationships from taking root between parents and teacher despite schools offering federally funded programs and a variety of local initiatives to reach out to parents. Some of these barriers include parent and family

obstacles such as transportation, schedules, and other accessibility issues, complex family dynamics and living arrangements, and conditions relating to poverty (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). Programs offered by schools include the parent engagement initiatives required in the United States by Title I for high-poverty schools (Mapp, 2012), and the rapid growth of new home visit models launched by the Parent-Teacher Home Visit organization born in Sacramento California by a group of parents that now serves schools in 700 communities in 25 states (Sheldon & Bee, 2018). These initiatives are designed to build relationships and connections between parents and teachers. One purpose of these efforts is facing the barriers that separate parents and teachers. One of the most significant barriers is the expectation that parents have about how communication should function between home and school. For example, parents have shared that a major source of dissatisfaction with schools is directly related to how well schools reach out to them and how this effort makes them feel welcome to engage (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014; DeMatthews, Edwards, & Rincones, 2016; Goodall & Montgomery, 2014; Smith, et al., 2014). Research has shown that in order to build better relationships, teachers must develop a deeper understanding of students and families. Being more fully engaged means that teachers know families in a personalized way by spending time together, learning more about what they know, understanding what is important to them, and by listening to their perspectives. (Smith, et al., 2014; Wassell, Hawrylak, & Scantlebury, 2017).

While parents have consistently demonstrated a desire to develop an open connection with schools, some parents still do not feel welcome, and many find they do not know how to take a first step or when the best time is to communicate (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014; DeMatthews et al., 2016; Goodall & Montgomery, 2014; Soutullo, 2016). Diverse family backgrounds and experiences also translate into different expectations leading to the emergence of barriers stifling

the ability of parents to be proactive. As a result, successfully navigating existing avenues for engaging with teachers and the school proves too difficult for many parents (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Smith, et al., 2014). Addressing these barriers to access will invite families from high-poverty and minority backgrounds to feel welcome and valued (Soutullo, 2016; Wassell et al., 2017). Equal partnerships between schools and families and a focus on authentic, open communities are crucial steps required to establish inclusive and culturally responsive entry points to schools and the environment necessary for establishing positive relationships. (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014; DeMatthews et al., 2016; Goodall & Montgomery, 2014; Hong, 2019).

Lack of quality engagement and relationships impacts more than just parents and students. Teachers also yearn for fulfilling professional experiences and job satisfaction (Evans, 2013; Smith, et al., 2014). Teachers want to know they are making a difference; yet lack of communication and proactive engagement with families prevents the most satisfying bonds and experiences from forming (Evans, 2013; Llopart, Serra, & Esteban-Guitart, 2018; Sheldon & Bee, 2018; Smith, et al., 2014).

Low teacher job satisfaction can lead to teachers leaving a school or even leaving the profession completely (Clandinin et al., 2015; Djonko-Moore, 2016; Lindqvist, Nordänger, & Carlsson, 2014; Ryan et al., 2017). As many as 20% of teachers leave high poverty schools every year, with some transferring to other schools and others permanently leaving the teaching profession (Ingersoll, 2004; Papay, Bacher-Hicks, Page, & Marinell, 2017; Whipp & Geronime, 2017). One reason that teachers have shared for leaving the profession is lacking a sense of belonging and purpose. A sense of belonging requires a clear sense of purpose, positive relationships with students and families, and a connection with the surrounding community

(Clandinin et al., 2015; Djonko-Moore, 2016; Dunn & Downey, 2018; Wronowski, 2018). While high poverty schools would benefit from attracting and keeping the most qualified teachers, these same schools are particularly susceptible to teacher attrition and teachers moving away from the school and the district (Bettini & Park, 2017; Dunn & Downey, 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Wronowski, 2018.). Teachers who stay in high-poverty schools frequently report feeling satisfied with parent and student relationships, and they share positive experiences making meaningful connections with parents, families and the community. Conversely, teachers who leave the profession report that a major reason for leaving is their perception of not belonging and feeling disconnected to the people and to the community (Djonko-Moore, 2016; Dunn & Downey, 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

Effective parent engagement experiences require collaborative and intentional relationships, trust building, and understanding between parents, students, and teachers (Balli, 2016; Collier, et al., 2015; Rusnak, 2018; Santiago., et al., 2016; Vesely, et al., 2017). Developing strong bonds ensures families are satisfied with their experiences, and that teachers are more likely to feel connected and valuable. If schools and parents expect beginning teachers to be healthy and able to grow and stay in the field, it will be ideal for parents to know teachers as people in a more personal way by having opportunities to invest time and energy for relationship-building (Clandinin et al., 2015).

Researchers have been able to confirm the positive benefits of parent engagement in schools with an abundance of supporting studies (Collier, et al., 2015; Edwards & Kutaka, 2015; Soutullo, 2016). However, there is still much to be learned about what contributes to positive relationships between schools and families and what happens when teachers visit students and families in their homes. There is a paucity of research on home visits. In particular, there is a

lack of research on the mindset of teachers who have chosen to conduct home visits, and how teacher home visits impact teacher experiences (Llopart et al., 2018). The few completed studies on teacher home visits provide insight into teacher perception of home visit effectiveness, yet many do not substantially link home visits to learning outcomes, and there is specifically a lack of home visit research at the secondary level (Barmore, 2018; Kronholz, 2016; Meyer, Mann, & Becker, 2011). One major recent exception is the work completed by PTHV showing promising gains in reading and increased attendance for students associated with home visits (Sheldon & Bee, 2018). To mediate educational achievement gaps, research has shown that teachers should develop an understanding of linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic, and racially diverse families (Vesely et al., 2017). Relationships are essential for the success of teacher home visits and family engagement initiatives in general. One purpose of teacher home visits is to foster relationships that provide deeper insight into family and student lives (Mcknight et al., 2017; Smith, et al., 2014).

When parent engagement initiatives are implemented with fidelity and with an appreciation for the value of an equal parent role, research shows a multitude of benefits including an increase in student outcomes, development of trust, and a significant increase in satisfaction for both teachers and parents. Consequently, fostering effective relationships between teachers and parents is a proven method, and honoring and welcoming parents should therefore be a priority for schools (Christianakis, 2011; Edwards & Kutaka, 2015; Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017). One objective of this study is to show if and how teacher home visits impact relationships between parents and teachers. Other than a few exceptions, the current literature does not provide an analysis of teacher beliefs and perceptions about parent engagement before and after participating in teacher home visit program (Llopart et al., 2018). In

addition, few studies have been conducted that focus on levels above elementary grades (Barmore, 2018; Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017). This study is designed to gain additional information to address this gap, since emerging data exists for elementary school students and home visits, yet research for high schools and home visits is still in its infancy. This study will contribute to the understanding of how parent engagement works in relationship to the context of parent-teacher home visits at the high school level, and particularly how the processes and conditions inherent in teacher home visits impact relationships between teachers, parents, and students and student outcomes.

Studying perceptions and attitudes of teachers who were trained and who have completed parent teacher home visits will provide valuable information. Previous research reveals that neither the researchers nor the participants have been able to formulate a consensus on what parent involvement or family engagement means to different stakeholders (Barton, Drake, Perez, Louis, & George, 2004; Ule et al., 2015). Through home visits, teachers could become seekers of information rather than simply givers of information as they traditionally are in the classroom. This new and transformative dynamic could lead to increased empathy, understanding, communication, and a more common expectation about how parents and schools can engage in meaningful ways (Hong, 2019; Peralta-Nash, 2003).

Background

The role and expectations by parents and teachers for engaging have for shifted over the years. Parents were once generally expected to merely join the Parent Teacher Organization, return a call or a letter, attend a schoolwide open house or a parent teacher conference (Goodall & Ghent, 2014; Hong, 2019; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Watt, 2016). While formal schooling has created a distinct community of highly trained educators who are expected to be experts in their

field, parents have expressed dissatisfaction with feeling distant or unwelcome. Consequently, parents express an increasing desire to be directly and primarily involved with the education of their children (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014; Rusnak, 2018).

Parents have reported feeling disconnected from teachers and schools for decades (Collier, et al., 2015; Goodall & Montgomery, 2014; Santiago., et al., 2016; Soutullo, 2016). One reason for this disconnect is related to teachers being unaware of the complexities and dynamics of the surrounding communities and homes (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014; Smith, et al., 2014). Creating an opportunity for teachers to get to know families by visiting them in their homes is one creative option for developing a deeper understanding of students and families (Smith et al., 2014). Formal teacher home visits have more recently re-emerged (Kronholz, 2016.) However, the expectation that parents and teachers will work together in an open, collaborative relationship is not new. While compulsory schooling has provided expert educational support for all children for over the past 150 years, parents are increasingly concerned about being excluded (Falk, 2017). Parents would like to be more responsible for their children's schooling than they often perceive they are able to be, and they would like to feel more welcome in schools (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014; Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017; Soutullo, 2016)

One model of parent and teacher cooperation emphasizes the idea of a partnership. Whereas there has been a tendency in the past for teachers to be the experts and parents the supporters, a partnership involves more mutual interaction and cooperation. (Graue, 2005; Hong, 2019; Smith, et al., 2014). The idea of parents being involved in schools as a type of partnership has been refined by Epstein (2001) to reflect the complexities of families and schools and options for involvement at home, around the school, or in the classroom. Other models describe the different dimensions of parent engagement to include parent and child interaction at home,

supervision of schoolwork, communication to children about the meaning and purpose of school, and school-home communication (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014; Fan & Chen, 2001; Goodall & Ghent, 2014). Parents are critical to a child's educational experience. Research has consistently shown the positive effects of parent engagement (Epstein, 2010; Fan & Williams, 2010; Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017; Henderson et al., 2002; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Jeynes, 2015; Sheridan et al., 2012).

Teachers visiting parents and student at home is an example of another way to nurture parent engagement. While some form of teacher home visits existed before records were kept, efforts to formalize home visits including training, scheduling, and compensation, have arisen again only recently (Kronholz, 2016; Meyer et al., 2011; Wagner, Spiker, Inman Linn, & Hernandez, 2003). National Title I and state policies require parent engagement to varying extents, yet formal teacher home visit programs are still more of a local and independently adopted initiative, and some researchers have expressed legitimate concerns about teacher home visiting programs such as safety (Sheldon & Bee, 2018; Burstein, 2010; Rosa, 2020). One of the Primary goals of teacher home visits is building rapport, trust, and confidence between parents, teachers and students (Loughlin-Presnal & Bierman, 2017; Nudd, 1921; Saïas et al., 2016)

Lack of communication and distrust have been reported to be the greatest barriers to effective parent engagement (Harris & Goodall, 2008; Santiago et al., 2016; Schweizer, Niedlich, Adamczyk, & Bormann, 2017). Research shows that teacher home visits can be vital to building partnerships between home and school (Llopart, et al., 2018). As a result, one goal of this study is to answer the question of if and how parent-teacher home visits impact relationships between parents, teachers, and principals, and how relationships affect graduation rates and academic performance.

Research Questions

The research questions have been designed to evaluate the prediction that teacher home visits are associated with positive parent and teacher relationships, and that improved relationships and trust will be associated with better attendance, higher graduation rates, and higher grade point averages among student home visit participants compared to the average for all students in each group. Semi-structured interviews will provide richer explanations of the survey results. Marshall and Rossman (2016) explain that interviews enable researchers to construct meaning from responses about everyday activities. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as a systemized, yet informal way to allow participants to expand and elaborate upon survey results, and to provide richer context. The selected research questions for this study are:

1. How do high school teachers' perceptions of parent-teacher home visits affect teacher relationships with parents and students?
2. What are the perceived barriers to effective home visits for high school teachers?
3. How do home visits impact high school student grades, attendance, and graduation rates?

Description of Terms

It is important to establish an understanding of common terms used in peer-reviewed literature about parent engagement and home visits. Establishing clarity around the meanings of the language used is especially important since parents and teachers may have different definitions of what parent engagement and family engagement means and what it should look like (Barge & Loges, 2003; Goodall & Ghent, 2014). In the past, the term parent involvement reflected the idea of a of one-way relationship between teachers and parents (Ferrara, 2017). Recently, policies and programs reflect a transition from the language of parent involvement to

parent and family engagement (Goodall & Ghent, 2014; Mapp, 2012). Consequently, the following terms are given to provide clarity and consistency throughout this research study.

Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships: Family engagement initiatives that build capacity among educators and families to partner with one another around student success (Mapp, 2014).

Family Engagement: Shared responsibility among families, school staff, and community members where families are committed to actively supporting their children's learning and development, and school personnel and community members are committed to engaging and partnering with families in meaningful and culturally respectful ways. This shared responsibility must be continuous across a child's lifespan, from cradle to career. Also, it must occur in multiple settings where children learn: at home, at school, and in community settings. (Mapp, 2012).

Family-Professional Partnerships: Mutually supportive interactions between families and professionals, which focuses on meeting the needs of children and families with competence, commitment, equality, positive communication, respect, and trust (Summers, Hoffman, Marquis, Turnbull, & Poston, 2005).

Overlapping Spheres: A social-organizational model -- to account for changes in the ages and grade levels of students and the influence of historic change on environments, and by behavior -- to account for the background characteristics, philosophies, and practices of each environment (Epstein, 1992).

Parent: A role lived out in a family by someone who has more responsibility than others in the family for the care and well-being of family members. The role of a parent is played by a range of individuals within the diversity of family structures that exist, individuals who are in

both biological and nonbiological relationships with children. The term parent is inclusive of all such individuals (Pushor, 2015).

Parent Engagement: Shared responsibilities of parents in the education of their children (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014). A relationship between parents and teachers that is side-by-side and reciprocal (Pushor, 2015).

Parental Involvement: Home-based activities related to children's learning in school- for example, reviewing the child's work and monitoring child progress, helping with homework, discussing school events or course issues with the child, providing enrichment activities pertinent to school success, and talking by phone with the teacher. They also include school-based involvement, focused on such activities as driving on a field trip, staffing a concession booth at school games, coming to school for scheduled conferences or informal conversations, volunteering at school, or serving on a parent-teacher advisory board (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

Proximal Processes: Direct measures of the environment, and mechanisms of organism-environment interaction (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994).

School, Family, and Community Partnerships: A comprehensive term, encompassing involvement, engagement, democratic participation, shared leadership, and other aspects of the collaborative efforts of school, home, and community in children's education and development from preschool through high school. The full label includes the community -- a rich and, often, untapped source of support and information, even in high-poverty locations (Epstein, 2018).

Teacher Home Visit: Engaging families and educators as a team to support student achievement (Mcknight, Venkateswaran, Laird, Robles, & Shalev, 2017).

Parent Teacher Home Visits (PTHV): A teacher home visit model designed to promote a mutually supportive and accountable relationship between educators and families. The goals are for the home visits to help nurture trusting relationships, support open lines of communication, and cultivate a partnership mindset between educators and families (Sheldon & Bee, 2018).

Significance of the Study

This study was designed to show how parent-teacher home visits impact teacher, parent, and student relationships at the high school level, and how student outcomes are affected. One goal is to identify a link between teacher home visit experiences and overall satisfaction with teachers and the school. A secondary purpose of this study is to gain a greater understanding of what the common barriers are for teachers considering going on home visits. Finally, research questions should answer how these barriers affect relationships between parent, students and teachers, and subsequently what impact parent-teacher home visits have on student outcomes and experiences. The primary method of parent engagment between parents and school as examined in this study is through parent teacher home visits.

Parent teacher home visits have continued to gain favor in the last few years as a way for schools to close the achievement gap, and to encourage meaningful connections with parents and the community (Bhavnagri & Krolikowski, 2000; Kronholz, 2016). Harvard University researchers have partnered with community non-profit family engagement groups, such as the Flamboyan Foundation, to support parent engagement and teacher home visit programs in the D.C. area and around the country (Mapp, 2014). The Parent Teacher Home Visit Project has also launched a major three-part study, in conjunction with John Hopkins University and RTI International, designed to analyze teacher home visit programs and evaluate the effectiveness of

current systems (DeFusco, 2017; Sheldon & Bee, 2018). Part one of the study is a thorough, 65-page report detailing the Parent Teacher Home Visit (PTHV) model of teacher home visits rooted in relationships and overcoming barriers to meaningful partnerships between families and schools. (Mcknight, et al., 2017).

Another major study underway by Rice University researcher shows that parents are deeply dissatisfied with family engagement experiences with school – despite being the top driver of overall satisfaction by parents (Falk, 2017). This trend reflects significant dissatisfaction with parent engagement experiences. The results of this study reveal important truths about the ongoing problem of parent engagement and the need for viable and creative solutions. Investments in programs, research, and outreach by the Parent Teacher Home Project, and new parent engagement requirements by the Every Student Succeeds act passed in 2015 (ESSA) are reflections of the rising importance of improved and responsive parent engagement programs These initiatives are designed to answer the ongoing discussion about how to build meaningful relationships between teachers and parents (Dahlin, 2017). Parents remain dissatisfied and deeply concerned about being connected to the school despite federal efforts by Title I programs, national initiatives promoted by the Parent Teacher Home Visit Program, and an abundance of data affirming parent dissatisfaction with schools that is available to both the research and educational practitioner communities (Balli, 2016; O'Connor, 2008; Summers et al., 2005) These efforts, including the third and final report published the Parent Teacher Home Visit Organization in November of 2018 about student outcomes and teacher home visits, reflect major financial and time commitments to support improved parent engagement and relationships with families (Sheldon & Bee, 2018). Significant barriers to parent engagement include several challenges, though research is required to understand more about how and why parents and

teachers develop assumption of roles, how cultural bias forms and interacts with parent engagement philosophies and efforts, and the mediating effects of parent engagement including home visits on the challenges of poverty. (Hong, 2019; Smith et al., 2014; Wassell et al., 2017)

An additional important barrier is an unfortunate consequence of living in modern times where school shootings, kidnappings, and criminal activities threaten school safety and the well-being of children (Burstein, 2020; Rosa, 2020; Soutullo, 2016). The resulting safety measures, including the requirement of photo identification, volunteer registration with social security numbers, and locked down campuses, cause many parents, particularly those of immigrant status, to find entering and engaging with the schools a nearly insurmountable hurdle (Soutullo, 2016).

This study may provide valuable data and insight for school administrators, teachers, teacher candidates, parents, and other researchers. While parent engagement in general has been studied extensively, little is known about how home visits may transform the mindset and relationships between parents and teachers (Llopart et al., 2018). The study examines perceptions by teachers about their relationship with parents and what impact this relationship may have on building trust and satisfaction with school-level parent engagement programs. The study may contribute to the literature on the significance of home visits at the high school level as a method to create lasting, transformative change in the relationship dynamics between parents and teachers.

Theoretical Framework

The Theoretical Framework for this study is Uri Bronfenbrenner and Ceci's (1994) bioecological theory of human development. Bronfenbrenner proposed the idea of nested environmental systems including the micro, macro, meso, exo, and chronosystems that affect human development (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). Bronfenbrenner's theory describes

interactions between a person and his or her environment that continually influence a person's development (Appendix A). These proximal processes represent the actualization of potential through the interaction of a person's genetic inheritance and environmental conditions (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). In addition to proximal processes, personal characteristics (biological, genetics), contextual factors (home, neighborhood, relationships), and time (changes over time) impact human development and consequently a child's disposition and direct experience throughout life in various microsystems (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield, & Karnik, 2009). Proximal processes, person characteristics, contextual factors, and time (also known as PPCT) all work together to shape a person's development as the environment and genetics exert a simultaneous impact (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Tudge et al., 2016). This framework will guide the research questions seeking to answer why parents and teachers, who function within different microsystems, either succeed or fail to connect and collaborate in positive relationships, and how teacher home visits may serve as a proximal process or a mediating effect in the relationship between parents, teachers, and students.

Bronfenbrenner and Ceci's (1994) bioecological theory of human development provides a foundation for this study by framing the crucial environmental and human interaction points in a way that recognizes the importance of established norms, cultural modalities, and dispositions. The nested systems which were proposed in Bronfenbrenner's earlier work are still helpful, as they illuminate the logical patterns and spaces that define and anchor everyday life experiences and expectations (Vélez-Agosto, Soto-Crespo, Vizcarrondo-Oppenheimer, Vega-Molina, & García Coll, 2017). Each microsystem functions differently, and children learn to respond to the expected routines, rules, and rhythms of home, a classroom, or a community (Vélez-Agosto, et al., 2017). Microsystems are impacted by exosystems, macrosystems, and proximal

processes. Mesosystems become a fluid interaction of the microsystems, while macrosystems and the exosystems are where cultural practices and structures are interwoven into the overall nested system of human development (Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017). Clashes and disappointments are not surprising when two microsystems with different contexts merge with the arrival of a new person or a group. When one person participates in more than one setting (microsystem), a mesosystem emerges (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). It is the mesosystem that a student participates in when he or she lives at home and attends school as predominant microsystems. The dissatisfaction with parent engagement opportunities that has been expressed through national surveys and studies reflects a conflict at the mesosystem level (Ashiabi & O'Neal, 2015) since the mesosystem is the interaction between two microsystems, and schools and homes represent two common microsystems for children, parents, and teachers (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). A number of barriers have been identified that have stifled quality relationships between mesosystems including transportation, work schedules, cultural misconceptions, language, and other issues related to poverty (Auerbach, 2009; Smith et al., 2014). These barriers that affect schedules and availability, self-efficacy, the realization of parenting capacity, family processes, and child development are significantly impacted by external environmental factors (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). Bronfenbrenner suggested that to truly know a child, one must know the relationship between a child and his or her family and home environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Lin & Bates, 2010). This theory helps to explain the dynamics of school and home relationships, and it enables research questions to be formed and tested.

The latest development of Bronfenbrenner and Ceci's (1994) theory includes proximal processes, person characteristics, context, and time encompassing additional issues related to

family and school relationships and teacher home visits (Ashiabi & O'Neal, 2015; Lin & Bates, 2010). The theory invites questions related to demographics and openness to receive visitors, along with the context of the home and the community. These additional variables may also impact the teacher home visit process. The research questions are related to the idea of how teacher home visits function and how they impact relationships between families. This question is crucial as research strongly shows the link between parent engagement and student success, (Adams & Christenson, 2000; Christianakis, 2011; Collier, et al., 2015; Edwards & Kutaka, 2015; Epstein et al., 2002; Jeynes, 2010; Soutullo, 2016). The teacher home visit could function as a proximal process that could theoretically improve the health of the microsystems and the mesosystem, which the theory demonstrates is the relationship between home and school (Leer & Lopez-Boo, 2018). Bronfenbrenner has suggested that proximal processes are able to influence circumstances and people enough to shift possibilities of success as nature and nurture work together (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994).

Overview of Research Methods

This study used an explanatory, sequential, mixed methods design. For the quantitative section, data was collected through surveys emailed to all teachers and staff from one high school in northern Virginia. This school has offered home visit training and support for teachers and staff. The email distribution list was secured by contacting the school's teacher home visit coordinator and requesting that the survey be sent to all teachers and staff whether they chose to participate in parent-teacher home visits or not. Upon initial approval from the teacher home visit coordinator, a survey was shared with a release form for all participants. Data was also requested to analyze graduation rates, attendance, and grades for student visited by teachers at home compared to the whole grade.

All teachers and staff in the high school who were invited to participate in the parent-teacher home visits were sent a link to take the survey. The teacher survey included thirty-nine Likert scale type questions. The questions were adapted from the Staff-Family Relationships Survey created by a group at Harvard University. Following the survey, 45-60-minute semi-structured interviews were administered with seven volunteer teacher participants. The qualitative part of this study was designed to gain additional explanations from teacher-answered survey questions. Questions were designed to allow teachers to share their experiences about teacher home visits, and how home visits have impacted relationships with parents and students. Finally, graduation, attendance, and grade data were analyzed to provide insight into relationships between teacher home visits and student outcomes.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

Introduction

Discussions about parent engagement in schools are increasing in scope and significance among lawmakers, educators, and families (Auerbach, 2009; Auerbach, 2012; Collier et al., 2015; Miller Marsh & Turner-Vorbeck, 2010; Murray, McFarland-Piazza, & Harrison, 2015). School leaders and teachers generally want parents to be engaged with teachers, and parents want to be engaged and supportive of their children (Hong, 2019; Pecháčková, Kabešová, Kuzdasová, & Vítková, 2014; Soutullo, 2016). Many different methods are used to connect schools with families, and one approach gaining support is teacher home visits (Kronholz, 2016, Nievar, 2018; Sheldon & Bee, 2018; Whyte & Karabon, 2016; Wright, 2018). Research in this literature review includes perspectives by teachers who have conducted home visits and how parent-teacher home visits affect relationships between teachers and parents and outcomes for students. Next, identifying the purpose and outcomes of parent engagement initiatives over the past several decades and in different contexts establishes a foundation for understanding the impact parent engagement has on experiences and interactions between parents and teachers. Themes in the literature review include the impact of bureaucratized, formal schooling, relationship dynamics between teachers and parents, implicit bias, divergent assumptions by teachers and parents, and philosophical beliefs about the who should be primarily responsible for initiating and maintaining relationships between teachers and parents. This study will highlight why family and parent engagement is important for student success in school and how parent-teacher home visits at the high school level are associated with teacher beliefs, parent-teacher

relationships, and student outcomes. A specific focus of this study is the way high school teacher home visits impact teacher and parent relationships and student outcomes.

Teacher home visits have increasingly gained attention as one method of developing effective parent and family relationships with schools since home visits emphasize relationships, partnership, and collaboration (Falk, 2017; Kronholz, 2016; Lamorey, 2017; Leer & Lopez-Boo, 2018). Home visit programs and strategies will be analyzed as a unique opportunity to build capacity for meaningful parent engagement in schools and as a mechanism for impacting student outcomes. Parent-teacher home visits have been associated with increased academic achievement, better attendance, and improved behavior at the elementary level (Leer & Lopez-Boo, 2018; Nievar et al., 2018; Wright et al., 2018). Teachers and parents are seeking meaningful relationships, yet positive relationships have been challenging to establish in many schools, and teacher attrition may be partly attributable to a lack of relationships and connection to the community (Ouellette et al., 2018). Parent-teacher home visits are designed to build connections and relationships, so this possibility for home visits to impact teacher satisfaction important to consider. In addition, teachers leave the profession for diverse reasons, but studies show teachers leave high-poverty schools and districts at higher rates (Dunn & Downey, 2018; Ouellette et al., 2018). Different variables may also impact teacher retention even in schools with similar demographics and systems, such as perceived quality of leadership, salary, or the effectiveness of managing student discipline (Dunn & Downey, 2018; Wronowski, 2018). However, overall job satisfaction and willingness to commit and persevere may be most connected to the quality of relationships with students, parents, and the community, and in part influenced by the perception of being valued as a professional with the ability to make a

difference (Clandinin et al., 2015; Djonko-Moore, 2016; Dunn & Downey, 2018; Lindqvist, et al., 2014).

Ideal parent engagement is often described as centering around relationships between teachers and parents, and teacher home visits are one intentional strategy for developing relationships (Llopart et al., 2018; Saïas et al., 2016; Whyte & Karabon, 2016). This literature review highlights efforts of schools to connect and engage with parents, and it identifies barriers that are most likely to stifle vibrant relationships between parents and teachers from emerging. The most commonly cited barrier to parent engagement in schools is the problem of assumptions and misconceptions between parents and the school (Collier, et al., 2015; Soutullo, 2016; Wassell et al., 2017). Numerous factors in the school and the home environment work together to impact the way people and institutions interact and how barriers are formed and sustained (Soutullo, 2016). Human development theories have helped to explain the way humans develop and grow within a community, including the home and the school. An analysis of home and school relationships in the context of Uri Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory of human development will provide an explanation for the barriers that hinder relationships between parents and teachers, implications for human development, and practical solutions for restoring ideal relationships between parents and teachers.

Theoretical Framework

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory describes human development as an experience characterized by a vital interconnection of environmental systems. Bronfenbrenner (1979) asserted that if one system does not work together well with the whole system, then a child will be negatively affected. Engaging most effectively with families and children requires an understanding of development throughout these ecological systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Research has shown that when the home and school commit to work together in cooperation to support empowering environments for students, the result is greater initiative and independence by students and an overall healthier developmental experience (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

Furthermore, and central to this study, Bronfenbrenner explained that observations and data from interactions of students in the home contribute to a deeper understanding of the child's experiences (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). He described this appeal for a broader perspective of how students learn and grow and develop by stating that observations of students in just one setting ultimately "fail to be developmentally valid" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 182). Parent-Teacher home visits are not about simply observing a student in the home, but home visits do serve to acknowledge the importance of how different settings influence a child's human development.

The Bioecological Systems Theory, an expansion and update to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, is grounded in the idea that different environments and systems work together when the system is connected and healthy. One prediction Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory makes is that home observations will tend to affect not only the behavior and outcomes of the child, but also those of the parents and the family. Bronfenbrenner (1979) concludes that a key to an effective public education system is not within the school alone, but in the interconnections with the community and with other systems (e.g., family and community resources). Each distinct setting where a child is influenced by people, and structures, usually composed of a physical, and human space is known as a microsystem. Microsystems are not always firmly connected, yet according to Bronfenbrenner, they should be. The Bioecological Systems Theory is driven by the potential of establishing vibrant relationships for children and communities when bioecological systems are connected, when microsystems are maximized to provide nurturing experiences for children, and parents and children connect and communicate in

such a way that microsystems work together in harmony (Ashiabi & O'Neal, 2015). While environmental factors impact a child's proclivities toward positive and negative behaviors and other developmental characteristics, research has shown that proximal processes, including parent and child interactions and potentially school and home proximal processes, mediate contextual and environmental factors such as poverty and neighborhood and family deficits (Ashiabi & O'Neal, 2015). Bronfenbrenner's theory fundamentally invokes the importance of educators and families working together, and specifically charges educators to reach out to families to establish and nurture empowering relationships (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Ferrara, 2017),

Bronfenbrenner (1979) argues healthy proximal processes are not nurtured in schools. Instead, in many communities, and particularly in high-poverty, predominantly minority areas, schools have become increasingly isolated, disconnected from the culture and community that students are living in and where relationships and meaning are created (Hill & Torres, 2010; Soutullo, 2016; Vesely, et al., 2017). The Bioecological Systems Theory points to a need for connection between schools, families, and communities. Proximal processes, such as increased parent interactions with children, evidence-based behavioral and academic interventions, and intentional partnerships, are meant to bridge the divide between the microsystems of home and school. These connections offer great potential for enhancing relationships, building self-efficacy for parents and children, and translating into greater behavioral and academic success (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). The exosystem is also an important factor in the development of children, despite not being a direct influencer. Poverty, the state of the economy, unemployment, neighborhood crime, and local culture and values are examples of factors that can work together to form the exosystem within which a child lives (Hayes, O'Toole, & Halpenny, 2017). Since

environmental and contextual factors from the exosystem, outside of the immediate family domain, exert the most profound impact on family life and human development, it is crucial for both microsystems within a relevant mesosystem to develop appropriate and relevant understandings and meaningful connections (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). In addition, the stronger the connection between the home and the school, the better the outcomes will be for children (Balli, 2016; Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017). The Bioecological theory reveals that this connection is not optional, but a necessity for providing equitable and purposeful support for all students and families. Figure 1 displays the relationships and interactions of nested systems.

Figure 1

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory
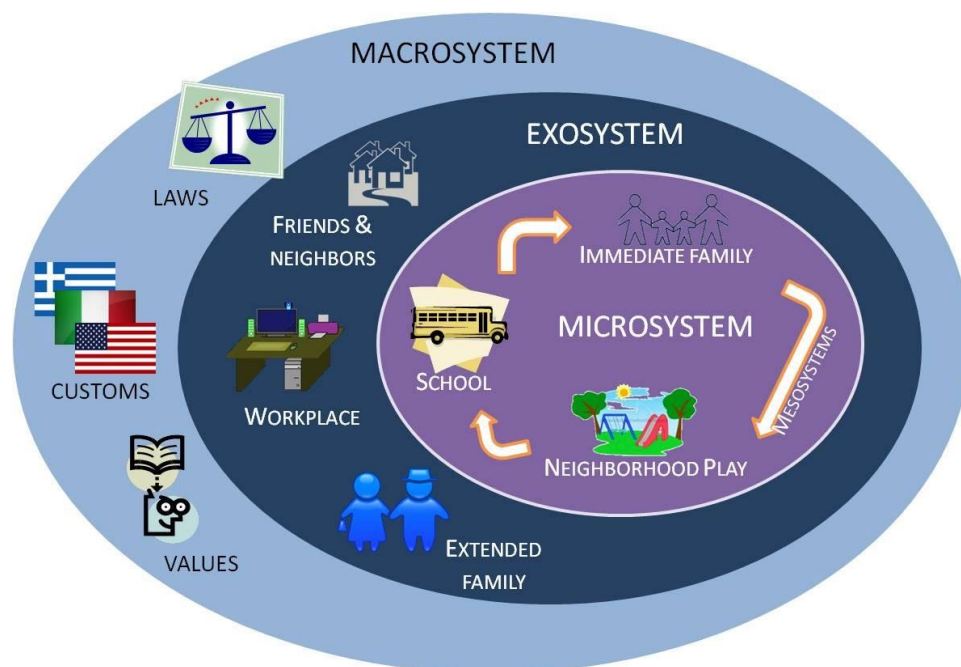
From Parent Involvement to Family Engagement: A Continuum

The conversation about parent engagement with schools has shifted over the years, and this shift is important to understand since the language corresponds to different pedagogies and philosophies about how parents and teachers will engage. At one time, the term *parent involvement* once implied an expectation that parents would attend meetings or volunteer for various events when called upon to support the school's mission (Miller Marsh & Turner-Vorbeck, 2010). This type of relationship is not reciprocal, and it is not designed to foster true partnerships (Goodall & Ghent, 2014; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Watt, 2016). The idea of involvement has been refined by Epstein (2001) and other models to encompass a shift in the parent's role and the depth of involvement with school and with learning activities. This shift includes the idea that the relationship between teachers and parents should be realized as more of a partnership. The idea of a school, family, and community partnership evolved when researchers realized that parent involvement placed a burden on parents to meet expectations established by the school, often without parent input, whereas the broader notion of partnership is more inclusive, richer, and more comprehensive (Edwards & Kutaka, 2015; Epstein, 2018; Pushor, 2017).

The meaning behind the language of parent or family engagement compared to parent involvement even varies by study and the perspective of the researcher and the participants (Edwards & Kutaka, 2015; Epstein, 2018). Parents and teachers often have vastly different ideas about what it should mean to be involved in school, and how to support their child or their student to be successful (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014). Despite these contrasting ideas about what parent engagement means, what appropriate roles should be, and who should take on these roles, some common themes have emerged in the literature. These themes include: parent and

child interaction at home, supervision of academic work and activities at home, educational

aspirations communicated to children by parents, trust between the school and home, school

contact with parents, and opportunities for participation (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014; Fan & Chen,

2001; Goodall & Ghent, 2014). These different components of parent engagement are all

identified as important for building relationships and supporting students. However, for some

parents and teachers, one of these themes may be more important than another. In fact, these

contrasting perceptions about what is expected and appropriate for parent engagement have been

identified as the root of significant barriers that can put parents and teachers at odds and cause

families to feel marginalized from the dominant cultural norm embodied by the local school and

educational culture and systems (Soutullo, 2016; Wassell et al., 2017).

Different models have been developed to more specifically delineate the multiple layers

and interpretations of the parent engagement experience. Dr. Joyce Epstein has been a leader in

her field of parent engagement for many years. Dr. Epstein carried out meticulous research to

affirm the critical role of parental involvement in the success of students in school. She also

merged the ideas of Uri Bronfenbrenner and other prominent parent and human development

theorists into a respected and popular parent engagement framework representing six major types

of parent engagement essential to successful family, school, and community partnerships

(Epstein et al., 2002; Ferrara, 2017). Epstein's (1995) parent engagement framework is one of

the most comprehensive and widely used around the United States and around the world. The six

types of parent engagement that Epstein identified are:

1.   **Parenting:** parent education workshops and other practices that foster positive student
      environments.

2.   **Communicating:** effective communication between home-to-school and school-to-home.

3.   **Volunteering:** parents are involved by serving at the school in different capacities.

4.   **Learning at home:** parents help students at home with homework and other academic activities.

5.   **Decision-making:** parents serve as parent leaders, decision-makers, and representatives by serving on teams and committees.

6.   **Collaborating with the community:** connecting with community agencies and resources to create an integrated community (Epstein, 1995, p. 704).

Epstein's (1995) model paved the way for parent engagement research and practice, a strength in that it embeds both traditional parent involvement components and partial elements of the more recently favored parent engagement philosophy that encompasses the entire parent, school, and community partnership conceptualization in a new more reciprocal formulation. While Epstein (1995) has provided a foundational model upon which other parent engagement researchers have built, some researchers have incorporated different niche perspectives in their studies, including adapted explanations of a formal conception of parent engagement and specific ways to include parent participation in the learning activities, processes, and experiences of their children (Goodall & Ghent, 2014; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Jeynes, 2005). In addition, concerns have been expressed about Epstein's model leading to school-centric approaches, which can be more of a problem when parent engagement practices reflect a dominant racial or ethnic group or middle class norms in contrast to the demographics of the community (Baquedano-López, Alexander, & Hernandez, 2013). However, Epstein (1995) established a respectable and widely cited framework for conceptualizing parent-teacher engagement in schools including components that would lead to future research. The Epstein framework facilitated evolving conversations, and the language has been shifting from parent involvement to family engagement in family, school, and community partnerships to encompass a broader and more inclusive design.

The History and Purpose of Family Engagement

Conversations about how parents and teachers should work together are not new. The appropriate role for parents and teachers in the education of children has been discussed for thousands of years. Even the ancient Greeks and Romans held different views. While the ancient Romans believed it was the family, particularly the mother and father, who could provide their children the best education, the Greeks believed the school was the only way to adequately educate students to become good soldiers and citizens (Svadkovskij, 1970). These philosophies stand in stark contrast to each other, and the philosopher Plato even advocated for his ideal system of education that cut out the family altogether. He believed that an ideal society would remove children from families and send them to a public school. While families were viewed with suspicion by educational leaders even into the middle ages, by the Renaissance era, the family emerged as an important part of educating children (Svadkovskij, 1970). Even in nations and communities preferring formal schooling, parents have been important as teachers and as authorities.

In colonial American schools, parents were expected to be involved with school planning, curriculum, recruiting and selecting teachers, and supporting religious education such as reading the Bible and enforcing behavioral and spiritual expectations (Barge & Loges, 2003; Hiatt, 1994). Later, parent involvement dynamics shifted as society and the economy became more complex, the industrial revolution impacted families and communities, and school attendance became compulsory. Compulsory education represented a significant change as educational authority and responsibility shifted from parents to schools. Specialization and economic strain may have contributed to this shift as well, as parents began going to work away from farms, and into dangerous factories, coal mines, and hazardous work conditions unsuitable for young

children. Whereas parents were more able to train up a child at home in agrarian traditions on the farm, or in a family craft, parents were unable to pass along their specialized skill to their children as work became more advanced and separated from the home. Public School in the United States began with a goal of instilling religious values and to provide for a literate population, but expanding compulsory education laws transformed the purpose and outcome of the schooling experience (Cutler, 2015).

One of the first American policies to specifically establish required schooling where children would be educated away from the home environment was the Civilization Fund Act of 1819, a policy created to provide for the "improvement" of Native Americans through education and assimilation into mainstream society (Baquedano-López et al., 2013). Policies directed toward Native Americans were motivated by a specific goal to integrate a distinct cultural group, and this approach contrasts with the motivation for most education compulsory laws. With new and expanding educational institutions, parents from all backgrounds were forced to think about their role in working with teachers and schools (Cutler, 2015; Scribner, 2016). For example, up until the 1960's in the United States, parent rights in were considered directly linked to local authority (Scribner, 2016). As professional and legal authority grew, and districts and legislative power over schools expanded, districts began to make decisions more with their interest in mind rather than parents. The governing bodies and institutions (local and state) that had once supported and reinforced family authority and values, were now usurping parent authority and diminishing fundamental parent rights (Scribner, 2016). Consequently, parent and school engagement continued to evolve as parents were required to send their children to school, yet school systems grew in scope and complexity.

Originally, parents volunteered to send their children to school, or they saved their money to invest in their child's schooling. Yet the parent retained control and power as they could remove their child at any point and for any reason. As compulsory public school attendance laws were established across the United States and around the world, free education for all children may have been promoted as the benefit, but the cost was parent authority and choice (Bhavnagri & Krolikowski, 2000). Formal education had an important role in providing equity and access, yet growing pains were evident. One challenge was rooted in the disconnect between home and school. As the microsystems of home and school were inadvertently disconnected, the home and school often worked against each other during the early 20th century – in part due to lack of communication and familiarity (Culbert, 1921).

However, schools continued to seek engaged parents even before nationwide compulsory education laws were fully in place in the United States, as evidenced by teacher home visit initiatives established in the United States in the early 20th century. (Culbert, 1921; Nudd, 1921). Public schools may have been created to support the common good, and they ideally may have been designed for the benefit of all students equally, yet some students struggled to conform behaviorally and academically as early as the turn of the 20th century. Teacher home visits were established as one remedy (Culbert, 1921).

Teacher home visits were also created to advance compulsory education in public schools and to foster academic achievement (Bhavnagri & Krolikowski, 2000). Data linking home visiting teachers to increased academic achievement was actually collected and compiled in the United States nearly 100 years before the resurgence of home visiting models in the United States. In 1919, the National Association of Visiting Teachers and Home and School Visitors was created in the United States, and detailed research was already being conducted to determine

the effectiveness of teacher home visits (Culbert, 1921). According to another study conducted in 1920, 60% of elementary students receiving home visits improved their grades, while only 38% of students from the control group of students who did not receive home visits were credited with academic improvement (Bhavnagri & Krolikowski, 2000).

By the 1906-1907 school year, New York, Boston, and Hartford all began a home visit program called the Visiting Teacher (Charles & Stone, 2019; Culbert, 1921). While many of these programs were started by private organizations, when New York City observed the success of helping students and families, the Department of Education took it over and the Visiting Teacher program spread (Nudd, 1921). One of the proposed goals of the Visiting Teacher program was to learn more about the whole child, since the school, home, and the neighborhood may observe different characteristics (Charles & Stone, 2019). Visiting Teachers outreaches were specifically designed to support students who were struggling in school. The goal was that making this connection between the school and home could identify an issue and provide information that could help the student to be more successful (Nudd, 1921). The Visiting Teacher program grew steadily, and by 1921, there were visiting teachers in 28 cities in 15 states, across the United States (Nudd, 1921). Table 1 shows the distribution of visiting teachers.

Discussions about connecting the home and school have continued to increase in priority, permeating classrooms, school board meetings, national policy documents, and even speeches by the President of the United States (Kainz & Aikens, 2007). While school initiatives and government policies reflect this priority, the language and intent have been adapted and refined (Harris & Goodall, 2008). For example, parent engagement and parent involvement represent similar ideas, yet the expectation and scope have evolved over the years. In addition, there is recognition that although establishing engagement between teachers and parents is generally

viewed as a positive goal for all parents and teachers, interpretations of the term vary. Parents typically define parent engagement as offering support to students, teachers tend to view it as a way to get support to improve behavior, and students see parent engagement as providing support in general (Harris & Goodall, 2008; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Watt, 2016).

Table 1

Number of Home Visiting Teachers by State in 1921 (Nudd, 1921).

State	City	Number of Visiting Teachers
1. Connecticut	Hartford	3
2. Georgia	Atlanta	1
3. Illinois	Chicago	3
4. Iowa	Des Moines	1
	Mason City	1
5. Kentucky	Louisville	1
6. Massachusetts	Boston	15
	Newton	1
	Springfield	1
	Worcester	1
7. Minnesota	Minneapolis	14
8. Missouri	Kansas City	1
9. New Jersey	Glen Ridge	1
	Monmouth County	1
	Montclair	1
	Newark	4
10. New York	New York City	17
	Mount Vernon	1
	Rochester	7
	Utica	1
11. North Carolina	Raleigh	1
12. North Dakota	Billings County	1
	Fargo	1
13. Ohio	Cleveland	2
	Columbus	3
14. Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	5
	Harrisburg	1
15. Virginia	Roanoke	1

Engaging with families through home visits by teachers has grown in popularity in the United States again recently. Home visits have been around for years in an informal capacity, yet a new and more formal system began to emerge in the United States around the early 20th century (Bhavnagri & Krolikowski, 2000; Culbert, 1921; Nudd, 1921). The most common arrangement for visiting teachers involved a district hiring a homeschool teacher to be assigned to one school, thereby allowing the teacher to represent both the school to families and the neighborhood to the school. (Nudd, 1921). Creating a position to represent the neighborhood to the school reflects the goal of serving both schools and families and building rapport with parents (Nudd, 1921). The Teacher Visitor program in the United States grew rapidly and extended across at least 15 states. Teacher home visiting programs moved out of the spotlight for a period, and initiatives to formalize home visits, including teacher training, schedules, and compensation, have arisen again only recently (Kronholz, 2016; Meyer et al., 2011; Wagner, et al., 2003). However, there had been some small-scale efforts in the United States with Montessori and Head Start to visit parents in their homes before the beginning of the school year (Kronholz, 2016).

Home visiting has also happened informally in different parts of the world. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the revered WWII era theologian, also served as a teacher earlier in his career. Metaxas (2010, p. 133) explains that "…the young pastor visited the homes and parents of each one his fifty students." Bonhoeffer, telling of the experience, said:

> This is real work. Their home conditions are generally indescribable: poverty, disorder, immorality. And yet the children are still open; I am often amazed how a young person does not completely come to grief under such conditions; and of course, one is always asking oneself how one would react to such surroundings (Metaxas, 2010, p. 133).

Other earlier home visit programs in the United States were directed at Mexican immigrants. The Home Teacher Act of 1915 placed teachers into the students' homes who could then directly instruct parents, and specifically mothers, on a wide range of practices, from personal hygiene to principles of American governance and citizenship (Sanchez, 1995). Home visit policies have been motivated by different factors, and Sanchez (1995) points out that those in favor of Americanizing immigrants (in this case primarily those from Mexico), were hoping to work alongside women to transform families from a rural pre-industrial way of living to a modern American (e.g. factory) lifestyle.

After the bureaucratization of American education during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, home and school eventually separated in operation and function.   Consequently, parents and schools were viewed and experienced as two different spheres. These dichotomous roles established an expectation whereby parents supported children at home with schoolwork, and parents in return supported schools financially and by helping only rarely as a chaperone, or volunteer in the school when a school initiated an invitation (Barge & Loges, 2003). This experience continued for decades before educational and government leaders realized that, perhaps unintentionally, parents were disconnected from the school experience, and thus a vital part of their children's lives. That began to change with the rise of accountability, data, Title I requirements and increased oversight (Mapp, 2012).

In the twentieth century, as pressure increased to raise test scores and compete internationally, the motive for increased parent engagement shifted again. Efforts to fight the war on poverty aligned with educational support and increased parent involvement strategies initiated by Federal Title I programs, and the commitment to engage schools and parents continued with the Goals 2000: Education America Act (Abdul-Adil & Farmer, 2006; Baker, 1997; Kainz &

Aikens, 2007; Mapp, 2012; Nakagawa, 2000). While some argued the problem of poverty in the United States was a reflection of school failure, a report by Coleman (1991) commissioned by the United States Department of Education pointed to decreased parent involvement in education -- which he also attributed, in part, to mothers beginning to enter the workforce.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) expanded parent engagement initiatives and also placed increased demands on schools to raise test scores (Miller Marsh & Turner-Vorbeck, 2010). Once again, ideas about how schools should best work with parents emerged. This evolution in policy discussions from parent involvement to family engagement demonstrates a commitment to a growing role for families in education (Mapp, 2012). There has been an important shift in the parent engagement language, reinforced through Title I modifications beginning in the late 1990s from parents as learners to parents as partners. This significant shift re-centers parents as equal partners. In addition, in a climate of increasing school choice, parents had become consumers, empowered with choice and a new authority, and schools became more driven to work with all parents. (Baquedano-López, et al., 2013; Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014).

The Title I law still contains some provisions that do not embrace the equal partnership model. For example, parents are still relegated to essentially monitoring homework, media consumption, and attendance as "watchdogs" for the school (Mapp, 2012, p. 17). According to Karen Mapp, Harvard professor and researcher of family engagement, this approach does not embody the intent for an equal partnership that reflects the dual capacity building necessary for effective relationships between parents and teachers.

Another view of parent engagement suggests that expectations by the school are rooted in the dominant culture. This perspective essentially asserts that society sets the standard for what

good parenting means, that all parents or guardians should partner with schools in a way that supports the school's mission, and that if they do not, then the parent is responsible for the disconnection to the school community (Christianakis, 2011; Rusnak, 2018). However, this view does not acknowledge the complexities of socio-economic realities that complicate how parents are able to engage with schools, and how this reality creates challenges for equitable access and collaboration (Barton et al., 2004; Kainz & Aikens, 2007; Nakagawa, 2000).

The idea that parent engagement means parents serve the goals of the school ignores the role and experiences of parents, and it tends to focus on the perceived failures and deficits of parents. Consequently, this view does not address the underlying issue of establishing collaborative relationships and mutually agreeable expectations for parent engagement. Assumptions such as narrowly interpreted, deficit-minded viewpoints focus on the weaknesses of parents and families, and they minimize the potential of the school's role in building positive community and relationships with parents (Baquedano-López, et al., 2013; Nakagawa, 2000). Instead, some parent engagement strategies such as parent-teacher home visits are designed to build transparency, partnerships, and trust (Collier et al., 2015; Edwards & Kutaka, 2015; Rusnak, 2018).

Parent Engagement Outcomes

A large body of data demonstrates that parent engagement positively affects school outcomes (Epstein, 2010; Fan & Williams, 2010; Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017; Henderson et al., 2002; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Jeynes, 2015; Sheridan et al., 2012; Suizzo et al., 2016). A growing body of literature has also continued to show that parent engagement leads to improved student academic achievement (Constantino, 2008; Fan & Chen, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Jeynes, 2007). Numerous studies

also show that parent engagement is beneficial for children of all ages (Cox, 2005; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Epstein, 2001; Vesely, et al., 2017). The range of outcomes includes increased academic achievement, better attendance, improved behavior, and greater satisfaction with school (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2005; Meyer et al., 2011; Wilder, 2014). Positive academic and social outcomes are evident across all socioeconomic groups, racial and ethnic lines, educational backgrounds, and ages (Edwards & Kutaka, 2015).

While research has demonstrated a positive relationship between family engagement and specific outcomes, there are also many different layers of parent engagement that have been studied (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014; Goodall & Ghent, 2014; Wilder, 2014). For example, while parent engagement is known to have a significant effect on educational outcomes in general, this effect has been more pronounced for students and families from working class and lower socioeconomic groups (Crozier & Davies, 2007; Edwards & Kutaka, 2015; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Watt, 2016).

It is important to note that a small segment of researchers is not convinced that parent engagement with schools is associated with student achievement gains. While numerous studies have shown that parent engagement is beneficial to students, parents, and the entire community, as well as being associated with higher attendance, better scores, motivation, and improved behavior (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014; Dor, 2013; Goodall & Ghent, 2014), other studies have shown mixed results (Mattingly, Prislin, McKenzie, Rodriguez, & Kayzar, 2002; Robinson, & Harris, 2014). These results have led to the suggestion that new questions should be raised about whether parent engagement activities both inside and outside of school positively impact measurable student outcomes such as grades and test scores (Mattingly et al., 2002; Robinson & Harris, 2014).

One major reason for this lack of consensus among scholars about whether increased parent engagement is definitively associated with increases in academic outcomes is that parent engagement has been measured differently across different studies (Barton, et al., 2004; Mattingly, et al., 2002; Ule, et al., 2015). The current empirical literature is also unclear as to what extent parent engagement affects student achievement at different levels and among different measures. Researchers are also unsure of which forms are most effective (Mattingly, et al., 2002; Robinson & Harris, 2014;). Robinson and Harris (2014) are, in fact, "…puzzled by the strong belief that parent involvement will lead to improved achievement for all children and to convergence in achievement gaps" and they have "…sufficient reason to be skeptical that this will lead to substantial improvement in students' achievement" (p.23).

However, contrasting research demonstrates a meaningful link between teacher and parent engagement and student outcomes in general. The Parent-Teacher Home Visit organization conducted a three-part study starting in 2017 that specifically studied how parents can be engaged with schools through teacher home visits (Sheldon & Bee, 2018). In the final report published in 2018, results showed that schools that consistently implemented a teacher home visit program with at least 10% of its families experienced both a decrease in chronic absenteeism and an increase in standardized ELA scores (Sheldon & Bee, 2018). Increased academic achievement has been established in early childhood and elementary schools when teachers engage parents through home visits (Leer & Lopez-Boo, 2018; Sheldon & Bee, 2018; Wright et al., 2018). While home visits have recently been linked to higher academic achievement, better attendance, and improved behavior, not enough is known about the mechanism that that enables home visits to be effective (Leer & Lopez-Boo, 2018; Wright, 2018). In addition, very few home visits have been conducted at the high school level, and

research is not available to affirm that home visits at the high school level are also associated with student outcomes (Barmore, 2018).

Evidence is clear that engaging parents impacts academic outcomes, yet questions remain about the most effective strategies to engage parents. Despite some skepticism about how parent engagement specifically impacts educational outcomes, parents clearly want to be engaged with schools. According to a 2017 survey of 7,259 parents included in a new study, although family and community engagement is the top driver of overall satisfaction among parents, public schools nationwide are rated poorly in connecting and engaging with families and parents (Falk, 2017). In addition, parent engagement satisfaction has been rated low throughout other nations around the world (Ule, et al., 2015).

Teacher Perception of Parent Engagement

Teachers express a lack of confidence in parents and their interest and ability to work together with the school. Research has shown that many teachers doubt their ability to change parents' attitudes toward engaging with schools (Dor, 2013; Epstein, 1992). However, there are many complex variables at work in the relationship between home and school, and teachers have reported that working with parents is one of their biggest challenges (Epstein, 2018) One challenge is that the expectation of roles and responsibilities for teachers and parents is often in conflict. Teachers, parents, and students have communicated different ideas about what effective parent engagement means for stakeholders (Barton et al., 2004; Ule, et al., 2015; Watt, 2016). Both teachers and parents agree that communication is important, and research shows that parents and teachers specifically agree that effective parent engagement requires schools to communicate better with parents (Smith, et al., 2014). However, teachers tend to struggle with understanding barriers parents face to adequately engage with teachers and the school (Smith et

al., 2014). Teachers have reported feeling apprehensive and discouraged by parents who do not communicate in the expected way, or when they seem to challenge a teacher's authority (Dor, 2013; Smith et al., 2014). Yet there is a power asymmetry for many teacher and parent relationships, and since teacher behaviors and mindsets toward parents have significant impacts on the willingness for parents to be involved with school, teachers as the professionals should be responsible for initiating communication, and building partnership, and trust (Collier et al., 2015; Dor, 2013; Rusnak, 2018; Smith et al., 2014).

Teachers have communicated basic ideas about how they believe parents should be involved with schools. Teachers generally want parents to support their expectations and to show up. The problem is underlying assumptions and beliefs by teachers drives their willingness and openness to engage different strategies and approaches with parents (Dor, 2013; Rusnak, 2018; Smith et al., 2014). One critical component required for more consistent and meaningful parent engagement is a deep and transparent examination of the way teachers believe and what they think about parents (Pushor & Amendt, 2018).

These assumptions do not mean that teachers are not interested in engaging with parents. It does mean that teachers have expectations that are shaped by their own biases – including cultural and socioeconomic mismatches between teachers and families (Smith et al., 2014). Generally, teachers have been open to the idea of asking parents to attend school functions, help with homework, attend parent nights, and sign forms (Crozier & Davies, 2007; Pushor & Amendt, 2018). There may be an assumption that parents are not willing or able to be further involved (Hong, 2019; Smith et al., 2014). Confusion about expectations creates divisions between teachers and parents in other ways as well. Teachers have reported that they would like parents to communicate by calling the teacher, setting up conferences, encouraging students to

complete homework, and instilling discipline in their children (Barge & Loges, 2003). Teachers also agree that parents should avoid some behaviors that could threaten positive family and school communication. These behaviors include criticizing the school and teachers, not supporting regular attendance, and neglecting to support teachers with negative student behavior (Barge & Loges, 2003; Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014).

While teachers have communicated skepticism about parent abilities or interest in school engagement, there remains a desire by teachers to connect through positive relationships (Hong, 2019). Implementing Epstein's (1995) six types of family engagement would be a start, where it is proposed that effective parent engagement would embrace all six types of school, family, and community partnerships. However, since it may be challenging for some communities to quickly excel in each of the six areas identified by Epstein, and since teachers, parents, and students have all expressed a strong basic desire for high-quality relationships, a true collaboration is the ideal goal (Barge & Loges, 2003; Hong, 2019).

At the same time, despite the recognized importance of parent engagement, multiple studies have found that teachers do not feel prepared or equipped to work well with students' families (Collier, et al., 2015; Ferrara, 2017; He, 2013; Smith & Sheridan, 2019). One reason may be that teacher education programs often lack specific courses or units designed to impress on teachers the importance of parent engagement and practical strategies for working with families. (Bergman, 2013; Coleman, 1991; Flanigan, 2007; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). Where parent engagement is addressed in university teacher preparation programs, curriculum often focuses on parent–teacher conferences, parent concerns, newsletters, and working within the community (Bergman, 2013; Stevens & Tollafield, 2003).

Teacher preparation programs involving field experiences and student teaching may also inadvertently prepare aspiring teachers with negative assumptions about parents when veteran teachers and mentors share negative communication and experiences. Teacher candidates also often view cooperating teachers and other influential adults as conveying the idea that student struggles are due to uncaring, uninvolved parents (Abdul-Adil & Farmer, 2006; Grossman, 1999). In addition, teacher colleges have not effectively prepared new teachers to engage with families, and their lack of confidence and skills have created significant barriers to working effectively with parents (Collier, et al., 2015).

Another hindrance to effective parent engagement is an outdated deficit view suggesting that working class, minority, and poor parents do not care about their child's education (Abdul-Adil & Farmer, 2006; Christianakis, 2011; Crozier & Davies, 2007; Kainz & Aikens, 2007; Lee & Bowen, 2006). However, this view is beginning to be supplanted by more contemporary understandings that instead consider why parents may feel isolated or unwelcome in schools. Even though the deficit view of parent engagement is fading, researchers are continuing to find a persistent and widely-held belief that parents of children living in poverty (particularly minority students), do not care and do not want to be involved in their children's education (Abdul-Adil & Farmer, 2006; Llopart et al., 2018; Soutullo, 2016).

These perceptions are crucial to understanding parent engagement dynamic since misconceptions and bias can interfere with meaningful relationships between teachers and parents. According to Baum and Swick (2008), "teachers (particularly those new to the field), may minimize family involvement opportunities, as a strategy to avoid potential conflict" (p. 580)

Parent Perception of Family Engagement

Parent engagement in schools is significantly influenced by teacher and administrator perceptions of parents' background and of the roles expected of them by the school and existing parent engagement protocols (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Barton, et al., 2004; Crozier, 1999; Kainz & Aikens, 2007). In addition, even though both parents and teachers have expressed an interest in quality relationships, teachers tend to have a narrower view of parent engagement as being primarily communication initiated by the school to the home, while parents have a broader view of what their role should be including parent programs, participating in school input on curriculum, input on staff evaluations, and advocating for their child (Soutullo, 2016). Also, many teachers have established a general perspective and expectation of parents as passive receivers of a school's agenda, or a view that parents do not want to be involved, but these perceptions and assumptions disproportionally affect families from minority and lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Lee & Bowen, 2006).

Ishimaru and Takahashi (2017) cite institutional barriers for non-dominant families as reasons for dissatisfaction with parent engagement. They argue that it is important to consider the perspective that in some educational communities the "'hard to reach' parent (sometimes 'lazy' parent) tends to be code for Latino/a, other immigrant or refugee families, and sometimes Native American families who are presumed not to care about their children or their education" (Ishimaru & Takahashi, 2017, p. 349).

The assumption that parents are not interested in being involved with school contrasts with evidence that parents equate parent engagement with feeling welcome and building personal relationships with their child's teachers (Abdul-Adil & Farmer, 2006; Balli, 2016; Barge & Loges, 2003). Parents want teachers to know more about their families, and they indicate a desire

to hear more good stories and less of the bad. They want to know phone calls and communication are about more than just a problem (Abdul-Adil & Farmer, 2006; Barge & Loges, 2003; Crozier & Davies, 2007; Rusnak, 2018). Other parents have discussed being pleased with multiple methods of communication including phone calls, texts, parent nights, and emails. Availability and openness by schools and parents is important to parents (Abdul-Adil & Farmer, 2006; Barge & Loges, 2003; Collier et al., 2015; Crozier & Davies, 2007; Rusnak, 2018).

In addition, "Parents talked about the need for parents and school personnel to work collaboratively together…as a community to help the child and teachers could become more familiar with the uniqueness of the child's home life and make adjustments to school readings and assignments" (Barge & Loges, 2003, p. 149). Some parents have also talked about how much they like home visits that allow teachers to better understand the home environment and how these dynamics positively affect their child and their experiences with school (Loughlin-Presnal & Bierman, 2017; Meyer, et al., 2011; Peralta-Nash, 2003; Wagner et al., 2003).

Lack of communication and trust, as well as parents' own poor experience with school, have been among the most significant barriers to effective parent engagement (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014; Harris & Goodall, 2008). Many parents feel marginalized, and they view schools as a place where they experienced only failure, as places of conflict or as another system that they must fight or help their children to fight against (Ishimaru et al., 2016). Working-class parents have also reported their perception of teachers as superior and distant (Crozier & Davies, 2007; Ishimaru et al., 2016; Wassell et al., 2017). These perceptions are heightened when teachers do not recognize challenge some immigrant or lower socioeconomic families may have access to books, transportation, or language skills (Soutullo, 2016). Rather

than parents being hard to reach, it is frequently schools themselves that inadvertently erect barriers to communication and engagement by failing to acknowledge important structural and cultural barriers to traditional forms of parent engagement (Crozier & Davies, 2007; Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017; Wassell et al., 2017).

Parents from all social classes and backgrounds have consistently communicated the importance of their role in supporting their children in school. (Kuru Cetin & Taskin, 2016; Ule et al., 2015). Parents want to be involved with their children's school experience, and they have communicated the belief that the success of their children increasingly depends on their efforts as co-educators (Ule et al., 2015; Wassell, et al., 2017).

Barriers to Parent Engagement

While parents want to be involved and engaged with their child's school and connected with teachers, several barriers have stifled meaningful collaboration (Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017; Soutullo, 2016; Wassell, et al., 2017). These barriers are important to acknowledge and address since parent engagement, when carried out with a spirit of cooperation and openness has been shown to contribute to increased student achievement, overall satisfaction with the school experience, and an increasing openness to a partnership (Brock & Edmunds, 2010; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Ishimaru et al., 2016; Watt, 2016). One barrier that prevents teachers and parents from engaging is a lack of training, and self-efficacy (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Another barrier to parent engagement is that some parents may believe that their child does not want or need help or that they were unable to be helpful (Brock & Edmunds, 2010). Often, immigrant families cite a lack of English proficiency as the main barrier preventing them from helping (Johnson et al., 2016). There is also a perception by parents that teachers are

not open to involving parents – a major barrier to schools and families engaging effectively

(Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Latunde, 2016; Pushor & Amendt, 2018).

Public schools are charged with serving all students and families. However, parent

engagement dynamics are characterized by some as mostly imposing cultural norms and

strategies geared toward molding non-dominant families into accepting school policies, and

expectations (Ishimaru et al., 2016; Latunde, 2016; Pushor & Amendt, 2018). This restrictive

arrangement is not open and collaborative as effective parent engagement requires.

Consequently, parent engagement cultures that ignore marginal groups, or that demand

conformity, inadvertently create an uninviting atmosphere for some families, Marginalized

families are most commonly from lower socioeconomic groups, those with lower educational

levels, unconventional work schedules, those with language barriers, and other non-traditional

characteristics (Ishimaru et al., 2016; Latunde, 2016; Pushor & Amendt, 2018).

While collaboration and openness has been effective in some schools, reciprocal and

relational partnerships can be adopted more effectively by addressing barriers and intentionally

creating a welcoming, caring, and homelike school environment (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011;

Ishimaru et al., 2016; Watt, 2016). When relationships between parents and teachers are

nurtured, instead of stifled by narrowly focusing on deficits of parents, teachers can begin to see

parents as assets (Pushor & Amendt, 2018). This welcoming approach that invites parents to

walk alongside teachers in partnership, contrasts with an assimilation approach where families

and parents may have expectations imposed upon them by school officials to serve existing

structures without a true relationship and partnership. In this latter assimilation model, while

schools may suggest that they are working to engage with parents and families, parents might

typically be asked by the school to sign up for administrative and support tasks instead of being

invited to work in relationship to advocate for both the needs of the school and those of parents and families (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Ishimaru et al., 2016).

Interestingly, while research shows a positive correlation between parent engagement and academic achievement, parents do not communicate higher academic achievement as the main goal and intended purpose of establishing meaningful relationships and engagement experiences with the school. Instead, when parents believe that a school is inviting and allows for meaningful collaboration and a two-way relationship, they report sensing that their experience with the school is good and satisfying (Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Ishimaru et al., 2016).

Achieving the idea of more collaborative parent and teacher engagement and partnership has resulted in different proposals. One suggestion is to embrace co-designed learning environments with minority or marginalized families. This goal for improving parent engagement involves a shift of power and mindset to a newer, more radical view of a walking alongside in a partnership (Ishimaru et al., 2016; Latunde, 2016; Pushor & Amendt, 2018). Rather than looking outward for reasons why parents are not engaged with teachers and the school, teachers are encouraged to look inward for explanations and solutions (Pushor & Amendt, 2018).

Teaching is a relational profession, and many teachers enter the teaching profession because they want to make a difference. Teachers who do not feel supported and connected to a community are more likely to leave the profession (Clandinin et al., 2015; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Teachers leaving the profession is an important barrier to ongoing parent engagement, since effective parent engagement requires time and effort for relationships to be built and for trust to grow (Pushor & Amendt, 2018). This relational barrier to parent engagement is reflected

in the school culture, and it is self-perpetuating unless the cycle is broken by introducing systems designed to embrace the power of professional relationships and a culture that prepares teachers for engagement with parents. Ultimately, teacher turnover prevents meaningful relationships from forming and developing. Although teachers leave the profession for a variety of reasons, feeling connected and belonging to a community impacts the experience and the decision to remain at a school or in the profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Relationships and social support also positively impact the overall teaching experience and mediate the reported high level of stress, lack of belonging, and struggle with establishing identity (Clandinin et al., 2015; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Despite an abundance of research over the past two decades, there is a need to continue the study of teacher attrition and mobility. Some general trends for why teachers leave have emerged. For example, teachers in high-poverty urban and predominantly minority schools report a significantly higher level of stress and job dissatisfaction than teachers working in wealthier, suburban schools (Dunn & Downey, 2018; Wronowski, 2018). Root causes and solutions are still being identified and developed as U.S. laws, policies, and initiatives work to reach high-poverty and minority students (Clandinin et al., 2015; Djonko-Moore, 2016; Ouellette et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

Teacher attrition is a problem for many reasons. Continuous teacher turnover costs the U.S. over two billion dollars a year, student achievement is adversely affected, and a lack of teacher stability threatens opportunities for equitable teaching and learning experiences (Clandinin et al., 2015; Haynes, 2014). The revolving door of new teachers is a significant problem since many of the most capable and effective teachers are the first to leave the classroom (Clandinin et al., 2015; Wronowski, 2018). Teachers may cite many reasons for leaving the profession, but many teachers cite a lack of belonging and social and parent support

(Çimen & Özgan, 2018; Clandinin et al., 2015). Developing an intentional parent engagement culture in a school community has the potential to reverse the growing trend of teacher attrition. Schools with high parent engagement levels are more likely to have teachers report high job satisfaction than those schools with low levels of parent engagement (Markow, 2013)

Teacher attrition is still a complex phenomenon (Clandinin et al., 2015; Wronowski, 2018). Reports by teachers leaving the profession have been too multi-faceted and intertwined with personal characteristics and the context of the community to consistently identify clear reasons for staying or leaving (Clandinin et al., 2015). These trends suggest the importance of understanding new teachers as people in a holistic sense, and knowing their needs, desires and interests. This complexity also reflects the reported need of teachers to feel connected in relationships and embraced by the school and the community with a sense of belonging and purpose (Çimen & Özgan, 2018; Clandinin et al., 2015). When parents are involved with school and sensitive to the issues and challenges of the classroom, teachers experience in increase in their ability to be successful, to plan for the future, and to overcome challenges (Çimen & Özgan, 2018).

Despite clear evidence that teachers in urban, high-poverty, high-minority schools leave the profession at higher rates, some teachers choose to stay (Dunn & Downey, 2018; Ouellette et al., 2018; Wronowski, 2018). The reason for staying can also be understood by an examination of why teachers leave. Student behavior is consistently cited as a major reason for teachers leaving the profession within the first five years (Clandinin et al., 2015; Djonko-Moore, 2016; Haynes, 2014; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Teachers feel tired, overworked, and stressed by the problems associated with disruptive students, and parents who do not seem available or supportive. However, when teacher and parents collaborate in a relationship, through home

visits, student problem behavior has been reported to significantly decrease (Wright et al., 2018).

Relationships matter for teachers. Teachers who stay in the profession and in high-poverty

schools cite reasons including supportive principals, learning systems that are setup to promote

strong social support, and a culture that generally embraces positive relationships with the

community (Ouellette et al., 2018; Redding & Henry, 2019; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

    New and early-career teachers are especially likely to leave the profession early, and even

in the middle of the school year (Dunn & Downey, 2018; Redding & Henry, 2019). Out of state

teachers and uncertified teachers are more likely to take jobs in high-poverty, urban schools, yet

the turnover for these two groups are higher than average (Redding & Henry, 2019). Teacher

motives for entering the profession may vary, but many teachers are excited about living out

their story, and their vision about what they believe teaching can be (Dunn & Downey, 2018).

When negative experiences, disappointments, and hopelessness emerge, teachers are more likely

to leave (Çimen & Özgan, 2018; Dunn & Downey, 2018). One prevalent theme for teachers is

the importance of relationships and a commitment to people. Teachers express disappointment

when the stress and demands of the job or restrictions imposed by the school result in students

and parents being let down (Dunn & Downey, 2018). When teachers do not feel connected and

purposeful, they are more likely to leave the profession, and when teachers leave their job, the

adjustments required to catch up with turnover significantly disrupts student learning and

interferes with positive relationships between teachers, students, and parents. (Redding & Henry,

2019). When teachers develop positive working relationships with parents, they are more likely

to feel encouraged about their work, and more hopeful for a successful future (Çimen & Özgan,

2018). As a result, engaging with parents and developing good relationships is crucial for student

success, teacher efficacy, and teacher retention, which translates into improved capacity for positive student experiences and outcomes (Çimen & Özgan, 2018).

Teacher attrition is impacted by relationships and identify in a multitude of ways. For example, white teachers are more likely than black teachers to leave teaching in a HPRS (high-poverty, racially segregated) school, and beginning teachers are also more likely to quit (Djonko-Moore, 2016; Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006). Also, higher qualified teachers tend to leave high-poverty racially segregated schools at a higher rate. In addition, beliefs about poverty and experiences with inequity impact teacher decisions to stay. Teachers who accept the notion of structural poverty as an injustice, and those who have experienced inequity personally, are more likely to continue teaching in a HPRS (Djonko-Moore, 2016). When new teachers believe parents are not interested in being involved, they are less motivated and committed (Çimen & Özgan, 2018; Dotger, 2009). Unfortunately, many teachers perceive the lack of parent involvement as lack of interest (Mcknight, et al., 2017). The problem is not the perception or the underlying political views though as much as the lack of relationship between parents and teachers. While teachers are known to have implicit biases about parents and different groups and communities, parent engagement, and particularly parent teacher home visits result in changing perceptions and a deepening relationship (Mcknight, et al., 2017).

There is an important relationship between emotional burnout and teacher attrition (Hong, 2012; Hong, 2019). When teachers feel joy, fulfillment, and supportive interpersonal relationships, they are more equipped to cope with challenging circumstances of working with students in the classroom (Hong, 2012; Redding & Henry, 2019). Relationships with parents create meaning and purpose, and parents can serve as one part of a positive support systems.

Teacher burnout is not a minor issue in education because it leads to changes in attitude, effort, motivation, commitment to outcomes, and eventually leaving teaching altogether.

Lack of teacher training is a barrier to teacher retention and parent engagement relationships since training can significantly impact teacher candidate perception of parents and the ability to engage with families (Bergman, 2013). Beginning teachers specifically report feeling unprepared to communicate with parents (Freeman & Knopf, 2007). Teacher training to improve engagement with parents could result in an increased likelihood of staying in the profession as greater job satisfaction would result from better relationships with families. Even modest training (one semester), or training embedded in an existing course can yield meaningful gains in family engagement measures (Bergman, 2013).

Pre-service teachers report not feeling prepared to adequately engage with parents and families, and an increasing number of education colleges are implementing coursework devoted to school and family partnerships and parent engagement (Epstein, 2018; Ferrara, 2017; Willemse et al., 2017). While some teachers express some confidence in working with parents and families, many teacher candidates are less confident about parent engagement with different cultural groups (Epstein, 2018). University teacher preparation programs are beginning to recognize that many teachers are not prepared with confidence or the tools to partner with parents (Epstein, 2018; Ferrara, 2017; Willemse et al., 2017). Pre-service teachers also continue to believe that parents are generally not interested in helping their children or being involved with the school. As a result, more pre-service teachers are required to study parent engagement and strategies for building effective relationships (Epstein, 2018; Ferrara, 2017; Willemse et al., 2017).

New Paradigms: Family-Centric Schools and Hospitality

Trusting relationships are crucial for the development of positive relationships between parents and the school (Collier et al., 2015; McAllister & Irvine, 2002). Developing trusting relationships between parents and teachers is particularly important for minority students of color who continue to be negatively affected by the achievement gap (Auerbach, 2012; Latunde, 2016; McAllister & Irvine, 2002). Trusting relationships are hindered when there is limited awareness, empathy, and communication. New teachers have continued to display a limited understanding of how diversity and inequalities impact everyday life and the capacity to interact and engage with the school, and students free or reduced lunch eligibility has even been able to predict the trust level of parents toward teachers (Santiago et al., 2016; Vesely et al., 2017).

Parents of minority and low-income students have continued to report feeling unwanted, unwelcome, and unappreciated (Brown, Vesely, & Dallman; Latunde, 2016). One common reason for this exclusionary feeling is that true partnerships require trust and feeling welcome (Balli, 2016; Latunde, 2016). Latunde (2016) describes hospitality as one way to foster trust and safety. Hospitality is about establishing safe and trusting relationships so parents can engage and participate because they are valued and welcomed (Balli, 2016; Latunde, 2016). There are many different ways to build trusting relationships between parents and schools. Building trust between parents and schools requires a commitment to building a welcoming, trusting, and open relationship with parents (Balli, 2016; Collier et al., 2015; Rusnak, 2018)

Parents feel excluded from schools for many reasons. These reasons include language barriers, cultural divides, bad experiences in the past, and a feeling that teachers do not make parents feel welcome (Balli, 2016; Collier et al., 2015; Rusnak, 2018). Schools are susceptible to problematic barriers to parent engagement when "school-centric" cultures dominate. Even when

some attempts are made to include parents in school decision-making, a school-centric approach may marginalize many parents by scheduling forums at the school only, and by embracing people with existing school associations and groups friendly to the cause supported by the school (Bennett, 2018). School-centric policies are traditional, and they leave the role of the school unchallenged (Pushor, 2017). In contrast, "parent-centric" schools walk alongside parents, and they see parents as individuals, with authority, capacity, and special knowledge of their child that is important to the overall educational experience (Pushor & Amendt, 2018).

Family-centric schools are built on trust and an appreciation for parents, their role, and their contributions (Pushor & Amendt, 2018). Establishing family-centric schools requires a challenge to the barriers of trust and access associated with restrictive policies, attitudes toward parents as being unhelpful, and an appreciation for doing the hard work of communication and openness exemplified by true partnerships (Collier et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2014; Soutullo, 2016). Recent immigrants and minority families may face additional barriers related to language and social norms. Culturally responsive parent engagement rooted in the philosophy that embodies the partnership approach between schools and parents reflects a School-centric mission that can foster a genuinely positive relationship between teachers and parents (Pushor, 2015).

Home Visits: Outcomes and Possibilities

One approach that has recently gained favor for revitalizing relationships between teachers and parents is having teachers visit with parents and students in their homes - a parent-teacher home visit. Research on this newly re-emerging model of parent-teacher home visits has only recently begun to be available. Setting up parent-teacher home visits at a school requires some work and preparation and getting approval for allotting human or capital resources in a school typically requires evidence that an intervention is effective. Home visits also work best

when a district or a school principal gives approval and provides support. Accountability requirements and pressure on school administrators requires data-driven results to support almost any intervention, and comprehensive or updated data was not available until a few years ago. In fact, as recently as 2016, research was not able link modern home visits to learning outcomes. (Kronholz, 2016). However, research conducted over the past few years now shows an association between home visits at the elementary level and student outcomes including attendance and achievement on standardized tests (Nievar, Brown, Nathans, Chen, & Martinez-Cantu, 2018; Sheldon & Bee, 2018; Wright, 2018). These studies do not include high school home visits. Still, home visits at the elementary level at least are associated with increased student outcomes by following the philosophy of building relationships and trust with parents, and empowering parents to be partners in the education of their children (Nievar et al., 2018; Sheldon & Bee, 2018; Wright, 2018). A growing body of research suggests that although still not widespread among school districts around the country or the world, home visits can be vital to building partnerships between home and school (Meyer, et al., 2011; Peralta-Nash, 2003).

A crucial component of parent-teacher home visits is building authentic relationships (Meyer & Mann, 2006; Sheldon & Bee, 2018; Stetson, Stetson, Sinclair, & Nix, 2012). Research shows that when teachers understand culture, language, and background of parents and families, relationships are more likely to develop and to translate into engagement with teachers (Nievar et al., 2018). Home visits at the elementary level have also been linked to improved relationships between parents and teachers, stronger communication, and more positive perceptions of the school and teachers (Hong, 2019; Leer & Lopez-Boo, 2018; Llopart et al., 2018; Meyer et al., 2011; Meyer & Mann, 2006; Saïas et al., 2016; Stetson et al., 2012).

Some school leaders have attributed parent-teacher home visits with the transforming the culture and capacity of the entire school. One principal who had struggled with staff morale began using home visits consistently and she believes home visits are "the thing that put my school on a different trajectory" (Kronholz, 2016, p. 19). In another study by Meyer, et al., (2011) after only the first set of home visits, almost one half of the teachers reported the home visit experience had opened communication and that conversations had become more positive with parents.

Some common barriers are known to hinder relationships between teachers and parents via the traditional parent engagement methods (Baker, Wise, Kelley, & Skiba, 2016; Hornby & Blackwell, 2018) home visits offer a way for teachers to shift from their traditional teaching role to that of a learner in families' home (Vesely et al., 2017; Whyte & Karabon, 2016). There still remains some skepticism about how well home visits can equalize roles between teachers and parents as transforming roles while conducting home visits has been identified as a challenge because observation is in itself a means of control, and teachers have more power in the educational realm than most families (Whyte & Karabon, 2016). Nonetheless, home visits have demonstrated an ability to transform relationships between teachers and parents at the early childhood and elementary levels (Meyer et al., 2011; Wright, 2018).

Finally, it is important to recognize that in Whyte and Karabon's (2016) study, teachers repeatedly communicated a desire to feel connected with families whenever they talked about or wrote about working with families or working with their children. This finding gives hope for identifying and implementing the most effective philosophies and strategies for connecting parents and teachers in meaningful and satisfying relationships.

Conclusion

Parent engagement has been a topic for research around the world in different forms over the past several decades. Yet, the dynamics of schooling have changed, and new strategies are gaining attention. While research has revealed important insights, there is still much to learn. While numerous studies have demonstrated strong evidence that effective parent engagement increases educational outcomes, questions remain about the cause and effect of parent engagement and about what outcomes are affected and how these outcomes are measured (Soutullo, 2016; Wright, 2018). In particular, there is not much research available about parent-teacher home visits at the high school level (Barmore, 2018).

Furthermore, expectations by teachers and parents about how to best work together remains unclear, and this disconnect, and avoidance can lead to significant barriers to meaningful engagement (Rusnak, 2018). Interestingly, both teachers and parents have cited a desire for better relationships, yet parents, predominantly parents from minority backgrounds, have reported roadblocks preventing open and comfortable involvement in schools – particularly by teachers and school policies (Ishimaru & Takahashi, 2017).

In addition, teachers are affected by poor relationships as well, and many teachers report dissatisfaction with the teacher profession and a lack of feeling connected to meaningful relationships and community as the main reason for leaving (Saeki, Segool, Pendergast, & Embse, 2018; Wronowski, 2018). Parents are also unhappy with how they are able to engage with school, and recent studies show the number one area of parent dissatisfaction with schools is family engagement experiences. Since new teachers, even more so in high-poverty schools are leaving the field due to feeling dissatisfied, yet both parents and teachers desire better relationships, developing new ways to build positive relationships between parents and schools is

imperative. Parent-teacher home visits show promise to revitalize relationships between home

and schools, and the intent of this study is to demonstrate the effectiveness and potential of home

visits.

Chapter III

Design and Methodology

Introduction

There is a lack of clarity around the definition of parent and family *involvement* as compared to *engagement* between teachers and parents (Edwards & Kutaka, 2015). It is important to be specific about the meaning of parent engagement and parent teacher home visits to ensure that what is being measured reflects the intended purpose. The term parent engagement as opposed to parent involvement has become more commonly used as it reflects a broader role for parents beyond involvement to include opportunities for advocacy and contributing as equal partners (Edwards & Kutaka, 2015; Goodall & Ghent, 2014). These relationships do not happen without planning, training, and work. Parent teacher home visits represent one method of building capacity for parents and teachers to build trust, to change mindsets, and to function together as equal partners with the goal of a better educational experience for students (Mcknight et al., 2017). One goal of this study is to identify how teachers have been impacted by conducting teacher home visits. Surveys can collect demographic and attitudinal data, while interviews can expand themes, and open possibilities for depth, breadth, and richness (Zygmunt-Fillwalk, 2011). A second goal is to measure how teacher home visits impact student attendance, grades, and graduation rates. Ex post facto quantitative data can provide those answers.

Research Design

The methodology selected for this study is the sequential explanatory mixed methods design. This sequential explanatory approach allows the qualitative to contextualize the qualitative data (Bowen, Rose, & Pilkington, 2017; Creswell, 2015). Qualitative data with this method can enhance and enrich the results of the quantitative survey data (Bowen et al., 2017).

Research questions were carefully selected to answer important questions about the meaning of parent engagement, how it works, and how teacher home visits are associated with student academic outcomes, attendance, and parent and teacher relationships. Research questions should drive the selection of research methods (Subedi, 2016). Consequently, since the nature of these questions can be answered with both quantitative and qualitative data, surveys and focus groups have been employed (Zygmunt-Fillwalk, 2011). Quantitative research was the best method for assessing the frequency and magnitude of trends in a larger group such as a teachers' perceptions of their expected roles and responsibilities with parents, and the perceived merits and effectiveness of teacher home visits (Creswell, 2015). Qualitative research helped to explain survey responses related to attitudes toward staff-family relationships, mindset (e.g., ability to grow), and expected roles and responsibilities. This context is important since using only quantitative data for studies may exclude valuable insight by using only pre-selected variables (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Semi-Structured Interviews following surveys allowed for a more in-depth conversation designed to yield richer explanations and meaning.

Participants

Participants in this study were teachers and staff at a public high school in northern Virginia. After sharing this proposal with district contacts over the phone and determining this site fit the research goals, a research application was submitted to the district office, and permission was obtained to commence research (see Appendix B). All teachers and staff involved with this study have been invited to be trained to conduct parent teacher home visits by the organization Parent Teacher Home Visits (PTHV), the national, non-profit organization, or by training materials provided by PTHV. 225 teachers and staff were invited to participate in the survey.

Families have been considered important partners in education for years. Title 1 legislation in the United States reflected an understanding of the crucial role that parents serve as partners in the educational process, and it exemplifies a commitment to parents and schools working together (Mapp, 2012). Recent studies by PTHV have demonstrated a positive relationship between teacher home visits and increased attendance and academic performance for elementary students (Mcknight et al., 2017). Due to its large and diverse sample size, PTHV research has established a strong link between teacher home visits and student outcomes (Sheldon & Bee, 2018). However, parent teacher home visits at high schools are far less common, and there is limited data available to demonstrate how home visits impact relationships and outcomes at the high school level.

For the survey, all teachers and staff who had been invited to be trained for parent teacher home visits in the past were selected. All teachers who had conducted home visits had been trained by the PTHV program, or with associated materials, to conduct home visits with teachers. All teachers and staff who had been invited to participate in parent teacher home visit training were sent an electronic invitation and a request to participate in a confidential survey about teacher home visits (see Appendix C). The survey includes themes from the Family-School Relationships and Staff Surveys created in conjunction with the Harvard Graduate School of Education and Panorama Education Organization (see Appendix D). Teachers in this survey represent a diverse range of backgrounds. There were new teachers and veteran teachers of twenty and thirty years. Some were career teachers, and others had been career switchers. Several teachers were in their twenties, and others were over sixty and planning to retire. However, all teachers had volunteered to participate in the teacher home visit training and to conduct teacher home visits with their students.

Participants for this study lived in different parts of the country, and meeting together in person was not always possible. For the first part of the study, the quantitative portion, surveys created using Qualtrics were easily shared electronically via email. A list of teacher participants was shared by the school district contact for teacher home visits.

For the qualitative portion of the study, participants who completed surveys and indicated interest in participating in an interview, were emailed or called to invite participation in a semi-structured interview. The interview questions were designed to allow elaboration, explanations, and context for survey answers with the goal of providing a clearer picture of how teachers view the effects of teacher home visits (see Appendix E). When distance did not allow for face-to-face interviews, participants were interviewed using GotoMeeting or using a speakerphone and Windows Audio Recorder. To ensure participants were comfortable, a visual display was shared in Gotomeeting including personal information about me as a researcher, and informed consent information to review together. When a meeting occurred over the phone, this information was shared verbally at the beginning of the conversation.

Studies must be designed to protect the identity and privacy of participants. Ethical research also requires training and certification for Human Research with the National Institute of Health. This training was completed, and certification obtained before research commenced (see Appendix F). Permission from the home district's research department allowed surveys to be distributed to participants, and for interviews to be obtained. Consent was also sought and obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Northwest Nazarene University before the study began. In this study, teacher and staff participants were assured that surveys were confidential, that semi-structured interview transcripts would not be shared with anyone else. and that only pseudonyms would be used. Participants and schools were assured that no personally

identifiable information would be shared about individuals, specific information about schools,

or any information in the study beyond what had been approved. All participants signed an

informed consent form before participating in any part of the study (see Appendix G)

The quantitative part of this study reflected data collected from Panorama teacher surveys

relating to parent engagement, student mindset, and teacher characteristics (See Appendix D).

Correlations were analyzed for the following variables:

- years taught
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- primary language
- the highest level of parent education
- birth decade.

Following the surveys of fifty-three teachers from a high school in northeastern United

States, seven teachers were selected to participate in semi-structured interviews. The interviews

were designed to allow participants to expand, explain, or to elaborate on their survey results and

open-ended questions stemming from the original survey. Semi-structured interviews enable the

researcher to gain deeper understanding that everyday activities such as home visits and parent

engagement means for people (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). After emails or phone calls were

made to invite participants from those who completed surveys at the high school in northern

Virginia, all teachers and staff who volunteered to participate in semi-structured interviews were

invited and seven participated.

Creswell (2015) encourages researchers to remember that selecting a site and a sample

begins with those that are accessible while building on earlier data collection. Convenience

sampling reflects this approach, and this study used both convenience sampling and snowball

sampling. The first step in obtaining a convenience sample involved contacting the Parent

Teacher Home Visits representative at the site. After introductions, the purpose of the study, and

a brief overview of methods were shared. A request was made to have email access to all trained teachers allowing an electronic survey to be sent to participants. An electronic notice was created to invite all teachers and staff who were invited to be trained to conduct parent teacher home visits to participate in the survey (See Appendix C).

Data Collection

Instead of creating an original instrument like the one that PTHV used to determine the association between teacher home visits and attendance and academic performance, an existing instrument with validated scales was adapted to capture the relationship between teacher home visits and teacher perception of roles and responsibilities, mindset, and other characteristics (Bahena, Schueler, McIntyre, & Gehlbach, 2016). One advantage of using a survey designed for teachers and parent engagement is that the instrument may be more explicitly designed for that purpose and more suited to capture the subtleties of the topic (Gehlbach & Brinkworth, 2011; Schueler, Capotosto, Bahena, McIntyre, & Gehlbach, 2014). A survey was created using the Family-School Relationship instrument created by Harvard University and the Panorama Education group. Categories included staff-family relationships, educating diverse students, perception of instructional self-efficacy, and perceived proper roles and responsibilities of parents and teachers. Demographic questions were also included. Since over 50 teachers were trained for teacher home visits in one year, demographic information was included to identify possible trends associated with teacher home visit experiences and multiple teacher characteristics such as years of teaching experience, education level of parents, gender, race, and favorability of teaching in the school of interest.

Additional student data was collected by requesting student academic, attendance, and graduation data from the school for students whose parents participated in at least one teacher

home visit. The report provided by the school included grade point averages, attendance (days absent per year), and graduation rates. The graduation rate used to compare the whole cohort to students visited at home by teachers is generated by the graduation and completion index used for accreditation. This rate is published on the state's official website and school report cards. The graduation and completion rate awards full credit for students earning Board of Education-approved diplomas and partial credit for other outcomes, while also including "carryover" students from previous cohorts. Home visited students were only counted as graduates for the comparison group if any type of approved diploma was earned within a four-year period. This data was compared to the average for the school and the specific cohort associated with each student. All identifying information was removed by the school before being shared for analysis. Removing student information allowed the data set to be anonymous. Data was stored on a password protected USB drive in a secure office space. The data was also saved on an encrypted, password protected device backup USB drive. Both devices were encrypted, and password protected. The password was only known by the researcher, and in compliance with the Federalwide Assurance Code, data from this study will only be kept for three years before being destroyed (45 CRF 46.117).

They survey was designed using Qualtrics, an online survey tool. An invitation was sent using an anonymous link in Qualtrics to all teachers and staff who were invited to participate in parent teacher home visits (Add this to the Appendix from email). 53 teachers and staff completed the survey, and 10 agreed to be available for post-survey semi-structured interviews. Two follow-up survey requests were sent to those who had not responded, and 10 additional teachers completed the survey and 3 additional teachers agreed to be available for a post-survey focus group.

Teacher participants for the qualitative portion of this study were recruited using information from the online survey. All teachers and staff who completed the survey were invited to participate in the semi-structured interview. Prospective semi-structured interview participants were contacted using email or phone communication. A script was used to assure consistency in questions and to allow follow-up questions to confirm interest, demographic information, and availability (See Appendix H). The follow-up email or call allowed the researcher to get to know participants and to gather information about their experience with home visits and willingness to share experiences. While convenience sampling cannot assure a representative sample, it does offer helpful information that can answer central questions and a hypothesis of a study (Creswell, 2015).

After the teacher survey was submitted and before the semi-structured interviews were conducted, interview questions were piloted with 12 current classroom teachers who have experience communicating with parents and conducting parent teacher home visits. Pilot interviews help the researcher to understand barriers including technology glitches and the potential lack of trust in the researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Participants from this pilot shared helpful feedback about questions and the process of the semi-structured interviews. Adjustments were made to the questions and to the format based on information gathered from this pilot group. The pilot group also served as an opportunity to test the best method and environment for conducting the focus group during the research stage of the study. First, an online meeting was scheduled as a pilot and GoToMeeting™ was used to record and transcribe the interview. Second, a face-to-face meeting in a public location was scheduled and Audacity™ was used to record audio. These pilot interviews revealed the need to ensure the computer's microphone was in a central location. It was also evident that while recorded audio was

transcribed automatically, a backup audio recording was necessary to provide consistency where audio was not clear due to multiple people talking, low voices, or problems related to enunciation. In addition, these pilot participants were familiar to me, and it became evident that some answers may have been less detailed when it was assumed answers were already known and perhaps, it was assumed certain answers were preferred. Due to the personal nature of our relationships, concerns about reliability arose. To counter this, a third pilot group was conducted with three teachers who were not previously known.

Semi-structured interviews were planned for the fall of 2019 with 7 participants invited. Each participant signed an electronic informed consent agreeing to be a part of the study, to be audio recorded, and to allow their direct quotations to be used in the study (see Appendix G). All sections of the informed consent agreement were explained. For online interviews, information from the informed consent was reviewed with participants and a wait time for questions was included. Copies of the informed consent were also shared before each interview.

Before interviews began, an expert panel was chosen to review questions and to provide feedback. Research questions were shared, along with the survey. Since the explanatory sequential method is designed to build from the quantitative data, surveys were also shared to ensure that survey question, and research questions aligned with the semi-structured interview questions. Experts were selected for their experience as parent engagement researchers, or for being parent engagement practitioners. Several insights were gained from the expert panel feedback that helped to shape the interviews. Feedback included the importance of ensuring that language is consistent between the survey and the interview questions. For example, some questions used the term home visit, and others included the term parent-teacher home visit. One question re-worded to avoid possible resistance to an idea since the language could have been

perceived negatively. This question was refined. Next, some questions were too broad without a plan for following up. When asking about assumptions, one expert panel member suggested to be prepared with more specific questions for teachers to align with research questions. A question was also added about whether teachers received any home visit training which aligned well with research questions. Finally, after reviewing questions, one expert panel member suggested opening with open-ended questions to allow the participants to share more in their own words. These recommendations were adopted.

Table 2

Expert Panel Members and Experience

Expert Panel Member	Experience
University Professor and Author	Associate professor. Published over 20 articles and 3 books on parent engagement
University Professor and Author	Associate Professor. Published over 20 books and journals on parent engagement
Family Engagement Director	Director of Family Engagement for a150,000 student school district.
University Professor	Math and statistics professor specializing in student-centered learning and pedagogy
School Principal	International principal of a diverse school. Experience and training with home visits.

The first semi-structured interviews were conducted in October of 2019. The online interviews were recorded and transcribed using GoToMeeting™ (2019). All interviews used piloted questions and lasted between 40-60 minutes (See Appendix E). Confidentiality and

anonymity were emphasized from the start. All researchers have an obligation to protect participant identities unless participants expressly agree otherwise (Creswell, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). For this study, all measures of confidentiality were followed. Participant statements were attributed to specific pseudonyms, and any identifiable or personal information was changed. As a way to follow up and assure the confidential nature of the research, a debriefing statement was shared via email following each interview (see Appendix I). After all data was collected and analyzed, a member checking email was sent to participants to ensure that the themes and interpretation matched the participants' understanding (see Appendix J)

Analytical Methods

Student data was analyzed to determine correlations between students whose parents were visited by teachers at home, and grade point average, attendance, and graduation rates. Correlations allow researchers to interpret the meaning between different scores and values (Creswell, 2015). Identifying correlations between students whose parents have been visited by teachers at home, and outcomes including grade point average, attendance, and graduation rates, could provide valuable insight for school administrators and program planners responsible for organizing and supporting teacher home visit programs. The Mann-Whitney U Test was used in this study to examine relationships between students whose families have been recipients of teacher home visits and outcomes, as compared with students who have not been recipients of teacher home visits (Choi, Peters, & Mueller, 2010) Students receiving teacher home visits is the independent variable, while student outcomes are dependent variables. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistical Software version 25 to determine statistically significant relationships and how teacher home visits might impact student outcomes, and in relation to demographics and other select student characteristics.

Teacher surveys were analyzed to identify the differences between teachers who had conducted home visits and those who had not. In addition, data were analyzed to examine trends associated with the perception of parent-teacher relationships and roles and teacher characteristics including gender, race, years of experience, the perception of education all students, and favorability of working in the school. The Mann-Whitney U Test and Kruskal-Wallis tests were used to find statistically significant relationships between perceptions of parents as partners and teachers characteristics. The independent variables were demographic information and the dependent variables were the perception of parent relationships and student mindset. Data were analyzed using SPSS statistical software version 25.

Data from the quantitative survey results were analyzed using SPSS Statistical Software Version 25 (SPSS, 2019). The Likert-style survey questions were analyzed using Spearman's Correlation. Several tests were conducted between different variables to search for tendencies in the data samples that could reflect wider teacher home visit populations. A sample of over 50 participants resulted in a reliable view of the teacher home visit population. Upon completion of survey results, correlation results were calculated to determine the relationship strength between variables by analyzing Spearman's Coefficient or the p value. Correlation data was compiled into matrices and results were analyzed to determine how characteristics of teachers impact perceptions of parental roles and responsibilities.

Semi-structured interviews with a total of seven participants were conducted. Audio was recorded, field notes, and observations of the setting and participants were collected to provide information helpful for identifying trends and themes (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). At the conclusion of the interviews, additional notes were recorded to aid in documenting relevant details and experiences that could help with making sense of the data. Each interview was

recorded using GoToMeeting™. Semi-structured interviews were transcribed using the built-in

feature in GoToMeeting™. Upon completion of semi-structured interview transcriptions,

conversations were reviewed and analyzed to identify dominant themes (Creswell, 2015;

Marshall & Rossman, 2016). To ensure accuracy and understanding, interview audio was played

while transcripts were reviewed. Common themes were initially identified by applying

knowledge of parental engagement studies found in the literature review, and by searching for

patterns. Additional notes and questions were recorded when new or unanticipated themes

surfaced (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Throughout the process of identifying codes, several

strategies were adopted. Key words, phrases, and potential themes were highlighted, or

underlined, and notes were made in the margins. Words were circled, and arrows crossed the

paper. Precise industry words were added to assist in identifying themes (In Vivo codes) such as

barriers, doesn't care, not helpful, or easy to talk to (Creswell, 2015). After interview transcripts

were read and analyze multiple times, responses were recorded in Microsoft Excel according to

emerging themes. The next step in the process involved tallying responses to identify dominant

themes, and to review responses for possible nuances, and sub-themes.

Qualitative research methods allowed for themes to organically emerge from semi-

structured interviews. To ensure accuracy, member checking was employed by sending

responses to participants (see Appendix I). These emails included the themes identified, direct

quotations, and paraphrased responses included. All seven participant received the email with

research questions included, and individualized responses that were included in this study to

ensure accuracy. Participants were asked to respond with changes or questions if the information

obtained from the interview and compiled through coding and did not reflect their memory.

Three participants responded. Two participant responses indicated that there were no concerns

and offered thanks for the interview again. The third participant agreed with the responses but added that one response taken straight from in vivo coding indicating that home visits humanize parents can also mean that home visits help parents, teachers, and students to see each other as "real people." Consideration was made for these responses and no significant changes were required.

Role of the Researcher

Bias is problematic in research and preventative steps should be taken to avoid conflicts. After the focus group pilot, plans were made to be sure this study was conducted in an unbiased manner. Marshall and Rossman (2016) suggest one approach to qualitative research should reflect neutrality, while also being oneself. To maintain a focus on the study and to avoid possible confusion related to my role and position, this study involved teacher participants that I did not know before research began. It was important to think and function as a researcher, and not in the role of a school administrator that I serve every day at another school.

As a school administrator, an adjunct professor, and a parent, there have been many opportunities to observe relationships between teachers and parent. Admittedly teacher-parent relationships are a challenge. From a parent perspective, it has become clear that more communication and better conversation between schools and home is preferred (Falk, 2017). Research has affirmed the value of parent engagement and teacher home visits are one method of developing better teacher-parent relationships. Yet, it is also clear that the relationship between parents and teachers requires both sides to be open and willing to engage. Bias is evident the researcher's expectation that teachers serve the community and parents as partners. In addition, entanglements are a factor as an administrator evaluating teachers based, in part, on their ability to communicate with parents about academics, behavior, and other school concerns.

Nonetheless, it is important to understand why some teachers have more success with parent relationships, and as a researcher it is important to understand how teacher home visits work, and what about these visits results in a meaningful connection. In this way, a researcher can strive to be objective and accepting of whatever results are uncovered. Biases for the researcher have been mitigated by using an expert panel to review my survey and semi-structured interview questions. The survey and interview questions were shared with professionals and academics in different states throughout the United States, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and Australia.

Limitations

This study, like all studies, has limitations. First, this site was identified as a teacher home visit school buy the Parent Teacher Home Visit organization. This organization partners with schools to establish and support teacher home visits. It is possible that schools voluntarily committed to teacher home visit programs may already have a culture supportive of understanding parents and of developing partnerships. Furthermore, teachers and parents only participate in the visits by volunteering. At this site, like all others established by the PTHV, participation is wholly voluntary. Consequently, teachers who choose to participate, may already be more likely to have mindsets and dispositions that reflect an openness and priority for partnering with parents. While the survey results compare teachers participating in teacher home visits with those who do not, and data collection compares student outcomes of those visited at home by teachers with those who are not, a voluntary program may not reflect changes resulting from teacher home visits. Consequently, a limitation of this research is that the survey respondents were all volunteers, and there was a limited control group (Sheldon & Bee, 2018).

While there will likely not be any previous familiarity with any of the teachers or the students, there are connections in Virginia and through this search for a site that have developed

into relationships. Through this process appropriate information about background, interests in research, and some history was shared. Since this site is currently about four hours away from my home, it is likely not going to impact results, despite other roots in Virginia.

The sample may not reflect overall school demographics, though the home visit guidelines for this site invite all incoming ninth graders, and no specific student groups are targeted. Finally, research always requires adherence to ethical guidelines. Even when survey results are compiled and qualitative transcripts are coded, ethical requirements continue (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). This responsibility has been respected as data is treated with caution, confidentiality is maintained, and efforts have been made to fairly and accurately interpret data.

Chapter IV

Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of parent-teacher home visits on

relationships between teachers and parents of high school students, and the association of parent-

teacher home visits with high school student outcomes. The United States government has

required parent involvement and participation in school for the past several decades (Collier et

al., 2015). Research has also established a positive relationship between parent engagement in

schools and student achievement (Collier et al., 2015; Edwards & Kutaka, 2015; Hampden-

Thompson & Galindo, 2017; Sheldon & Bee, 2018; Vesely et al., 2017). However, many

communities still struggle to establish positive relationships between parents and teachers, and

research shows that despite nationwide efforts and federal mandates, parent engagement can be

difficult to achieve (Collier et al., 2015). Different strategies have been attempted throughout the

United States and throughout the world. One emerging strategy involves considering parent

engagement as a philosophy and a pedagogy where teachers are encouraged to look inward and

examine assumptions about parents and the communities within which one works (Pushor &

Amendt, 2018). The power of developing relationships has emerged in the literature, and

evidence has surfaced that parents are far more likely to engage with teachers and schools when

they sense commitment, when trust is built, and when they feel welcome (Balli, 2016). One of

the most positive reported outcomes of parent-teacher home visits has been the transformation of

relationships between teachers and families (Llopart et al., 2018; Whyte & Karabon, 2016). The

importance of parent engagement between schools and home has continued to be discussed by

researchers and lawmakers, and parent-teacher home visits have expanded and gained support in

recent years (Wright et al., 2018). Still, there is much that is not known about how parent-teacher home visits impact relationships between parents and teachers and student outcomes in different communities and among different grade levels and school types (Wright et al., 2018).

While evidence has recently begun to emerge showing that academic outcomes in elementary schools are affected by implementing teacher-home visits, very little research on parent-teacher home visits is available for the secondary level. (Barmore, 2018; Wright et al., 2018). Gaps in research include effects of home visits for high school students, teachers, and parents. (Wright et al., 2018) researched the impact of parent-teacher home visits on academic achievement and behavior and suggested that future studies should include a representation of schools in different geographic regions including academic outcomes, relationships between teachers and parents, and attendance. The research questions for this dissertation study are:

4. How do high school teachers' perceptions of parent-teacher home visits affect teacher relationships with parents and students?

1. What are the perceived barriers to effective home visits for teachers?

2. How do home visits impact student grades, attendance, and graduation rates?

Results relevant to this study's research questions from teacher and staff survey and interview data from the high school are shared in Chapter IV.

Quantitative Results

The quantitative phase of this study began with a survey (see appendix D). Twenty survey questions are Likert Scale items, and items are associated with themes and four different scales related to family engagement and home visits. To check for validity of the survey scales, a pilot survey was administered with nine participants. Participants are educators working in local

schools who have conducted parent-teacher home visits on multiple occasions and within the

past year. Using the results of this pilot survey, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated. Cronbach's

Alpha is used as a measure of the internal consistency and reliability of test or survey items

(Field, 2013). As correlations among items in a scale increase, Cronbach's Alpha will generally

increase as well (Field, 2013). Since .70 is generally an acceptable level for most professionals to

regard a scale as internally consistent, .70 will be used for this study as the standard (Manerikar

& Manerikar, 2015). The first scale measures the perception of teacher and staff relationships

with families at their school. Six items were included in this study. Table 2 shows that

Cronbach's Alpha is .859 for the relationships scale. Consequently, the items on the relationship

scale meet the standard, and the scale is reliable for this study.

Table 3

Cronbach's Alpha: Teacher-Parent Relationships Scale

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Relationships	**.854**	.859	6
Home Visit	**.934**	.955	7
Educating All	**.966**	.967	3
Efficacy	**.880**	.889	4
All Scale Items	**.966**	.966	20

The Parent-Teacher Home Visit Scale is also included in Table 2. Seven items are included on

this survey under this category. This scale relates to general support for parent-teacher home

visits. Cronbach's Alpha is .955.

The Educating All Students Scale reflects a teacher's readiness to address issues of diversity as a teacher and through interactions with parents and in the community. Table 2 shows a Cronbach's Alpha score of .967, which is quite strong. Table 2 provides the Cronbach's Alpha score for the last survey scale on the instrument used for this study: Teacher Efficacy. This scale captures teacher perception for professional strengths and areas for growth. The Cronbach's Alpha score for this scale is .880. By using Cronbach's Alpha, the survey scales are determined to be internally consistent and reliable (Manerikar & Manerikar, 2015). The survey is ready for administration to a similar population of teachers who are familiar with parent-teacher home visits.

While parent-teacher home visits have expanded across the United States over the past few decades (Sheldon & Bee, 2018), there is still uncertainty about how high school home visits are associated with relationships between teachers and parents. The first research question asks:

How do high school teachers' perception of parent-teacher home visits affect teacher, student, and parent relationships?

The pilot survey is created from an existing instrument designed by a team at the Harvard Graduate School of Education to support researchers and practitioners in parent engagement research. The survey contains 39 questions and four different scales. 51 surveys were submitted out of 225 eligible participants who received a survey resulting in a response rate of 22.6%. Nonresponse bias has traditionally been a concern to researchers, but it has been recently regarded as less of a threat to validity, and lower response rates have even been regarded as statistically indistinguishable from more rigorous surveys with higher response rates (Keeter, Kennedy, Dimock, Best, & Craighill, 2006). While a higher response rate may be considered desirable, studies have revealed response bias in samples ranging from 5% to 75% are not much

different, and that time-intensive attempts to increase response rate higher will usually result in just trivial changes (Fosnacht, Sarraf, Howe, & Peck, 2016). Even professional journals tend to focus more recently on survey design or even a gut feeling than a survey quality when making publishing decisions, and no minimum response rate rules have been established for the vast majority of publications (Carley-Baxter et al., 2009). Another rigorous study shows that response rate does not have much impact on mean, internal consistency, or other statistical properties of a survey – with response rate comparisons ranging from under 20% to 100% (Wåhlberg & Poom, 2015).

Teachers and staff were invited to participate in parent-teacher home visits at the high school site in this study. Survey results were broken down into two different groups: those who completed home visits and those who did not. Next, a comparison between these two groups and the four survey scales was conducted. The Mann-Whitney U test was selected as the appropriate statistical test since the survey contains five-point Likert scale and Likert-item questions, and some researchers suggest this test is appropriate for nonparametric data (DeWinter & Dodou, 2019). A 2-tailed test is used for this study and a p-value of .05 is considered statistically significant. Table 6 shows that when the groups of those who have conducted parent-teacher home visits and those who have not at the same school in this study are compared, there is a statistical significance between the two groups and the scores on the Relationships scale. The p-score is .018 which is below .05.

Table 4

Mann-Whitney U Test by Survey Scale

Scale	Relationships	Home Visits	Educating All Students	Teacher Efficacy
Mann-Whitney U	181.500	163.000	172.000	146.500
Wilcoxon W	371.500	268.000	263.000	611.500
Z	-2.359	-1.343	-.655	-1.341
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	**.018**	.179	.513	.180
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]			.557[b]	.202[b]

a. Grouping Variable: Have you completed at least one parent teacher home visit?

b. Not corrected for ties.

Table 4 shows the mean difference between those who completed parent teacher home visits (m=3.5645) compared with those who had not completed parent-teacher home visits (m=3.1316). These questions all relate to how teachers perceive parents to be friendly, trusting, fair, and caring.

Table 5

Relationships Between Teachers and Parents: Perception by Teachers

Have you completed at least one parent teacher home visit?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Yes	31	3.5645	.54378	.09767
No	19	3.1316	.64209	.14731

Individual items on the survey scale were further analyzed for significance. For this study, H_0, or the null hypothesis, will be tested. The null hypothesis states that the distribution for the group who completed home visits and the group who did not are equal. The Mann-Whitney Test is a nonparametric test that is appropriate for this survey with Likert questions (DeWinter &

Dodou, 2019; Sullivan & Artino, 2013). This test also provides a p-value to reflect statistical significance. The p-value is the probability of generating a value at least as extreme if the null was true. With a p-value of .05, there is a 95% level of confidence that there is a relationship between the two groups and each variable (Creswell, 2015). Table 8 includes all individual survey items with a rejected null hypothesis. Items are considered statistically significant in this study when p<.05.

Items one and two are included in the Relationship scale. The first question with statistical significance between the two groups is how often teachers and staff meet with parents in person. The group who completed home visits indicated making personal visits more frequently than non-home visitors. The mean rank and frequency of visiting in person with families is included in Figure 2

Table 6

Mann-Whitney U Test: All Survey Items with a Rejected Null Hypothesis

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	How often do you meet in person with the families of your students? *Have you completed at least one parent teacher home visit?*	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	**.032**	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	When you face challenges with particular students, how supportive are the families? *Have you completed at least one parent teacher home visit?*	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	**.015**	Reject the null hypothesis.
3	How safe do you feel when thinking about going on a parent teacher home visit? *Have you completed at least one parent teacher home visit?*	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	**.005**[a]	Reject the null hypothesis.
4	How supportive are families of participating in parent teacher home visits? *Have you completed at least one parent teacher home visit?*	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	**.001**[a]	Reject the null hypothesis.
5	How confident are you that you can engage students who are typically not motivated? *Have you completed at least one parent teacher home visit?*	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	**.048**[a]	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .050.

a. Exact significance is displayed for this test.

Figure 2

Home Visit and Meeting In person With Parents: Mann-Whitney U Test
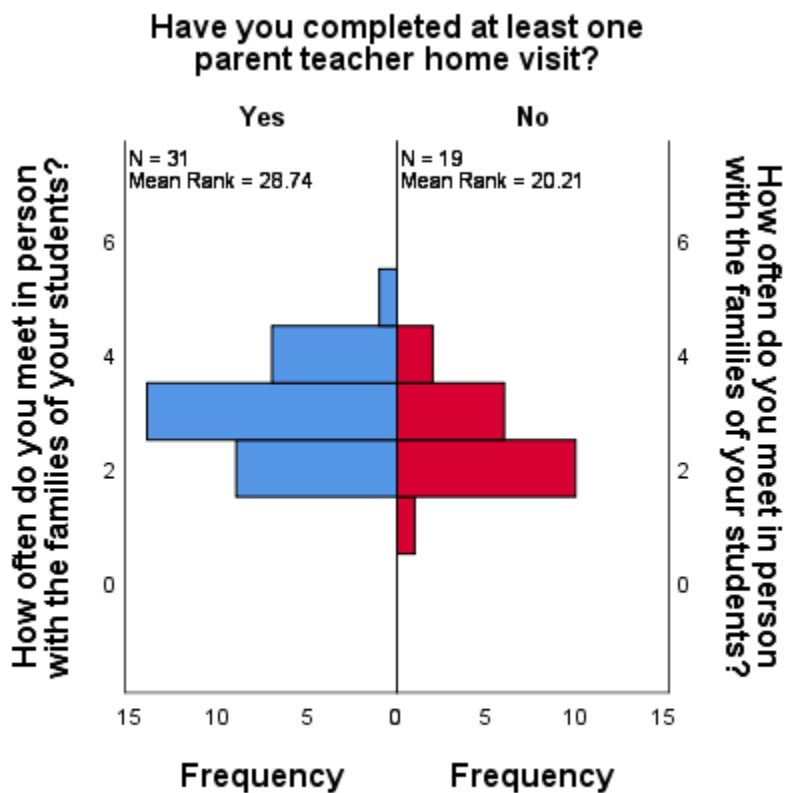
Item two asks about parent support when faced with challenging students. Figure 3 shows the

mean rank and frequency for both home visiting groups for parent support with challenging

students.

Figure 3

Home Visit and Support from Families with Challenging Students: Mann-Whitney U Test
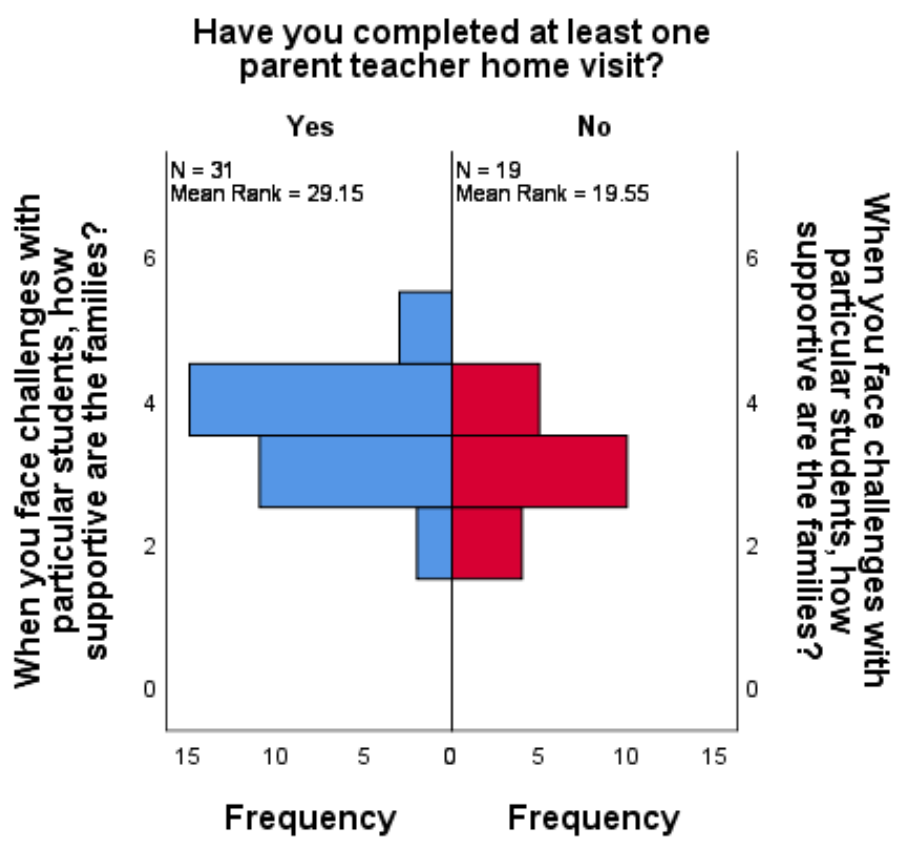
The third item with statistical significance asks how safe teachers and staff feel when thinking of going on a home visit. This item is included in the home visit scale. With a p-value of .005, there is a strong statistical significance between teachers who have chosen to go on home visits and those who have not. Figure 4 provides the mean rank and frequency for the item related to feeling safe on home visits.

Figure 4

Home Visits and Teachers Feeling Safe
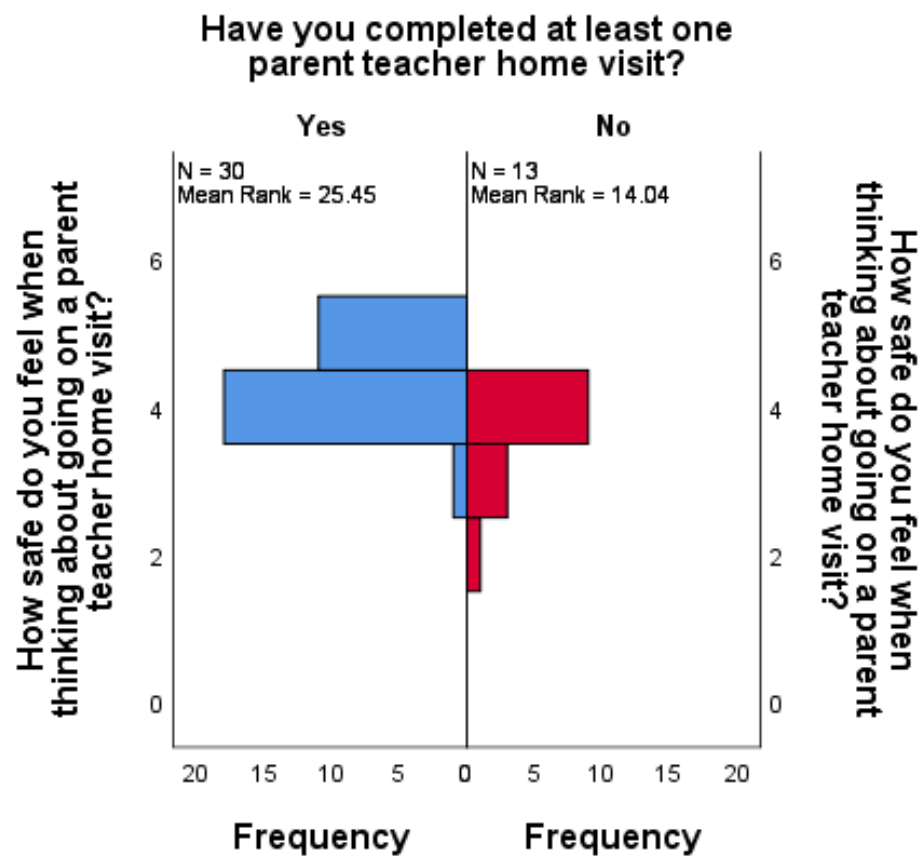
Item four asks how supportive families are of participating in parent-teacher home visits. The p-value for this item when comparing the two groups is .001. This is the strongest statistically significant item for all of the items with a rejected hypothesis. The mean rank and frequencies can be found in Figure 5. These distributions are clearly not equal.

Figure 5

Home Visits and Perceived Parent Support
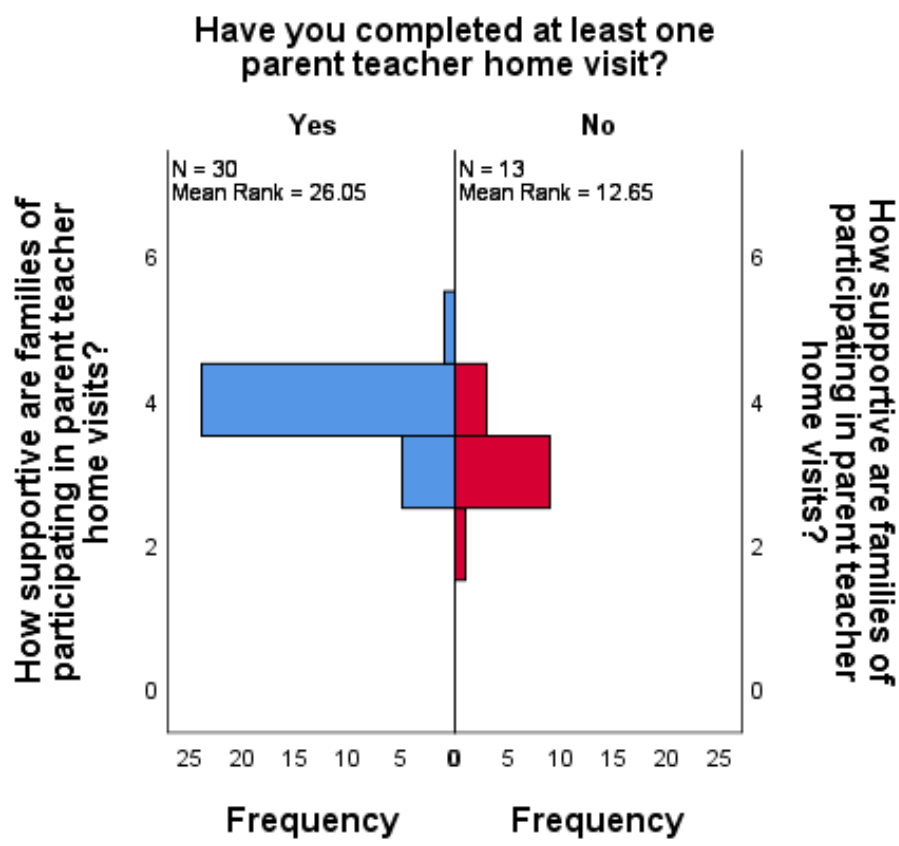
The fifth item with a rejected null hypothesis is included in the Teacher Efficacy Scale.

Both groups were asked how confident they are engaging students who are typically not

motivated. The non-home visitors were in this study are more confident about engaging with

students who are not motivated. Mean ranks and frequencies for this item are in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Home Visits and Engaging Unmotivated Students: Mann-Whitney U Test
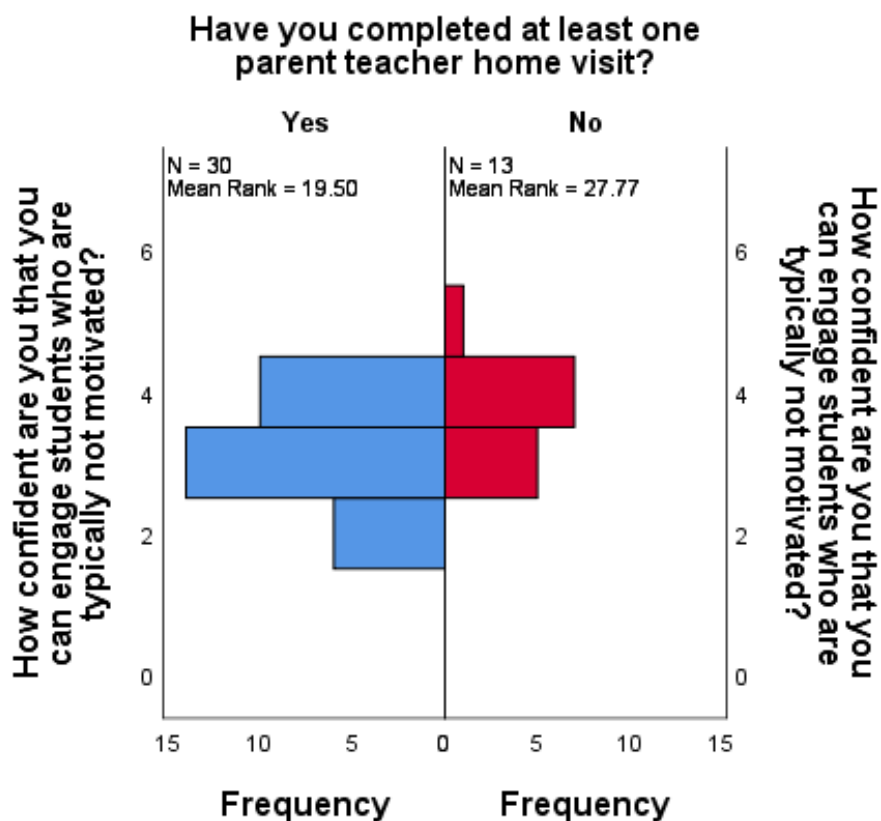
There is a statistically significant relationship between the relationship scale and the two groups of home visitors and non-home visitors. Two items in particular are how frequently teachers meet in person with parents and how supportive teachers perceive parents to be. Survey results show that relationship expectations and perceptions are associated with whether a person chooses to go on a home visit or not.

The next research question is designed to further shed light on why some teachers chose to conduct home visits and others do not. Research question two is:

What are the most common barriers to effective home visits for teachers?

Two statistically significant items provide valuable information to help answer this question. In table 8, Item 3 shows how teachers and staff feel about safety and home visits. Those teachers and staff who have conducted home visits feel far safer than those who have not p=.005. Next, item 4 reveals what teachers believe about how supportive parents are to participate in parent-teacher home visits. Again, teachers who have conducted home visits are far more likely to believe that parents are supportive of home visits than teachers and staff who have chosen not to go on home visits (p=.001).

Other considered barriers to home visits include characteristics of teachers and staff and demographic information. The Teacher-Family Relationship Survey includes five related questions: number of years taught, gender, race or ethnicity, highest level of education, and decade of birth. The Mann-Whitney Test was conducted between home visiting groups and there is no statistically significant relationship between teachers and staff who conduct home visits and those who do not when analyzed by included characteristics and demographic data (See Table 9).

Table 7

Demographics Compared by Home Visiting Group (n=51)

	Years Taught	Gender	Race or Ethnicity	Birth Decade	Highest Level of education completed.
Mann-Whitney U	171.500	177.000	154.500	136.000	152.500
Wilcoxon W	262.500	583.000	245.500	542.000	243.500
Z	-.407	-.177	-.989	-1.349	-1.100
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.684	.860	.323	.177	.271
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.772[b]	.901[b]	.446[b]	.205[b]	.413[b]

a. Grouping Variable: Have you completed at least one parent teacher home visit?

b. Not corrected for ties.

Item number thirty of the Parent-Teacher Home Visit Survey (See Appendix D) asks survey respondents to share whether teachers, parents, or students are primarily responsible for school success in ten different areas. The Chi-Square statistical test can be used to compare two groups when the independent and dependent variables are both categorical, and the data is nonnormally distributed (Creswell, 2015; Hoy & Adams, 2015). The chi-square test is as test of frequencies and it compares what was actually found in analysis of the data set with what is expected to be found by chance (Hoy & Adams, 2015). The independent variable in this survey is a binary categorical variable reflecting the two groups of teachers and instructional staff: those who have completed home visits and those who have not. The dependent variable answers who should be primarily responsible for communication between the home and the school: parents, teachers, or students. Since there are only three options, and there is no ordering of response options, this variable is also categorical.

One item for survey question number thirty is statistically significant when conducting a chi-square test (See Table 7). This question asks both home visit groups to answer who should be primarily responsible for communicating between home and school. 92% of Teachers and instructional staff who completed home visits indicate that schools should be primarily responsible for ensuring good communication between home and school, while 69% of those who did not complete home visits believe that schools should be responsible for ensuring good communication (See Table 7). In addition, 7% of teachers and staff who conducted parent-teacher home visits believe that parents are responsible for ensuring good communication between school and home, while 30% of teachers and staff who did not complete parent-teacher home visits indicate that parents should be primarily responsible for ensuring good communication.

Statistical significance between two categorical variables can be determined with Chi-Square analysis by using Pearson's Chi-Square test (Creswell, 2015). The Pearson Chi-Square p-value comparing the home visit groups with teacher perception of responsibility for communicating between home and school resulted in a p=.046 (See Table 8). When p<.05 statistical the result is statistically significant. Consequently, in this study there is a statistically significant relationship between teachers who conduct home visits and the belief about who is primarily responsible for communication between school and home.

However, when an expected value in the Chi-Square test is less than five, some authors suggest using the Fisher's Exact test due to a lower sample size (Pandis, 2016). Fisher's exact test=.069. This value is above the statistically significant threshold of .05 for the Pearson's Chi-Square test (See Table 8). Yet, calculating the effect size is also recommended for the Chi-Square test (Creswell, 2015). The phi coefficient measures the strength of relationship between two categorical variables (Creswell, 2015). The phi correlation coefficient comparing the home visitor variable with the perception by teachers of who should be primarily responsible for communication between home and school is .311 with an approximate significance of **.046.**

Table 8

Crosstabs Chi-Square Responsibility for School Success by Home Visit Group

| | | | Ensure good communication between home and school | | Total |
			Primarily parents	Primarily schools	
Have you completed at least one parent teacher home visit?	Yes	Count	2	26	28
		% within Have you completed at least one parent teacher home visit?	7.1%	92.9%	100.0%
		% within Ensure good communication between home and school	33.3%	74.3%	68.3%
		% of Total	4.9%	63.4%	68.3%
	No	Count	4	9	13
		% within Have you completed at least one parent teacher home visit?	30.8%	69.2%	100.0%
		% within Ensure good communication between home and school	66.7%	25.7%	31.7%
		% of Total	9.8%	22.0%	31.7%
Total		Count	6	35	41
		% within Have you completed at least one parent teacher home visit?	14.6%	85.4%	100.0%
		% within Ensure good communication between home & school	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	14.6%	85.4%	100.0%

Table 9

Chi-Square Tests: Ensure Good Communication Between Home and School

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.967[a]	1	**.046**		
Continuity Correction[b]	2.301	1	.129		
Likelihood Ratio	3.679	1	.055		
Fisher's Exact Test				.069	.069
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.870	1	.049		
N of Valid Cases	41				

a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.90.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The third research question is designed to show how parent-teacher home visits at the high school level impact attendance, academic achievement, and graduation rates. Research question three is:

How do home visits impact student grades, attendance, and graduation rates?

The site's central office provided data for 803 students who had been visited by high school teachers at home as rising ninth graders. The Home Visit High School has a 78% minority student enrollment. Table 9 shows the percentage breakdown of students by ethnicity and race. 43% of the Home Visit High School's students are economically disadvantaged.

Table 10

Student Diversity at Home Visit High School

Ethnicity/Race	Percent
American Indian/Alaskan Native	.3%
Asian	9%
Black	20%
Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander	.2%
Hispanic	45%
White	22%
Two or More Races	5%

Attendance was calculated by comparing two different student groups: those whose families had participated in parent-teacher home visits, and the total population of the school for three consecutive school years beginning with the 2016-2017 school year and ending with the most recently available data in 2018-2019. Attendance for the school is measured by the chronic absenteeism rate which is defined as the percentage of students missing 10 percent of the school year regardless of the reason. Table 9 shows the total percent of students who were chronically absent at the site for three school years.

Table 11

Chronic Absenteeism Rate

School Year	whole school	N of whole school students	All home visited	N of all home visited students	Home visited active student >50 days	N of home visited active students
2016-2017	16.89	2108	14.5	487	11.5	433
2017-2018	15.69	2212	15.75	323	14	285
2018-2019	18.46	2308	17.1	350	14.1	311

In addition, the percent of chronically absent students for all students who were visited at home by a teacher is included regardless of transferring out of the school at any point. Finally, the home visited active student column in table 9 shows only those students visited at home by a teacher who remained an active student at the site school the during the selected school year reported, and who attended at least 50 days. This group of active students is included to allow a comparison of those students who may continue to benefit from the effects of the parent-teacher home visit associated with the home site school. Figure 9 provides a graphical representation of the chronic absenteeism rate among the groups impacted by teacher home visits and those who were not.

Figure 7

Chronic Absenteeism Rate by Group
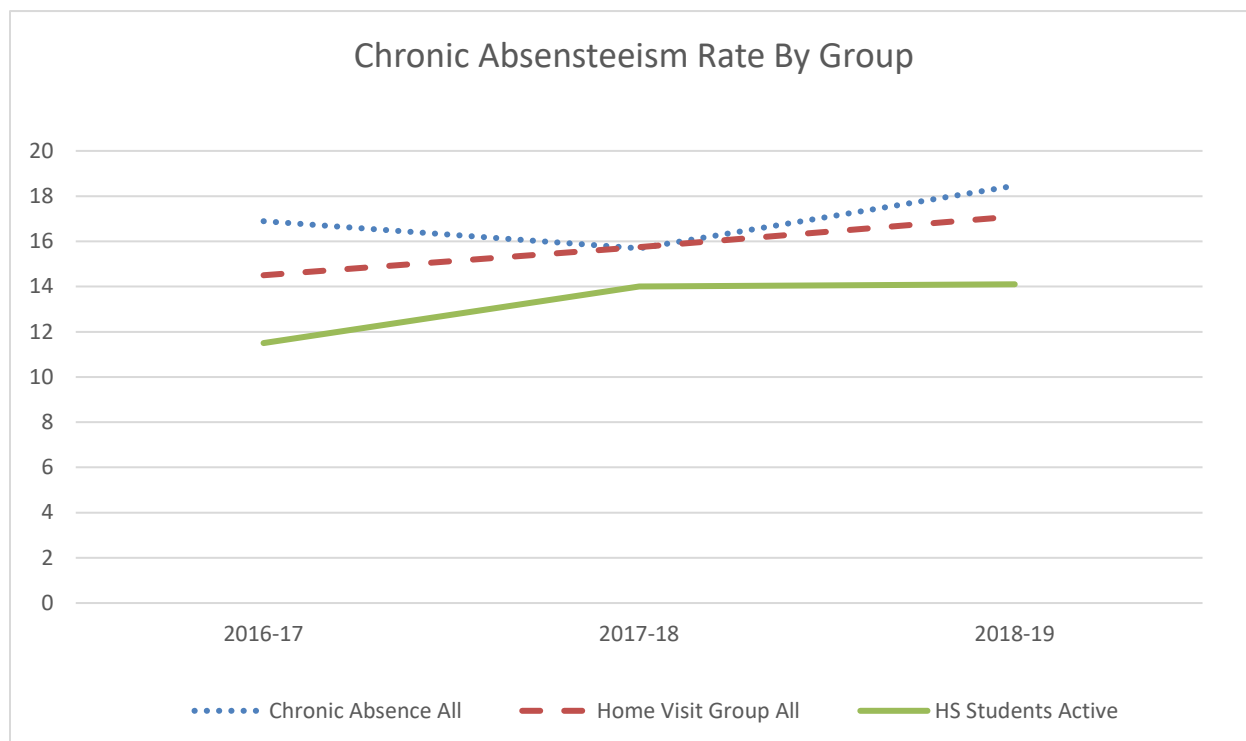
The whole home visited group has a lower chronic absenteeism rate for two out of the three years, and the active student home visited group has a lower chronic absenteeism rate for all three years for a net absenteeism rate advantage for all three school years of 3.69 percent for the whole home visit group and 11.44 percent for the active home visit group.

Graduation rate was calculated by using data reported by the school to the state. This information is available to the public. Five years of graduation data were available for comparison by beginning analysis of students first visited at home by teachers in 2011 for the 2011-2012 school year. This cohort completed an on-time graduation in 2015. Graduation rate comparisons are available for this site from 2015-2019. For the graduation rate, two groups were compared: students who were visited at home as a result of the parent-teacher home visit

program, and the entire graduating cohort. Students who with a status of dropping out were subtracted from those who had graduated, and a percentage of home visitor graduates was calculated. The home visited cohort exceeded the graduation rate of the whole high school cohort for four out of five years, and the graduation rate for home visited students over five years in this study is 94.3 while the whole cohort rate for all five years is 91.4 (See Figure 8).

Figure 8

Graduation Rate Home Visits vs. Whole High School
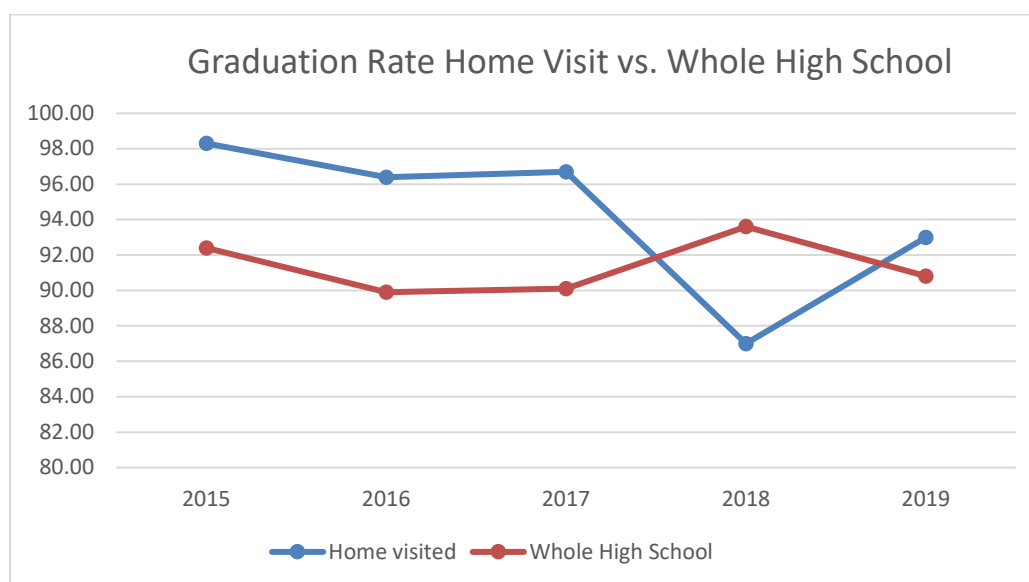
Grade point averages were also analyzed for all students visited at home by the parent-teacher home visit program. While Grade point averages generally rise from 9th grade to 12th grade for this group (from 2.79 for ninth graders to a peak of 2.89 for eleventh graders, and finally, 2.87 by twelfth grade), a comparison group such as the whole school GPA was not provided by the district (See Figure 9).

Figure 9

GPA for Home Visited Students
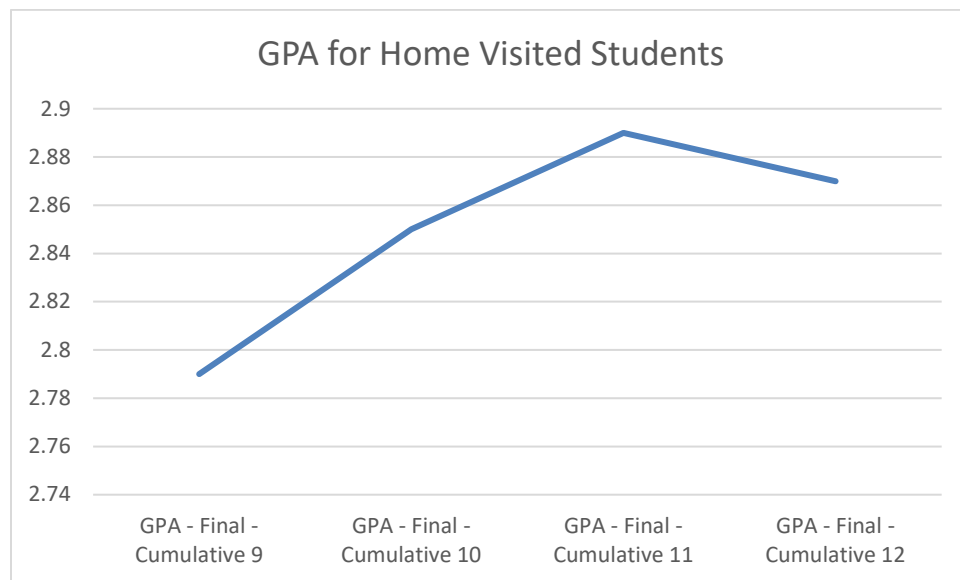
Qualitative Results

Seven respondents volunteered to participate in one semi-structured interview following the survey. Interviews were transcribed and coded to identify themes. Interview questions align with the Staff-Family Relationships Survey with a focus on relationships, barriers to home visits, and teacher perception of parent engagement. The explanatory sequential design model for this study enabled interviews to illuminate and expand data and results from the initial survey (Bowen et al., 2017). Pseudonyms are used to uphold anonymity as participants were assured before participating and as recommended by Marshall and Rossman (2016) and Creswell (2015). All seven interview participants have been trained by the Parent-Teacher Home Visit Team or by a school staff member who has uses training materials. All interview participants completed multiple parent-teacher home visits (See Table 10).

Table 12

Participant Background and Experience

Pseudonym	Position	# of Home Visits (approximate)
Emily	English Learner Teacher	20
Dianne	Exceptional Children's Teacher	50+
Rey	Gen. Ed. Teacher	20+
Susan	English Learner Teacher	30+
Connie	Gen. Ed. Teacher	100+
Mary	Gen. Ed. Teacher	30+
Riley	English Learner Admin	25+

After interviews were transcribed, coding was completed by hand by using Microsoft Excel to organize and categorize emerging themes. In Vivo coding was the method used for first cycle coding. In Vivo codes reflect the actual language of participants and this method is appropriate for nearly all qualitative studies (Saldana, 2015). Using In Vivo methods, repeating statements were color-coded and counted to organize emerging themes. While In Vivo coding is able to deepen an understanding of different cultures and worlds by capturing the personal meaning by using participant's own words, it also may be used with many different coding methods (Saldana, 2015). Table 11 shows the frequency of responses by all semi-structured interview participants after initial In Vivo coding.

In Vivo coding produced an abundance of first cycle codes, and many different codes embodied substantially similar meaning. As a result, structural coding was employed to enhance organization, and to enable the codes to be analyzed with comparable groupings of codes (Saldana, 2015). While structural coding was useful for organizing codes, new subcategories also emerged that were related like a child code to a parent code (See Table 12). This child code, or

subcode, is a next level theme that enhances or enriches the first code (Saldana, 2015). Finally,

second cycle coding was applied with axial coding to focus and reassemble coding and to

connect categories and subcategories (Saldana, 2015).

Table 13

Top Six Frequency of Responses

Code	Frequency
(1) Understanding/Empathy	59
(2) Parents Comfortable at Home	32
(3) Relationship/Partnerships	30
(4) Home Visit and Parent Engagement Obstacles	15
(5) Non-Home Visitor Reasons: Time, safety, not worth it	15
(6) Thankful Parents	10

Table 14

First and Second Cycle Coding of Semi-Structured Interviews

Theme	Subtheme
Theme 1: Relationships	1:1 Trust
	1:2 Partnership
	1:3 Communication
Theme 2: Home Setting	2:2 Neutral Environment
	2:3 Parent's Turf
	2:4 Safety
Theme 3: New Understanding	3:3 Empathy
	3:4 Assumptions
	3:5 New Perspectives

Theme One: Relationships

The opportunity to form relationships is an important reason for conducting home visits

according to participants of this study. Meeting in the home is reported to make parents feel

more comfortable, leading to increased trust, communication, and a sense of partnership. Emily believes that home visits are effective at building relationships between teachers and parents. She says that "With home visits, it's nice to build relationships…talk about hopes and dreams." The opportunity to expand understanding in a comfortable environment allows an opportunity to know families in a deeper way: "Hearing families describe how they value education and how they want to support their children through education…confirms that even if kids struggle at school, that we're on the same team." Emily shared an example of how one mother after visiting her at home began listening more and trusting her as the teacher: "There have been lasting connections." "Home visits build trust in a way that's different than just a parent conference."

Rey also believes that home visits are effective at building relationships. Rey is one of the few teachers who took a formal college course specifically about family and parent engagement. She believes this training has been helpful. She has observed that in some districts home visits are "absolutely unheard of…like even a mention of home visits, teachers were like, I would never do that." Her training instilled confidence and an understanding of the purpose and promise of parent-teacher home visits. Rey believes that through home visits "I can build relationships." She believes that after building relationships with parents through home visits, it is much clearer that "We're on the same side trying to help this student to be successful." She has begun to see parents differently, as partners and she is more likely to ask "Howe can we work together much more than I have to tell you that your kid is not doing what they're supposed to be doing." Now Rey knows that even though "We have Opposite roles…we are on the same team."

Susan has completed over thirty parent-teacher home visits. She believes that home visits provide opportunities to learn important information about families, but to really get to know

them as people too. "Parents are nervous about high school" Susan shared. After completing home visits for the past five years she now sees "family in the community now, it's like the village we talk about. It makes a big school seem smaller." Parents have become more open and willing to share about their stories and struggles and dreams of their children. One parent shared something personal about her child that caused her anxiety about the new school year. Susan and her team felt that this personal relationship made a big difference: "We made sure this student was in touch with…leaders right away. We didn't want bullying to happen God forbid. I think if this didn't happen at home, it could have taken awhile." Susan shared several instances of parents and teachers building a relationship that resulted in a better experience for students, parents, and teachers. She explained how being in the home, built trust and fostered a relationship that would not have been there otherwise: "There's a shared trust if they've already accepted a home visit and I've already been invited. We both agree that the best thing for this child is that we have a relationship with each other. You put the triangle together and you do it in a place where they are comfortable."

Theme Two: Home Setting

One overarching theme that has emerged from this study relates directly to relationships and teachers perceiving that parents feel comfortable connecting at home during parent-teacher home visits in ways that they might not during a visit to the school. Emily is an English Learner teacher (EL). She explained that "There is something unique about being the family's space versus being in our space. That's why we do it." Emily shared stories about parents appearing more comfortable multiple times throughout the interview. In her experience, "Some families (immigrant families) aren't comfortable coming into the school. They might not be sure of norms

and expectations." For Emily, parent-teacher home visits serve as a way to empower families and students. She stated that "Sharing that parents have a right as members of the school community…it's easier to establish this on their turf."

As an exceptional children's teacher (EC), Dianne regularly works with families in IEP meetings. Still, she says that it is not always easy to communicate with families. Some issues are somewhat complicated, and Dianne believes that "It can be more comfortable away from the school." For Dianne, the goal of parent-teacher home visits is more than just communicating information. She wants to build relationships and trust. "Parents tend to open up more and share in a more neutral environment" Dianne explained.

Susan understands parent-teacher home visits from both a parent and a teacher perspective. While Susan is a teacher at the school where she sets up home visits, her first experience was as a parent when the school called to setup a home visit for her child. Susan said her experience as a parent during a home visits was "great", and she was eager to participate in parent-teacher home visits when she transitioned to the school. Susan believes that schools and teachers don't always understand what other families are going through. "We have to think about where we come from…some families might not trust a school…that's such a vastly different situation than where I come from…I have to respect that." Building relationships and empathy can be nurtured by "being at home where parents are more comfortable to talk about things. That's a great way to gain some empathy."

Susan has been thankful for home visits both as a parent and as a teacher. Susan "…joined and did home visits because I appreciated the program [as a parent previously]." Susan also believes that "Parents are universally concerned about the trajectory of their child." Susan

has also sensed that parents are sometimes surprised by an invitation for a home visit: "Parents are surprised…they still want to be involved though…maybe the surprise works in our favor."

Connie helps to organize the parent-teacher home visit group. She has visited homes for several years, and she has been to over 100 homes. Connie believes that

> "For a teacher to come to a parent home, they are honored, they are blessed, they are so thankful. I've never walked away from a home visit where a parent talked about their child's hopes and dreams and they thought it was a waste of time. Parents…when we leave, they're always very thankful. Parents say I can't believe you're asking about my child's hopes and dreams. No one has asked this before."

Riley has had similar experiences. She has conducted over twenty-five home visits and her consistent experience has been that "Parents are very thankful for home visits." Riley shared that parents appear comfortable in their home and appreciated by the people taking the time to visit their family and to show an interest in their child and their parents together.

Non-home visitors communicate several reasons for not volunteering to go on home visits. Perspectives vary by background and experience. Dianne has gone on parent-teacher home visits since before the program started at the school. She believes that her background in mental health and personal experiences has prepared her to feel comfortable. However, she shared that several teachers have decided they did not want to visit families in their homes. Dianne believes that "Those not going on home visits said basically that they don't have time. They don't live locally. They don't see the value in it." She also added that "…some people are introverts. Personality is a big part of it."

Rey also talked to teachers who declined home visits. She said that "Some colleagues don't' want to do home visits because they don't feel comfortable…they think it's awkward."

Upon asking for elaboration, Rey explained that "One didn't want to go into a student's home. Another didn't want to spend their summer working. They have families, and they don't see the outcomes."

Connie shared similar stories about teachers who opted not to conduct home visits. Reflecting on conversations with colleagues, she believes that "some had a bad experience. Others tried it and said they weren't getting anything out of it. Some also think we haven't had an impact on the kids."

Mary reiterated similar concerns that her colleagues expressed about home visits. Reasons she has heard include: "Time commitments, feeling uncomfortable going into a stranger's home and being away from family." Mary explained that even among those who have gone on home visits, some have shared a fear of "cold calling" and feeling like the visit might "go on and on." Martha echoes her colleague's stories. Martha has heard teachers say that home visits take too much time, and that it's not a top priority.

Theme Three: New Understanding

Several participants shared that their understanding had increased through parent-teacher home visits. Emily explained that "Seeing kids in their home environment with families gave me a richer context for background and home life." Emily shared thoughts several times about how understanding increased through home visits. She said she was able to "Understand them [parents and students]" and that "…the larger context can make you more sympathetic as a teacher." She later stated that "[developing] relationships and hopes and dreams has been eye-opening."

Dianne has visited students at home for over twenty years and developing relationships is vita from her perspective. She believes that home visits "humanize parents" and that parent-

teacher home visits serve as a "foot in the door." Dianne's experience with families in the past has led to an appreciation for parent-teacher home visits. When a student's mother was killed as a result of domestic violence, Dianne felt particularly devastated. While she didn't think she could have saved anyone necessarily from that violent night, she did realize there was more to the story at school than a boy feeling distracted, or unmotivated: "That one thing has always nagged me my entire career and that was 25 years ago that if I had just gone to visit the family and said what can I do?"

All seven interviewees shared that parents who were visited at home expressed gratitude. They said thank you and teachers felt that it was a positive experience. Some home visits may have felt more productive than others, but home visitors felt that nearly all of the parents were thankful for the visit, and that they expressed it through words or actions. Emily said that "Parent feedback is overwhelmingly positive for home visits." While "sometimes there is suspicion when calling parents at first about a home visit" Emily explains that parents appreciate the parent-teacher home visit method because it's "just about getting to know you and your child's hopes and dreams."

Dianne believes there's often not enough time at school to talk about what really matters with parents, since people are always on the go. After spending time just talking to a parent outside of school on one occasion, Dianne observed a parent who was stressed and anxious about her child's experience in school, become relaxed and encouraged. "Parents want to be heard. This personal conversation in person made all the difference in the world" Dianne remarked

Susan understands parent-teacher home visits from both a parent and a teacher perspective. While Susan is a teacher at the school where she sets up home visits, her first experience was as a parent when the school called to setup a home visit for her child. Susan was

not entirely interested in being visited at home at first. She admitted feeling like her child didn't require extra support. However, she finally agreed, and Susan said her experience as a parent during a home visits was "great", and she was eager to participate in parent-teacher home visits when she later transitioned to the school as a teacher. Having experienced her own parent-teacher home visit, her perspective about the purpose and promise of parent-teacher home visits changed. Susan believes that schools and teachers don't always understand what other families are going through. "We have to think about where we come from…some families might not trust a school…that's such a vastly different situation than where I come from…I have to respect that." Building relationships and empathy can be nurtured by "being at home where parents are more comfortable to talk about things. That's a great way to gain some empathy."

The themes that emerged through the interviews provide a deeper understanding of how teacher home visits work to impact relationships with parents and student experiences in school. Figure 10 is a visual representation of the relationship between school and home and how different parent-teacher home visits are associated with different perceptions and beliefs that ultimately impact teacher and parent relationships and student experiences.

Figure 10

Parent-Teacher Home Visit Relationship Process & Potential
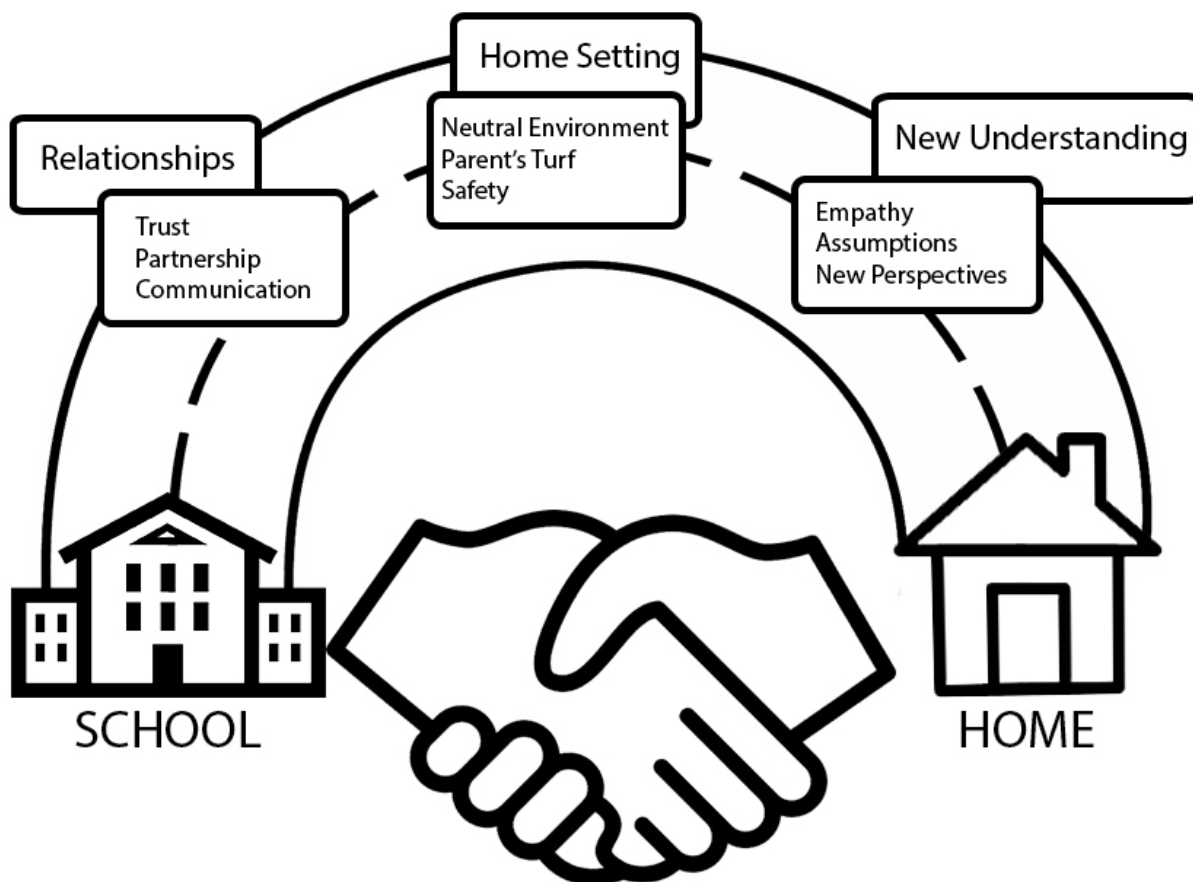
Conclusion

Chapter IV provided a summary of the results for this mixed-methods study of parent-teacher home visits. Quantitative and qualitive results are presented. The Mann-Whitney U Test found several statistically significant relationships between teacher views of relationships with parents, perceptions of safety and parent interest in parent-teacher home visits and the two groups of teachers: those who have volunteered to conduct home visits and those who have not volunteered to conduct home visits. The overall relationship scale consisting of relationship

items was also statistically significant between the two groups of home visitors and non-home visitors, p=**.018**. One additional survey section (item 30) included two categorical variables (See Appendix D). Each item was analyzed by the variable of whether a teacher had conducted a home visit or not, and which person should be most responsible for each area of a school activity e.g. having time to complete schoolwork, emotional support, communicating between home and school, and whether parents, teachers or students should be most responsible. The Chi-Square test found that there is a significant relationship between parent-teacher home visit group and one item, who is responsible for communicating between home and school, p=**.046**.

The qualitative portion of this study employed semi-structured interviews with seven teachers, all who had conducted parent-teacher home visits. No teachers who had not conducted home visits volunteered for an interview. Interview questions were designed to further probe survey results about relationships between parents and teachers, barriers for teachers to conduct home visits, and data showing an association between students participating in parent-teacher home visits and student academic, attendance, and graduation outcomes. Several dominant themes emerged. Teachers overwhelmingly shared that understanding, and empathy had increased as a result of home visits. Understanding and new perspectives lead to trust, a stronger sense of partnership, and ultimately better relationships. Teachers reported that being comfortable in a parent's own home for a visit nurtures conditions for better relationships and trust to grow. Teachers shared that for those who had opted not to conduct home visits, most cited not having enough time, feeling that it's not worth it, and feeling unsafe or nervous. Finally, all interviewees agreed that parents were consistently and sincerely grateful for the teacher-home visits, with rare exception. Chapter V will expand on these results by discussing how relationships between teachers and parents are affected by parent-teacher home visits, by

identifying the implicit and explicit barriers to conducting home visits, and by analyzing the

longitudinal outcome data for students participating in parent-teacher home visits.

Chapter V

Discussion

Introduction

Parent engagement has become an increasing priority for the U.S. Department of Education, state education departments, and local school systems (Abdul-Adil & Farmer, 2006; Baker, 1997; Hong, 2019; Kainz & Aikens, 2007; Mapp, 2012; Nakagawa, 2000). Federal programs require parent engagement initiatives as part of the Title I Program and for Head Start (Kronholz, 2916; Mapp, 2012). In addition, parent-teacher home visits have expanded to over 700 communities in 25 states in the U.S. over the past 20 years - primarily at the elementary level (Sheldon & Bee, 2018). Also, major, well-funded studies supported by multiple parent engagement advocacy organizations across several primary schools have been commissioned to examine associations between parent-teacher home visits and student attendance, and academic achievement on standardized tests (Sheldon & Bee, 2018). Evidence supports a connection between early childhood and elementary home visits and outcomes including attendance, behavior, and academic achievement (Nievar et al., 2018; Sheldon & Bee, 2018; Wright et al., 2018). Still, few high school home visits have been conducted (Barmore, 2018; Sheldon & Bee, 2018). Consequently, expanding home visit research to different types of schools and across different levels would provide valuable information about how parent-teacher home visits impact parent-teacher relationships and student outcomes and experiences (Wright, 2018).

While research has recently begun to show an association between early childhood and elementary parent-teacher home visits and standardized test scores, there is not much known about high school home visits since they are a rare occurrence, and consequently very little research exists on home visits at the secondary level (Barmore, 2018). Furthermore, much of the

home visit research has been qualitative (Wright et al., 2018). This mixed-methods study has set out to strengthen and reinforce the available home visit literature by examining teacher surveys, student outcome data, and follow-up semi-structured interviews for high school teacher and student participants, in addition to answering the question about whether home visits at the high school level impact student outcomes. In addition, there is not much known about teacher relationships with parents beyond parent-teacher conferences (Hong, 2019). Results from this study support the association between high school home visits and improved relationships between parents and teachers. While there is strong evidence showing that home visits are linked to positive student outcomes, there is not much known about the causal mechanisms that drive this relationship and what motives some parents may have for engaging with teachers in traditional ways (Leer & Lopez-Boo, 2018; Wright, 2018). These mechanisms that are the proximal processes in the Bronfenbrenner model (primary engines of effective human development) between a person and their immediate surroundings enable a person to achieve maximized levels of human developmentand to actualize full potential (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Hayes et al., 2017). The ongoing presence of patterns of proximal processes (e.g. in the form of parent-child or teacher-child relationships) provides the opportunity to engage the child's attention and to reach beyond boundaries (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). The relationship between people in two different microsystems, and in the school and home setting involves the requirement of a triad connection at minimum: a parent, the child, and the teacher. Studies have shown that a relationship between two people (dyad) is vitally dependent on the presence and participation of a third person – in the case of school: the parent, child, and the teacher (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner (1979) compared these three-person systems to a three-legged stool, whereby when all legs are present and strong, there is great stability, but when a leg

is broken or damaged, the connection becomes weak and it is in danger of collapsing (Figure 11)

. Bronfenbrenner (1979) asserted that:

> The same triadic principle applies to relations between settings. Thus the capacity of a
> setting-such as the home, school, or workplace—to function effectively as a context for
> development is seen to depend on the existence and nature of social interconnections
> between settings, including joint participation, communication, and the existence of
> information in each setting about the other. (p. 5)

Figure 11:

Bioecological Human Development Triad Connection: The Three-Legged Stool
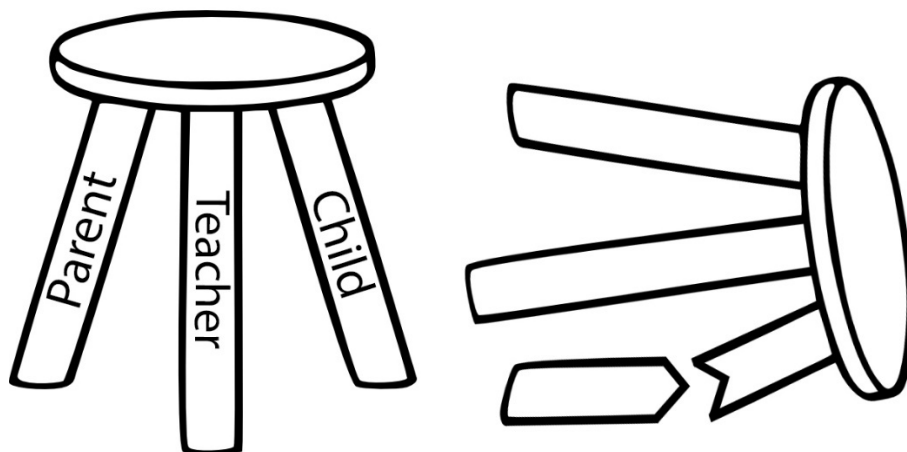
The research questions for this study are:

1.   How do high school teachers' perceptions of parent-teacher home visits affect teacher
relationships with parents and students?

2.   What are the perceived barriers to effective home visits for teachers?

3.   How do home visits impact student grades, attendance, and graduation rates?

Chapter V provides an interpretation of the results, a discussion of the answers to these questions, and an analysis of connections to Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory of Human Development. Implications for future research are included.

Summary of the Results

This study explored the impact of parent-teacher home visits on teacher and parent relationships and outcomes associated with home visits. Barriers to implementing parent-teacher home visits were also analyzed. Since there are numerous potential variables influencing parent-teacher relationships, the mixed-methods design was used to enrich and enhance the quantitative survey results (Bowen et al., 2017). The sequential explanatory mixed methods design specifically allowed qualitative data to contextualize the quantitative data (Bowen et al., 2017; Creswell, 2015). Survey results designed to evaluate teacher perceptions of home visits and engagement with parents coupled with ex post facto student attendance, GPA, and graduation records provide concrete data and relevant trends associated with research questions. Semi-structured interviews with seven participants provide a deeper explanation and context for survey responses and student outcome data.

Teachers and staff members of a high school were surveyed in this study. All participants were invited to be trained by the Parent-Teacher Home Visit organization, or by materials provided by the group. Those who conducted home visits were required to complete the training, while those who did not conduct home visits either chose not to attend the training, or they attended the training and subsequently opted out of going on a home visit. All parent-teacher home visits at this school are voluntary for staff and for parents. Survey results provided data relating to four different scales: parent-teacher relationships, perception of parent-teacher home visits, perception of educating all students, and perception of teacher self-efficacy. In addition,

the survey included a section reflecting views of who should be most responsible for parent engagement with schools.

Student outcome data were also analyzed. Attendance measured by chronic absenteeism rate reflects the percentage of students missing more than 10% of the school year for any reason. Grade point average is simply the overall GPA for a given school year. The graduation rate is the percentage of students in a school year who are considered to have graduated on time. These three variables were compared between two different groups: (1) students in a school-year who had been visited at home through the parent-teacher home visit program, and (2) the entire student population in a school-year including those who had been visited at home and those who had not.

Following the survey and request for existing student outcome data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teacher and staff volunteers of the school. The goal was to ask questions to further illuminate and enrich data findings and to provide context, and a deeper explanation for quantitative results. An electronic request to participate in the survey was sent to all teachers and staff inviting those who were eligible to conduct teacher home visits to complete the survey and to express interest in participating in the semi-structured interviews (See Appendix C). Volunteer participants were asked to share preferred times for the semi-structured interviews, and based on that information, requests were sent using GoToMeeting, the online meeting program. The interviews were also transcribed using GoToMeeting. Interviews were conducted following the close of the survey, and questions were designed to dig deeper into the information provided by the quantitative results.

Quantitative Results

The survey for this study was adapted from a family-schools relationship instrument created by researchers at Harvard University designed to assist educators in determining which forms of parent engagement work best (Bahena et al., 2016). The survey scales adopted for this study capture perceptions of teachers about their views of relationships with parents, their own self-efficacy as teachers, and educating a diverse population of students. An additional scale was created to measure the perceptions of teachers about parent-teacher home visits. Finally, a series of questions was included that relate to the perceived role of parents and teachers and who should be most responsible for various school experiences including communication, homework, and socialization. Each scale was validated when nine acting teachers who have conducted parent-teacher home visits completed the survey. After results from the pilot were finalized, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated (Table 2, p. 72)

The survey was sent to 225 eligible teachers and staff members who were invited to be trained to conduct parent-teacher home visits using a modified Parent-Teacher Home Visit (PTHV) model. Principles of the PTHV that were retained included being voluntary for all teachers and parents, teacher training and compensation, a focus on relationship-building, not targeting a specific population, and visiting in pairs. The unique feature of the site in this visit is that parent-teacher home visits are conducted for rising ninth graders before the first day of school, and home visits are typically conducted on only one occasion per student.

One goal of the parent-teacher home visits is to build relationships. Consequently, the first research question asks how high school parent-teacher home visits impact relationships between teachers and parents. Using SPSS Statistical Software Version 26, a Mann-Whitney test was calculated to compare results on the relationship scale between the two groups: those

teachers and staff who volunteered to conduct home visits and then subsequently completed at least one, and those who did not complete a home visit. The Mann-Whitney test of the relationship scale resulted in a 2-tailed p-value of .018 which is below the .05 value considered statistically significant for Likert data (DeWinter & Dodou, 2019). The relationship survey questions stand out, and the relationship scale is the only scale on the survey that is statistically significant. This result means that the differences found between the two teacher home visits groups and their views of relationships would likely happen 95% of the time, that they are not due to chance, and that these results are generalizable to larger, similar populations (Creswell, 2015). Research has demonstrated that one benefit of visiting with parents at home is the potential of developing relationships (Llopart et al., 2018; Saïas et al., 2016; Whyte & Karabon, 2016). Since home visit research has nearly all been related to primary schools, the results from this study show that parent-teacher home visits at the high school level are also strongly associated with better relationships between teachers and parents.

Next, individual items were analyzed for statistical significance. H_0, or the null hypothesis, was tested for each Likert item on the survey. The null hypothesis states the distribution for the group who completed home visits and the group who did not are equal. Five items are statistically significant when the two groups are compared (Table 5, p. 76). When comparing responses to the question asking how often teachers meet in person with families, the p-value is **.032**. The next statistically significant item asks how supportive families are when dealing with difficult students, and this p-value is **.015**. The response to the question asking how safe the teacher feels when thinking about going on a home visit resulted in a p-value of **.005**. Teachers and staff were then asked how supportive they believe families are of participating in parent-teacher home visits. This p-value is **.001**. Finally, teachers responded to the question

about how confident they are when engaging students who are typically not motivated, and this p-value of **.048** is also statistically significant. Each of these items is below a p-value of .05 resulting in a 95% level of confidence that there is a relationship between the two groups and each variable (Creswell, 2015).

The survey also asked participants to share who they thought was most responsible for various school experiences related to their child. The Chi-Square statistic was used since the data available in this item contained two non-normally distributed categorical variables (Creswell, 2015; Hoy & Adams, 2015). Only one item resulted in statistical significance: the question asking teachers and staff who should be most responsible for communication between home and school. The 2-tailed Pearson Chi-Square p-score of **.46** is statistically significant. The teachers who conducted home visits responded that teachers should be more responsible than parents for communication between home and school. In this study, 74.3% of teachers who conducted home visits believe that schools are primarily responsible for communication, while 25.7% of teachers who did not complete home visits believe that parents are primarily responsible for communication between the school and home (Table 7, p. 84). Communication between the school and home has been a source of discontent for many years. There is a discrepancy between teacher and parent expectations for how communication between the home and school should happen and more than half of parents are not satisfied with interactions they had with schools (Conus & Fahrni, 2019; Kraft, 2017; Schneider & Arnot, 2018). This study shows that a crucial reason for communication problems between parents and teachers at the high school level is there are different expectations about who is primarily responsible for initiating and sustaining communication. Importantly, there is an association between teachers who have completed parent-teacher home visits and their expectation about who is responsible for communication.

Teachers at this high school who chose not to conduct home visits (home visits are voluntary in this model) are far more likely to believe that parents are primarily responsible for communication between the home and school. This difference in the belief about who is primarily responsible for communication between the home and school may exist before teachers make a decision about whether to complete a home visit, or the belief may change after teachers after completing home visits, but the difference in beliefs, and the significance between the groups is important. While literature shows cultural and language barriers contribute to communication problems between teachers and parents (Schneider & Arnot, 2018), this study shows that underlying beliefs by teachers also contribute to communication deficits at the high school level.

  The third research question asks how parent-teacher home visits impact attendance, graduation rates, and academic achievement (grade point average). Ex post facto attendance data is available for students entering the school at least as early as 2013. The official chronic absenteeism rate was compared for all students at this site for three consecutive school years starting in 2016-2017 as reported to the state and ending with the most recent data available. Determining the chronic absenteeism rate for students visited at home compared to the whole school required a calculation of the total percent of days absent for each home visited student and comparing this rate to the rate provided by the state for the whole school. Comparison results show the chronic absenteeism rate is lower for home visited students for two out of the three years. In addition, there is a net absenteeism rate advantage for all three school years of 3.69 percent for the whole home visit group and 11.44 percent for the active home visit group (Figure 7, p. 77).

Ex post facto data is also available graduation rates. Data is available for students visited at home as rising freshman in 2012 who then graduated after the 2016-2017 school year and subsequent cohorts up to the 2018-2019 school year. Comparisons show for students visited at home by a teacher, the graduation rate exceeded the whole high school cohort rate for four out of five years, and the graduation rate for home visited students over five years in this study is 94.3% while the whole cohort rate for all five years is 91.4% (See Figure 8, p. 88). This study demonstrates a strong association between students who are visited at home by teachers and the likelihood of graduating from high school. Schools are committed to having the highest graduation rate possible, and parent-teacher home visits at the high school level contribute to higher graduation rates for student participants. While this study cannot show that parent-teacher home visits cause students to graduate from high school at a higher rate, evidence reveals students who participate in home visits are either more predisposed to graduate, or the parent-teacher home visit affected student experiences thereby resulting in a higher graduation rate. Either way, this study shows parent-teacher home visits are an important intervention for high schools to implement if they are interested in supporting more students to graduate from high school on time.

Grade point averages were also analyzed for all home visited students. Grade point averages rose slightly from 9th grade to 12th grade (from 2.79 for ninth graders to a peak of 2.89 for eleventh, and 2.87 by twelfth grade) when calculating all home visited students (Figure 9, p. 89). However, a whole school GPA was not provided by the district for comparison. The COVID-19 crisis interrupted some data collection as swift decisions were made to remote learning that prevented this final piece from being shared by the site to be included in this study. As a result, it is not possible to determine if high school home visits are associated with GPA in

this study, and we cannot know if the general rise in GPA for home visited students is a result of parent-teacher home visits, or other factors. Future studies should include an analysis of how home visiting is associated with academic achievement by comparing students visited at home, to all other students who were not visited at home by teachers. The literature has shown a link between parent-teacher home visits and an increase in academic achievement at the elementary level (Nievar et al., 2018; Sheldon & Bee, 2018; Wright, 2018). However, existing research does not include studies reflecting home visiting programs at the high school level and academic achievement. This study does show that students who are visited by teachers at home have a lower chronic absenteeism rate. Low chronic absenteeism (good attendance) has a positive and strong correlation to achievement in high school courses (Kirksey, 2019). As a result, since high school home visits are associated with higher attendance rates, and higher attendance is positively correlated with higher course grades, then high school home visits are at the very least, a contributing factor to higher high school GPA.

Qualitative Results

After analyzing survey results, individual semi-structured interviews were scheduled with teacher and staff participants from the school site. Seven teachers and staff members participated in the interviews and all completed home visits. Participants are teachers, parent liaisons, and one teacher who is also a parent of a student in the school. Each participant completed the survey and volunteered for a 45-60-minute interview. The sequential explanatory design uses quantitative data (survey results, attendance, graduation rate, and GPA in this study) to enrich the results of the quantitative data (Bowen et al., 2017). Survey results and preliminary ex post facto attendance, graduation rate, and GPA data were considered when creating the semi-structured interview questions. The sequential explanatory approach enables the qualitative data to

contextualize the qualitative data (Bowen et al., 2017; Creswell, 2015). Qualitative questions were aligned with research questions and specific attention was focused on items reflecting statistical significance from the quantitative portion of the study to provide an opportunity for more depth to be included. Interviewees were asked about relationships with parents, perceptions of home visits from their view and colleagues, concerns about safety, feedback from parents about home visits, and perceptions of student outcomes associated with parent-teacher home visits.

Interviews were setup using the online meeting application GoToMeeting. Interviews ranging from 40 minutes to 64 minutes were recorded and transcribed through the GoToMeeting application. Transcripts were reviewed for clarity and coded for themes (Table 12, p. 91). Major codes were identified followed by minor codes or subcodes, which are a next level theme that enhances or enriches the first code (Saldana, 2015). The major and minor themes for this study are represented by a home and school environment and a connected road between the two microsystems signifying the potential to work alongside one another (Figure 12, p. 98). Each theme will be presented as shared by participants along with existing, relevant research, and Bronfenbrenner's (1994) framework for bioecological human development.

Theme One: Relationships

The first dominant, or major theme that emerged for the qualitative section of this study is the importance of relationships. Teacher and staff participants communicate the significance of parent-teacher home visits affecting relationships, and how an intentional approach designed to focus on relationships contributes to positive experiences for both teachers and parents. Home visits function as a proximal process, and as a mechanism for improving the quality of the school and home microsystem for the teacher-parent, parent-child, and teacher-child relationships --

reflecting the innermost layer of Bronfenbrenner's model (Leer & Lopez-Boo, 2018). The minor themes under relationships are trust, partnerships, and communication. The relationship between the home visiting teacher and the family is central to the success of a home visit experience. (Saïas et al., 2016). Parent-teacher home visits for high school students contribute to building relationships between teachers and parents. Positive relationships between teachers and students are known to be associated with a greater likelihood of a student graduating (Zaff et al., 2017).

    Trust. Teachers often feel reserved about engaging with parents for various reasons including a fear of conflict, yet much of the tension between teachers and parents is a result of a lack of trust (Balli, 2016; Rusnak, 2018). Bronfenbrenner (1979) argued to enhance developmental success for a child in a mesosystem (home and school for example), the settings must include interactions and systems that foster mutual trust. Trust between parents and teachers is critical for positive relationships between home and school to develop (Collier et al., 2015; Hong, 2019; Santiago et al., 2016; Schweizer et al., 2017).

    Studies have also shown the relationship between the teacher and the parent is developed in different phases, beginning with overcoming a fear of being judged, establishing a mutual understanding, and building trust (Saïas et al., 2016). Working through these phases takes time and commitment. Bronfenbrenner (1979) asserted that the developmental potential of a mesosystem (e.g. the interaction of a child's home and school) is also enhanced when indirect linkages between the actors and environments in a mesosystem develop a positive orientation, and goal consensus on behalf of the developing child. Parents and teachers are typically the primary influencers in the school-age child's mesosystem and developing a positive orientation and goal consensus requires trust and cooperation. Participants in this study spoke about trust in different ways. Emily described a relationship with one parent that grew out of multiple parent-

teacher home visits. When asked what made this relationship so positive and fulfilling, she responded after talking to her so many times "she will listen to me, and I listen to her, and she just trusts me, and that makes all the difference." Still, it was the face-to-face home visit that birthed and nurtured this relationship.

The start of a relationship that builds trust is crucial. As past experiences shape our beliefs and expectations, the mechanism for connecting and building trust is important. This study shows that some teachers expect parents to be primarily responsible for communication. However, as Riley shared in her interview "Some parents don't get involved because they don't know how." Riley, who works directly with English learner students and families as the English Learner Liaison, shared even more about how parents feel about connecting to the school. She said that "Some Latino parents…it takes awhile because of language and cultural understanding." Riley said that when parents know the school cares, and when they feel welcome, they are more involved, and students perform better academically. "Trust between teachers and parents influences academic success" Riley stated.

Since teachers and parents may feel uncertain about when and how to initiate relationships, several studies suggest that teachers should take responsibility for creating structures and systems for developing relationships with parents (Christianakis, 2011; Rusnak, 2018). Initiating communication builds trust according to several participants in this study. Susan shared that "there's a shared trust if they've [parents] accepted a home visit and I've already invited." Building a trusting relationship means getting to know parents who may come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Research shows an association between students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch and increased parent trust of teachers (parents of children who are

eligible for free and reduced lunch are less trusting), which then predicted parent involvement

(Santiago et al., 2016). Susan explained:

> We have to think about where we come from. I come from two educators, one with a
>
> PhD and a school administrator. Some families might not trust a school, that's such a
>
> vastly different situation than where I came from - so I have to respect that.

Ultimately, building a sense of trust and relationship requires time and contact between teachers

and parents (Pushor & Amendt, 2018). Susan echoed this point when she said "You might get

more information in their home. It goes back to trust. They may be more willing to call. I've put

in the time and effort. They may take me more seriously."

Teachers and staff in this study report that developing trust is an important outcome of

parent-teacher home visits. Emily stated:

> So, I think What's powerful about home visits is that then if there is an issue in the
>
> classroom and you're calling that family, you've established kind of trust from the
>
> beginning and they know your face. Home visits build trust in a way that's just different
>
> than a parent conference.

Five out of the seven interview participants mentioned trust as being important to parent

relationships. Riley summed up how trust impacts relationships when she shared "…after home

visits, parents do trust more, and they are more willing to talk to you because they know you."

Partnership. Parent and teachers are not always ready to work together as partners

(Auerbach, 2009; Christianakis, 2011; Graue, 2005; Hong, 2019; Miretzky, 2004). Often, parents

and teachers have different ideas about the meaning and the purpose of parent engagement and

school-family partnerships. In light of this discrepancy, the language of parent engagement has

even evolved to describe what happens and what is expected to happen when teachers and

parents work together, and leading parent engagement researchers have carefully reflected on how to best describe the way relationships function between parents and teachers (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Epstein, for example, has suggested that instead of discussing the relationship as parent involvement, it should be replaced by school, family and community partnership (Epstein, 2010; Goodall & Montgomery, 2014). The idea of a partnership implies parents and teachers work together more on equal ground. Rey suggests that parent-teacher home visits "crack the idea of being against each other. We have opposite roles, but we are on the same team." A partnership means that both sides have something valuable to offer for the student's success.

Literature clearly shows that one of the best ways to support student learning, and specifically underachieving youth, is by having schools and parents work together in partnership (Goodall, 2018; Jeynes, 2007). Rey feels that home visits have improved her ability to function as a partner with parents when sharing that since going on home visits she feels more confident: "We're [parents and teachers] on the same side trying to help this student to be successful. So now I call parents with information, but also what information can you share with me?" This idea of a reciprocating parent-teacher relationship is suggested by Hornby & Lafaele (2011) when they describe one partnership model as embracing the ideas that teachers are considered the experts on education, while parents are considered experts on their children, yet both should work together in a mutually cooperative relationship.

All participants in this study shared that home visits had been mostly positive experiences and that they felt a sense of partnership. Rey and Riley emphasized that the time they spent with parents had offered a dynamic that led to a greater understanding of what a partnership can be. A true partnership is built on seven principles, including trust, respect, competence, communication, commitment, equality, and advocacy (Edwards & Kutaka, 2015). Parent-teacher

home visits have been able to foster each of these principles, as participants shared how each of these principles are exhibited.

Partnerships with all parents is ideal, yet partnerships between schools and high-poverty populations are especially difficult to establish (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Smith et al., 2104). For families living in poverty, and for those who have recently immigrated, effective teacher-parent partnerships may be especially important for student outcomes (Goodall, 2018; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Soutullo, 2016). Teachers are also more equipped to build effective partnerships with parents when they have a deeper understanding of individual students. (Smith et al., 2014). This triadic relationship between mesosystems is what Bronfenbrenner (1979) described when he wrote the following about intentional relationship building between parents and teachers: "…it brings together the child's 'significant others'-the parent and the teacher -as partners, not competitors or strangers, in the child's learning… Neither can do this job in opposition to the other or in isolation" (p. 226-227).

Research has shown that after home visits, parent-educator partnerships improve, which then enables better student support (Nievar et al., 2018; Sheldon & Bee, 2018; Wright, 2018). Still, establishing partnerships can be challenging even for those who believe they are committed (Hong, 2019). A true partnership implies an equal relationship between where power and control are balanced; yet even when teachers have a genuine desire to partner with parents, the partnership dynamic is complex for even those with the best intentions (Goodall, 2018; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Whyte & Karabon, 2016). Several participants shared before making home visits they had made assumptions about parents not returning calls or visiting the school for events. Yet, after a home visit, participants in this study communicate that they felt a new understanding through the home visit that led to a better relationship and a belief that working

together is important. Assumptions about how caring or involved they perceived a parent to be, impacted participant behavior that could have led to improved partnerships. After the home visit, and meeting face-to-face, the possibility of a partnership became more viable. Home visits at this site are designed to build a relationship and to avoid authoritative or adversarial dynamics. These conditions led to the belief by teachers that meaningful partnerships were formed after home visits.

Parent-teacher partnerships have been more of a focus for elementary schools and less for high schools. Recent efforts have been made to improve partnerships at the high school level. Parent-teacher partnerships at the high school level are also established to support student learning. Studies have shown a strong, positive correlation between high school attendance, and academic achievement, and one of the major strategies used to increase student attendance is intentional efforts to communicate more effectively with parents with the goal of parent support with student learning (Kirksey, 2019; Stormshak, Connell, & Dishion, 2009). Participants in this study also agreed that parent partnerships support student outcomes. Only one participant expressed doubts about student outcomes being impacted by home visits even though he agreed that home visits are effective at building relationships and trust. Several participants shared how home visits broke down adversarial assumptions by both teachers and parents and reminded both teacher and parent that they are both working together for the child.

Communication. All seven interview participants made comments about communication being different or improved through a parent-teacher home visit. Some remarked that parents "opened up more" while others shared that parents are "more comfortable" to talk in their home. At times, communication can be hindered by schedules or expectations parents have had from previous school experiences. Susan explained that "Not as many parents show up to back to

school nights. Parents are missed in a lot of school events. Many have two jobs; they work at night. And others aren't comfortable talking at the school." One reason for poor communication between parents and teachers may be inadequate training. Rey explained that conducting home visits "improved my confidence communicating with parents…I don't have as much as I used to, a teacher versus parents kind of idea" though she also gave credit to taking a formal family-school engagement class in college. Rey's experience may be rare. In a national study, 88.5% of teacher educator professors agreed that preservice teachers did not receive adequate information in their programs to communicate effectively between home and school (Zygmunt-Fillwalk, 2011).

Parent-teacher home visits are credited with clearing up assumptions and improving communication. According to Rey, too many teachers have assumptions about why parents are involved or not, and home visits "…help to uncover the discrepancy between teacher perception of parents, and what is really happening with parents." Susan reiterated that many parents want to communicate with the school, but they do not know how to connect, or they are unable to due to life circumstances. She explained that "Some parents don't have reliable transportation or a car, or they work two jobs." As a result, communicating to the school when school is open during regular hours can be a challenge. Communication challenges between teachers and parents are not just isolated to one region, culture, or demographic. In fact, the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education determined that the responsibility of developing successful home–school relationships is deemed to lie with teachers themselves (Broomhead, 2013). Riley, who serves as a family liaison specialist, explained that "Some parents don't get involved because they don't know how, or their schedules are a problem, and for some Latino parents, it takes awhile because of language and culture." Some teachers may assume that

parents do not want to communicate when they do not call or when they do not attend school events, but participants in this study shared that most parents do want to be engaged with the school; they often just don't know how to begin communication (Conus & Fahrni, 2019; Schneider & Arnot, 2018).

The parent-teacher home-visit program at this site was intentionally designed to connect with rising 9th graders to build relationships and to foster communication right at the start of high school. The enhanced communication and relationships are connected to various student outcomes as research shows that frequent and personal communications between teachers, parents, and schools support student learning (Kraft, 2017). Susan shared that as a result of parent-teacher home visits,

> When you already know their name, you remember the birth of a sibling, or a family story, when you need to get your student's trust during any sort of difficult thing, if it's an essay, or they're not comfortable talking about a test they failed, if you having something non-academic in the beginning….it's powerful.

According to a study sponsored by the Parent-Teacher Home Visit Organization, after home visits at the elementary and secondary level, family members reported that they felt more comfortable communicating with teachers and, as a result, did so more frequently (Sheldon & Bee, 2018).

Theme Two: Home Setting

The next major theme that emerged from participant interviews centers around the idea of meeting parents in the home setting. Teacher participants shared several similar stories about visiting the homes of parents. Some teachers were nervous because they had never visited a students' home before, while other participants were eager to meet in homes even before the first

visit. One common experience that participants expressed is how home visits are overwhelmingly positive, and that they all learned something new and important about the family, students, or the community. Some made assumptions about what might be inside the home based on the neighborhood, and then admitted they were surprised that families were so different with a wide range of resources and dynamics. The two most frequent environments where high school students spend most of their time (microsystems) are home and school, yet the acknowledgement of the merging of two microsystems to create the most common mesosystem for students (home and school) does not get enough attention considering how important it is to healthy human development. This transition and the existence of the mesosystem must be acknowledged to provide the best support for students – including high school students. Teacher participants in this study who conducted home visits shared multiple stories affirming the vital and transformative act of meeting in the home with the family. This act acknowledges the mesosystem in a non-threatening way and lays crucial groundwork and connections for a healthy transition for students who live and function within the mesosystem of home and school.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) described the importance of this principle, and the way this transition should ideally work to maximize human development for the student:

The most critical direct link between two settings is the one that establishes the existence of a mesosystem in the first instance-the setting transition that occurs when the person enters a new environment…of course the mother may not come to the school until a later point, or the teacher may visit the home, in which case the connection becomes dual at that time. (p. 210)

There was a general acknowledgement throughout the interviews that learning about families and student lives created a richer educational experience. Connie talked about the

different smells in homes from cooking food that might not be familiar to some participants. In another home, all of the kids were expected to remain quiet and, in another room, while the adults talked in the front room. Several teachers shared that the physical space of the home, or the configuration and number of people could not allow for an adequate study environment. She admitted that she did not realize how this situation is out of the control of the student, and this affected her conversation and tone when collecting homework in the future. Meeting with parents in the home has revealed important and actionable insight into the lives of students that has transferred over to how teachers support students academically and social. Susan explained that:

> One girl did not have a place to study at home. We learned this on a home visit. We thought she could work at school, but parents didn't want her walking home; so we made a call to get picked up later from school one day per week. I may not have been this forward without the home visit

Emily believes that "Some families (e.g. immigrant families) aren't comfortable coming into the school…not sure of norms and expectations." Teachers in this study mentioned thirty-two instances relating to the idea of feeling comfortable in connection with parent-teacher home visits. Dianne is enthusiastic about parent-teacher home visits and she shared that "talking with parents can be more comfortable away from the school."

Neutral Environment.

Dianne has conducted home visits for over twenty years, and she believes parents and teachers both benefit in an environment where parents feel "that teachers become more of a person than a teacher and that changes how they view me." Dianne shared that "Being at a home where parents are more comfortable to talk about things" changes the perspective. Riley, who

works with English Learner students and their parents, believes that "parents are more comfortable in their homes…in their territory…they feel appreciated…and they feel more comfortable in their home with questions." Research supports the power of teachers and parents meeting in a parent's home (Nievar et al., 2018; Vesely et al., 2017; Wright, 2018). In one study, before home visits, many family members reported viewing the teachers as authority figures with elite social statuses, but as a result of a home visit, family members began to perceive teachers as being on the same level (Sheldon & Bee, 2018).

This imbalance of authority can be exacerbated by the dynamic of parents being expected to meet in the school on the school's terms. Yet, despite the power imbalance in parent-teacher relationships, some researchers suggest that it is the professionals' responsibility to initiate steps that can promote relationships and trust (Hong, 2019; Rusnak, 2018). Parent-teacher home visits in this study are initiated by the school and by teachers. Dianne says that "parents tend to open up and share more in a neutral environment." One school system that has experienced success conducting home visits attributes part of their sustained academic gains over five years to their philosophy of recognizing and respective family needs, their values, and cultural norms (Nievar et al., 2018). Meeting at the home in a neutral environment allows teacher home visitors to acknowledge the space, customs, and norms that impact everything that their child experiences and knows, and then approach the relationship on an equal level. This is not possible in the same way at school. Participants shared repeatedly that parents just open up and share more at their home when the home visit is about getting to know them and asking how they can help. Part of this success, and the open communication is related to the parent feeling comfortable in the neutral environment where they are acknowledged as an equal. While current literature for home visits at the high school level does not identify the importance of meeting in a neutral

environment, this study supports the strong effect that meeting in the home with parents has on trust, communication, and relationships that then transfer to the increasing success of students.

Other reasons that meeting in a neutral environment supports parent-teacher relationships and student success include the challenges of families who are new immigrants or who speak different languages. Meeting at the school may be stressful, or some parents may not know that teachers are hoping to have parents visit and communicate with them. Susan has a unique role as one of the several English Learner teachers in the school. She explained that "Some parents have just moved to the country" and they are still fitting in. Meeting these families at home allows barriers to be broken down. In response to meeting in the homes of parents, she replied that their relationship becomes "Reciprocal since we learn to take shoes off in some homes, or they go to great lengths to make us feel comfortable, and we are treated as though it's an honor, and they prepare food for us, and they want to share their lives. When you have that happening, they're not just a student on your roster." Meeting at home in a neutral environment empowers some families in a way that establishes a meaningful bond between the parents and teachers. Participants agree that parents were friendly and eager to share and communicate in their home in a way that they had not expected.

Many participants were shown family pictures, they laughed with parents as kids played, and even met extended family. Several teacher participants were invited to eat a meal with the whole family. Meeting in a neutral environment, and in the home of the parents, created opportunities for the parent to care for and serve the teacher. The home visit model at this site specifically asks teachers not to bring schoolwork, or to talk about grades, detailed curriculum, or to tell parents everything they need to know. Instead, the visit is driven by asking questions and listening. One of the questions that several participants discussed is asking parents what their

hopes and dreams are for their child. Teachers report that parents particularly like this question. Their authority and perspective are valued, and they know that the teacher's goal is to learn more about their family and the student to adjust and adapt alongside one another. This is the essence of a true partnership, and meeting at a parent's home reinforces this value. This parent-teacher home visit model is rooted in the idea of being driven by a neutral mindset, and it is enhanced and actualized by the possibilities of meeting in a physically neutral location – the home.

Parent's Turf. Another important factor influencing the parent engagement with schools is the teachers' commitment. The most powerful recommendation is 'make the parent feel more welcome' (Balli, 2016). Teachers who participate in the parent-teacher home visit program at the school, agree to be trained and to do something that is at first often outside of their comfort zone. Parents notice the effort and they are grateful, especially when teachers first offer to visit their house. According to Connie one parent told her that "I cannot believe you're here in my house asking about my child's hopes and dreams. No one in a school has ever done something like this before." All participants agreed that any anxiety they felt at first, was usually diminished after they began talking with the parents and sensing their excitement and appreciation – at least in part teachers shared because parents were so appreciative that teachers took the time to visit them where they live.

Teachers have reported that families are impacted by being visited at their home in several different ways. One family member explained being more comfortable than before in talking with the teacher about the family's situation because there was no longer a fear of being judged (Sheldon & Bee, 2018). Deborah believes that meeting in the homes of parents demonstrates a commitment to parents and to their relationship: "Sharing that parents have a right as members of the school community is easier to establish on their turf." Susan reiterated

thoughts about parents being appreciative of the commitment to visit them at their home, and she believes that "You might get more information in their home. It goes back to trust. They may be more willing to call. I've put in the time and effort. They may take me more seriously… I'll call.

Unsafe. Not all teachers feel comfortable meeting with parents in their homes. All the interviewees for this study conducted home visits, and they all reported feeling comfortable meeting in the home setting with parents and the student, and often with a larger family. However, all participants also shared several reasons why other teachers did not volunteer to participate in the parent-teacher home visit program. Conducting home visits at this site is voluntary, and teachers do not have to share why they choose not to volunteer. However, most home visiting teachers had talked to other teachers who declined to participate, and safety was expressed repeatedly.

Emily said that one "common one [reasons for not participating] is it is outside of their comfort zone…they are more comfortable in school. The most common reason teachers choose not to go on home visits is that it's outside of their comfort zone." Rey said that teachers told her it was "would not be comfortable to be in the homes of students" while Mary has been told by teachers that they do not feel "comfortable going inside the homes of strangers." Connie has visited more homes than any of the participants and she has been involved for over five years. She reported that some hesitation to visit homes related to questions about "when to report issues to social services like drugs, or suspected abuse. Others expressed concerns about strange smells or big dogs." Dianne also shared a story of safety as a concern. One of her students experienced a murder in their home, and she acknowledge the potential of domestic violence, complicated family dynamics. Interestingly though, this experience propelled Dianne to become even more committed to engaging in parent-teacher home visits.

Since the expansion of the Parent-teacher Home Visit model in more than half the states across the United States, it has been understood that not all teachers have been ready to commit to visiting parents in their homes. Some teachers at one school reported being upset about what they felt was a new requirement to travel into neighborhoods and homes where they felt unwelcome and/or unsafe (Sheldon & Bee, 2018). However, the Parent-Teacher Home Visite model is committed to all home visits for teacher and parent being voluntary.

Several interview participants acknowledged that visiting parent homes was uncomfortable at first. But all who eventually conducted home visits agree that it became easier and more comfortable with time and experience. Rey shared that "I thought home visits might be a little uncomfortable at first. Like everyone was trying to find their place. That was true. After some time. Everyone settles." Mary said that one concern at first is that "teachers are afraid that the visit might go on and on…the biggest fear for me was leaving." Emily agreed that she was nervous at first too "…yeah apprehensive would be a good word for it…before I went the first time just because I wasn't sure what to expect. But going with a partner took my nerves away. It was just new."

The reported feeling of being unsafe is a significant barrier for implementing home visits. Both the qualitative and quantitative data reveal a strong concern for feeling safety. The survey question asking about how safe a teacher participant feels when thinking about going on a home visit revealed a sharp divide between the group of home visitors and those who have not visited homes. After running the Mann-Whitney test on this item to compare the two groups, the p-value of .05 shows a statistically significant relationship, and teachers who did not volunteer to conduct home visits are far more likely to report feeling unsafe. The qualitative data supports this finding, as nearly all home visiting participants shared that the reasons given by teachers who chose not

to go on home visits often includes feeling unsafe. Consequently, teachers' beliefs about feeling safe on home visits is a significant barrier for implementing and sustaining home visits in a school. Some literature is available about home visits and safety concerns, but quantitative or in-depth qualitative research about safety concerns have not been conducted previously. Reports by the National Head Start organization report that some teachers feel uneasy about going on home visits, but specific data is not included (Burstein, 2020; Rosa, 2020). In addition, a comprehensive qualitative Parent Teacher Home Visit report collecting data in four districts showed that participants were not afraid for their physical safety as much as for their psychological safety and fear of the unknown (Mcknight et al., 2017). These reports were not linked to a specific number of participants, quantitative data were not included, and sites in this study were only conducted in elementary schools – not high schools. The current study included both quantitative and qualitative data, and it was conducted at the high school level. Results are strong enough in this study to draw a conclusion that reported safety concerns by teachers is a major barrier.

Theme Three: New Understanding

The next major theme that emerged relates to increased understanding for both teachers and parents resulting from parent-teacher home visits. The problem of misunderstanding between teachers and parents is not new. Dating back to 1932, a sociologist and education researcher named Willard Waller described teachers and parents as "natural enemies" He explained that parents and teachers are:

> predestined each for the discomfiture of the other. The chasm is frequently covered over, for neither parents nor teachers wish to admit to themselves the uncomfortable

implications of their animosity. There is the fact…that parents and teachers wish the child

to prosper in different ways (Waller, 1932, p. 68).

Hong (2019) argues divisions between schools and parents continue, and a battle is being

waged for the hearts and minds of parents. Parent-school relationships are still not clearly

understood, yet without meaningful connections to parents and families, teacher are often simply

guided by their assumptions about parents and their role in supporting their children (Hong,

2019). The literature suggests a new understanding will be helpful in this endeavor, and several

participants in this study agree. Understanding is especially important for serving and supporting

marginalized families. Developing understandings between teachers and parents of people of

color, and those living in poverty, is necessary to build teacher-parent connections for all

families (Hong, 2019; Vesely et al., 2017).

Empathy. One of the explicit goals of parent-teacher home visits at the site int his study

is to build relationships and understanding with parents. Participants in this study shared stories

of how parent-teacher home visits led them to see parents and families in new ways. Seeing how

parents live, understanding their work schedule, or knowing that they work two or three jobs

affected how participants felt, and this understanding increased empathy in general for parents

and students. Participants explained how as a result of knowing how much new immigrants

sacrificed for their children, they felt a new level of commitment to supporting students. When

teachers realized through home visits that a home was small, and crowded, and that the high

school student cared for young children each evening, this understanding opened their eyes to

their own practices and their view of their students. Several teachers said they knew why

homework could not be completed, or why a student was struggling, and this information gained

form the home visit instilled empathy and different, supportive actions.

One of the reasons that teachers in this study have been able to embrace empathy is that that the home visit model at this site is structured to listen to parents and to build relationships. Rey says that "It's [a home visit] very informal. We start by asking questions of the person, and then we ask the parents what are their hopes and dreams for their child as parents." This question immediately shows parents that the teacher is open to receiving information that is important to the parents, and it equips teachers with the mindset that parents have valuable information. Relationships are primed, and broken expectations from previous interactions between teachers and parents, are pushed aside and met instead with a new framework of care. Participants in this study admit that relationships take time and effort, and many parents are surprised at their more inviting approach. Participants in this study recognize that assumptions by both teachers and parents have created tension in the past for several different reasons. Previously constructed options about parents and backgrounds have contributed to a divide in the past (Hong, 2019; Whyte & Karabon, 2016)

 Hong (2019) asserts that to improve parent engagement is to repair relationships by building trust and healing. She believes that ignoring cultural and racial injustice hinders parent engagement efforts. Yet "Teachers do not blindly follow the past if they are taught to critically observe and reflect on the issue of race, culture, and power that permeate interactions between teachers and families (Hong, 2019 p. 169). Rey gained a new perspective on culture and students through her visits with parents: "Home visits taught me to be more culturally responsive, different ideas about homework, grades, assignments and attendance…can be very different."

Each participant shared that through a home visit, they were able to see from the perspective of the parent and the child in a way that they had not before. Rey said after going on home visits "I'm able to see students in a social perspective rather than teacher vs. students.

Instead of saying you didn't do it the way I said, I ask in what ways did they respond positively to my assignment? Could I have done something else to support student." Connie also gained empathy that turned into action: "Sometimes we see things at home visits…and I know that maybe I need to be a little more kind." When asked to explain, she replied "I realized through other experiences that a child might need an extra hand…like a little softer glove. One person wanted to be known as gender neutral. Another student's parents said their child was struggling with weight. I learned these things at the home visits."

Empathy is not always present in teachers and parent naturally, and past harm and wrong assumptions have contributed to the conflict (Hong, 2019; Whyte & Karabon, 2016). As a result, training is recommended to foster empathy. Participants in this study who had taken a formal parent engagement course, had developed a much stronger sense of purpose and hope in the parent-teacher home visit. Empathy was born out of taking the time to understand parents and communities in an intentional way and as part of an education course required for their major. Other participants received training to work with parents as English Learner or special education teachers.

There is a continuing concern that pre-service teachers are not adequately prepared to work with parents and that they are specifically not equipped with the socio-emotional skills required to develop effective teacher-parent relationships (Broomhead, 2013; Ferrara, 2017; Vesely et al., 2017). Parent teacher home visits enabled several participants in this study to gain a new understanding and to identify with the feelings of parents and students in new ways that often transferred to improved outcomes including attendance and likelihood to graduate.

When teacher candidates gain knowledge of students, families, and communities, empathy can be developed. Empathy is necessary to shifts beliefs, attitudes, and values that

ultimately impact their approach to teaching and interacting with students and parents (Warren, 2018). Experience can contribute to empathetic thinking for both pre-service teachers and teachers. Participants in this study share that parent-teacher home visits provide an opportunity to build relationships with parents and families and to develop empathy. Connie shared that "Sometimes we see things at home visits…and I know that maybe I need to be a little more kind."

Assumptions. Several participants shared that parent-teacher home visits had led them to realize how important it is to be cautious about assumptions. When teachers face challenges with students, teachers can jump to conclusions and blame parents rather than assuming parents want to do their best, and they are doing their best (Hong, 2019). In addition, teachers may be quick to assume that parents are not willing to partner with them (Hong, 2019). Emily shared that as an English Learner teacher, she understands parents more, and she expected positive communication with parents as a result of her training, and her past experiences. However, she also asserts that, in general,

> We have a narrow view of who the kids are when they come into our classrooms. So, we need to think about understanding them [parents and students] as people…because the larger context can make you more sympathetic as a teacher.

This school in this study had been trained by the Parent-Teacher Home Visit organization (PTHV). As part of their training, teachers have reported that they were encouraged to avoid making assumptions about families and students (Sheldon & Bee, 2018). Teachers in this study also shared how their assumptions had changed through visiting students at home. Emily had once judged parents for not calling back, and she has heard other teachers make assumptions

about parents. When asked to explain more about her experiences with assumptions teachers and parents have, Emily stated:

> Some teachers may ask why aren't you [parents] returning calls. I can't imagine keeping that assumption anymore after meeting face-to-face because being in the environment with parents shows that they're working too much, or they're not sure how to call back, or not sure if you expect a call back, but their interest in their child is there.

Rey believes assumptions about problems are mitigated by home visits as well. "We sometimes think with dropouts...it means parents are just like, oh well, it doesn't matter, they don't have good parental involvement… but they do." Other studies show that home visits reveal to teachers that deficit assumptions about families simply were not accurate. Teachers instead reported that contrary to their previous assumptions, disconnected parents did not live in chaotic or impoverished, neglected homes (Sheldon & Bee, 2018). Rey agrees that parent-teacher home visits have contributed to a greater understanding of family experiences and the lives of students. She says that "Home visits have given me a more well-rounded approach to teaching…cause I see students in a different view…remember that they are not only students, but children, siblings, with a life outside of school." However, Rey is the only participant who took a formal family-engagement course in graduate school. She believes that the training developed "cultural responsiveness, and an appreciation for the positive research on home visits." Yet, in other districts, Rey shared that "home visits are unheard of, and teachers have said they would never do that."

Participants in this study all shared stories of improved relationships with parents, and how training and parent-teacher home visits contributed to greater understanding of parents, a

shedding of false assumptions, and improved relationships. Consequently, an examination of the beliefs and assumptions of school staff is essential, then, in identifying if their beliefs conducive to developing relationships between teachers and parents (Pushor & Amendt, 2018).

New Perspectives. Each interview participant shared that, through home visits, they learned something new that helped them to understand families and students and to be a better teacher. Rey said that going on parent-teacher home visits enabled her to "see students in a social perspective, rather than as a teacher vs. student. You also get to see different perspectives on how parents were actually trying to engage." The major theme of gaining a new understanding is also reflected in the literature. Many schools have made parents feel that they must justify their presence, and teachers have become so pressured to keep up with high stakes testing and increasing demands, that they often have less time to engage families (Hong, 2019). There is another way though. Soo Hong a family engagement researcher (Hong, 2019) proposes that schools should become *grounded institutions* that are empowered to be rooted in and connected to the full experiences of students' families.

Parent-teacher home visits are one way to support schools in becoming grounded institutions. Susan shared that not all teachers understand the local culture or how family dynamics impact school experiences for both parents and for students: "Parents are universally concerned about the trajectory for their child's future. It might be more heightened for parents who made sacrifices to leave their country because there's a lot riding on the future of the child." The conversations required, and the new perspectives gained through meeting with parents and families promote a connection to the community, culture and relationship-building. Rey shared several instances of gaining new perspectives a result of home visits:

Home visits are good…helped me to understand that this behavior towards me wasn't personal because that's how she treats everyone, and it helped me to understand her relationship with mom and to understand potential that her mom sees in her. So, it changed how I treated her...it changed my understanding of her, and I think in that day it changed her understanding of me.

Susan shared that her expectations changed after a home visit after gaining a new perspective of the family and the home dynamics. After one visit she realized that there was "Not a quiet place to study. Lots of activity. The student had a lot of responsibility. So vastly different than others. Once you get inside the home to see what they live with." Both Rey and Susan shared that this new perspective translated into teaching and learning practices and relationships with parents. Rey said that a home visit experience "translates into how you see your own students that you teach as you got to see parents more in their own elements through home visits. I can see what kind of pressure students are under."

Research supports the power of home visits to build new perspectives, community, and improved relationships between teachers and parents. Through home visits, family conferences, and consistent communication with parents, teachers will be able to continuously learn about families, and communities, and they will be able to build relationships with parents (Hong, 2019). However, the parent engagement research has affirmed the important of establishing explicit statements of beliefs and then actually living them out as a community. This intentional and action-oriented approach is required for teachers and schools to develop deeper, and more meaningful relationships with parents (Pushor & Amendt, 2018).

Conclusions

The questions analyzed in this study are:

1. How do high school teachers' perceptions of parent-teacher home visits affect teacher and parent relationships?

2. What are the most common barriers to effective home visits for high school teachers?

3. How do home visits impact high school student grades, attendance, and graduation rates?

This study shows that teachers' perceptions of the purpose, potential, and value of parent-teacher home visits are associated with the quality of parent-teacher relationships. Survey results included four overall Likert scales to measure perception of parent relationships by teachers. The scales are (1) relationships, $p=.018$ (2) home visits, $p=.179$ (3) educating all students, $p=.513$ and (4) teacher self-efficacy, $p=.180$. When comparing the two groups of teachers who had volunteered and conducted home visits with teachers who had not volunteered to conduct home visits, there is a statistically significant result on the survey's relationship scale. This means teachers who never conducted a home visit are far more likely to believe parents are less friendly, and less supportive of teachers when facing challenges. Teachers who do not complete home visits are also more likely than teachers who do complete home visits to believe that it is challenging to communicate with parents, and that when communication happens, parents are less likely to be caring. Teachers who conduct high school home visits believe parents are more supportive and they are also more likely to have better relationships with parents. Each interview participant who conducted a home visit told multiple stories about new relationships forming, or existing relationships with parents growing deeper.

Individual survey scale items were then analyzed to determine more specific links between teachers who had completed home visits and those who had not completed home visits with perceptions of parent-teacher relationships. The Mann-Whitney test resulted in statistically significant p-scores for five different items, and two of these items were directly related to relationships between parents and teachers. The first question "How often do you meet in person with the families of students?" resulted in $p=.032$. The next item with statistical significance ($p =.015$) asked when teachers face challenges with students, how supportive do they believe families are. With both items, teachers who had conducted parent-teacher home visits reported more positive relationship experiences with parents. Home visiting teachers meet with teachers more, and they believe parents are more supportive. Literature also shows that when teachers understand a parent's culture and background, relationships are more likely to develop (Nievar et al., 2018). In addition, home visits at the elementary level have been found to improve relationships between parents and teachers, communication and engagement between parents and teachers, and parents' perceptions of the school experience (Hong, 2019; Leer & Lopez-Boo, 2018; Llopart et al., 2018; Meyer et al., 2011; Meyer & Mann, 2006; Saïas et al., 2016; Stetson et al., 2012).

Interview participants in this study shared similar experiences. When teachers learned about struggles or specific fears the student or the family experienced, and it was shared during the home visit, communication and follow-through happened as a result, and parents were contacted by the teacher or someone at the school who could help. Home visiting teachers explained that this type of personal communication was not common with traditional communication such as parent-teacher conferences or phone calls. Phone calls and school visits

are still important in the eyes of teachers, but the home visits build capacity for enriching the

entire potential of the relationship between teachers and parents and ultimately for the student.

For the qualitative interviews in this study, volunteers were invited to participate at the

end of the survey, and seven teachers and staff agreed. One semi-structured interview was

completed for each participant. Following the sequential explanatory design, interview questions

were generated from the survey and relevant literature to gain a deeper understanding of the

quantitative results. While each survey participant was invited to volunteer for an interview, only

teachers and staff who completed a home visit eventually agreed to complete a semi-structured

interview. Teacher participants all agree that parent-teacher home visits somehow contributed to

improved relationships. Parent engagement research also supports the association between

parent-teacher home visits and building positive relationships with parents (Hong, 2019; Leer &

Lopez-Boo, 2018; Llopart et al., 2018; Saïas et al., 2016; Wright, 2018). However, since very

little parent engagement research is available that focuses specifically on the relationship

between teachers and parents (Hong, 2019), both quantitative and qualitative results in this study

showing a strong link between home visits and parent-teacher relationships are important for

enhancing the understanding of how parents and teachers are able to build positive relationships.

The next statistically significant items from the survey center around barriers to home

visits for high school teachers. The second research question also asks what the barriers are to

conducting high school home visits. Results show that barriers include both beliefs and

perceptions about home visits, and factors related to implementation and support such as training

from the preservice teacher level to active teachers. Both the survey and qualitative data provide

concrete results showing that teachers who do go on home visits have sharply different views

than those who do not about parent-teacher home visits. One survey question asks, "How safe do

you feel when thinking about going on a home visit?" The p-score for this question when comparing the home visitors and non-home-visitors is .005, a strong statistically significant result. Teachers who chose not to go on home visits reported feeling less safe than teachers who do go on home visits. Next, teachers were asked "How supportive are families of participating in home visits?" When comparing the two groups of teachers, the p-score for this question is .001, a strong and statistically significant result. Teachers who choose not to go on home visits believe parents are far less supportive of home visits when compared to teachers who have completed home visits.

The semi-structured interviews affirmed the survey results as participants shared that teachers who opted out of going on home visits often cited safety concerns, or that they believe home visits are not worth the time. Consequently, two notable barriers to implementing parent-teacher home visits are the perception that visiting parent homes is not safe, and the belief that parents are not interested in home visits. Literature also supports this finding about safety concerns by teachers and going on home visits. Teachers, pre-service teachers, and principals have all expressed concerns about going into certain neighborhoods and feeling unsafe about visiting homes (Peralta-Nash, 2003). If teachers who feel anxious or unsafe about visiting homes in the neighborhoods where their students live, the likelihood of overcoming assumptions and bias and building relationships with parents is compromised (Mcknight et al., 2017).

The semi-structured interviews also revealed that most of the teachers participating in home visits at this site are either English learner or special education teachers. One regular education teacher had taken a formal family engagement graduate class. These teachers have the advantage of built-in training and the experience working with parents, since college courses, IEP meetings and English learner plans require parent communication and support. As a result,

another barrier to conducting high school home visits is lack of training and experience for working with parents and families (Bacon & Causton-Theoharis, 2013). Home visitors who are trained to understand different family worldviews, cultures, and language, are better equipped to build relationships with parents (Nievar et al., 2018). Participant interviews from this study also shows that acknowledging family traditions, culture, and language translates into better relationships. When families at the site in this study predominantly speak another language, then home visitors bring along a translator to the home. Teacher home visitors shared stories about families who felt uncomfortable visiting the school due to a language barrier, but when home visiting teachers arrived prepared at their home, communication was better, and the relationship was healthier.

The third research question asks how parent-teacher home visits impact attendance, graduation rates, and academic achievement (GPA). While it may not be possible in this study to show that parent-teacher home visits directly cause an increase in attendance and academic achievement (measured by GPA), and a greater likelihood of graduating from high school, comparisons in this study do show differences for those students who were visited at home by a teacher. Ex post facto attendance data is available for students visited at home dating back to at least 2013 for this site. The school reported the chronic absenteeism rate to the state starting in the 2016-2017 school year. The chronic absenteeism rate was compared for all students at this site for three consecutive school years starting in 2016-2017 and ending with the most recent data available. When calculating the chronic absenteeism rate for students visited at home who attended school at the site compared to the whole school, the rate is lower for two out of the three years. In addition, there is a net absenteeism rate advantage for all three school years of 3.69 percent for the whole home visit group and 11.44 percent for the active home visit group (Figure

7, p. 77). The whole home visit group includes all students visited at home even if they transferred out before starting high school at this site, or anytime before graduation. The active home visit group includes all students who were visited at home and who eventually graduated from the high school. Results from this study showing increased attendance for students visited at home by teachers supports existing literature available for home visits and attendance. Several studies have shown that parent teacher home visits have been associated with improved attendance at the elementary school level (Mcknight et al., 2017; Nievar et al., 2018; Sheldon & Bee, 2018; Wright, 2018). Better attendance is also known to be associated with higher academic achievement (Kirksey, 2019; Zaff et al., 2017). This study shows that home visits conducted at the high school level also area associated with increased attendance. Previous studies have not included high schools and this study has been able to start to fill that gap.

Graduation rates in this study were also examined for students who were visited at home by teachers in comparison to the whole graduating cohort. Ex post facto data is available for students visited at home during the summer as rising freshman dating back to at least those who graduated after the 2016-2017 school year and up to the end of the 2018-2019 school year. For students visited at home by a teacher as part of the site's parent-teacher home visit program, the graduation rate exceeded that of the whole high school cohort for four out of five years, and the graduation rate for home visited students over five years in this study is 94.3 while the whole cohort rate for all five years is 91.4 (See Figure 8, p. 88). Research on factors promoting high school graduation have shown that the closeness of the relationship between parents, and their middle or high school child can predict the likelihood of graduating from high school (Jeynes, 2012; Zaff et al., 2017).It can be concluded that parent-teacher home visits are able to build the relationships closeness of relationship between the parent-teacher-student triad that impacts the

graduating from high school. This study provides strong evidence that high school home visits are associated with higher graduation rates.

Grade point averages were also analyzed for all students visited at home by the parent-teacher home visit program. While Grade point averages generally rise from 9th grade to 12th grade for this group, a comparison group such as the whole school GPA is not available. The COVID-19 crisis interrupted some data collection as alternative work arrangements and shifting priorities prevented this final piece from being available and shared by the site and then included in this study. However, analysis provides some useful insight. Research shows that when schools work to engage parents in their child's education, then the result is higher academic achievement (Jeynes, 2012; Mcknight et al., 2017; Sheldon & Bee, 2018; Zaff et al., 2017). While, it has not been clear in existing literature how parent-teacher home visits impact academic outcomes for high school students, some important inferences can be made. This study provides strong evidence that high school home visits can be attributed to better attendance, and better attendance is associated with increased academic outcomes (Kirksey, 2019; Zaff et al., 2017). Furthermore, parent-teacher home visits are reported by interviewees in this study to build stronger relationships, and a sense of trust. Bronfenbrenner (2005) argued that for ideal human development to occur, children should operate in a strong triad (in this case teachers, parents, and students). Home visited students were influenced by the home visits, and this study show they have better attendance than the whole cohort to include non-home visited students. Students who attend school more frequently are more likely to be academically successful. While there is not a comparison group for grade point average for this study, attendance is a strong predictor of academic achievement at different levels (Kirksey, 2019). Consequently, parent-teacher home

visits in this study are associated with better attendance, and attendance is positively correlated with academic achievement.

Recommendations for Further Research

Parent-teacher home visits continue to grow in scope and scale across the country, especially at the primary level (Asmar, 2017; Mcknight et al., 2017; Sheldon & Bee, 2018). However, home visit research has not been expanded to include secondary schools (Barmore, 2018). It is important to continue studying the impact of parent-teacher home visits on a variety of school levels and in different communities with a diversity of demographics and community dynamics. (Wright et al., 2018).

The High School Home Visit site in this study has been described by one of the participants as one of the most diverse schools in the country (See Table 9). The high school has a relatively large student population, and the English learner department is made-up of over ten veteran teachers with specialized training and in many cases advanced degrees. Other volunteers in this study were special education teachers who had training and experience working with families. All the volunteers for the semi-structured interviews had also volunteered to be trained by the Parent-Teacher Home Visit model, and they all had completed several home visits. While several non-home visiting teachers did complete the survey, none volunteered for the interview. This is a limitation of the study. Future studies may benefit from understanding more about why some teachers do not volunteer to participate in home visits, including concerns about safety.

This study focused on teachers and staff at the high school level. More research should be conducted to evaluate how the quality of parent-teacher home visit implementation affects student outcomes (Sheldon & Bee). Future studies should include an evaluation of how home visits are associated with academic achievement by comparing students who have been visited at

home by teachers, to all other students in the same school who were not visited at home by teachers. Showing a more specific Understanding how parent engagement works to impact relationships and outcomes also requires an authentic examination of teachers' beliefs about parents and truly engaging the parent voice (Pushor & Amendt, 2018). Future studies should survey parents and teachers and compare results since expectations and assumptions between teachers and parents are often in conflict (Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017; Hong, 2019; Soutullo, 2016; Wassell et al., 2017). In addition, parents should be included in interviews to allow an opportunity for new or more in-depth insights be shared. Results could affirm what teachers have expressed, or a discrepancy could enlighten a different issue pointing to the need to break down barriers and establish trusting relationships between teachers and parents (Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017; Hong, 2019).

Visiting the school directly and attending parent-teacher home visit meetings could enable a different perspective as well. Seeing and hearing discussions teachers are having about parents and the home visiting program could illuminate different themes or challenges that are not evident in this study. For example, some participants shared stories of discussions among the home visiting teachers about how home visits impact attendance, graduation, or academic achievement. While this study and others affirms the influence of home visits impacting student outcomes at the secondary level, it would be helpful to know more about what works and what does not work from both the teacher and parent perspective (Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017; Hong, 2019; Soutullo, 2016). Others shared brief stories about why some teachers do not want to go on home visits. While the surveys in this study capture important trends, and interviews enabled teachers to respond to open-ended questions, valuable insight could be gained by follow-up research addressing perceptions of teachers who choose to go on visits and those

who do not. Teachers who choose not to go on home visits reported feeling unsafe going into the homes of parents, and compared to teachers who do complete home visits, non-home visiting teachers believe parents are uncaring. It also would be useful to consider the past experiences of teachers, pre-service training, and deeper beliefs about parents, learning, and communities to provide a richer understanding of how teacher capacity for parent engagement is formed and influenced (Baum & Swick, 2008; Ferrara, 2017; Vesely et al., 2017). Future research should include surveys of teacher education programs and pre and post interviews with teacher candidates to gain an understanding of how intentional, parent engagement coursework and experience impacts pre-service teacher perception and capacity of working with parents. Additional pre-service research should include embedded field-training with parents prior to teaching and parent engagement at the school, home, and university classroom. There is still much to learn about how teacher beliefs about parents are formed and sustained.

It may be helpful to collect and analyze quantitative survey data with a more focused approach enable comparisons between two distinct groups of students who had been visited at home and those who had not. It would be helpful to measure outcome data immediately before the home visit in middle school, and then immediately following the home visit. Chronic absenteeism rates were only available for the whole school for a specific school year, and graduation rates shared by the Home Visit High School reflect the entire graduating cohort including both the home visited and non-home visited students. A larger sample, and increased specificity would add clarity and strength to the qualitative results (Leer & Lopez-Boo, 2018).

Finally, the last recommendation is to seek the student voice about the impact of parent-teacher home visits. Qualitative research could provide a wider range of themes and including student voices would enrich the understanding of how home visits work. Students may share

about how a relationship impacted their confidence, or willingness to attend school more frequently, or even to stay in school until graduation. Students may also share stories about how a relationship formed through parent-teacher home visits impacted their overall school experience and perhaps even their parents' outlook.

Implications for Professional Practice

Despite the availability of a large body of parent engagement research, hardly any attention has been given to the relationship of parents and teachers (Hong, 2019). This study may be helpful to any high school or school system that is considering the idea of conducting parent-teacher home visits. Results also may be helpful to university professors or administrators who would like to incorporate more parent engagement preparation into their program. Visiting parents at home has grown in favor in recent years at the primary level, and evidence shows that engaging with families through home visits is associated with positive relationships, and with improved student outcomes. Schools may be interested in understanding what it takes to start and sustain a successful home visit program and what some of the common barriers may be. High schools should be particularly interested in the results of this study since students at Home Visit High School were visited at home have better attendance and they are more likely to graduate.

Results also point to an underlying perception by non-home visitors of parents being unsupportive and of homes being unsafe. This perception contrasts sharply with teachers who had volunteered to visit homes. The perceptions of teachers who conducted home visits is largely that any pre-existing anxiety was alleviated after going on home visits, and that they gained a new and important understanding of parents, the community, and of students.

This changed mindset as a result of meeting with parents in their homes should be addressed in both university teacher preparation programs and with current teachers, and

administrators. Even though at times, teachers and parents have felt like natural enemies, this study shows that when teachers take the time to build relationships with parents, a new understanding can emerge that enables teachers and parents to impact the experiences and outcomes of students by becoming natural allies (Hong, 2019). All schools and districts, including high schools, should consider implementing parent-teacher home visits. Intentional planning and training are recommended to start the conversation. Building administrators should take the lead. An example flier that can be used at staff meetings, or for a parent engagement committee may plant the seed for further conversations (Appendix K) It is especially important to address underlying mindsets and philosophies of teachers and what research says about how working together as a team will impact student learning.

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Appendix A

Bronfenbrenner's Nested Bioecological Systems
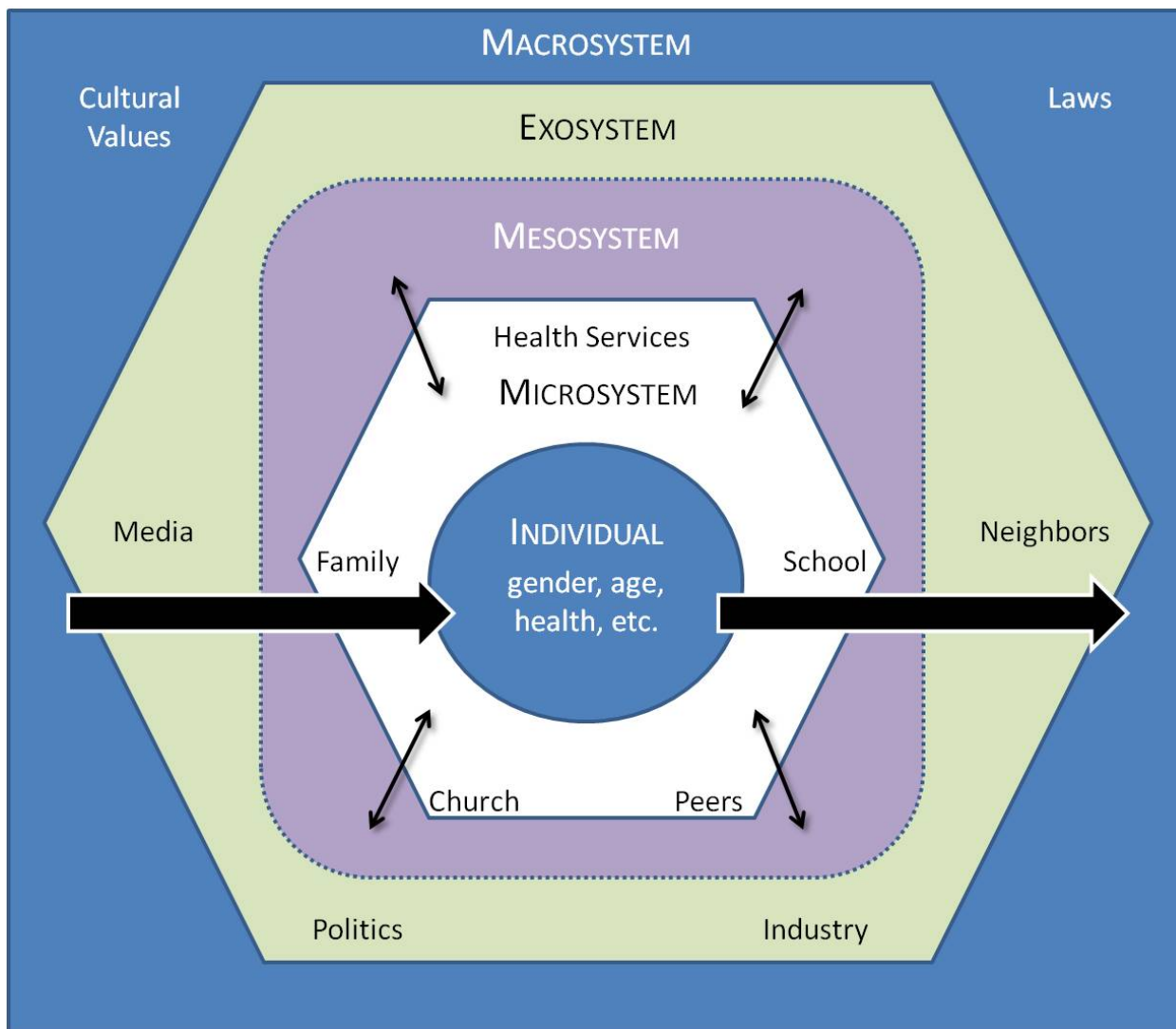
Appendix B

September 26, 2019

Nathan Soule

Dear Mr. Soule:

Our research committee has completed its review of your application to conduct the research study entitled "Teacher Home Visits: Effects on Parent Engagement and Student Outcomes" The committee has approved your research contingent on the following requirements:

1. The participation of staff member, student, or family who might be involved is completely voluntary at all times. Each participant (or parent of participating students) must be informed in writing of the scope and potential impact of their participation. You should be prepared to provide proof of their informed consent, if requested.
2. You must maintain the total anonymity of all students, staff, and schools associated with any discussions or reports. Any disclosure that may reveal the participation of student, staff member, school, or the school system must be approved in advance by the
3. Any change to the proposed research must be submitted to and approved by the
4. Any confidential conversations should take place in a private area rather than a public location, such as a coffee shop.
5. A refined list of time commitments for participants is to be emailed to

We wish you success as you carry out this study.

Sincerely,

Appendix C

Electronic Recruiting Email

Dear prospective participant:

You are invited to participate in a research project about parent-teacher home visits and parent engagement with schools. Please participate whether you have completed home visits or not. This online survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary, and responses will be kept confidential to the degree permitted by the technology being used. All information will be kept confidential and any identifying information will be withheld. Pseudonyms will be used for schools and school districts.

You have the option to not respond to any questions that you choose. Participation or non-participation will not impact your relationship with your employer. Submission of the survey will be interpreted as your informed consent to participate and that you affirm that you are at least 18 years of age.

There are risks and benefits in everything we do. The risks to the participants include a loss of time or a sense of frustration or discomfort. Your time is valuable, and you may elect to skip any questions you wish or end your participation at any time. You may also feel frustrated or uncomfortable as you examine Teacher home visits and parent engagement with schools. However, by participating in this survey, you will help to contribute to the body of research in the area of Teacher home visits and parent engagement with schools. Specifically, your information will contribute to research investigating Teacher home visits and parent engagement with schools.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please contact the principal investigator, Nathan Soule, via email at nsoule@nnu.edu or the faculty advisor, Dr. Curtis at hlcurtis@nnu.edu. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, also contact Dr. Curtis at hlcurtis@nnu.edu

Appendix D

Parent Teacher Home Visit Survey 2019 Final Live

Q2 Electronic Informed Consent

○ I affirm I am at least 18 years of age, and agree to participate in the survey. (1)

○ I do not wish to participate in the survey. (2)

Q3 Teacher-Family Relationships

Q4 How friendly are your school's families towards you?

○ Not at all friendly (1)

○ Slightly friendly (2)

○ Somewhat friendly (3)

○ Quite Friendly (4)

○ Extremely Friendly (5)

Q5 How often do you meet in person with the families of your students?

○ Almost never (1)

○ Once in awhile (2)

○ Sometimes (3)

○ Frequently (4)

○ Almost all the time (5)

Q6 In your communication with families, how caring do they seem towards you?

○ Not at all caring (1)

○ Slightly Caring (2)

○ Somewhat Caring (3)

○ Quite Caring (4)

○ Extremely Caring (5)

Q7 When you face challenges with particular students, how supportive are the families?

○ Not at all supportive (1)

○ Slightly supportive (2)

○ Somewhat supportive (3)

○ Quite supportive (4)

○ Extremely supportive (5)

Q8 At your school, how respectful are the parents towards you?

○ Not at all respectful (1)

○ Slightly respectful (2)

○ Somewhat respectful (3)

○ Quite respectful (4)

○ Extremely respectful (5)

Q9 How challenging is it to communicate with the families of your students?

○ Not challenging at all (1)

○ Slightly challenging (2)

○ Somewhat challenging (3)

○ Quite challenging (4)

○ Extremely challenging (5)

Q10 Parent Teacher Home Visits: Please respond to questions in this section even if you have NOT completed home visits.

Q11 Have you completed at least one parent teacher home visit?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Q12 Approximately how many parent teacher home visits have you completed?

○ 1-5 (4)

○ 6-10 (7)

○ 11-15 (8)

○ 16 or more (9)

Q13 How effective are parent teacher home visits for promoting positive relationships with students' parents?

○ Not effective at all (1)

○ Slightly effective (2)

○ Moderately effective (3)

○ Very effective (4)

○ Extremely effective (5)

Q14 How effective are parent teacher home visits for positively impacting students' classroom behavior.

○ Not effective at all (1)

○ Slightly effective (3)

○ Moderately effective (4)

○ Very effective (5)

○ Extremely effective (6)

Q15 How effective are parent teacher home visits for positively impacting students' academic achievement?

○ Not effective at all (1)

○ Slightly effective (2)

○ Moderately effective (3)

○ Very effective (4)

○ Extremely effective (5)

Q16 How safe do you feel when thinking about going on a parent teacher home visit?

◯ Not at all safe (1)

◯ Slightly unsafe (2)

◯ Somewhat unsafe (3)

◯ Quite safe (4)

◯ Extremely safe (5)

Q17 How reasonable is it to expect teachers to go on parent teacher home visits?

◯ Not at all reasonable (1)

◯ Slightly reasonable (2)

◯ Somewhat reasonable (4)

◯ Quite reasonable (5)

◯ Extremely reasonable (6)

Q18 How supportive are families of participating in parent teacher home visits?

◯ Not at all supportive (1)

◯ Slightly supportive (2)

◯ Somewhat supportive (3)

◯ Quite supportive (4)

◯ Extremely supportive (5)

Q19 How often do you believe important relationships formed as a result of parent teacher home visits?

◯ Almost never (1)

◯ Once in awhile (2)

◯ Sometimes (3)

◯ Frequently (4)

◯ Almost all of the time (5)

Q20 Educating All Students

Q21 How easy do you find interacting with parents at your school who are from a different cultural background than your own?

○ Not at all easy (1)

○ Slightly easy (2)

○ Somewhat easy (3)

○ Quite easy (4)

○ Extremely easy (5)

Q22 How comfortable would you be contacting a parent from a different background if his or her child struggled to get along in your class?

○ Not at all comfortable (1)

○ Slightly comfortable (2)

○ Somewhat comfortable (3)

○ Quite comfortable (4)

○ Extremely comfortable (5)

Q23 How comfortable would you be communicating with a parent who could not communicate well with the school because his or her home language was different?

○ Not at all comfortable (1)

○ Slightly comfortable (2)

○ Somewhat comfortable (3)

○ Quite comfortable (4)

○ Extremely comfortable (5)

Q24 Teaching Efficacy

Q25 How confident are you that you can help your school's most challenging students to learn?

○ Not at all confident (1)

○ Slightly confident (2)

○ Somewhat confident (3)

○ Quite confident (4)

○ Extremely confident (5)

Q26 If parents were upset about something in your class, how confident are you that you could have a productive conversation with this parent?

○ Not at all confident (1)

○ Slightly confident (2)

○ Somewhat confident (3)

○ Quite confident (4)

○ Extremely confident (5)

Q27 How effective do you think you are at managing particularly disruptive students?

○ Not effective at all (1)

○ Slightly effective (2)

○ Moderately effective (3)

○ Very effective (4)

○ Extremely effective (5)

28 How confident are you that you can engage students who are typically not motivated?

○ Not at all confident (1)

○ Slightly confident (2)

○ Somewhat confident (3)

○ Quite confident (4)

○ Extremely confident (5)

Q29 Roles and Responsibilities

Q30 Many different factors play a role in school success. Each statement below represents something that may contribute to children's success in school. Please indicate who you think is primarily responsible for each factor by checking the appropriate box. If you do not think an item is important for school success, please check "N/A."

	Primarily parents (1)	Primarily schools (2)	Primarily children (3)	N/A (4)
Make sure that the children understand what is being taught (1)	○	○	○	○
Ensure children have good relationships with their peers (2)	○	○	○	○
Make time for doing fun activities that are unrelated to schoolwork (3)	○	○	○	○
Make sure that the children have an adult to talk to at school (4)	○	○	○	○
Identify what children are most interested in learning (6)	○	○	○	○
Make sure that children have enough time set aside to do all of their school-related work (7)	○	○	○	○
Help children deal with their emotions appropriately (8)	○	○	○	○

Ensure good communication between home and school (9)	○	○	○	○
Call attention to decisions about learning that do not seem to be in the best interest of the children (10)	○	○	○	○
Make sure children are supported to do their best in school (11)	○	○	○	○

Q31 Other Information

Q32 For how many years have you taught?

○ Less than 1 year (1)

○ 1-2 years (2)

○ 3-5 years (3)

○ 6-10 years (4)

○ 11 or more years (5)

Q33 What is your gender

○ Male (1)

○ Female (2)

○ Other (4)

○ Wish not to respond (5)

Q34 What is your race or ethnicity?

○ American Indian or Alaska Native (1)

○ Asian (2)

○ Black or African American (3)

○ Hispanic or Latino (4)

○ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (5)

○ White (6)

○ Two or more races/ethnicities (7)

○ Other (8)

○ Wish not to respond (9)

Q35 In which decade were you born?

○ 1940-1949 (1)

○ 1950-59 (2)

○ 1960-69 (3)

○ 1970-79 (4)

○ 1980-89 (5)

○ 1990-99 (6)

Q36 Please select your highest level of education completed.

○ Graduated high school (1)

○ Less than 2 years of college (2)

○ 2 Years of college (3)

○ Graduated from a 4-year college (4)

○ Masters Degree (5)

○ Doctoral degree (14)

Q37 Follow-up Interview Invitation. Your input is valuable whether you have or have NOT completed a parent teacher home visit.

Q38 I am available to participate in a brief semi-structured interview to answer additional questions related to home visits.

○ Yes, I am interested (1)

○ No, I am not interested (2)

Q39 Please provide your email address to allow the researcher to schedule an interview at your convenience.

_____

Appendix E

Semi-Structured Interview Questions - Teacher Home Visits

<u>Research Question #2: Home Visit Barriers</u>
1. Approximately how many home visits have you made?
2. Did you or your colleagues ever feel apprehensive about going on your first home visit? What were the concerns?
3. What assumptions did you have before you went on your first home visit?
4. How did that change?
5. In what ways did making a home visit teach you something about students that you did not know?
6. Share your fears or concerns you may have had about home visits? Were they validated? What changed?
7. Describe your training in college or your teacher preparation program for parent engagement? Teacher home visits?
8. Were you adequately trained or prepared? What are some ways you could have been more prepared for partnering with parents and doing home visits?

<u>Research Question #1: How Home Visits Impact Relationships</u>
9. How did the home visit experience change your thoughts and feelings about parents of the children you work with? How? How did that affect the way you see their children?
10. How has making home visits and building relationships affected the way you feel about teaching in general? Has the experience affected your satisfaction with teaching? What about your likelihood to remain in the teaching profession?
11. What have you learned about families through home visits? What surprised you? Have you made any lasting connections as a result of relationships formed during home visits?
12. What have you learned about students whose homes you visited?
13. Have your home visits affected your confidence in communicating with parents? How did the relationship formed during the home visit affect your ability to communicate with parents?
14. How was trust built during the teacher home visit? In what ways?
15. Can you describe how teacher home visits different from a traditional parent-teacher conference in terms of building relationships?
16. What kind of feedback did you get from parents during and after home visits? What would they tell us about teacher home visits?
17. Why did you decide to do home visits? Was it better than expected? Worse? Different?
18. How did your perspective about parents change after your first home visit?

<u>Research Question #3: Student Outcomes</u>

19. How did what you learn help you to teach your students more effectively?
20. Have you observed an increase in attendance for students through home visits?
21. What about an increase in grades?
22. Do you believe the relationships formed through teacher home visits have helped students stay in school and graduate? How so?

Appendix F

National Institutes of Health Informed Consent Form

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Nathan Soule** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 01/21/2018.

Certification Number: 2608211.

Appendix G

Informed Consent Form

A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Nathan Soule, PhDc, in the Department of Graduate Education at Northwest Nazarene University is conducting a research study related to the impact of teacher home visits on perceptions of family engagement systems and relationships between teachers and parents. We appreciate your involvement in helping us investigate how to better serve and meet the needs of Northwest Nazarene University students.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a healthy volunteer, over the age of 18.

B. PROCEDURES

If you agree to be in the study, the following will occur:

1. You will be asked to sign an Informed Consent Form, volunteering to participate in the study.

2. You will complete a twenty-five-question electronic survey before your first teacher home visit.

3. You will meet with the primary researcher to answer a set of interview questions and engage in a discussion about your teacher home visit and your views of working with families an family engagement systems. This discussion will be audio recorded and is expected to last approximately 30-45 minutes.

4. You will answer a set of demographic questions at the end of the electronic survey

5. You will be asked to read a debriefing statement at the conclusion of the interview.

6. You will be asked to reply to an email at the conclusion of the study asking you to confirm the data that was gathered during the research process.

These procedures will be competed at a location mutually decided upon by the participant and principal investigator and will take a total time of about 90 minutes.

C. RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

1. Some of the discussion questions may make you uncomfortable or upset, but you are free to decline to answer any questions you do not wish to answer or to stop participation at any time.

2. For this research project, the researchers are requesting demographic information. Due to the make-up of Virginia's population, the combined answers to these questions may make an individual person identifiable. The researchers will make every effort to protect your confidentiality. However, if you are uncomfortable answering any of these questions, you may leave them blank.

3. Confidentiality: Participation in research may involve a loss of privacy; however, your records will be handled as confidentially as possible. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications that may result from this study. All data from notes and digital recordings will be kept in a secure, password-protected folder on the principal investigator's school computer. In compliance with the Federalwide Assurance Code, data from this study will be kept for three years, after which all data from the study will be destroyed (45 CFR 46.117).

4. Only the primary researcher and the research supervisor will be privy to data from this study. As researchers, both parties are bound to keep data as secure and confidential as possible.

D. BENEFITS
There will be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study. However, the information you provide may help educators to better understand the impact of teacher home visits.

E. PAYMENTS
There are no payments for participating in this study.

F. QUESTIONS
If you have questions or concerns about participation in this study, you should first talk with the investigator. Nathan Soule can be contacted via email at nsoule@nnu.edu, via telephone at xxx-xxx-xxx or by writing: Nathan Soule (at address)

Should you feel distressed due to participation in this, you should contact your own health care provider.

G. CONSENT
You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. You are free to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point. Your decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will have no influence on your present or future status as a student at Northwest Nazarene University.

I give my consent to participate in this study:

_____   _____
Signature of Study Participant   **Date**

I give my consent for the interview and discussion to be audio recorded in this study:

_____   _____
Signature of Study Participant   **Date**

I give my consent for direct quotes to be used in this study:

_____   _____
Signature of Study Participant   **Date**

_____   _____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   **Date**

THE NORTHWEST NAZARENE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH REVIEW COMMITTE HAS REVIEWED THIS PROJECT FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH

Appendix H

Phone Script to Invite semi-structured interview participants

Researcher: Hello, this is Nathan Soule. I'm the guy writing the dissertation and conducting research about teacher home visits. You agreed to participate by completing the survey and expressing an interest in the next part: semi-structured interviews.

If you agree, then I'd like to invite you to either talk over the phone, or to meet in person. Do you have a preference? This interview may take between 30 and 45 minutes. Also, I would like permission to audio record our conversation which will help me to analyze our conversation. All of our conversations will be confidential.

If your statements are included in my research, a pseudonym will be used. When the interviews are completed and analyzed, I will follow up with you to be sure my information reflects your understanding of what was said. Are you interested? If so, let's schedule a day and a time now.
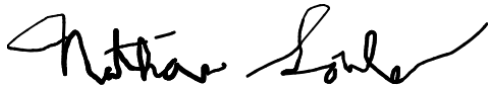
Appendix I

Debrief Statement

Thank you for participating in this study.

I will be analyzing the data over the next several weeks. After organizing and reviewing data, I will email you and ask for your feedback. My main purpose in following up is to ensure that results accurately reflect our focus group discussion and your thoughts. This study will conclude by April 1st, 2020.

If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact Nathan Soule via email at nsoule@nnu.edu, or via cellphone at:

Thank you again for participating!

Nathan Soule
Doctoral Student
Northwest Nazarene University
IRB Application#

Appendix J

Member Checking Email

Date: February, 20th, 2020
Dear [Participant Name]
This is a follow-up to your semi-structured interview. Thank you for your participation in my study entitled *Transitional High School Parent-Teacher Home Visits: Effects on Parent Engagement and Student Outcomes.* I hope you are having a great school year. The purpose of this email is to share some of the themes that emerged as a result of our interview (see below). Please review these statements and let me know if they accurately reflect the conversation. If you have any suggestions for modifications, or any questions, please let me know by Monday, March 2nd, 2020.

The goal of this study was to examine research questions related to how and why parents engage in schools, and how teacher home visits contribute to relationships between teachers and parents and student outcomes.
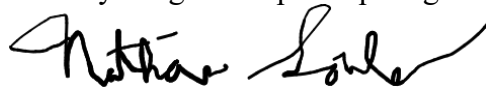The research questions for this study were:
1. How do high school teachers' perceptions of parent-teacher home visits affect teacher relationships with parents and students?
2. What are the perceived barriers to effective home visits for teachers?
3. How do home visits for rising high school students impact student academic outcomes, attendance, and behavior?

Many themes were evident from the interviews. After reading and coding transcripts, results show that teacher home visits contribute to positive relationships and other outcomes. Please review the following themes that emerged from our interview:

[Themes varied by participant]

If these ideas do not reflect your memory of the discussions, or your experiences, please reply to this email, or contact me at the number below. Thank you again for your support with this dissertation study.

Thank you again for participating!

Nathan Soule
Doctoral Student
Northwest Nazarene University
IRB Application#

Appendix K

Parents and Teachers: The Dream Team!

Parents and teachers have the same goal: to provide the best educational experience for children.

Research tells us that both parents and teachers provide valuable insights about their children. Working together creates optimal experience for students. When we connect parents and teachers, students thrive!

Why is the parent-teacher relationship so important?
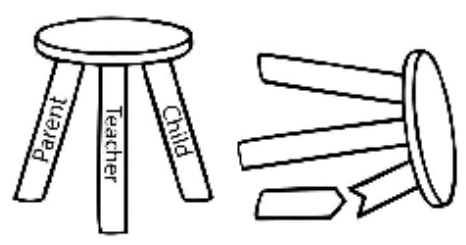
Three-Legged Stool

Students are most successful when teachers and parents work together in a reciprocal relationship. Imagine a three-legged stool: if one leg is neglected, the stool cannot stand.

The Possibilities!

When parents and teachers build relationships built on trust, empathy, and reciprocity, the school experience will be more positive for everyone, and student well-being and school success will be maximized.