St. Catherine University

SOPHIA

5-2014

The Benefits of Parent-School Partnerships: A Cooperative Approach to Increase Student Learning & Achievement

Karen Lambiase
St. Catherine University

Follow this and additional works at: https://sophia.stkate.edu/maed

Part of the Curriculum and Instruction Commons

Recommended Citation

The Benefits of Parent-School Partnerships:
A Cooperative Approach to Increase Student Learning & Achievement

An Action Research Report

By Karen Lambiase

-

The Benefits of Parent-School Partnerships:

A Cooperative Approach to Increase Student Learning & Achievement

Submitted on May 23, 2014
in fulfillment of final requirements for the MAED degree
St. Catherine University
St. Paul, Minnesota

Benefits of Parent-School Partnerships

Advisor: Amanda Perna _____   Date: _____

Abstract

This action research study was conducted at a rural Montana public school and included students in the first through third grade and their parent participants. The study investigated the ways that parent participation, through parent-school partnerships, could benefit student learning and achievement. The study used a combination of student surveys and interviews, while the parents completed an online survey and questionnaire. The results of the study focused on students' perceptions of their parents' involvement in their educational experience as well as primary ways that parents communicate with their child's school, teachers, and their involvement with their child in and out of school. Further investigation of this study would focus on specific ways parents are involved in their child's educational experience and observing and documenting parent-student involvement through a school-hosted program during a school day.

Benefits of Parent-School Partnerships

Of the multiple factors that contribute to a child's academic success, the parent–school partnership is an important one. Research during the late 1970s focused on how parent involvement during the elementary school years contributes to their child's academic success and positive attitude. There is less research in the area of parent-school partnerships to support evidence of the benefits of the partnerships that can exist between parents and their child's school. This is partly due to the subjective nature of action research where there are varying degrees of attitudes and perceptions with regard to the benefits that parental involvement poses to a child's academic achievement and attitude. It has been hard to evaluate whether these partnerships are really a benefit to student learning. The study is also a challenge because of the dynamic relationships between parents-children-teachers, and because so many different issues can arise or be present in the child-parent relationship before the child ever begins school. However, research has been conducted over the last decades that points to benefits when parents are active in or at least well-informed about their child's educational experience. The single most important factor in bridging the gap between school and home is parent participation. Studies have found (Henderson & Mapp, 2002) that "students with involved parents earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs; are promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits; attend school regularly; have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school; and graduate and go on to postsecondary education."

The goal of this report is to bring an awareness to the important role that parents play when they are engaged in their child's education. It will also outline the parent benefits and how those benefits can produce positive results in a student through their school years and into adulthood. This is a topic that can affect all areas of education whether it is the methodology of teaching, the teacher themselves, the school, the administration, sports programs or other after-school

opportunities. From a parent's perspective, they will want to know what to do, how much time it will take, and others will want to know ways they can be directly involved. Some parents cannot or do not want to be involved in their child's education. For those students, we will address how the work of active partnerships, once in place, can benefit even these students.

The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 collected data, and the findings suggested that parental involvement does not independently improve children's learning, but some involvement activities do prevent behavioral problems. Since the Reagan administration's 1986 Goals 2000: Educate America Act, parent-school involvement has been an issue that remains an important inclusion in school programs across the country. The initiatives vary from state to state or school to school, but are especially common in urban and city schools. In cities like Chicago, where a large percentage of children come from low-income households, the need for parent-school partnerships is critical to improve both behavior and academics.

In an article written in 2005 (Domina, pg. 233), it points out that parent involvement affects the sociology of education as well as children's cognitive development and behavioral problems. Domina's study was based on the same survey done in 1979, but he found additionally that there are three main things that influence children's outcomes in education. Parental involvement socializes, generates social control, and gives parents access to insider information (2005). As recently as 2008, a study called "Building Bridges Between Households and Schools Through Parent Involvement" was conducted (Peterson, 2008). Like Domina, the findings similarly mentioned that parents who participate in schools are empowered because they can serve as partners in problem-solving, helping design, implement, and evaluate teaching-learning experiences and new services and support strategies. As a result of the commitment and involvement of parents, problems and solutions change.

When the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) was founded in 1897, its goal was to provide a way for parents -mostly mothers at that time- to advocate on behalf of their child. This is much like the principles that Peterson and Domina mention. Since the formation of the National PTA in 1970, the organization of parents and teachers have worked together to create Kindergarten classes, improve child labor laws, establish lunch programs, include arts in education, and increase school safety. Currently the PTA supports the Family Engagement in Education Act that was introduced in the U.S. Congress in 2011. They also stand behind the Connect for Respect initiative- a series of anti-bullying discussions that are supported by the community- and their self-published "Parent Guides on the Common Core State Standards for English and Math, grades K–12 in English and Spanish."

Deciding that research on this issue would be important became clear after reading about the types of research that could be conducted (Hendricks, 2013). I chose participatory action research because it is a social, collaborative process that investigates reality so that it can be changed. Thinking about what issue facing education could be investigated in its current state and then changed, I chose parent-school partnerships. After writing a short research paper titled *The Impact of Parent-School Partnerships on a Child's Educational Experience*, I found that an important educational issue was the weak partnerships that were in place or lacking in schools of all kind. I have always valued the parent- teacher partnerships that I maintained while being a lead teacher.

The setting of this study takes place in a rural Montana school. There are 61 students (Pre-K through grade 12) and sixteen teachers/administrators. The average class size is eight students. The amount of parent participation, as it appears through empirical evidence, is currently minimal. Half of the students that attend the school are attending as "out of district" students and

most of the parents work full time day shifts. Currently parents can participate - by attending

parent-teacher conferences, sporting events, and substitute teaching. The town population where

school is located is 220. The population and square mileage of areas served by the school is three

times the population and area where the school is located. The median income was $40,376 in

2011. The students that I chose to study in this project were the sixteen students in the first

through third grade and 13% of their parents who agreed to participate in the survey. All of the

students are between the ages of six and eight years old and it is divided equally between girls

and boys. The mean age of the students is *m=7.*

My role in the school is as a music specialist and elementary aid- both are part-time

positions. This is my first year in this position and at this school. The teacher of the eight (8)

first-grade students is a new teacher this year. In January of this year, there was a major staff

change and the pre-kindergarten/ kindergarten teacher became the second-third grade teacher.

Despite these transitions, my role and position has remained the same throughout the school

year. Communication throughout the school could be improved despite the context of a small

environment.

<div align="center">Description of Research Process</div>

I submitted my action plan proposal through the Mentor Institutional Research Board (IRB)

at St. Catherine University and received approval to conduct my study. Throughout the research,

parents and students were interviewed and surveyed separately. The students took part in an

initial survey (See Appendix A), interview (See Appendix D), and attitude scale (See Appendix

E). All of the data collected from students was recorded and charted through Google Forms.

Students were de-identified and their names were replaced with a number. Parents participated

in an initial survey and questionnaire, both which were available online through Google Drive.

The recorded parent responses were anonymous, so there was no way of my knowing which parents had completed either the survey or questionnaire.

Prior to the research, a letter (See Appendix J) was presented to parents of every student that could potentially be in the study. The letter outlined the overview of the study and its benefits. A separate letter (See Appendix I) also addressed parents and was signed and returned by those choosing to be part of the study. The initial data collection at the beginning of the study was an online survey for students (See Appendix A) and an online survey for their respective parents (See Appendix B). The survey that I used addressed the current level of parent participation, listed choices of ways those parents are currently participating, and generated responses of the attitude and academics associated with participation. The questions on both surveys were a combination of short answer, multiple choice, and paragraph-style.

To compare results of the study to student academic success, data was gathered from three quarters of the current school year's report cards (See Appendices F, G, H). These records were approved by the superintendent of my school and acquired through the secretary in the main office. The definition of "student academic success" was based on a rubric that measures Common Core standards. Results recorded as a "3" for any of the categories were defined as "meeting grade-level standards" and results recorded as a "4" were defined as "exceeding the grade-level standards." It is these two ratings that supported whether a student was achieving academic success and was used to analyze results. The report cards used can be found in the appendices in their template form.

Studies show that in order for a genuine and successful partnership to exist between parents and schools, the power needs to be shared. Joyce L. Esptein, director of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships and the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS),

finds that communication is the start of parent engagement. She also categorized six types of parental involvement: communication, parenting methods, volunteering, learning at home, community collaboration, and decision-making. For each of these types of involvement, the results are unique and also shows parents how many different ways they can positively influence and support their child in education. A piece in *Family Relations* (Oyserman, Brickman & Rhodes, 2007), says that the positive influence of parent-school involvement is through the message it sends. Furthermore, "daily behaviors become imbued with meaning when they are linked to the future, especially self-relevant goals for the future, such as graduating from high school or going to college."

A recent newsletter from the National Educators Association (NEA, 2013) contained an article that outlined ideas for engaging parents. In it, teachers contributed the ways in which they currently involve parents in their students' learning. Among these ideas were, texting to parents, sharing school stories through classroom websites, enticing parents into the school through district-wide programs, and visiting parents directly on "home visits." Visiting families, if they are willing, is a great way to communicate with parents, see their parenting skills, and observe ways that the child might be learning at home. Sending home a survey to parents about their habits in the home can give teachers and schools a better idea of what is taking place outside of school.

For this study, shortly after collecting each segment of the data, I analyzed it first by using the "summary of responses" through Google Drive. Through this tool, I was able to record the student and parent responses to create a baseline of parents' and students' perception and attitudes of parental involvement, which showed how much parents believe that they are involved and students' perceptions of their involvement (See Appendices A and B). I was able to

make correlations between the data collected from the students and the data collected from the parents.

After the initial data collection and analysis, I interviewed all of the students. Over the course of several weeks, I asked the interview questions to each student one-on-one in a semi-structured interview format (See Appendix C). I sent a postcard through the mail reminding parents about the study and a link to the online questionnaire (See Appendix D). Within week after the postcard was sent, one parent (0.6%) participated in the online questionnaire through Google Drive that used a combination of checklists and questions, with room for open-ended responses. The responses from all three data collection methods, from both the parents and students, were correlated between academic achievement and parent participation, as well as a correlation between student attitude and parent perceptions of their child's educational experience.

I charted the information I gathered from the survey and compared it to the data I received from the interview process. My highest priority was analyzing the data from the students since I had only a total of three responses from parents. The way I conducted my research and the feedback I received was a learning experience for me. I initially felt that having the parents participate through an online medium was the best way. After seeing the lack of responses from parents, it might have been better to present them with a hard copy of the survey and questionnaire and then recorded the data manually myself. In an effort to increase parent responses, I met with both the first-grade and second/third-grade classroom teachers to find out the most effective ways they communicate with parents. Their feedback and suggestions were very helpful and included calling certain parents, putting the information again in their take-home folders, and suggested several parents who are frequent classroom participants. It was also

suggested that I send correspondence to parents with a self-addressed-stamped-envelope. That might have been the best way for this group of parents.

We can see the many benefits that can result when schools are willing to welcome parents into a partnership for children's education. Whether the parent is volunteering, a paraprofessional within the school, or part of a school-related committee, their influence and presence will naturally increase more parent involvement.

The Harvard Family Research Project published a document which explains the core components of systematic family engagement (Westmoreland, Rosenberg, Lopez, & Weiss, 2009). At the top of the list, a shared vision is the most important component. Clear and consistent communication between schools and parents and shared responsibilities and power support this point. Specifically, it says, "school districts move beyond the traditional notion of family engagement, which focuses on parents attending events at the school, to recognizing that sometimes schools cannot "see," but can still support, one of the most important parts of family engagement: what happens at home." Another component is identifying purposeful connections to learning. This is in line with what Oyserman, Brickman, and Rhodes (2007) found in their clinical trial of schools with low parent school involvement. They theorized that "highly involved parents provide youth with a sense that doing well in school is possible for them and therefore is worth investing in and that becoming offtrack can be avoided via engagement with school." The other components tag investments in high quality programming and staff, robust communications systems, and evaluation for accountability and continuous learning as the final parts of systematic family engagement.

In the book, *Beyond the Bake Sale* (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007), they suggest forming an action team as the first step in getting started with family-school

partnerships. On an action team, participants can listen to ideas, organize into committees based on priorities, develop a one-year plan including funding, plan programs, and publicize activities and team meetings. Once the action team is in place, relationships between parents, teachers, administrators, and members of the community can develop. The key to developing relationships is by welcoming parents, honoring their participation, and connecting parents through focus on their children and their learning. Showing parents that staff care about their children can come in the form of encouraging parents to visit their child's classroom or through home visits. School psychologists can fill an important role in promoting family-school partnerships and facilitate the involvement of parents. They can also bring together school administrations and teachers with the parents of students. In Gary Hornby's book, *Parental Involvement in Childhood Education,* he says that in order for effective partnerships to exist between teachers and parents, there must be trust, respect, competence, commitment, equality, and advocacy. Looking beyond the parent-school partnerships, we see that these characteristics will be the same ones that will be passed onto the students and they will learn by watching adults as their example. He says, "rapport between parents and teachers can be built and fostered through appropriate structuring of the parent-teacher meetings, and reviews of the meeting completed by teachers after such meetings,

including discussion with the children, collaboration with colleagues, and plans for following up to allow for the best possible outcome" (Hornby, 2011).

The final method of data collection was an attitude scale survey (See Appendix E) that all sixteen students completed. This attitude scale had closed-ended questions and was used to focus on how students felt about the ways their parents participated in their educational experience (Hendricks, 2013).

Analysis of Data

At the beginning of the study, I chose a group of students and their respective parents to invite into the study. I originally hoped to include the entire 61 students in the school (Pre-Kindergarten through grade 12), but reduced the participants to those in the first through third grade. A parent notification letter was addressed to every parent outlining in detail the specifics of the study with the choice to opt out if they did not want their child in the study. I did not receive any opt-out forms back; therefore, all sixteen students had permission to be in the study. I read the student notification letter to each student, stopping intermittently to further clarify the purpose and process of the study. I gave each student a copy to sign and received all signatures. One student in particular was curious to know why I wanted to survey them and why I was interested in how much their parents participated. I explained that if I found that certain participatory actions benefitted their learning and success in school, then I and other teachers could use that information to make school a better experience for everyone. The student expressed that they thought that was a good idea!

Each week, I implemented a different part of the data collection process. Starting with student and parent surveys, I then moved to more specific data by conducting interviews with students and gathering additional information from parents in the form of a questionnaire. An attitude survey was given to students toward the end of the study to gauge students' feelings on certain aspects of parent participation and of school. The information gained through the attitude survey was compared to the answers given in the surveys and interviews to determine whether any correlations existed between the data collected. The complete collection of data was used to determine the results of parent participation on student academic achievement and attitude.

The initial student (See Appendix B) and parent surveys (See Appendix A) asked basic questions pertaining to parent participation, types of participation, and feelings on the level of participation that parents gave. The initial survey saw all sixteen students respond to the questions. Additionally, two parents took the initial survey. After I reviewed the results of the initial surveys, I met with every student for a brief interview (See Appendix C) to expand on some of the basic questions that I asked in the survey. For parents, I generated a questionnaire (See Appendix D) that asked questions about their involvement with their child outside of school and at school. At the end of the study, I gave an attitude scale to the students to pinpoint the effects that parent participation had on them (See Appendix E). Based on the low response rate of parents, I then sent out a postcard reminding them of the study and included the link to the questionnaire. The postcard generated only one additional parent response.

I increased validity in my study through truth-value validity, applicability/transferability, and catalytic validity. Through accurate data recording, member checks, and persistent and prolonged observation truth-value validity was established. I realized that due to the political nature of a small school in a small town, it was difficult to maintain democratic validity. The students and parents of the school were, however, the main stakeholders in the study.

The results of the initial student survey showed that 80% of students said they talk about school with a parent because the parents asks them about school, while 13% of students surveyed said they talk about school with a parent because the student brings it up. Only 7% of students said that they do not talk about school with a parent because it doesn't come up. Of the affirmative responses, 93% of students reported on the initial survey that their parent visits the school or comes to school events. On that same topic, only 7% of students said that their parents do not visit the school or come to school events. Students reported that in conversations with

their parents, homework, lunch, what they did at school, peer social interactions, and general

school inquiry were the topics they talked about. When asked "What events do [your parents]

attend?" students listed the annual school Carnival, school plays, meetings/ parent-teacher

conferences, in-school visits, and academic success events- such as the book fair, fieldtrips, and

track meets.

I asked the last question of the initial student survey, relating to communication between

school and home, to increase the response rate of the parents in this study. All students

responded that three things were the way communication came home from school: notes, their

bookbags, and their take-home folders. Gathering this information early in the study was

intended to increase parent participation. It is unclear whether my correspondence made the

journey from school to students' homes based on the low number of parents who chose to be

participants in this study, even though I sent the information through the students' take-home

folders.

Questions	"Yes," frequency (%)	"No," frequency (%)
Do you talk to another adult/ Mom/Dad about school?	15 (94%)	1 (6%)
Does Mom/ Dad/ another adult you are close to visit school or come to events?	15 (94%)	1 (6%)
Does your teacher or someone at school ever speak to your parent(s) or send notes home?	11 (69%)	5 (31%)

Figure 1. Results of Initial Student Survey.

Through the student interview, students met individually to answer open-ended questions

about specific ways their parents participated, the impacts parent participation had on them, and

interactions between they and their parents. The results of the interview found that only 20% of

students perceived their parents as patient when working with them on school-related

assignments. Eighty percent (80%) of students perceived their parents as only somewhat or a

little patient when working with them on school-related assignments. Despite the fact that most

of the students' views of their parents pointed to lack of patience when helping them with

assignments, 50% of students interviewed said that they did better when their parents helped

them on homework or assignments. Forty percent (40%) of students felt that they did about the

same regardless of having their parents help them with homework and assignments. The largest

group of affirmative responses from the student interviews was 90%. Those responses indicated

that students felt their parents thought that they were "good students." Only 10% of those

interviewed did not know if their parents perceived them as "good students."

Student Theme 1- Students listed the reasons why the felt they are "good" students and included

being helpful, doing one's best, completing assignments, and getting homework done.

Student Theme 2- Students who felt their parents perceived them as "good" students was

attributed to feedback from parent-teacher conferences, parent directly telling the student, by

reviewing students' corrected papers and assignments, and positive attitude following the school

day.

The attitude scale was given to students at the end of the study (Appendix E). The students

sat at the computer and submitted chosen answers on their own after I read each statement. I told

each student that this was the last piece of information I was collecting from them before I wrote

my final study. Similar to the beginning of the study, a student asked what I was going to do with

my research. I explained that I was going to use the information to make teaching and learning a

better experience for everyone through what I found out. She said, "That's really cool!"

Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My parents come to every school and event activity.	50%	38%	13%	0%
I invite my parents to school events or activities.	50%	50%	0%	0%
My parents help me with homework or school projects.	25%	63%	13%	0%
My parents think it's important that I do	63%	25%	13%	0%

well at school.				
Doing well in school will help me do well in other things.	44%	25%	19%	13%
I try to do my best in school so my parents are happy/ pleased.	50%	38%	6%	6%
Doing well in school makes me feel good.	56%	44%	0%	0%

Figure 2: Student Attitude Survey Results.

The results of the initial parent survey (Appendix B), available online, was completed by

two parents at the start of the study in response to the Information and Consent Form that was

sent home to parents in the students' take-home folders. The take-home folders contain the

students' homework, in addition to any important school-to-home correspondence. Although

seven parents signed and returned the consent form indicating that they wanted to participate in

the study, only two parents submitted responses through the online survey in Google Drive,

which was emailed to those parents in a link. The second data collection method from parents

was through an online questionnaire and was accompanied by a cover letter asking for their

timely contribution of responses. The questionnaire generated only one additional response after

a week from when the letter and the link to the questionnaire was sent out. Based on those two

surveys, several themes appeared in parent responses.

Parent Theme 1- Parents involved themselves in their child's educational experience by routine

conversation about school, direct communication with the child's teacher, attendance at school

events, working with their child on homework, and meetings with their child's teacher.

Parent Theme 2- Parents felt the most important aspect of their child's education was the child's

relationship with the teacher and parent-teacher communication.

Parent Theme 3- Both parents unanimously agreed that a parent's participation is extremely

important in their child's educational experience.

By reviewing the scores on all of the 1ˢᵗ through 3ʳᵈ grade report cards and charting the

information, I was able to determine the average that a whole class was meeting or exceeding the

grade level standard. Table 2 shows the average by grade.

Grade	Frequency	% "Meeting grade-level standards" (3s)	% "Exceeding grade-level standards" (4s)
1ˢᵗ grade	8	39%	3 %
2ⁿᵈ grade	3	34%	7%
3ʳᵈ grade	5	38%	8%

Figure 3: Average of a Whole Class Meeting or Exceeding their Grade-Level Standard.

The results were inconclusive as to whether the grades were a direct result of parent participation

due to low level of parent responses on either the initial parent survey or the parent

questionnaire. A future study might focus on parents working on homework, projects, and

assignments with their child within the school day. With both the parent and child participating,

there would be a way to directly correlate whether the student is seeing the benefits of their

parent's participation. Students seemed to believe that their parents would be happy/ pleased by

their success in school and 100% agreed that doing well in school made them feel good.

However, only 69% of students surveyed thought that doing well in school would help them do

well in other things, such as sports, the future, college, and social situations.

The results of the study did not indicate any connection between student attitude and

academic success. Of the 69% of students who said they thought that doing well in school would

help them do well in other things, most also achieved high marks in non-academic classes such

as Physical Education, Music, Library, and Art. This indicates that the students' attitude about

core academic classes- such as reading, mathematics, writing, social studies, and science- carries

over to additional curricular classes.

Specifically, students cited the specific ways that their parents help them with regard to

school-related assignments and projects. According to the students in this research project, the

ways that parents help their children fell into four distinct categories: math, reading, general

homework, and general assistance. Of the sixteen students interviewed, 69% could detail the

ways their parents helped them with regard to school. The remaining 21% did not verbalize the

ways their parents helped them, but expressed their feelings on whether their parents were

helpful, patient, and understanding (Figure 5).

Subject/ Content	Frequency (out of 11 students)	% of responses
Math help	3	27%
Reading Help	3	27%
Homework Help	1	1%
General Academic Assistance	4	36%

Figure 4: Specific Ways Parents Helped Their Student (according to students).

The table below (Figure 4) shows the results of student perceptions of parents' attitude when
helping with school-related assignments.

	Frequency	Yes	No	Sometimes
Patient	11	55%	18%	27%
Understanding	11	18%	27%	55%
Helpful	11	81%	0%	19%

Figure 5: Student Perceptions of Parents' Attitude When Helping Them with School-Related
Assignments.

Based on the results of the data in above two tables (Figures 4 & 5), regardless of their parents'

attitudes during school-related assignments, students still received help from their parents with their

schoolwork.

There is no correlation made between the parents' participation with their child in school-related

assignments or projects and their participation in this study. The results and responses could be related to

a number of factors, including parent commitments, parent perception of their child's assignments or

projects, and their personal investment in their child' education.

Action Plan

It is important to understand how this research will impact my teaching practice and student learning. The implications of parent-school partnerships are many, but this study had two main focuses. The first was to determine how increased parent participation benefits student academic achievement. The second part of the study concurrently assessed whether parent participation affected the student attitude toward school and learning in this setting. Knowing ways to bridge the communication gap between parents and the school is the most important aspect of establishing successful partnerships and requires minimal time commitment from parents, but reaps great rewards. Treating parents as equals and respecting their opinions and questions is a great way for teachers and districts to understand how to tackle problems in education and find appropriate solutions. Parents who have more time can volunteer at their child's school, head parent-school committees, and be liaisons to the local community, who can help families in ways that schools might not be able to. Involving the community broadens the variety of professionals and resources that could be available to schools and families. Communities can also offer programs that support schools and families, but also provide skills that students can use long into their futures.

The results of this study will be useful in different contexts and with different individuals, therefore applicability and transferability were achieved. Catalytic validity was also established because the results of this study has changed my view on parent participation outside of school and will transform my teaching practice in the future to accommodate student learning within context of this study.

From reading their child's homework assignments to attending school open houses, there are many ways parents can increase their involvement. Understanding what is happening in the

classroom can come in the way of reading a class website, e-mails from a teacher, or direct face-to-face meetings with teachers or administrators. Once parents are empowered, they feel more confident to ask questions, they are more comfortable in attending school-sponsored activities, and they will want to create partnerships that support their child, their family, and their community.

Based on the results of those surveyed, both from a student's and parent's perspective, and student grades, the study determined that students who feel that education is important to their future and who have parent participation with regard to homework and assignments, positively affects student academic achievement as well as student attitude. If students feel that their parents are invested and interested in their schooling, they may be more likely to feel positive about their school experience and strive to do better in their academics. When certain opportunities present themselves to parents, in order to increase their participation, will parents take advantage of those opportunities?

A goal of the study was to determine the best and most effective ways that parents can involve themselves. As a teacher, the events that are well attended by parents of my students might be the avenues where I can strengthen parent-school partnerships. Finding the most effective ways of communication between school and home may increase student achievement because parents will be informed about what their children are doing in school and how successful they are in academic areas. The study also suggested that when parents are on board with what their child is doing in school, the attitude of parents has an influence on their children and parents will be more aware of how their participation greatly influences their child's academic success. In the future, I could plan my instruction to require parents to read or follow up on students' assignments with an opportunity to comment and add their input.

Future action research investigation could use the results of this study to determine what parent participation elements were most successful and implement them in school protocol. Also, schools would be informed as to what kind of parent participation affected student academic achievement and attitude so that those areas could see the most immediate benefits. In a piece from *The School Community Journal* (2012), which studied 233 schools in New Zealand with regard to school-parent-community partnerships, they found that "it was important for schools to take account of parents' aspirations for their children and incorporate these into their strategic planning." In addition, the article listed many things where parents felt that the partnerships needed strengthening and included providing more opportunities for participation and involvement, supporting and promoting the culture of students, and having high expectations for all children (Mutch & Collins, 2012).

For future research that involves parent participation and requires parents to submit responses via online or otherwise, it would be important to find out which ways produce the most results. The number of parents invited into this study was very small- containing only 30 parents representing the students in first, second, and third grade. Due to the small number of parent responses on the initial parent survey (See Appendix B) and the one additional response generated by the parent questionnaire (See Appendix D), it indicated that the online response method may not have been the best way to collect information from this group of parents. Additionally, since I am new to the school many parents do not know me personally and may not have felt comfortable answering questions about themselves, their involvement with their child's educational experience, or revealing information contained on the questionnaire or the survey. Establishing positive relationships and making strong connections with parents could contribute to more successful research at another time. Holding a meeting or event related to future research

could generate interest in the topic and would be an effective way to meet parents and gather their input on the best way to communicate with them.

Bridging the gap between home and school life is an important consideration when establishing parent-school partnerships. Parent attitude that instills the importance of education onto their child can provide increased student motivation and thus benefit academic achievement. Parents' positive perceptions of their child's school and education, coupled with consistent communication with their child's teacher and a positive teacher-student relationship, could be the elements to a parent-school partnership that will be successful long into the future.

References

Domina, Thurston. (2005). Leveling the home advantage: Assessing the effectiveness of parental involvement in elementary school. *Sociology of Education,* 78(3), p. 233-249.

Epstein, Joyce L. (2011). *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Graham, Edward. (2013, October 16). 10 Ideas for engaging parents. *National Education Association.* Retrieved from www.nea.org

Henderson, A.T., Mapp, K.L, Johnson, V.R., & D. Davies. (2007). *Beyond the bake sale: An essential guide to family-school partnerships.* New York, NY: Perseus Distribution.

Henderson, Anne T. & Mapp, Karen L. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on academic achievement.* Austin, TX: National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools.

Hendricks, Cher. (2013). *Improving schools through action research: A reflective practice approach* (Third Edition). Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

Hornby, Garry. (2011). *Parental involvement in childhood education*. New York, NY: Springer Publishing.

Jarmuz-Smith, S. (2011). Parent involvement in education. Bethesda: Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/872203999?accountid=26879

Mutch, Carol & Collins, Sandra. (2012). Partners in learning: School's engagement with parents, Families, and communities in New Zealand. *The School Community Journal, 22,*167-87.

National Coalition for Parent Involvement In Education. (n.d.). *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement.* Retrieved from http://www.ncpie.org/WhatsHappening/researchJanuary2006.cfm

National Network of Partnership Schools (website). *Six Types of Involvement: Keys to Successful Partnerships.* Retrieved from
http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/nnps_model/school/sixtypes.htm

National Parent Teacher Association (2013). PTA History: 2010- Present. Retrieved from

http://www.pta.org/about/content.cfm?ItemNumber=3465

Oyserman, Daphna, Brickman, Daniel, & Rhodes, Marjorie. School success, possible selves, and parent school involvement. *Family Relations*. December 2007, *56*(5), p. 479-489.

Peterson, Melissa N. (2008). *Building bridges between households and school through parent involvement: A qualitative approach.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Arizona, Phoenix, AZ.

Westmoreland, Helen, Rosenberg, Heidi M., Lopez, M. Elena, & Weiss, Heather. (2009, July). Seeing is believing: Promising practices for how school districts promote family engagement. Parent Teacher Association: Harvard Family Research Project website: www.hfrp.org/content/download/3420/98238/.../SeeingIsBelieving.pdf

Appendix A

Student Initial Survey

1. What grade are you in?
   a. 1st grade
   b. 2nd grade
   c. 3rd grade

2. How old are you?
   a. 3-5 years old
   b. 6-8 years old
   c. 9-11 years old

3. Do you talk to another adult/Mom/Dad about school?
   a. No, I never bring up school with an adult.
   b. No. There are no adults who ask me about school.
   c. Yes, because I bring it up.
   d. Yes, another adult asks me about school.

4. If you talk about school with another adult, what do you talk about?

5. Does it/ would it feel good to talk about school with an adult?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Unsure

6. Does Mom/ Dad/ another adult that you are close to visit school or come to events?
   a. Yes
   b. No

7. If you answered "yes" to the above question: What events do they attend and how often do they attend?

8. Does having parents or other adults attend school events and functions or visiting the school make you feel important?
   a. No
   b. Yes
   c. A little
   d. Sometimes

9. Does your teacher or someone at school ever speak to your parent(s) or send notes home?
   a. Yes
   b. No

10. If a teacher or someone at school communicates with your parents, how do they do it and are your parents part of the communication?

Appendix B

Parent Initial Survey

1. How do you involve yourself in your child's educational experience?
   a. Routine conversation
   b. Volunteer/ paraprofessional at school
   c. Direct communication with child's teacher
   d. Participant of parent organization
   e. You are a teacher or coach
   f. Check the school's/ class' website
   g. Attendance at school events
   h. Work with child on their homework/projects
   i. Meet with the child's teacher/ observe classroom

2. What is the most important aspect of your child's education and how does it benefit their achievement? *(You might focus on homework, attendance, sports, school clubs/ organization, etc.)*

3. Does your child benefit from any type of community involvement?
   a. No, our child is not an active participant in the community
   b. Yes, our child is part of a community organization/ club
   c. Yes, our child is/has been a community volunteer
   d. Yes, our child has a positive relationship with a member of the community
   e. Yes, our family participates in community events along with our child

4. On average, how routinely do you participate in your child's education? (*This can range from simple conversation to attendance at events.)*

5. Regardless of your own participation, how important do you think a parent's participation is in their child's educational experience?
   a. Extremely
   b. Very important
   c. Somewhat important
   d. Rarely important
   e. A waste of a parent's time
   f. Other:

6. Please use the space below to provide any additional comments or feedback that might help with this research. *(Please do not use names or other identifying language in your response.)*

Appendix C

Student Interview Questions

1. How would it/does it feel when your parent(s) participate with you in:

    a. School things, like homework or projects?

    b. Sports?

    c. Conversation?

    d. Attendance at events, school or otherwise?

2. How are you doing at school when your parents are involved? How does that change when they are not involved?

3. Do you feel that you are a "successful" student? Why?

4. What does being a "successful student" mean to you? To your parents?

5. What is your favorite thing that you and your parent(s) do together?

6. How do your parents help you with regard to school? Are they really helpful/ patient/understanding?

7. What would you like to say to your parent(s) or to your school about the ways that your parent(s) are participating?

Appendix D

Parent Cover Sheet & Questionnaire

Dear Parent,

If you recall, the action research that I am conducting is to examine the ways parents participate and correlate the benefits that it has on student academic achievement and attitude. Any information I gather is important to my study.

The information that you provide will be compiled in a non-identifiable, aggregated format.

Each question is followed by an area for open comments. Please utilize these and be as specific as possible.

The survey will take about 5-7 minutes to complete.

Areas covered in the questionnaire:
- **How you spend time with your child outside of school and during school**
- **What types of activities you share with your child**
- **Ways you involve yourself with regard to your child's education**

You will be sent an e-mail following this one with the link for the online questionnaire through Google Drive.

This questionnaire will close after April 19th. I will send everyone an email reminder if you have not been able to reply by April 17th.

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding this questionnaire.

Thank you for your feedback.

The first four (4) questions are about how you spend time with your child OUTSIDE of school. The last four (4) questions are about how you spend time with your child AT school. Each question is followed by an area for comments.

1. How do you spend time with your child OUTSIDE of school?
   a. Family time
   b. Church
   c. Hunting
   d. Fishing
   e. Camping/Hiking
   f. Other:
2. How do you support your child outside of school?

3. What do you like to do in your free time with your child?

4. Outside of school, approximately how much time do you spend with your child?
   a. 1-2 hours
   b. 3-4 hours
   c. 5-6 hours
   d. More than 6 hours
   e. Other:

5. How do you spend time with your child AT school?
   a. Attend Reader's Theater
   b. Attend the Christmas program
   c. Attend the school Carnival
   d. Volunteer in my child's classroom
   e. Observe my child's classroom
   f. Attend my child's field trip as a chaperone
   g. Other:

6. What could Willow Creek School do better to encourage or increase parent participation?

7. Realizing that it is difficult to find the time, what might you do to increase your participation AT your child's school?

8. Do you feel there is a need for a parent-teacher organization at XX School?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Maybe

Appendix E

Student Attitude Scale

For each answer, please choose:
a.   Strongly Agree
b.   Agree
c.   Disagree
d.   Strongly Disagree

1. My parents come to every school and event activity
2. I invite my parents to school events or activities.
3. My parents help me with homework or school projects.
4. My parents think it's important that I do well at school.
5. Doing well in school will help me do well in other things. (Such as sports, the future, college, high school, social situations, etc.)
6. I try to do my best in school so my parents are happy/ pleased.
7. Doing well in school makes me feel good.

Appendix F
Report Card Template- First Grade

Student's Name:

Teacher: * Grade Level: 1st * SY: 2013-14

Exceeding the grade-level standard.	**4**
Meeting the grade-level standard.	**3**
Progressing toward the grade-level standard. Needs teacher direction to accomplish the grade-level standard	**2**
Beginning to develop the grade-level standard. Needs teacher direction to accomplish the grade-level standard	**1**
Not Assessed at this time.	**N**

	Q1
Attendance	
Absent	
Tardy	

Lifelong Learning Skills

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Teamwork: Works and plays cooperatively.				
Effort/Initiative: Demonstrates ambition through perseverance in completing tasks/goals.				
Effort/initiative: Follows oral directions.				
Interpersonal Skills: Displays appropriate manners & shows respect for others.				
Quality Work: Work is accurate.				
Quality Work: Work is neat.				
Responsibility: Follows school rules & accepts responsibility for own actions.				
Time Management: Uses Classroom time effectively				

Literacy - Language

	Q1
Prints upper – & lower-case letters.	
Uses common proper & possessive nouns.	
Uses singular & plural nouns with matching verbs in basic sentences.	
Uses personal, possessive & indefinite pronouns.	
Uses verbs to convey a sense of past, present, & future.	
Uses frequently occurring adjectives, conjunctions, & preposition.	
Uses determiners.	
Capitalizes dates & names of people.	
Uses end punctuation for sentences.	
Uses commas in dates & to separate single words in a series.	
Spells untaught words phonetically, drawing on phonemic awareness & spelling conventions.	
Uses conventional spelling for words with common spelling conventions.	
Determines or clarifies the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words & phrases.	
Demonstrates understanding of word relationships & nuances in word meanings.	

Literacy - Speaking and Listening

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Participates in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade topics & texts				
Asks and answers questions about key details in a text read aloud or informational presentation.				
Asks & answers questions about what a speaker says in order to gather information.				
Describes people, places, things, & events with relevant details, expressing ideas & feeling clearly				

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Adds drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, & feelings.				

	Q1
Uses words & phrases acquired through conversations, reading, & being read to.	

Literature - Reading

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Asks & answers questions about key details in a text.				
Retells stories, including key details & demonstrates understanding of their central message.				
Describes characters, settings, & major events in a story.				
Identifies words & phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.				
Explains major differences between books that tell stories & books that give information.				
Identifies who is telling the story at various points in a text.				
Uses illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, settings, or events.				
Compares & contrasts the adventures & experiences of characters in stories				
Reads prose & poetry of appropriate complexity for grade 1.				
Distinguishes between information provided by pictures or other illustrations & information provided by the words in a text.				

Literature - Foundational skills

	Q1
Recognizes the distinguishing features of a sentence (e.g., fist word, capitalization).	
Distinguishes long from short vowel sounds in spoken single-syllable words.	
Orally produces single-syllable words by blending sounds.	
Isolates & pronounces initial, medial vowel, & final sounds in spoken single-syllable words.	
Segments spoken single-syllable words into their complete sequence of individual sounds.	
Knows the spelling-sound correspondences for common consonant digraphs.	–
Decodes regularly spelled one-syllable words.	
Knows final –e & common vowel team conventions for representing long vowel sounds.	
Uses knowledge that every syllable must have a vowel sound to determine number of syllables.	
Decodes two-syllable words following basic patterns by breaking the words into syllables.	
Reads words with inflectional endings.	
Reads with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.	

Literacy - Writing

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Writes opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing.				
Writes informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply facts & closure.				
Writes narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events.				
Focuses on a topic & responds to questions & suggestions from peers & add details to writing.				
Uses a variety of digital tools to produce & publish writing.				
Participates in shared research & writing projects.				
Recalls information from experiences or gather information from provided sources.				

Social Studies

	Q1
Demonstrates knowledge & concepts taught: map skills.	–
Demonstrates knowledge & concepts taught: holidays & celebrations.	
Demonstrates knowledge & concepts taught: primary economics.	

Science

	Q1
Demonstrates knowledge of concepts of organisms	

Mathematics	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Develops strategies for adding & subtracting whole numbers.				
Develops, discusses, & uses efficient, accurate & generalized methods to add within 100 & subtract multiples of 10.				
Develops an understanding of the meaning & processes of measurement.				
Composes & decomposes plane or solid figures & builds understanding of part-whole relationship.				
Uses addition & subtraction within 20 to solve word problems within a cultural context.				
Solves word problems within a cultural context.				
Applies properties of operations as strategies to add & subtract.				
Understands subtraction as an unknown-addend problem.				
Relates counting to addition & subtraction.				
Adds & subtracts within 20 demonstrating fluency for addition & subtraction within 10.				
Understands the meaning of the equal sign & determines if equation involving addition & subtraction are true & false.				
Determines the unknown whole number in an addition or subtraction equation.				
Counts to 120.				
Understands that the two digits of a two digit number represent amounts of tens and ones.				
Compares two two-digit numbers based on meanings of the tens & ones digits.				
Adds within 100				
Mentally finds 10 more or less given a two-digit number.				
Subtracts multiples of 10 in the range of 10-90.				
Orders three objects from a variety of cultural contexts.				

Music	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Singing skills (sings expressively, on pitch, & in a group)				
Music Theory (read, notate, compose, & perform rhythmically & melodically).				

Demonstrates knowledge of concepts of balls & ramps.	

Student's Name:

Teacher:

Art	Q1
Participates, follows directions & is respectful	
Demonstrates age-appropriate skills	

Health	Q1
Understands, explains, & practices safety & first aid	
Understands, explains, & practices staying drug free.	
Understands, explains, & practices personal hygiene & wellness	
Understands, explains, & practices social & emotional health	
Understands, explains, & practices physical activity & nutrition.	

Physical Education	Q1
Participates, follows directions and is respectful	
Demonstrates age-appropriate skills	

Guidance	Q1
Communicate clearly, solve problems, collaborate, gain independence in understanding how to work well with others. Demonstrates appropriate problem solving techniques and oral communications skills.	
Sits & listens in one-on-one or small group & whole-class settings. Demonstrates appropriate communication skills to be a contributing member of the group.	

Music Listening (Identifies & analyzes music elements).				

Library	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Participates appropriately in group story sharing.				
Follows Library procedure and accepts responsibility for own actions.				
Identifies and understands how to effectively use library resources.				

Respects and understands others perspectives and cultures.	
Understands how to interpret and assess data in making decisions. Demonstrates appropriate decision making skills.	

Comments Q1:

Comments Q3:

Comments Q2:

Comments Q4:

Appendix G
Report Card Template- Second Grade

Student's Name:

Teache * Grade Level: 2nd * SY: 2013-14

Exceeding the grade-level standard.	**4**
Meeting the grade-level standard.	**3**
Progressing toward the grade-level standard. Needs teacher direction to accomplish the grade-level standard	**2**
Beginning to develop the grade-level standard. Needs teacher direction to accomplish the grade-level standard	**1**
Not Assessed at this time.	**N**

	Q1
Attendance	
Absent	
Tardy	

Lifelong Learning Skills	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Teamwork: Works and plays cooperatively.				
Effort/Initiative: Demonstrates ambition through perseverance in completing tasks/goals.				
Effort/initiative: Follows oral directions.				
Interpersonal Skills: Displays appropriate manners and shows respect for others.				
Quality Work: Work is accurate.				
Quality Work: Work is neat.				
Responsibility: Follows school rules and accept responsibility for own actions.				

Literacy - Language	Q1
Uses collective nouns.	
Forms and uses frequently occurring irregular plural nouns and past tense of irregular verbs.	
Uses reflexive pronouns and adjectives and adverbs.	
Capitalizes holidays, product names, and geographic locations.	
Uses commas in greetings and closings of letters.	
Uses an apostrophe to form contractions and possessives.	
Generalizes learned spelling patterns when writing words.	

Time Management: Uses classroom time effectively				

Consults reference materials to check spellings.	
Compares formal and informal uses of English.	
Uses sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.	
Determines the meaning of the new word formed when a known prefix is added to a known word.	
Uses a known root word as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word with the same root.	
Uses knowledge of the meaning of individual words to predict the meaning of compound words.	
Uses glossaries and beginning dictionaries to determine the meaning of words or phrases.	
Identifies real-life connections between words and their use.	

Literacy - Speaking and Listening

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Follows agreed-upon rules for discussion.				
Builds on others talk in conversations by linking their own comments to the remarks of others.				
Asks for clarification and further explanation as needed.				
Recounts or describes key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally.				
Asks and answers questions about what a speaker says in order to clarify comprehension.				

Literature - Reading

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Asks and answers such questions as who, what, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding.				
Recounts stories and determines their central message, lesson, or moral.				
Describes how words and phrases supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.				
Describes the overall structure of a story.				
Acknowledges differences in the point of view of characters.				
Uses information gained from the illustrations and words to demonstrate understanding.				
Compares and contrasts two or more versions of the same story.				
Identifies main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs.				
Describes the connection between a series of historical events, scientific concepts, or technical steps.				
Knows how to use various text features.				

Literacy - Language

	Q1
Distinguishes shades of meaning among closely related verbs and adjectives.	
Uses words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to.	

Literature - Foundational skills

	Q1
Distinguishes long and short vowels when reading regularly spelled one-syllable words.	
Knows spelling-sound correspondences for additional common vowel teams.	
Decodes regularly spelled two-syllable words with long vowels.	
Decodes words with common prefixes and suffixes.	
Identifies words with inconsistent but common spelling-sound correspondences.	
Recognizes and reads grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words.	–

Literacy - Writing

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Writes opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about.				
Writes informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic.				

Music

	Q1
Singing skills (sings expressively, on pitch, and in a group).	
Music Theory (read, notate, compose, and perform rhythmically and melodically).	

Writes narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events.				
Focuses on a topic and strengthens writing as needed by revising and editing.				
Uses a variety of tools to produce and publish writing.				
Participates in shared research and writing projects.				
Recalls information from experiences or gathers information from provided sources to answer a question.				

Mathematics

Mathematics	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Represents and solves problems involving addition and subtraction.				
Understands and applies properties of operations and the relationship between addition and subtraction.				
Adds and subtracts within 20.				
Works with addition and subtraction equations.				
Extends the counting sequence.				
Understands place value.				
Uses place value understanding and properties of operations to add and subtract.				
Measures lengths indirectly and by iterating length units.				
Tells and writes time.				
Represents and interprets data.				
Reasons with shapes and their attributes.				

Social Studies

Social Studies	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Demonstrates knowledge and concepts taught: map skills.	–	–	–	–
Demonstrates knowledge and concepts taught: communities.				
Demonstrates knowledge and concepts taught: cultural diversity.				

Music Listening (Identifies and analyzes music elements).	

Art

Art	Q1
Demonstrates an understanding of technique (manual skills).	
Demonstrates an understanding of art elements, design principles, and art history.	
Demonstrates an understanding of materials.	

Student's Name:

Teacher:

Health

Health	Q1
Understands, explains, and practices safety and first aid.	
Understands, explains, and practices staying drug free.	
Understands, explains, and practices personal hygiene and wellness.	
Understands, explains, and practices social and emotional health.	
Understands, explains, and practices physical activity and nutrition.	

Physical Education

Physical Education	Q1
Uses a variety of loco-motor movements.	
Uses a variety of object control skills.	
Uses a variety of non-loco motor skills.	
Understands concepts and rules.	
Participates vigorously during activities.	

Guidance	Q1
Communicate clearly, solve problems, collaborate, gain independence in understanding how to work well with others. Demonstrates appropriate problem solving techniques and oral communications skills.	
Sits & listens in one-on-one or small group & whole-class settings. Demonstrates appropriate communication skills to be a contributing member of the group.	
Respects and understands others perspectives and cultures.	
Understands how to interpret and assess data in making decisions. Demonstrates appropriate decision making skills.	

Science	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Demonstrates knowledge of concepts in the life cycles of the butterflies.				
Demonstrates knowledge of concepts of soils.				
Demonstrates knowledge of concepts of the solar system.				
Demonstrates knowledge of concepts of dinosaurs.				

Library	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Participates appropriately in group story sharing.				
Follows Library procedure and accepts responsibility for own actions.				
Identifies and understands how to effectively use library resources.				

Comments Q1:

Comments Q3:

Comments Q2:

Comments Q4:

Appendix H
Report Card Template- Third Grade

Student's Name:

Teacher: * Grade Level: 3rd * SY: 2013-14

Exceeding the grade-level standard.	**4**
Meeting the grade-level standard.	**3**
Progressing toward the grade-level standard. Needs teacher direction to accomplish the grade-level standard	**2**
Beginning to develop the grade-level standard. Needs teacher direction to accomplish the grade-level standard	**1**
Not Assessed at this time.	**N**

	Q1
Attendance	
Absent	
Tardy	

Lifelong Learning Skills

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Teamwork: Works and plays cooperatively.				
Effort/Initiative: Demonstrates ambition through perseverance in completing tasks/goals.				
Effort/initiative: Follows oral directions.				
Interpersonal Skills: Displays appropriate manners and shows respect for others.				
Quality Work: Work is accurate.				
Quality Work: Work is neat.				
Responsibility: Follows school rules and accept responsibility for own actions.				
Time Management: Uses classroom time effectively				

Literacy - Speaking and Listening

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Engages effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.				
Determines the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud.				
Asks and answers questions about information from a speaker.				
Reports on a topic or text, tells a story, or recounts an experience with appropriate facts.				
Creates engaging audio recordings of stories or poems that demonstrate fluid reading.				
Speaks in complete sentences when appropriate to the task or situation.				
Uses knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.				
Determines or clarifies the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.				

Literacy - Language

	Q1
Explains the function of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.	
Forms and uses regular and irregular plural nouns, irregular verbs, simple verb tenses.	
Uses abstract nouns, coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.	
Ensures subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.	
Forms and uses comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs.	
Produces simple, compound, and complex sentences.	
Capitalizes appropriate words in titles.	
Uses commas in address.	
Uses commas and quotation marks in dialogue.	
Forms and uses possessives.	
Uses conventional spelling for high-frequency and other studied words and for adding suffixes.	
Uses spelling patterns and generalizations in writing words.	
Consults reference materials as needed to check and correct spellings.	

Literature - Foundational skills

	Q1
Identifies and know the meaning of the most common prefixes and suffixes	
Decodes words with common latin suffixes	
Decodes multi-syllable words.	

Demonstrates understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.				
Acquires and uses accurately grade-appropriate words and phrases.				

Literature - Reading	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Asks and answers questions to demonstrate understanding of a text.				
Recounts stories and determines the central message, lesson or moral.				
Describes characters in a story and explains how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.				
Determines the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in text.				
Refers to parts of the stories, dramas, and poems using terms from the text.				
Distinguishes their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.				
Explains how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the story.				
Compares and contrasts the themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author.				
Reads and comprehends literature independently and proficiently.				
Describes the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas, or technical steps.				
Uses text features and search tools to locate information relevant to the topic.				

Literacy - Writing	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Writes opinion pieces in which they support a point of view.				
Writes informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information.				
Writes narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events.				
Produces writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to the task.				
Develops and strengthens writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.				
Conducts short research projects that build knowledge.				
Recalls information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources.				

Reads grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words.	
Reads on-level text with purpose and understanding	
Uses context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, re-reading as needed.	–

Information Literacy	Q1
Types 12-20 words per minute.	

Music	Q1
Singing skills (sings expressively, on pitch, and in a group)	
Music Theory (read, notate, compose, and perform rhythmically and melodically).	
Music Listening (Identifies and analyzes music elements).	

Art	Q1
Demonstrates an understanding of technique (manual skills).	
Demonstrates an understanding of art elements, design principles, and art history.	
Demonstrates an understanding of materials.	

Social Studies	Q1
Demonstrates knowledge and concepts taught: citizenship/government	–
Demonstrates knowledge and concepts taught: early American settlers.	
Demonstrates knowledge and concepts taught: cultural diversity.	

Student's Name:

Teacher:

Mathematics

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Represents and solves problems involving multiplication and division				
Understands properties of multiplication and the relationship between multiplication and division.				
Multiplies and divides within 100.				
Solves problems involving the four operations and identifies and explains patterns in math.				
Uses place value understanding and properties of operations to perform multi-digit math.				
Develops an understanding of fractions as numbers.				
Represents and interprets data.				
Understands concepts of area and related area to multiplication and to addition.				
Recognizes perimeter as an attribute of plane figures and distinguishes between linear and area measurements.				
Reasons with shapes and their attributes.				

Guidance

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Communicate clearly, solve problems, collaborate, gain independence in understanding how to work well with others. Demonstrates appropriate problem solving techniques and oral communications skills.				
Sits & listens in one-on-one or small group & whole-class settings. Demonstrates appropriate communication skills to be a contributing member of the group.				
Respects and understands others perspectives and cultures.				
Understands how to interpret and assess data in making decisions. Demonstrates appropriate decision making skills.				

Library

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Participates appropriately in group story sharing.				
Follows Library procedure and accepts responsibility for own actions.				

Science

	Q1
Uses simple tools to gather scientific data and make observations.	
Uses the process of investigations to develop scientific conclusions.	
Demonstrates knowledge of concepts of sound.	
Demonstrates knowledge of concepts of rocks and minerals.	
Demonstrates knowledge of concepts of plant growth and development.	

Health

	Q1
Understands, explains, and practices safety and first aid.	
Understands, explains, and practices staying drug free.	
Understands, explains, and practices personal hygiene and wellness	
Understands, explains, and practices social and emotional health.	
Understands, explains, and practices physical activity and nutrition.	

Physical Education

	Q1
Uses a variety of loco-motor movements.	
Uses a variety of object control skills	
Uses a variety of non-loco motor skills	
Understands concepts and rules	
Participates vigorously during activities.	

Identifies and understands how to effectively use library resources.				

Comments Q1:

Comments Q3:

Comments Q2:

Comments Q4:

Appendix I

**The Benefits of Parent-School Partnerships: A Cooperative Approach to Increasing Student
Learning & Achievement
INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM**

Introduction:
You are invited to participate in a research study investigating parent participation. This study is being
conducted by Ms. Karen Lambiase, a graduate student at St. Catherine University under the supervision
of Amanda Perna, a faculty member in the Department of Education. You were selected as a possible
participant in this research because you have a child in the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd grade, where I am focusing my
study. Please read this form and ask questions before you agree to be in the study.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is being conducted to explore ways in which I can increase the involvement of
parents at my school and see if there is a correlation with students' academic success and positive social/
behavioral development. Approximately 49 people are expected to participate in this research.

Procedures:
If you decide to participate, you will be asked to attend two interview sessions that will take
approximately 15 minutes each. The first is at the start of the research and the second is at the end of the
research. This study will also ask you to complete 2 surveys (available online), which will take you
approximately 10-15 minutes. Lastly, I will encourage you to keep a log of your parent participation and
any observations or thoughts that you have throughout the study.

Risks and Benefits of being in the study:
There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research.

Confidentiality:
Any information obtained in connection with this research study that can be identified with you will be
disclosed only with your permission; your results will be kept confidential. In any written reports or
publications, no one will be identified or identifiable and only group data will be presented.

I will keep the research results in a locked file cabinet in my home where only I will have access to the
records while I work on this project. I will finish analyzing the data by April 20, 2014. I will then destroy
all original reports and identifying information that can be linked back to you.

Voluntary nature of the study:
Participation in this research study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not
affect your future relations with your child's school or St. Catherine University in any way. If you decide
to participate, you are free to stop at any time without affecting these relationships.

New Information:
If during course of this research study I learn about new findings that might influence your willingness to continue participating in the study, I will inform you of these findings.

Contacts and questions:
If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, 406-224-8104.You may ask questions now, or if you have any additional questions later, the faculty advisor, (Amanda Perna, amperna@stkate.edu), will be happy to answer them. If you have other questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you may also contact Dr. John Schmitt, Chair of the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board, at (651) 690-7739 or jsschmitt@stkate.edu.

You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent:
You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature indicates that you have read this information and your questions have been answered. Even after signing this form, please know that you may withdraw from the study.

_____

I consent to participate in the study.

_____
Signature of Participant   Date

_____
Signature of Parent, Legal Guardian, or Witness   Date
(if applicable, otherwise delete this line)

_____
Signature of Researcher   Date

Appendix J
Student Assent Form

**The Benefits of Parent-School Partnerships: A Cooperative Approach to Increasing
Student Learning & Achievement
Assent Form**

My name is Ms. Karen Lambiase. I am trying to learn if your parent's participation in your schooling affects the way you learn and how you feel about school. If you would like, you can be in my study.

If you decide you want to be in my study, you will answer some questions I have for you (interview) at the beginning of the study and at the end of the study. I will also ask you to keep a journal where you can write your thoughts and feelings-I will review the journal throughout the study and collect it at the end of the study. We will do an attitude scale where you tell me how happy/ pleased or unhappy you feel about different aspects of school and your parents' participation in your education each time we meet. Finally, I will help you fill out an online survey that asks you questions about this topic.

This study has minimal risks. What that means is that it not likely that you will experience anything to you mind or body that is "bad."

Other people will not know if you are in my study. I will put things I learn about you together with things I learn about other children and parents, so no one can tell what things came from you. When I tell other people about my research, I will not use your name, so no one can tell who I am talking about.

Your parents or guardian have to say it's OK for you to be in the study. After they decide, you get to choose if you want to do it too. If you don't want to be in the study, no one will be mad at you. If you want to be in the study now and change your mind later, that's OK. You can stop at any time.

My telephone number is 406-224-8104. You can call me if you have questions about the study or if you decide you don't want to be in the study any more.

I will give you a copy of this form in case you want to ask questions later.

Agreement

I have decided to be in the study even though I know that I don't have to do it. Ms. Karen Lambiase has answered all my questions.

_____   _____

Signature of Study Participant   Date

_____   _____

Signature of Researcher   Date