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What it Means to “Be Somebody:” Redefining Parental Involvement and Social Mobility in Public Education

The researchers are three students working from different academic and personal perspectives, but all with an interest in studying education. When the opportunity was presented to work at the district level in a public school we were excited by the prospect of working on a project called: Online to College. This program had successfully improved graduation rates by promising middle school students two years of tuition at the local community college. We met with Dr. Bonnie Mooney, who is the head of Student and Family Support Services (SFSS) and our internship supervisor, Leslie Sorensen. Upon arrival we learned that the Online to College project was on hold, so we were invited to work on a community school project. The goal of the project is: “to identify and secure additional services for students and families in Ontario-Montclair School District“ (Appendix, p. 50). In order to gain clarity about the needs of the community, the district began by sending out surveys to parents via the schools. The district’s goal was to obtain 100 responses per school. Leslie informed us that the Outreach Coordinators (ORCs), the SFSS liaisons to the parents, may be having difficulty gathering surveys and asked us to help them meet their deadline and quotas. (Appendix, p. 45-46). The response was far better than expected and most schools returned 200+ surveys. We had at least 5,000 surveys to process. We met with Leslie once or twice a week and sorted stacks of surveys into file boxes to take home. We processed all of them by hand, because the parents were not familiar with filling in bubbles in a Likkert Scale and it was impossible for a computer to read the results. We also entered three open-ended responses into a database. (Appendix p.47)
Invisible Barriers to Parental involvement: cultural, linguistic barriers and the meritocracy myth.

While there is much literature and consensus that “parental involvement” is linked to student achievement, there is less discussion as to what the term entails. This paper explores multiple approaches to defining “parental involvement” and its barriers. Whose voices are heard in this discussion and whose may be silenced through invisible barriers? We will also discuss social mobility through the damaging lens of the meritocracy myth. This will link simplistic bootstrapping narratives about students success to the “invisible involvement” that traditional parent involvement discourses ignore.

We will also explore how naturalized discourses surrounding barriers to parental involvement serve as an internalized oppression mechanism. Divisions are created between “involved” and “uninvolved” parents, and the misunderstandings continue to serve as the source for the school district’s information on possible barriers. We will discuss the possibility of “invisible barriers,” explore how and why they may remain hidden, and introduce viable ways to begin to uncover and address these barriers. Since we are writing from three perspectives, we are each going to attempt an overview and analysis based on our topics of parental involvement. We will examine some possible causes of social immobility in our school systems and their relationship to parental involvement.

Originally, our project was guided entirely by OMSD. We worked with quantitative data from the surveys and did not have opportunity to work in the community until the end of the semester. When we began to conduct focus groups our project changed direction. We sensed themes and questions emerging as we researched the Community School Project. Originally, we thought our focus would be on Social Reproduction Theory. Reflecting on the focus groups and
our meetings with school district officials, we began to notice the absent voices of the so-called uninvolved parents who were common in our discussions. Invisible barriers may be preventing these parents from engaging in their children’s educational experience. We use the term “invisible” because the barriers we are postulating are nearly impossible to recognize from outside the immediate family structure. They are hidden from the district and so-called “involved parent” -as defined by the US Department of Education (USDE). The district is concentrating on the basic needs of the families, committing to restoring the bottom tiers of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs to the whole family system, so their students will have a better chance for success. We began to sense a hidden tier on Maslow’s Hierarchy that needed to be in place in order to build a strong foundation that approached the families as a resource, rather than as a burden.

An analysis of literature, quantitative data, personal interviews, and parent focus groups, make it clear that students are largely dependent on their family’s ability to interact with the system. Well-intentioned attempts to raise the level of socioeconomic stability in the community could be destabilized by a “top down” approach to community building. Directing attention to the causes and misunderstandings behind invisible barriers to parental involvement is an essential ingredient in the movement towards a model of engaged partnership between school and family. This led us to examine some possible causes of social immobility in our school systems and their relationship to parental involvement. We identified three areas of possible impediments to social mobility and parental involvement. Culture: external and internalized messages about the value of home culture and language affect the ability of parents to negotiate the school system and as a result, affect learning outcomes. Linguistics binary forms of communication and labeling solidify hierarchical roles and restrict and ignore the fluidity of changing family circumstances. Meritocracy: myths about equal opportunity for all, ignorance of
privileges and our national love affair, or more accurately—marriage—to the rags-to-riches story, is a major motivator of capitalism and can contribute to negative internalized and externalized dialogues about social immobility.

There needs to be more study devoted to the subject of parental engagement for a number of reasons. As part of the Obama administration’s revision of NCLB, Education Secretary Arne Duncan, is seeking to double the current level of funding toward parental involvement (USDE). That means that the funding would go from the current level of 1% of Title I funds, to 2%. If we are directing funding to parental involvement, we should study possible barriers. While it is possible that lack of funding has contributed to poor outcomes, there is debate about the efficacy of current strategies and their ability to influence parental engagement (Domina). We should find the most efficient path to removing impediments. It is in the interest of our society to facilitate the potential of every child. Our current education structure fails to face the deeper reality of children’s circumstances and take responsibility for its part in creating a system based on false choices. It is very difficult for the middle and upper classes to accept that for the working class and poor of America, meritocracy is largely a myth. For the upper classes, there is room for a spectrum of mobility, because of generational accumulations of physical assets, and of social and cultural capital. Narrow definitions of parental involvement have a subtractive effect by not acknowledging a network of sometimes-fluid support.

In the context of educational research, structures of power continue to be reinforced by language that solidifies and polarizes roles. There are gaps in the notion of social mobility via education, and meritocracy discourse on education, that can have a corrosive and immobilizing effect on social mobility, because it does not present real choices based in the reality of students’ lives.
In the next sections, we will describe our site, methods, research, and finally our analysis and our contribution to the community.

The Site

Our internship and research project was based in the Ontario Montclair School District, which serves K-8 students and their families. The district is the third largest in California and stretches from parts of Upland, covers most of the city of Ontario-Montclair, and also serves some unincorporated portions of San Bernardino. There are 26 schools in the district and they serve nearly 27,755 students. Almost 85% of the children in OMSD live in poverty, and over 2,200 of those children are homeless. 39% of the parents of OMSD students have not completed high school. 88% are Latino and at least 50% of students are classified as English Language Learners. As of October 2010, unemployment in the Ontario-Montclair area is almost 15% (OMSD). Each district’s income is based on the average number of students attending school during the year (average daily attendance, or ADA) the general purpose (revenue limit) money the district receives based on ADA special support (categorical aid) from the state and federal governments, earmarked for particular purposes. (CA Dept. of Education)

OMSD consists of a wide range of roles: from accountants to web designers. The most public roles are that of the teachers and the administration, but there are many more people employed in supporting positions, bus drivers, carpenters, social workers, custodial workers, maintenance workers, health-care workers, etc. OMSD is comparable to a small city, in that it has a lot of moving parts. OMSD has a traditional top down hierarchical structure. Superintendent Hammond is at the top of the pyramid and there are many layers in different departments that trickle down to the classroom. In the Student and Family Support Services where our project is
based, Dr. Bonnie Mooney is the head of SFSS and our supervisor Leslie Sorenson reports to her. The Outreach Coordinators (ORCS) are the school site eyes and ears of SFSS, and the teachers work with the ORCS, parents, and community partners to provide services to the OMSD community.

“Whatever it takes, we guarantee our commitment to the highest quality of education for all students.” -Ontario-Montclair School District Mission Statement

As stated on publications from OMSD, the purpose of the intended Community school project is to “to identify and secure additional services for students and families in Ontario-Montclair School District.” This idea is that students are unable to receive a high quality education without having proper nutrition, healthcare, dental care, stable living situation etc. Within Ontario School district and the 27,755 students enrolled, we saw many primary social issues and patterns emerge: Poverty; lack of access to health care, affordable health insurance, dental care, food, clothing, affordable housing, counseling services; difficulty finding work/need for job training. Other issues included: English and Spanish literacy; lack high school diploma; citizenship; affordable childcare; lack of information about college; managing household budgets; transportation. 3000 students are homeless, this term encompasses students who live unstable households, living in garages, sheds, in cars, etc. (OMSD).

These primary social issues as identified by school officials, prompted the school’s aim of coordinating services and building partnerships through what they are calling the ‘Community School Project’. The idea is that bringing services to school sites provides families with more access to childcare, healthcare, counseling etc. Thus, the schools see it as their responsibility to provide the necessary coordination for these families to enable them access to these services.
OMSD Case Management / Mental Health Triage and Service Delivery

Teacher, Principal, or Parent makes referral to school Outreach Consultant (ORC)

ORC Coordination of Services Team
Contacts parent (consent for contact and background information)

Monitored / Follow-up through COST
Goals met / Closure
(summary to ORC, Teacher, etc.)

Parent

MH Treatment Provided
Process Documented and Outcomes Measured

Goals & Strategies developed
May include strategies for Teachers, parents, Noon Aides, etc.

ORCs
Review:
-Immediacy / Crisis Intervention
-Does the student/family need MH services only or Case Management and MH
-Who else is needed on team (PH Nurse, CFS, etc.)?
-Where should MH referral go (BFCS, Pacific Clinics, West End, South Coast, OMSD Interns)

Mental Health:
Appointment set with parent

Assessment / Intake with parent and/or child (CAFAS, etc.)

Treatment Plan:
-Parent
-Teacher
-Child

Possible Barrier Points in the Process:
-Parent agrees to participate at school meeting then declines
-Family reluctant to participate in counseling
-General issues of stigma of mental health treatment create a barrier

Case Management:
Facilitation of access / linkage to basic needs and other supports and coordination with MH supports

Process updates to: Parents and Teachers / Principal / ORC (appropriate and timely)
The Internship

We were directed to focus on data entry and our attempts to get into the field to do qualitative work were met with resistance. We worked in an office setting and from home and we processed and entered the results from the parent surveys that we had gathered and sorted. We looked specifically at the survey responses, which focused on community needs and access barriers, and lastly strengths/weaknesses of school sites. Subsequently, the data was disaggregated to look for common themes. After we analyzed this data, we submitted questions to OMSD school officials who began to form questions for a focus group with parents to further explore the survey results.

We were anxious to get into the field, but our supervisor seemed very reluctant to have us do anything other than process data. She was very distrustful of us and often treated us as if she was preemptively averting failure on our part, although we always met every deadline, responded to every question, and in many cases we exceeded her requests for data. On a personal level we knew that it was an important project and we wanted OMSD to get as much information as they could, so they could get as clear a picture as possible from the survey data. We wanted to reassure our supervisor that we were trustworthy enough to be on the school sites, but we could not press her too hard to give us access. We also wanted to preserve the relationship between the Ontario program and OMSD for future research opportunities. The legal restrictions on our entering school sites without permission were also a very real consideration. In retrospect, we all wish that we had pushed the boundaries a little bit. It would have been very informative to spend time in the front offices of school sites doing research on the accessibility and disposition of the staff. We heard complaints about front office staff in the survey data and in our interviews.

We did not want to jeopardize the Ontario Program’s relationship with OMSD, so we did our best to comply with Leslie’s directives. After we missed a very rich potential research
opportunity (The 39th Annual Parent Leadership Conference, which was a weekend devoted to bringing together 700 parents and community partners), we decided to contact and interview a parent educator. We tracked him down through a newspaper article about the event. Ultimately, we were only able to gain access to the school sites for a total of six hours, 10 days before the end of the semester. We conducted focus groups in two schools and interviewed the Outreach Coordinators. We came to the school sites early and waited around as much as possible at the end of our focus group session in order to gather as much on-site data as we could.

The Literature: Parental Involvement and Student Outcomes

There is plentiful data that underlines the importance of parental involvement. We found very little qualitative research that illuminated the experience of so-called uninvolved parents. We searched through many databases, sifted through bibliographies of relevant work, and looked for repeated voices in the field. What emerged was a combination of institutional/traditional, (mainly quantitative) literature, which looked through a largely middle class lens, qualitative literature that tended to vilify or victimize the “uninvolved” parent, and some outlier work that was examining our basic assumptions about parental involvement. Policy is determined by mainly quantitative traditional/institutional literature, but it is missing a qualitative approach.

Parental involvement has shaped public education policy over the past quarter century. In 1986, the Reagan administration launched, Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which incorporated parental involvement as a necessary component of student success. In 1996, the Clinton administration reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which required all schools that received Title I monies to dedicate at least 1% to parent school compacts. In 2002, No Child Left Behind reinforced the importance of parental involvement by making it one of its six goals. The US Department of Education built on the work of Joyce
Epstein, one of the central voices in education research, by adopting her six types of parental involvement which she developed at Johns Hopkins University. The six types of involvement that she describes are still embedded in the guidelines. Currently, the USDE defines parental involvement under No Child Left Behind as:

- The participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring that parents play an integral role in assisting their child’s learning
- That parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child’s education at school
- That parents are full partners in their child’s education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child.
- That other activities are carried out, such as those described in section 1118 of the ESEA (Parental Involvement).

As part of the Obama administration’s revision of NCLB, Education Secretary Arne Duncan is seeking to double the current level of funding to parental involvement (USDE, Family Engagement). Our national focus on parental involvement as a central factor in successful educational outcomes demands that we look critically at our understanding of “parents” and “involvement.” This literature review will address challenges to dominant discourses surrounding the definition, efficacy, and barriers of parental involvement as well as its role in social mobility and perpetuating meritocracy myths.

General consensus asserts that parental involvement is important, “Research on the impact of parent involvement on a child’s academic well-being is conclusive: Students whose parents are involved in school have higher achievement, better behavior and more motivation than other students” (National Education Goals Panel). Several sources stretch the definition of
“involvement” beyond activity in the school site. For example, a family may not be visible at the school site, but may be supportive of the child’s education. A few voices examine the definition of parental involvement through a critical lens and note the stark contrast in discourse about middle class parental involvement and the deficit-laden language that surrounds socioeconomically challenged families (Cohen-Vogel, Goldring, and Smrekar). Terms used to describe the “uninvolved” or “needy” parent don’t acknowledge assets and defines involvement aesthetically. Using a model that was framed by the dominant culture and ignoring evidence that does not lock into the reference points, creates an incomplete picture of what parental involvement looks like in practice.

While there is major consensus among popular discourses, some researchers interrogate the blanket assumption that more involvement is always better for children by looking critically at multiple factors surrounding parental involvement (Pomerantz, Moorman, and Litwack). Peering deeper into how and why parents are involved in their children’s education makes it clear that linking parental involvement to student success is not as simple as public discourse and popular literature often frame it. It is also unclear whether parental involvement does more to improve behavior or academic achievement when socioeconomic differences are taken into account (Domina). Evaluating Evaluations: The Case of Parent Involvement Programs also questions the widely held consensus by analyzing forty-one studies that evaluate the effectiveness of parent involvement programs. The authors assert that “serious design, methodological, and analytical flaws” exist in these studies. Therefore, we should halt conclusions about the effectiveness of parental involvement programs until we have improved our means of assessing them (Mattingly, et al.).
Several articles cite factors that are commonly believed to correlate with a lack of parental involvement in US school systems: low income levels (Lareau), feeling unwelcome in the school, not knowing how to negotiate the school system, lack of childcare, lack of English language skills, and lack of transportation (National PTA). Linek, Rasinski, and Harkins also found that a majority of teachers were dissatisfied with parent involvement, citing a general lack of interest or concern about school matters as an impediment to their involvement. Oversimplified discourses that name laziness or lack of interest as a barrier may conceal serious barriers to parental involvement.

A few articles cite specific barriers, which are not traditionally acknowledged in public discourse: “disabilities (Narrow), homelessness (Hill-Anderson, Oglesbee, and Renz), local conditions, (Cohen-Vogel, Goldring, and Smrekar) parent cliques (Peña), parent perceived skills and knowledge (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler), and parent-child dynamics (Wiseman). While there may be additional factors that inhibit parental involvement, our most limiting factor may be the lens of the researcher. A limited conception of the term itself may prevent researchers from seeing non-traditional forms of involvement. This lack of recognition facilitates a deficit based approach to parental involvement, denying communities of their assets and agency. Deficit-laden discourse is most harmful when enacted alongside assertions of meritocracy, which allow larger power structures to dislocate accountability for student’s failures. The myth of meritocracy can also contribute to generational apathy and low self-worth. If immigration is a factor, the child’s status as either a "voluntary" or “involuntary” immigrant, as defined by degrees of historical colonization or enslavement, affects “buy in” to the dominant culture (Finn). Most notably, resilient children have competent, caring adults advocating on their behalf and supporting their competence. Ann S. Masten, Professor and Director at the Institute of Child Development at the
University of Minnesota, writes about resilient, homeless children, “homeless children with parents who are involved in their education, communicate high expectations and facilitate school attendance and homework, have far better academic achievement than children without the advantages of an effective parent.” It seems that in the case of student academic outcomes, parental skills can be a better predictor of success than financial stability.

**Gaps or Biases in Existing Knowledge**

Very little data acknowledges the fluidity of parental involvement and qualitative ethnographic sources of experience that would illuminate the complexity of parental involvement. Changing the dynamic between socioeconomically/culturally “disadvantaged” students and the school system has the potential to create real shifts in access to opportunity, if the necessary restructuring is based in an organic, community-based model that respects the assets of the community. Unfortunately, such reforms are often viewed solely through the lens of the advantaged, who have a different set of basic assumptions and are therefore unable to see the true barriers and the wealth of cultural knowledge in the communities that they are trying to “help.”

There must also be strategies in place for children whose parents will not, or cannot become involved in supporting their children’s education, because we know that their chances of success without the support of an adult are exceedingly slim. It is clear that a child cannot successfully negotiate our public school system without adult assistance. The question is what form should adult assistance take and how can we support a structure that provides opportunities for communities to connect and to acknowledge the need for scaffolding adults in the lives of children?
Methodology

The methods we used in our research study were individual and collective interviews through focus groups. From our interviews, narratives emerged, which we approached as flexible and evolving (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). We also analyzed the predetermined surveys created by the school district to assess community needs as well as literature on the subject of parental involvement.

We began our research with a philosophical paradigm/worldview, which is “a basic set of beliefs that guide action” (Guba, 1990, p.17). The particular approach that guided our research was the Social Constructivist paradigm. Rather than beginning with a particular theory, we allowed the information from the interviews and focus groups to guide our research and framing of parental involvement. We asked general questions like: “What might keep parents from being involved at the school site?” and later explored the sharp contrast in tone between the immediate responses (‘they’re lazy and uncommitted”) and the delayed responses (“maybe they have to work”). Our approach was to develop subjective meanings of our experiences, which are varied, and multiple. We looked critically at the complexity of our experiences and allowed for the expansion, rather than the narrowing of meanings gleaned from them. We focused on the interaction of the parents and expanded upon the contextual meaning of their desire to understand each other. These parents began to realize they are rich in resources for each other (languages, cultural knowledge, parenting techniques, etc) but are mostly seen by the district as deficient. Being viewed as deficient makes the parents eager to offer ideas for outside help but hesitant to see where their own strengths may meet another’s need. We take these notions of deficiency vs. asset rich, in a larger historical and cultural context to shape our interpretations.
Our positionalities are also considered highly relevant to how we form meanings of our subjective experiences.

Our philosophical approach to our research is shaped by our desire for humans to transcend social restraints. We utilize a lens of critical theory because we are interested in social theorizing, understanding and hopefully transforming the social and systemic structures that bind and restrict our social, mental, emotional, and physical growth. Our research explores the study of an institution (the school district), in the context of its interaction with social groups and individuals. One goal is to facilitate the process for individuals to examine the discourses used by greater power structures to speak about them. Our research exposes assumptions made about so-called uninvolved parents and critiques narrow definitions of parental involvement.

We looked at the results of open-ended survey questions, Likkert scale questions, interviews, and focus groups. We also took a critical look at the literature surrounding parental involvement. Over the past 25 years, parent involvement has become a battle cry in education. There is a deficit-based model in place that does not seem to acknowledge the presence and strengths of the community, nor does it seem to be looking at parent engagement through anything but the perspective of the so-called involved parent and the administration, which often come from a socially empowered middle class perspective.

The Analysis

Discourse

Binary forms of labeling solidify hierarchical roles, restrict and ignore the fluidity of changing family circumstances, and perpetuate deficiency based approaches to community development. To examine these issues we have done an analysis of the discourses embedded in the school district’s literature, our focus groups, individual interviews, and selections from
relevant literature. Let’s first examine the school district’s goal and assessment methods. The goal of the community school project is: “to identify and secure additional services for students and families in Ontario-Montclair School District.” OMSD is approaching the community school as a service project rather than as a community partnership. The data from the surveys and the focus groups is limited to the questions that SFSS/OMSD chose before we became part of the project. The questions about community issues such as domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental illness—which agency partners and staff identify as problems, and family strengths—are missing from the parent surveys. The reason for the discrepancy between questions in the staff/agency partners survey and the parent survey remains a mystery and is an area for future exploration.

**Invisible Barriers**

Parents in the focus group did speak about several of the issues staff and agency partners identified when we asked if there was anything else they wanted to discuss. Personal stories highlighted an urgent need for education about signs of child abuse, personal harm, and substance abuse. “I think so many parents are unaware of what their kids are doing, it boggles my mind how they don’t know their kids are hurting themselves. And that can often be with children who are being abused, sexually, physically, mentally, emotionally. I found stuff in my daughters backpack. I found out she has a friend that’s doing that [cutting]” (Mother at Howard). Deeper issues such as these must be viewed in context with the notion of the “uninvolved parent.” Perhaps there are more serious issues within home life that remain hidden from view out of fear. In Learning From Latino Teachers, one of Gilda Ochoa’s interviewees stated: “There are a lot of obstacles for parents...economics, problems at home with divorce...that maybe make parents not want to take on something else.” Much of the discourse we encountered in our focus
groups of “involved” parents were blaming and othering “uninvolved” parents, “they’re lazy and immature; they lack commitment and interest.” This type of discourse is harmful because it concretizes people into roles which are actually fluid and allows for the perpetuation of the meritocracy myth.

**Divisions and False Dichotomies**

In *Whose Community Schools? New Discourses, Old Patterns*, Keith cautions that new trends focusing on parental involvement and student successes may be transferring accountability for student failures onto parents. Keith argues that this shift of “responsibility away from the school (and perhaps the public sector) and onto the families is strongly reminiscent of the conservative discourse” (228). While we recognize the role and responsibility of the school district, we must be careful not to deny individuals and families of their personal agency and ability to effect change. Balancing these ideas is a struggle when looking at multiple scales simultaneously. The school district is responsible for addressing the needs of the families. However, these needs may be addressed most effectively when understood in context with the assets of the families. Our research illuminates the divide between the school district’s largely dominant, deficit based approach to working with the community and the parent’s combined perceptions of deficits and assets. Parents easily identified needs in the community but were more hesitant to speak about its strengths. After discussing their interests in parenting techniques, cultural appreciation, and learning multiple languages, several of the parents began to see how they could share and teach each other. “That’s a great idea, I’m taking mental notes here,” one of the parents responds to another’s parenting tip. The parents’ desire to learn from each other was illuminated throughout our focus group with Howard. One parent suggested cultural appreciation classes and another added in agreement, “Just to have that understanding,
so there are not prejudices. I think that’s where it all stems from – ignorance of different cultures.” Parents also agreed on the desire for multiple language classes, not just English. In that small focus group alone there were fluent speakers of at least three languages. Rather than always bringing outside resources into the proposed community schools, many needs and desires can be met from within the community. Our recommendation is for OMSD to affirm the parents’ strengths and confidence by engaging them as equal partners and agents in community building and organizing efforts.

**Culture**

**Parents as ‘English Language Learners’**

In the focus groups for both Euclid and Howard, the majority of parents were dominant in languages other than English. When asked the question about whether or not they felt English Language classes were a need within the community, parents across the board expressed the necessity for English classes. They felt it was an essential skill to helping their children’s success, through helping them with homework and saw that learning English would benefit their overall quality of life. Some parents echoed themes of language deficiency theories and their sentiments of inferior treatment because of their lack of English skills. One mother, Diana Ortiz, at Euclid said the following on the matter:

“I want to finish high school. Some people make me feel less than them and inferior for not knowing English. They’ve made me feel bad. These people speak Spanish and in front of me purposely speak English as if I didn’t understand. Even in your own family. Well I’m speaking about my in laws who make me feel like I’m beneath them because they speak English. They think they’re better than me. But in reality we’re the same. –because they’re
ignorant. (response) – That’s why I say I want to learn English to be the same as them or even better. “

Through this quote we clearly see the lasting effects of Spanish language repression on individuals. While she is challenging the notion that English is better than Spanish, she still wants and needs to learn it in order to survive. Parents at the schools in the surveys also mentioned that one of the things they liked about the schools was when teachers were able to speak two languages and bridge the communication between the groups.

School-based Parental Involvement: Barriers and Motivations

“That they see their mother coming to the meetings, getting involved. That is what really motivates me. She was so proud.” Ana Cortez

“The kids call me teacher. (laughs)” Maria de la Cruz

Early while into conducting the parent focus groups, it became apparent that the parents participating were those already active at the school sites. During the Euclid focus group it was all women, all Spanish dominant. We got the sense, although they did not explicitly state it, that all the women there were either not working jobs or had hours that did not fit the 9-5 schedule. When answering questions we also got the sense that the majority of the women had small/young children at home or even with them.

“Estan felices por que vengo a ayudar en la escuela. They are happy when I come to help at the school.” Diana Ortiz. While it can be said that the group of women we met with at Euclid had different motives for participating a few recurred numerous times. In this case Diana felt a strong sense of pride when helping at the school sites. She spoke of her child feeling a sense of pride seeing his mother’s investment and presence at the school site. It served as a source of
inspiration, as described by his mother, to do well in school. While we cannot say this is always the case, it proves another example that whether or not parental involvement is school-based or home-based, it is strongly linked to student success and in this case a sense of empowerment for both the parent and child. Another motive was that if they helped, the teachers would have more time and energy to teacher. They saw this as their contribution to the school to make their jobs of teaching their children easier.

**Barriers: School Personnel & Faculty**

A variety of factors can interfere with the parent involvement practices. AdEuclidian’s 1990 study compartmentalizes these barriers into the following categories: personal (i.e. disposition of individual, lack of interest, perceptions of roles within school) impersonal (i.e. practical problems to work schedule conflicts, transportation, childcare); and institutional factors (i.e. lack of resource to support teachers efforts to increase parent involvement, lack of bilingual staff, inadequate training of teachers).

The women we spoke with either did not have these barriers in their experience or had found ways to navigate them. After speaking about their motives and experiences at yard duty (school-based involvement), I asked the women whether or not they felt comfortable at the school site. I asked this question primarily because much of the literature suggests, and surveys that the school can be an ostracizing, othering environment. (Moreno 1997) (Ochoa, 2007) The women challenged my assumptions and shared their contentment with the school and their comfort levels. “I was very happy here. I came here and began to involve myself more. In other schools, I didn’t feel the same as here. Here I feel included.” -Tanya Gutierrez. After the focus groups however we learned why mothers like those we spoke to, felt more comfortable. Just a few years
before conducting our focus groups, a new principal was introduced to Euclid Elementary. This principal was described by the school’s Outreach Coordinator (ORC), as being nearly the opposite as the one previous. Parents also echoed this sentiment.

“I don’t know if I could say that for the teachers, but definitely the principal makes us feel welcome.” Maria de la Cruz stated when speaking about the weekly teatime with the principal.

The previous principal made the school into an oppressive place by enforcing new practices that further excluded parents, particularly working class, Latino parents. She made it so school officials, the front desk and others were not allowed to speak Spanish. She refused to bridge communication and learn Spanish herself at a school in which the majority of families are Spanish speaking. The Outreach Coordinator described the effects of her position as lasting and as major deterrents to parent on-site involvement.

The school staff has been shown to be incredibly important in the parent’s relation to the school setting (Ochoa, 2007). Among Mexican Americans, Delgado-Gaitan reported parents’ social isolation and their English Language proficiency ‘created a knowledge gap’ (p 141) (Delgado-Gaitan 1990, Moreno, I also saw the aforementioned disconnect in the district wide survey. In some of the open-ended responses in the surveys we collected, parents said things like “Curriculum is not challenging. The majority of the staff are cold or unfriendly” or “The school does not listen or help us. We have to hound the school down to be heard.” These sorts of experiences can leave traumatizing effects on parents and led to the drop off, pick up, ‘invisible’ parent mentioned by mothers at Euclid. One parent stated “I’ve had bad experiences that I’m not sure to say but thanks to those my son knows what he knows.” Often times Latino parents who are seen as, unschooled and uneducated, also feel as though their perspective is not as valid or important and that the teacher/school knows what’s best for their child.
Value in Education by Latina/o families

In fact, it is precisely because of the possibilities for economic mobility, that will later be explored in more depth, many Latina/o families put value in education. In Gilda Ochoa’s Learning from Latino Teachers, a narrative from a retired middle school teacher Diana Cortez exemplifies this,

“Latinos value education. When you’re at the bottom of the heap in your own country and you’re just trying to survive and put food on the table, you want better for your kids. Many parents say, “I want my kids to get an education because I don’t want them to work”; especially the fathers say, “Como un burro, como yo, like a donkey.” They don’t want hard physical labor for their children. They want them to have more white-collar jobs.” (Ochoa, 2007)

Just as these teachers state, our own interviews and focus groups within OMSD echoed this perspective. Mothers at Euclid stated numerous times that they wanted their child to do better than them and have a better job. When speaking about who they saw as a successful person, one mother stated that her husband’s nephew who was becoming a dentist, in spite of his many obstacles, who she saw as a muy buen ejemplo, a great example of a successful person. Mother’s themselves even expressed their own wanting to return to school, “Succeed for me is learning to speak English well, write it well. Not needing to depend on them. I know I’m a little old but get a degree/career” Ana Cortez, Euclid Mother.

Community School Project

While doing research, it became apparent that there is a long history of programs aimed towards Latina/o families, specifically mothers, with the perspective that Latina/o families need
to be improved. They must learn to cook nutritiously, they must learn English, they must learn how to raise their children correctly (Ochoa, 2007, Gonzalez, 1990, Villenas, 2001). These practices within school settings often times can cause more harm than good as they cause people to blame individual families instead of larger systems and processes at play. This long history of cultural deficiency programs/perspectives can perpetuate practices that can subtract students, in this case Latino students of their cultural resources such as the family values and the Spanish language, creating a barrier for children and families to one’s own background and history. (Valenzuela 1999)

Because the ‘Community School Project’ is still at such an early stage, it can further perpetuate these cultural deficiency perspectives, or it can be a place to build community, as well as connect people with assets within their own community. It runs the risk of turning parents into clients/consumer/recipients of a service. When speaking to our supervisor Leslie Sorensen, she gave some examples of a women’s health group, Promotores de Salud, led by mothers at one of the elementary schools. This model for the group Promotores de Salud, Health teacher, creates more lasting community building in that it is run by community members, for community members, while simultaneously building off of their own ways of cooking etc.

**Meritocracy Myth—Equal Opportunity?**

In order to survive, this myth must ignore individual circumstances while simultaneously idealizing the plucky individual who bootstraps his/her way to success. In direct opposition to the meritocracy and in a perfect reflection of our society, our schools reward the students to whom traditional learning modes are easy, and ignores the fact that their success is not earned, but inborn. Essentially, as Barry Switzer said, “Some people are born on third base and go through life thinking they hit a triple.”
If a child is born a non-traditional learner, or comes from a different set of cultural reference points, tasks that seem easy are in fact, very hard. This point came up when we met with teacher educator, Lisa Loop. We spoke with Ms. Loop about the ability of a standardized test to measure what a child actually knows, because in many cases it is only measuring a child’s ability at the task of test taking, or their knowledge of the dominant culture, and tells you little about what a child has actually absorbed. She agreed, but said it could still measure improvement from year to year. The problem with that view is that testing is not just used to measure the children against themselves, or to assess the ability of the teacher, as she was saying it should be used, but that standardized testing is used as a means to track students and it impacts their life chances, and their view of themselves as learners.

There are many barriers to children reaching potential that they have no control over, if they have a troubled home life, they are going to have more difficulty in school. Meritocracy attempts to conceal differences in the home lives of students. Paul Tough points out that Angela Duckworth’s research concluded, “self-discipline scores were a more accurate predictor of G.P.A. then I.Q. scores by a factor of two.” Children do not hear that message, they hear that they have to be “smart” and then they are left to figure out how to study, or organize their homework. What we actually do in schools is reward inborn talents and cultural and social capital, all the while pretending to value hard work. The ORC could think of only two examples of children in her 15 years of experience that did well, despite little, or invisible support. She described these rare children as “Self-motivated.” If these children are so rare, why do we pretend that children can all overcome hardship, if they just try hard enough? As a society we are responsible for educating and protecting children and we fail them when we transfer that responsibility to them. The meritocracy pretends that we are all born into circumstances that
support our ability to internalize organization, or to perform certain tasks. How is a child who lives in chaos and fear going to bring their homework in on time? These children require the assistance of an adult, which brings us back to parental involvement.

We interviewed professionals who had many years of experience with parents, and asked them about barriers to parental involvement for the mainly Latino/a families that they worked with. Parental fear and insecurity was a recurrent theme, and perhaps the most destructive invisible barrier. We also heard a great deal about the respect that the families have for teachers and their feelings of inadequacy in the school setting. The Meritocracy Myth insists that we all have the same life chances and that every child in America can grow up to be anything they want. This myth is perhaps most damaging to children whose families lack the social capital of the dominant system—the coin of the realm: a healthy sense of entitlement. If their children are to “succeed,” it is imperative that parents learn to negotiate the school system for their children. It seems that the social capital most necessary for the success of children in the school system, is parental confidence. At Euclid school, our panel of parents was enthusiastic in describing their level of comfort in the school, and even at welcoming Euclid, the ORC described many timid parents who felt shy and embarrassed to be around “teachers who know everything.” We interviewed a parent advocate who spent many years teaching “Powerful Parent Involvement.” He told us about humiliations parents suffered at schools, and particularly at the hands of the front desk staff, who he described by saying: “90% are disgruntled.” He spoke glowingly about the few that really made a difference by directing parents to resources, and by showing them kindness. He said we could solve many problems by getting the front desk better training or pay, because their role as gatekeeper and as the face of the school was so important.
We also interviewed the ORC at Euclid Elementary School and she was an invaluable resource to us because she had worked as a teacher in the classroom for 15 years and now worked with parents and the administration. She instinctively understood bridging the cultural space for her “kids,” and she had the asset of being a native Spanish speaker. We asked her about the curriculum and if it reflected the social and cultural experience of the children and she replied, “No, I have to teach things they’ve never heard of.” She went on to say, “Sometimes it’s the academic language, you have to make it relatable.” She talked about helping the students to learn in a system that begins testing them in 2nd grade. “You build on what they know, you can’t change the curriculum.” She spoke of many techniques she had learned through necessity. She had to teach her students not just by transmitting academic knowledge, but also by serving as a guide to the dominant culture. Our parent educator was more blunt when discussing the cultural gap in the curriculum and the results in test scores, “The system disqualified them intentionally.” He and the ORC both discussed in great detail the necessity for the kind of involvement that is more “holistically” based. She said that parents are involved at school and do not know anything about what is going on with their child, and that she spent much of her time teaching parents how to negotiate the system because there are so many steps to getting your child to college and you have to start thinking about it early. The parent educator shared his philosophy: “Your love of your children needs to be stronger than any fear.” He gave us examples of parents who understood how to push for testing for the gifted program to give their kids better chances in middle school and in high school AP courses. The fact that it is necessary for parents to be “brave” in order to get the opportunity that all children in our country are legally entitled to, says a great deal about the failures in our system. The necessity of these skills is cloaked by the myth
of meritocracy. Parents do not know that they need to do more than send their children to school, because our myth says we have, as one parent wrote in the surveys, “equal opportunities.”

**Building a Scaffold for Social Capital**

Children depend on adults for the transmission of social and cultural capital. There is a concept in childhood language acquisition called “scaffolding,” wherein the parent teaches their baby to speak by filling in and repeating the words that the child already knows. This concept needs to be adopted as a means of strengthening the ability of students to reach their potential even if they do not have a traditionally supportive adult in their lives. Meritocracy myths romanticize the idea that people come from “nothing” while ignoring cultural/social capital. The idea of a “resilient” child is somewhat patronizing, because it is clear, when one digs a little deeper into success stories, that in the background of every resilient child, there is an adult who scaffolds their ability to accumulate the necessary social capital to succeed in the education system. Silent, or what we are referring to in this paper as “invisible” support is also unacknowledged and fuels meritocracy myths that further hopelessness in children and justify negative feedback both culturally and individually. The lens of Meritocracy pits cultures against themselves and the perceived Other. For socially immobilized groups, cooperation with those that looked down on the class in which you belong, can be experienced as a betrayal to one’s family and community. It is especially hard for groups who have a history of class discrimination to change “sides” and join those who have used the myth of meritocracy to justify maltreatment of their people. This phenomenon is not confined to immigrants or minorities, there is also resistance from white working-class children to relinquish their familiar personal identity.

Patrick Finn writes eloquently about this gap in his book: Literacy with an Attitude: Educating
Working-Class Children in Their Own Self-Interest. Finn states, “Members of the oppressed group come to regard certain beliefs, skills, tastes, values, attitudes, and behaviors as not appropriate for them, because they are associated with the dominant group. Adopting these is seen as surrendering to the enemy.”

Our system is hiding truth from children and parents about obstacles to success and therefore reinforcing a failure based self-image. Until the dominant narrative we recite to children includes the pitfalls they may face and tools that work, we will continue to reproduce social class, create resentment, and induce social manifestations of cognitive dissonance.
OMSD’s Poverty Profile

Our Conclusion

The community school model could be a powerful resource for families if it is rooted in a horizontal, rhizomatic approach and not a deficit/service based model. School officials should aim to create inclusive school sites, classrooms, and meetings. The community school project has the potential to bring together groups of parents that would otherwise never interact. Schools need to be redefined as community spaces in which all perspectives are valued and respected and
all feel welcome. The goals of the school should include raising the awareness of parents about how the school system works and empowering them to negotiate an excellent education for their children. There is need for scaffolding adults to transmit stability, practical knowledge, and early college planning to children whose parents cannot participate in trainings. Parental Engagement must focus on the skills and strengths that we saw in the community and foster confidence and respect for the families and their wealth of experiences. If the scope of parental involvement/engagement is expanded not to displace or replace family culture, and instead engages in an additive approach, there is potential for foundational change.

**New Research Questions**

Questions: What percentage of successful children had involved parents? How many succeeded despite a lack of parental involvement? Did they have other supports - invisible capital? How is parental involvement defined? How is “parent” defined - what about mentors? Has parental involvement changed along with the decline of success in schools - is there a link? Invisible involvement: do students who seem to succeed without any supports actually have invisible supports? How do we value different forms of cultural capital while still preparing students for the dominant culture? Is parental involvement in the school site the cause of increased academic achievement, or is improvement based on the acquisition of insider information (a by-product of involvement)?

**Notes for Future Researcher(s)**

We have many unanswered question because the data from the surveys and the focus groups is limited to the questions that SFSS/OMSD chose before we became part of the project. Questions about community issues such as domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental
illness—which agency partners and staff identify as problems—are missing from the parent surveys. Parents in the focus group did speak about several of these issues when we asked our last question--if there was anything else they wanted to discuss. Personal stories highlighted an urgent need for education about signs of child abuse, personal harm, and substance abuse. The families also had a deep desire to learn from each other and had a great deal to share. We had trouble getting on site because we were dealing with a school system that was protecting their interests and felt the need to restrict access. We came close to failing to collect the data we needed. As a result, we did not get to spend more time following up on our findings, and much of what we found was based on an algebraic model of seeing the influence of an unknown and unexplored force: the silent parents. We were glad to speak to the involved parents and we did find excellent data in interviews and the literature, but we still need to hear directly from the families that remain voiceless. Their voices could make a powerful difference.
A range of SFSS services are provided to students and families through school sites—

Case Management:

Counseling services:

Medical services:

Dental services:

Immunizations:

Health Insurance Enrollment:

Transportation access (Bus/gas passes):

Kids Pack:

Parent Education:

Teacher Classroom Consultations:

Crisis Counseling:

Crisis Case Management:

Supporting the physical, psychological, and social development of students so they can be successful in school and life.
2011 OMSD School—Community Assessment (Full Service Community Schools)—

First Deadline: 3/25/11

Objective: Gathering primary data for future program planning and grant development

900+ staff surveys completed to date (wrapping up)

Next steps:
- Disaggregate and review data

Parent surveys (English and Spanish) in progress (to be completed by 2/16/11)
Hawthorne School 300+ to date (incentive: bookmarks)—other schools?

Need help with now:
- Following up with each school site contact to see if they need help gathering parent surveys
- Going to After School Programs, school events, etc.
- Inputting open-end responses (English/Spanish) into a data base (start with Hawthorne?)

Later: Focus groups with parents to explore survey findings

Online survey to be launched week of 2/14

Questions:
Amount of time available and start/end?
When during the week? Set times to meet each week for status check?
Laptop computer to use?
Interns’ learning goals?

Contact info:
909.930.6776
leslie.sorensen@omsd.k12.ca.us
2011 FSCS Parent Surveys

- Contact Student Support staff person at each site by phone (record your contacts w/ date, time, comments)
- Let them know you are working with Dr. Bonnie Mooney
- Status check: how many collected to date and any plans for collecting more?
- Target: 100 parent surveys
- You are available to support them

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<th>Jacey</th>
<th>Natalie</th>
<th>Joanna</th>
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Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. We will use the results to identify and secure additional services for students and families. Return your survey to ____________________________ before February 15, 2018. Thank you for your help.

What is your dream for your child's future?


Please fill in any one circle / bubble per line.

Families in the community need the following:
1. Parenting classes
2. Family activities
3. Counseling services
4. Help with health care
5. Help with dental care
6. Help with food
7. Help with clothing
8. Help with affordable health insurance
9. Information about college
10. More pre-school classes for young children
11. Help managing household budgets
12. More income
13. Other (please list)

Barriers to more income for adults in the community include: (Fill in all bubbles that apply)
- Lack of English language skills
- Lack of a High School Diploma
- Lack of ability to read/write/low reading skills/low adult literacy
- Need for more job training
- Citizenship status

Please fill in any one circle / bubble per line.

Students need more of the following after-school:
14. Art, music, drama activities
15. Help with school work
16. More sports (basketball, baseball etc.)
17. Opportunities to volunteer in the community

What do you like best about your child's school?

Do you have any concerns about your child's school?

Thank you.
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<th>Families in the community need</th>
<th>English (N=90)</th>
<th>Spanish (N=190)</th>
<th>All (N=280)</th>
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<tr>
<td>3. Pre-school</td>
<td>3. College info</td>
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<td>5. Health care</td>
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<td>2. English skills</td>
<td>2. Citizenship</td>
<td>2. Job training</td>
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<th>Afterschool needs for students</th>
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<td>3. Art/Music/Drama</td>
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From open-end responses: What is your dream for your child’s future?

able achieve and attend become best better career child college daughter degree doctor dream education finish future goals graduate happy healthy help important independent job keep life person professional teach school someone something study succeed successful teacher university wants whatever

*This Word Cloud is a visual depiction of the weighted list of words most frequently mentioned by parents (parents from multiple sites).*
Questions for Community Partners/OMSD Staff

What is your role at OMSD?

What is your relationship to OMSD?
-Professional?
-Personal?

Does your personal history relate to that of the students?

How have you learned to bridge the gap between the student’s home culture and the culture of the district/school?

Do you think parental involvement is important?
-Can you think of an example?

Do you think that offering parents ESL or citizenship classes improves the chances for student success?
-Can you think of an example?

Do you think the curriculum reflects and respects the cultures of the families in OMSD?

What do you think are some barriers to parental involvement?
-Can you think of any examples?

We are researching full service community schools, have you heard of this model?

Is there anything you would like to add?
Hello, my name is _______. Thank you for being here. I am a student from Pitzer College and I’m helping with today’s discussion. This is _______, we will be working together to record your thoughts.

Before we get started, can everybody please make sure that your phone is turned off? Can I get a volunteer to be our timer? Why don’t we go around the room and introduce ourselves? Tell us your name and one thing about your child that makes you smile. I’ll start. [Introductions]

We are preparing for future programs and services in our schools for children and adults and we need your ideas. We have gathered surveys from all of the schools to help us to start this process and based on your answers we have certain topics that we’d like to discuss. —We’ll also be discussing your hopes for yourself and your family.

[IRB explanation]

During our discussion today there are no wrong answers, just different points of view. We want to know your thoughts, so our job is to listen, ask questions, and keep the discussion on track.

Let’s begin:

1. Parents used the term success often in the recent surveys – how do you define success for your child?
   a. Can you tell us a little more about what this might look like?

2. The parent surveys identified the need for the following adult education in the community: English language classes and citizenship classes - does this seem correct to you?

3. What other types of adult education classes would you suggest?

4. What might keep parents from attending these classes?

5. What keeps parents from being involved in the school site?

6. In the survey we asked you about your dreams for your children, would anybody like to share their dreams for themselves?

7. Anything else you would like to add before we end?
Educational Research Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study regarding Ontario-Montclair School District. You were selected as a possible participant because of your affiliation with OMSD. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

**Background Information:** The purpose of this study is to identify and secure additional services for students and families in OMSD.

**Procedures:** If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to answer questions as part of a focus group or individually.

**Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:**
We do not anticipate any risks for you participating in this study, other than those encountered in day-to-day life.
Direct benefits: The results will be used to identify and secure additional services for students and families in Ontario-Montclair School District.

**Voluntary Nature of Participation:** Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Pitzer College or Ontario Montclair School District. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

**Confidentiality:** Any records and tape recordings of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records and tape recordings will be kept in a locked file; only the researchers will have access to the records and recordings. Recordings will be used to aid research and will be destroyed when the research is completed.

**Contacts and Questions:** The researchers conducting this study are Susan Phillips, Natalie Mendoza, Joanna Looby, and Jacey Rubinstein. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact the researchers at: nmendoza@students.pitzer.edu, Joanna_Lamb-Looby@pitzer.edu, jrubinst@students.pitzer.edu. Our advisor is Susan Phillips who may be contacted at susan_phillips@pitzer.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact Leslie Sorensen at Leslie.Sorensen@omsd.k12.ca.us. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

**Statement of Consent:** I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I am at least 18 years old and I consent to participate in the study.

Signature of Participant ___________________________ Date __________

Signature of Principal Investigator: __________________________ Date __________

*This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study.*
Euclid Elementary School Focus Group

Thursday, April 29, 2011
12:30 PM

The following chart notes were translated from Spanish

Parents use the word success often in the recent surveys. How do you define success for your child?
--Coming to school everyday
--Perfect attendance
--Achieving his/her dreams
--Good grades
--Learn to communicate with others
--Good nutrition at home and at school
--Pay attention so that they can learn
--Have questions
--Get to the university
--Get a degree
--Learning

The surveys identified the necessity for adult education as the following:
English Classes and Citizenship classes

Does this seem correct to you?
Yes
-To be able to help my kids with their homework

What other types of classes would you suggest?
--Nutrition
--Grammar, to learn to read in write in Spanish or English
--GED classes
--Counseling.
--Motivation workshops

What could keep parents from attending these classes?
--Schedule, work schedule
--Shyness, timidity
--Distance from the school geographically
--The individual’s own disposition
--If they are new families in the community
--Lack of big prizes as motivation
--Necessity for childcare
--Lack of information
--Lack of interest

What keeps parents from being involved at the school site?
-- Work
-- Their economic situation
-- Lack of interest
-- Childcare
-- Schedule

Do you feel comfortable at school?
-- Yes
-- Very welcoming and nice
-- Everyone works as a team
-- The principal shows a lot of care for our kids, she takes care of them.

What motivated you to come here?
-- The principal
-- The education of my child, the importance of education
-- My child, he/she feels proud when he/she sees me here at school

Parent’s own dreams?
-- Learn English, computation (computers) to help my children
-- Overcome my challenges (speak and write English well) not depend on others
-- Gain a career (or degree?)
-- One has the ability to achieve what one wants.
-- Get my HS diploma (GED) (overcome)

Anything else left to add?
-- Receive the help we asked for
-- Classes for teachers
-- Better food for the children
-- Safety for the children
-- More volunteers
-- Workshops on bullying (parents and children)
-- Workshops on parenting
-- More surveillance (?) during lunch. More noon aids
-- Information on health (HF/medical, glasses)
Howard Elementary School Focus Group

Friday, April 30, 2011
8:00 AM

Parents used the term success often in the recent surveys – how do you define success for your child?
-Can you tell us a little more about what this might look like?
-Be successful in what he wants to do: go to school, become a cop.
-Natural talents can come to fruition.
-Accomplish more than what parents have done.
-Grow up happy, have an ambition.

The parent surveys identified the need for the following adult education in the community: English language classes and citizenship classes - does this seem correct to you?
-Should put them in sequence
-Thinking they should be separate

What other types of adult education classes would you suggest?
-Computer
-Food & nutrition
-Parenting- Discipline: "where are the parents & who are the parents?"
-Counseling
-Communication
-Parents speaking to teenagers
-Adult literacy- English learning to help children with homework
-Homework help- how to tutor your children
-Parents should study with children- be an example
-How to recognize signs of drug use, gang activity & what to do?
-How to talk to your children about sex
-Maybe a short video (15 min) teach parents how to transmit love of school
-Program (sp?) program in Chino- parents earn certificate and their students get priority at Cal State schools
-How to gain employment- interview, job skills

What might keep parents from attending these classes?
-Work
-Child care
-Lack of transportation
-Money- do the classes cost money?
-No time
-No desire- make it clear why it's important
-Both parents work
-Maybe short classes (30 min) at flexible times- weekends
-Online classes, video- but maybe they can't access? Don't know how to take a class
What keeps parents from being involved in the school site?
-Lack of commitment
-Lazy
-Working, no time
-Language barriers
-To much to do - chores etc.
-Immaturity (regardless of age)
-Think school will take care of everything- it will carry the responsibility

In the survey we asked you about your dreams for your children, would anybody like to share their dreams for themselves?
-See my child accomplishing his dreams
-See my kids get ahead, take care of themselves
-Get degree (college) to show children that they can always accomplish
-Be excellent in everything, be the mirror for your children, set the example you want your kids to enact
-Take advantage of all of the opportunities in this country
-Grow old with spouse- also example for children
-To be a family
-For children to be happy whatever form that takes

Anything else you would like to add before we end?
-Need higher level ESL classes too: multiple levels- read literature
-Other language classes- Spanish, Chinese
-Cultural appreciation and understanding- learn about other people in community.
-High demand for Spanish
-Parent drug education - see the actual drugs
-Awareness of problems associated with hurt children: cutting etc- for parents to -learn how to deal with these issues - for abused children these issues can become hidden- Prevention, not intervention.
-Check children's room, what to know to see what's going on- their drawings, their friends, how to communicate
-Parenting for teen children too, every level.
-How to deal with peer influence
-Parent should grow with children, keep promises.
OMSA Collaborative Partners—

Residen
Parents
Youth

Institutions of Higher Education
Azusa Pacific
Cal State Fullerton
Cal State San Bernardino
Chaffey Adult School
Chaffey Community College
Chaffey Joint Union High School District
La Verne University
Loma Linda University
Pitzer College
USC

City of Montclair
Community Action Committee
Fire Department
Human Services (Medical Clinic, Recreation, Por La Vida)
Library/Technology Center
Planning and Redevelopment
Police Department

City of Ontario
Economic Department
Police Department

County Organizations
Children's Network
Department of Behavioral Health
Department of Children Services
Department of Public Health
First 5
San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools
WESPEPA

Non-profit Organizations/Service Clubs
Bilingual Family Counseling Services
Foothill Family Shelter
House of Ruth
IEHP
Inland Valley Hope Partners
Inland Empire United Way
Isaiah's Rock
Kaiser Permanente
Kids Come First Clinic
Mercy House
Montclair-Ontario Junior Women's Club
Pacific Clinics
Para Los Ninos
Project Sister
Reach Out West End
Shoes That Fit
Soroptimist International Montclair/Inland Valley
West End Family Counseling Services

Businesses
BMS Upland
Costco
General Management of Montclair Plaza
Macy's
Ontario-Montclair Credit Union
Rocky's Pizzeria
Target
Students, you are now entering...

A

100% Success Zone!

Somebody Needs You!
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