

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Delorice Sykes Bell entitled "Parental Interest in and Motives for Studying the Educational Process." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, with a major in Curriculum and Instruction.

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PARENTAL INTEREST IN AND MOTIVES FOR STUDYING
THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine feelings of parents about their role in the process of public school education.

A questionnaire was developed by the researcher and administered to the parents in the study. Responses were statistically analyzed by computer. Averages, frequencies, percents, and rank order were methods used for analyzing data. Hypotheses were accepted that parents will:

1. Think they should have a significant voice in many aspects of public education.
2. Think their knowledge of the process of education is inadequate.
3. Know little about what goes on in various schools and systems.
4. Be interested in increasing their knowledge and participation in public school education.
5. Be motivated to learn more about public school education to better help their child.
6. Have time to become involved in activities to better help their child.
7. Be willing to participate in a study group to learn more about public education.

8. Be more motivated to learn about areas related to curriculum than they are areas related to politics.

The hypothesis was not accepted that white parents will be more motivated than black parents to learn about the process of education. Insufficient data in this study resulted in no conclusion on this variable. However, the hypothesis that parents with more education and income will be more highly motivated to study education was accepted.

The hypothesis was not accepted that urban parents will be more highly motivated to study education than rural parents. The opposite was found to be true. Rural parents in this study were more motivated to learn more about the process of public school education.

The hypothesis was accepted that mothers are more highly motivated than fathers to learn more about the process of education.

The following recommendations were drawn from the study:

1. School superintendents, central office personnel, principals, and teachers should each provide appropriate levels of parent education.

2. Further research is needed to survey what many schools are doing in parent education and to develop better questionnaires and samples.

3. School personnel should involve parents in education decision-making.

4. A program of parent education should be provided by an independent individual to provide a check and balance on other programs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose of the Study	1
Sources of Data	2
Importance of the Problem	3
Assumptions of the Study	6
Limitations of the Study	6
Hypotheses	7
Procedures	8
Overview	8
II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	10
Introduction	10
Literature Supporting the Need for Equality Education	11
Literature Stressing the Importance of Parent Involvement	16
Evidence that Parents are Involved in Some Communities	20
Literature Related to Procedure	30
Summary	32
III. PROCEDURES	34
Introduction	34
The Questionnaire	34
The Sample	38
Hamblen County	42
Morristown City	47
Administration of the Instrument	49
Data Analysis Procedures	51
IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA	52
Parents' Thoughts about Their Involvement in Educational Decisions	53
Parents' Thoughts about Their Knowledge of the Process of Education	58
Parents' thoughts about their rating of knowledge	61
Parents' Knowledge of Other Schools and Systems	63

CHAPTER	PAGE
Parents' Interest in Increasing Knowledge	66
Parents' desired rating of educational knowledge	69
Parents needing more information	72
Increased parent participation with increased knowledge	73
Parents' Motivation for Learning about Education	75
Parent motivation as indicated by selected activities	76
Parent motivation as indicated by reasons selected	81
Parent motivation as indicated by general reasons	84
Time for Children	84
Parent Interest in Study Group	87
Curriculum versus Politics	93
Variables Affecting Motivation or Interest in Learning about Education	96
V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	100
Hypotheses	100
Limitations	101
Summary of Findings	102
Conclusions	107
Recommendations	108
REFERENCES	110
APPENDIX	114
VITA	125

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. Frequency and Percent of Parents' Thoughts about how Much They Should be Involved in Educational Decisions	55
II. Frequency and Percent of Parents' Ratings of Their Knowledge of Education	60
III. Frequency and Percent of Parents' Thoughts about Their Rating of Their Knowledge of Education	60
IV. Frequency and Percent of Parents' Knowledge of Other Schools or Systems	64
V. Frequency and Percent of how Parents Would Like to be Able to Rate Their Knowledge of Education	68
VI. Frequency and Percent of Parents Questioning Equal Educational Opportunities	71
VII. Frequency and Percent of Parents Needing More Information Concerning Equal Educational Opportunities	71
VIII. Frequency and Percent of Parent Response Concerning Increased Participation with Increased Knowledge	74
IX. Frequency and Percent of Parents' Motivation for Learning about Education According to Activities Selected	77
X. Ranking of Reasons Parents are Motivated as Indicated by Frequency, Percent, and Weight	82
XI. Frequency and Percent of Parent Motivation as Indicated by General Reasons	85
XII. Frequency and Percent of Parents Interested in Study Group	89

TABLE

PAGE

XIII.	Parent Rank Order of Areas of Study Dealing with Curriculum and Politics	95
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The present study proceeded on the premise that parents are interested in learning more about the educational process; they are not pleased with their present knowledge in this area; and they would take a more active role in the education of their children if they had a broader knowledge base of what to do and how to do it. The investigation dealt with four broad categories of parental involvement in the process of education: their feelings about how much input they should have in various areas of the educational process, their assessment of how much knowledge they have and would like to have concerning the process of education, why they are motivated to learn more about the process of education, and whether or not they would actually like to be a part of a parent seminar.

Chapter I contains the purpose of the study, sources of data, importance of the problem, assumptions of the study, limitations of the study, hypotheses, procedures, and an overview.

I. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine the feelings of a selected sample of parents about:

- A. The roles they should play in education decision making
- B. The knowledge they possess about the education process
- C. Their interest in increasing their knowledge of the education system
- D. Their motivations for learning more about the process of education
- E. Their willingness to participate in a study group on the process of education.

II. SOURCES OF DATA

Data were collected through a questionnaire which gave parents the opportunity to "voice" their feelings about how much input they should have on certain decisions which are made that affect their child's education. They were also asked to assess their present knowledge of the process of education and to indicate whether or not they were pleased with how they were able to rate themselves. They were also asked why they would like to know more (if they did). Lastly, they were given an opportunity to sign up for a parent seminar and also given the opportunity to rate the type of learning experiences they would prefer in such a seminar.

III. IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Because the process of education is so important to the life of families, parental involvement in school affairs is becoming more important from year to year (Fantini, 1974).

Involvement in school affairs is instructional for parents and increases the investment of the home in the welfare of the child in school. Further, parent participation protects the school and the children from purely political and economic influences which may arise if participation is open mainly to other organized groups (Fantini, 1974, p. 20).

There was a time when parents were not received enthusiastically in the schools (Criscuolo, 1980). This traditional view which prohibited parents from participating in the education of their children is now being re-examined. For example, the 1970 White House Conference on Children, in emphasizing parenting, stressed that parents are the first and most influential teachers of their children. In setting the stage for learning, they are role models, offering challenges, establishing expectations, reinforcing learnings, and providing the child with a variety of opportunities to develop competencies and a positive identity. It was brought out that establishing a successful educator-parent interaction is a difficult but very worthwhile challenge (Barnes, 1978).

The present study was an attempt to conduct research in the area of parental interest and motivation for involvement in the process of education by analyzing the responses to a

questionnaire which was administered to parents of elementary school children, grades K-5.

The importance of this investigation was based partly on the hypothesis that the conclusions of this study could provide a basis for a training seminar for parents in the Hamblen County area of East Tennessee and also motivate similar endeavors by interested individuals in other locations. Besides determining the feasibility for such a seminar in this area, it could provide a base for interested citizenry in other areas of the country who are seeking information and guidelines for advisory boards, lay evaluation committees, and other educators who are aware of the need for this type of study in their educational districts.

During the last decade the American public has been bombarded with the language of educational reform, leaving a demand for an educated citizenry if survival of public school education is to be possible. If a group remains ignorant of facts, conditions, and rights in the United States, economic, social, and political possibilities for growth and prosperity are not likely. The concept of public in public education is particularly pertinent because it reveals what should be the basic nature of the major educational institutions—openness and responsiveness to the citizenry. In a public education system, lay persons rightly determine the goals and policies, professional educators are to implement them,

and the public reserves for itself the right and responsibility to assess whether or not these goals are being achieved. The public's right to assess and hold public officials responsible is fundamental (Fantini, 1974).

Two recent dissertations of the same general area of interest conclude by calling attention to the fact that more reserach needs to be done in this area. Harry Hutson (1978), at Indiana University states that: the school curriculum and community exist in dialectical relationship—each reinforcing the other, with the interaction between the two strengthening the conservative tendencies of both and resulting in social control.

He recommended that more curriculum research be undertaken in natural settings, that conceptual work be focused on curriculum decision-making, that critical work in curriculum be expanded, and that curriculumists make a stronger plea for their field and their work.

Hennebury points out that additional studies should be conducted to determine what the areas of disagreement may be in such areas as administrator and faculty accountability and evaluations. She stresses that administrators should assist community committees in organizing to become an effective lobbying group for educational priorities and financing at the local and state levels. She concluded by pointing out that in schools, where community apathy was cited as a

significant problem, committees should develop programs or techniques to help combat citizen disinterest (Hennebury, 1978).

Nebgen's report of parent involvement in Title I Programs touches upon many aspects which are central to the present study, but this particular research endeavor is by no means a replica of parent involvement in Title I programs (Nebgen, 1979). No other study was found that was at all similar to this research.

IV. ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

A. The questionnaire was assumed to be valid and adequate in measuring parent thoughts on the items that were included in this study. Further discussion of validity will be found in Chapter III.

B. Because the sample included all sections of Hamblen County, all income and educational levels, and both sexes and races, it is assumed that it is a representative sample of the area studied. Further discussion of the sample will be found in Chapter III.

V. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was limited to 282 parents of elementary school students (grades K-5) in Hamblen County in East Tennessee. The data were collected during the 1981-82 academic school year.

VI. HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses tested in the present study were:

A. Parents in this study will think they should have a significant voice in many aspects of public education.

B. Parents will think that their knowledge on the process of education is inadequate.

C. Parents will know little about what actually goes on in various schools and systems.

D. Parents will be interested in increasing their knowledge and participation in public school education.

E. Parents will be motivated to learn more about public school education to better help their child.

F. Parents will have ample time to become involved in activities to better help their child.

G. Parents will be willing to participate in a study group to learn more about public school education.

H. In a study group to learn more about public school education, parents will be motivated to learn about areas related to curriculum than they are in areas related to politics.

I. White parents with more education and income will be more highly motivated to become more involved in the educational process than black parents, parents with low income, or uneducated parents.

J. Urban parents will be more highly motivated than rural parents to learn more about the process of education.

K. Mothers will be more highly motivated than fathers to learn more about the education process.

VII. PROCEDURES

A. During the 1980-81 academic school year a questionnaire was developed and field tested.

B. A sample was developed based upon 1970 United States Census information, because 1980 data were not available at that time.

C. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher and a parent assistant during the 1981-82 academic school year.

D. Raw data were coded and tabulated.

E. Statistical analysis was in the form of averages and percentages.

VIII. OVERVIEW

Chapter I contains the introduction, purpose of the study, importance of the study, sources of data, assumptions of the study, limitations, hypotheses, procedures, and overview.

Chapter II reviews research concerning parents' role, participation, and contribution to the field of education.

Chapter III describes the procedures used in the study.

Chapter IV is a presentation of the data collected.

Chapter V states the summary, conclusions, and implications of the study.

The Appendix includes a copy of the Questionnaire which was administered.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

I. INTRODUCTION

The literature in Chapter II will include material relative to the importance of parent participation in the total process of public school education. The material is divided as follows:

1. Literature supporting the need for equality education
2. Literature stressing the importance of parent involvement
3. Literature presenting evidence that parents are involved in some communities
4. Literature containing instructive material for this research project.

Chapter II reviews research concerning parent's role, participation, and contribution to the field of education. The literature was limited to material directly or indirectly related to parent involvement in the process of education or the need for their involvement. No research is cited which deals specifically with assessing parent's knowledge, motivation, and interest in a parent seminar, which was the purpose of this study. The researcher could find no studies using that exact approach.

II. LITERATURE SUPPORTING THE NEED FOR EQUALITY EDUCATION

A few years ago the United States celebrated its 200th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The celebration signified that as a nation people continue to subscribe to the principles as given in that historical document. The first principle stated is that all persons are created equal, with equality being defined as the unalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Since educational opportunities directly determine life, liberty, and happiness and education is a government function from the local level on up, some gross inconsistencies seem apparent in the total process. Public education is not always displaying equality of experiences. Therefore, it is perpetuating inequality (Carlson, 1972).

For instance, several years ago it was reported that there is a school district in Texas which spends \$5,334 each year on each student. There is another district which spends \$264! The difference is 2,000 percent. The difference may not always be this astounding, but gross discrepancies can be found between the educational opportunities being offered children who live only several miles apart. Greenbaum gives the following implication:

. . . when the denial of equality of opportunity to major segments of the population and the shallowness of many prevailing notions of

equality are weighed against America's declared ideals, the conclusion can only be that the (American) experiment has been a tragic failure (Greenbaum, 1971, p. 501).

There are those who will argue that the amount of money spent and the services, environment, and materials available does not make a difference in the total educational outcome of the students. Guthrie and his colleagues, in their analyses of the extensive data available on the schools in Michigan, examined the relationships among the following variables: socioeconomic status, school services, academic performance, and success in later life (Guthrie, 1971). One set of findings in the Guthrie study reveals a strong correlation between school service components and student performance as measured by standardized aptitude and subject-matter achievement tests. Among the components are: student-teacher ratios; type of inservice training of teachers; the number of classes and courses taught by a teacher; job satisfaction for teachers; released planning time (more for chairpersons); services of a school nurse and psychologist; supplementary teaching materials; library books; newer less crowded buildings, with better illumination and accoustical control; summer school programs; and special services for students with special needs. All of these components correlate positively with pupil performance. The highest correlations are those that have to do with teacher characteristics, particularly verbal ability, teaching

experience, job satisfaction, and the amount and type of academic preparation. Therefore, there is strong evidence that schools, and especially the educators involved, do make a difference, and professional quality is identifiable, cultivatable, and most importantly, a commodity that can be purchased. Parents must become aware of this evidence and of the differences that exist between schools and systems that may have a detrimental effect on their children.

The last and possibly most important set of positive correlations that the above researchers derive has to do with the connection between school performance and success in later life. This dimension is noteworthy because success has a social as well as a personal dimension, so that society is also a beneficiary of improved education for individuals. The better educated are more informed, politically active, productive, and less likely to engage in criminal activity. Therefore, they can support themselves. All people as a society, in most cases, must help support the criminal and dropout. When it is said that a society can't afford quality education the people must realize that the nation can't afford not to provide equal and quality education.

With available reserach such as that quoted above one might wonder why parents and the general public are not more concerned about the obvious inequality that may be in existence in their locale and the consequences which their

children may suffer because of it, not only during their years in school but also throughout life.

In the past most parents have entrusted their children's education and therefore their lives to politicians and educators whom they assume to be honest, efficient, and trustworthy. Parents left their children at the door and then removed themselves from the situation, being virtually unaware of the inequality, or lack of quality in the educational experience that may or may not be being provided for their children.

However, in recent years as parents and the general public are becoming more aware of the problems, research indicates that school officials and the public hold different views on what constitutes quality education.

The 12th and 13th annual Gallup Poll in 1980-81 indicated that the public viewed highly qualified teachers and administrators and emphasis on the basics as the two most important influences on school quality. However, school officials ranked them as far down as sixth in importance (Gallup, September 1980, pp. 33-46 and September 1981, pp. 33-47).

Also in Phi Delta Kappan it was pointed out that colleges of education are often singled out as the agents primarily responsible for unqualified educators. However, W. Timothy Weaver has suggested that the fault lies not with the

colleges but with the political process of selection and placement. Weaver suggests that among applicants, hiring agents do not significantly favor the best qualified (Weaver, 1979).

Joseph Fratiani found that three academic criteria were good predictors of success as an educator: overall grade-point average, placement in one's major or area of academic concentration, and student teaching performance (Fratiani, 1979).

However, Perry reports that her study, which is in agreement with Weaver, suggests that placement is NOT according to such important criteria such as grades, student teaching evaluations, and recommendations from education institutions (Perry, 1981).

Another study indicated that citizen's confidence in educational leaders (administrative, supervisory staff) is on the wane, falling 20 percent in the period from 1966 to 1977. Income, rather than educational attainment, was indicated to be the factor of central importance. The findings of this study noted that confidence in educational leaders is lowest among persons in the highest income brackets even when the educational attainment of the people being compared is similar. The findings from this study also revealed that the results can be viewed as a plea for more analysis of surveys of public attitudes toward education (Kleiman, 1981).

In summary, although researchers such as those quoted in this section are saying that student success comes from educator competence, and the public too is calling for this; criteria for placement is not often based upon this with the result being lack of quality education. Because some systems do not place this as top priority, poor quality of education is very much in existence.

III. LITERATURE STRESSING THE IMPORTANCE OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Because of the gravity of the situation as described above, parents must be kept informed of all matters in the process of public school education. It is the job of educators to see that this is done. Any good administrator should be able to explain his or her program or plan to inform and utilize parents. If a regular newsletter is not sent to maintain close relations, explaining both the good and bad that is happening, parents should find out who is to blame (Buskin, 1975).

United States Commissioner of Education, Terrell H. Bell, in a speech presented at the Annual Convention of the American Association of School Administrators in Dallas, Texas, in 1975, maintained that the fundamental structure of American society is made up of the family unit, the home, and neighborhood community. He expanded to say that in order to build a more viable home-school partnership, the role and

function of the schools must be systematically redefined to get parents involved and committed to education . . . from training parents in the fundamentals of home-based incidental teaching to their active involvement in the total education process if the ingredients necessary for success are to be provided.

Several studies have indicated that parents must become more involved in the assessment, evaluation, and total educational process of their community. In a Ph.D. dissertation by Robert Charles Francy, University of Utah, 1978, the following conclusions were indicated concerning parent advisory councils:

1. Most parent advisory council members are appointed by principals and thus could be considered "safe" participants who may not truly represent the overall interests and concerns of the community they represent.

2. The profile of the average parent advisory council member does not match the average or typical member of the community served.

3. Potential critics of the status quo are not allowed to become involved in determining or providing input relative to the direction the school program will take.

Major recommendations from that study are:

1. Participants should be elected to membership or selected on a random sample basis to assure representativeness.

2. Broader opportunities for direct parent participation in the decision-making process need to be provided by schools.

3. The present or similar studies should be replicated in other school districts.

4. The scope of the study should be narrowed and additional analysis considered.

A final research area rose out of the secondary purpose of one recent doctoral study. Particular attention was drawn to:

1. Parent and staff involvement in making decisions in the school.

2. Parent and staff input into the placement of children in educational environments.

3. Parent and staff questionnaire for the evaluation of the school program.

4. A variety of educational environments co-existing in the same building (Chapman, 1978).

Another dissertation study involving community residents noted that advisory councils in a community educational setting must be allowed to examine both school and community problems. Traditionally, school-parent advisory councils have been limited to only school related matters; a narrow scope when compared to the potential of the broader community education approach to problem solving; a scope that this study indicates should be broadened (Neat, 1978).

In her doctoral dissertation, Josephine Mudrunka concentrated on creating a rationalized model for parent-policy role in American public schools. She recommended: voluntary participation in the schools by parents for the purpose of data collecting or first-hand experience to which parents may offer necessary input or formulate decisions and communication to the school and community via the participating parents for the purpose of informing the community as well as collecting data from the community (Mudrunka, 1978).

Eleanor Duff and Margaret E. Adams point out that many teachers fail to acknowledge that parents have any role in their child's school success other than keeping him or her in school regularly and suggesting that he or she have good behavior. They stress that in reading, for example, less emphasis should be placed upon reading as an activity that takes place between 9:00 and 10:30, and more emphasis should be placed on reading as a total experience, including reaching for parent's active involvement. Often, they point out, parents simply are not informed on how they can be of help to their children in reading and other subjects. They further suggest that it would seem logical that school personnel, representing the professional perspective, would assume leadership by encouraging and supporting parents as they help them to become lay educators, thus improving their child's performance (Duff and Adams, 1981-82).

An article by Susan Comstock also stresses that it should be educators from the classroom (teachers) who should plan total experiences including the open communication between home and school (Comstock, 1981).

IV. EVIDENCE THAT PARENTS ARE INVOLVED IN SOME COMMUNITIES

The following literature is evidence that parents are being allowed and encouraged to make contributions in some systems across our country.

For example, in New Haven, Connecticut, parent involvement in the reading program is the highest priority. The system's reading supervisor reports the following activities that involve the parents as partners in the learning process from kindergarten on up:

1. A Kindergarten Booklet—Contains reading readiness games and activities for the parent to use with the child.
2. Parents as Tutors—After receiving special training parents serve as community tutors to students who need additional help. Each tutor works eight hours a week and is paid an hourly stipend from a grant.
3. Project GRASP (also from a Federal grant)—operates in five inner city schools with trained parent tutors who are also paid hourly wages. Criterion-referenced tests gauge the progress of 100 first-, second-, and third-graders who participate each year.

4. Reading Recipes—Under a mini-grant from the Connecticut State Department of Education, a committee from Project GRASP prepared a 64-page book of "reading recipes" for parents to help their children at home.

5. Newspaper Publicity—Personnel from the district's reading department prepared a series of articles on how parents could help their children at home.

6. Advisory Board—A board of four parents, seven classroom teachers, and a supervisor explores ways teachers and parents can work together to improve the program.

7. Parent Resource Rooms—These rooms serve three purposes:

- (a) A place to meet informally with teachers or other school personnel to discuss the program.
- (b) A place where games and activities for home use can be made.
- (c) A place to borrow materials for children or adult reading material concerning educational topics.

8. Parent Workshops—A series of "make it, take it" workshops encourage parents to prepare materials to use with their children at home.

9. Courses for Parents—Two ten-week courses for parents, focusing on the reading program and suggesting ways parents can reinforce the reading program at home. This has been so positive it has been repeated several times.

10. Saturday Tutoring—With funding from the New Haven Jaycees, parents were trained and paid as tutors to supplement the regular reading program.

11. Be My Guest—An elementary school principal began this program, inviting parents to visit classrooms and then meeting with them in the cafeteria to share observations and ask questions over coffee. The program has since spread to several other New Haven schools.

12. Parent Activity Sheets—The New Haven Public School System has developed performance objectives (K-8) for reading, language arts, and mathematics. During the summer a committee of parents, teachers, and administrators developed 414 activities for parents that match the performance objectives. When children need reinforcement on a specific objective, the teacher simply pulls the activity that goes with the objective and sends it home.

13. Parent Conferences—Teachers have released time for conferences to inform parents of progress, problems, and how they can help at home.

14. Homework Program—Some time ago the New Haven School System formed a committee of 20 teachers and two supervisors to design home-study activities and games. The outcome was Homework Resource Activities, a booklet containing 156 reading, language arts, social studies, and science activities—116 for primary grades and 40 for the intermediate

grades. All are listed by subject and grade level. This enables teachers to select assignments that meet individual children's needs.

15. Reading Progress Letters—When a child completes work at a given level, an appropriate story is sent home, along with a letter informing parents of the child's reading achievement and suggesting that the story and questions be used for extra practice.

16. Questions Parents Ask—These commonly asked questions are compiled, answered, distributed in parent groups, and placed in the New Haven Parents' Center.

17. Book Bank—Used books were solicited and collected by parents, sorted, and placed in the book bank to be used by children and parents. The program is called "Operation Bookworm" and collected 7,000 usable books.

18. Talent Bank—Many parents have unusual experiences or talents to share with children. A compiled list of such parents is available and used to share this knowledge with students.

The New Haven School System stresses that communication and involvement are the key ingredients for effective partners with parents (Criscuolo, 1982).

Another similar article by Evelyn Sullivan reports that a Parent Drop-In Center can help support home-school communication. The same type of activities was reported in

this center in Williamstown, Minnesota, as was reported in the New Haven School System (Sullivan, 1980).

Does parental involvement in school programs translate into academic gains for students? Several studies report very positive results in this area. (Woods, Barnard, and TeSelle, 1974; Vukelich, 1978; and Gillum, 1977). This is one good reason to encourage such involvement. But Criscuolo points out another, equally important consideration. All parents have one thing in common: They want their youngsters to receive high-quality education. Allowing parents to see firsthand that this is the case engenders positive feelings about the schools. The end product is supportive parents who are responsive to the needs of the schools.

The ultimate beneficiaries, of course, are the children, whose attitudes are often the same as their parents. Positive attitudes always reap positive results (Criscuolo, 1980).

In several editions of School and Community many prominent educators addressed the need for a close working relationship between the school and the community. For instance, Dr. John van Willigen, Allyn G. Spence, and Dr. David Sadker (all from the University of Wisconsin) maintain that parental involvement is accepted as a valuable goal by parents and educators but conclude by stressing that it remains for the people involved to translate this

involvement into conclusive action and that professionals should have a commitment that goes beyond the classroom to the very boundaries of the community he or she serves. Because of this, a professional should be committed to the encouragement of parent participation (Willigen, Spence, and Sadker, 1972).

In that same volume (8), one principal writes, on that same subject, to show that in some districts across the country (as has been indicated in other literature) this is actually a reality. Dr. Fletcher O. Chasteen, principal of Crestwood Elementary School in St. Louis states that "parents can be influential in closing the gap between traditional ways of teaching in most schools and new, improved ways of helping youngsters learn how to learn and how to direct their own lives" (Chasteen, 1972, p. 8).

In Kansas City, a research team under the direction of Dr. Mary Catherine Meehan, asked parents their feelings and opinions when it became apparent that educational change was needed in their schools. Over 1,300 parents were involved in the survey via questionnaire. Parents expressed approval and support for new programs which included team-teaching, differentiated staffing, open concept classrooms, multi-age grouping and a wide range of supportive services (Meehan, 1971).

In the same study parents were asked to evaluate the work of teachers and principals. The data was also utilized

to redirect educational change in the district. In one of the experimental schools, the principal called each parent who had expressed negative opinion about any school practice. She reported that these discussions helped to resolve misunderstandings and, in some cases, strongly negative feelings about the school were modified.

From this we might surmise that parents are interested, that they do want to be a part of the educational process, that they can learn about education and have valuable input to offer, and that their contribution can be utilized to help build a stronger educational system. It should also be pointed out that they have every right to these powers and privileges of educational involvement. Many systems across the country allow very little input from parent clientele or even teachers. These rights seem to be reserved for administrators only. This seems very contrary to the democratic process that not only governs our schools but also our whole nation.

However, this is not the case in many other schools or districts. Several other examples can be cited of administrators who reach out for this much-needed input. School and Community also reports the efforts of another principal who entitled his study, "We Asked Parents." His was a small school in a semirural district, where many parents had been very critical of some of the existing

practices. Instead of reacting to these feelings with resentment the principal decided to channel the information into productive form via a questionnaire. The principal's conclusions included that he had learned much from the endeavor; that morale was boosted instead of squelched; that the questionnaire definitely needs improvement; that staff and parents felt it was a very profitable experience for all involved; and finally, that other administrators should consider some type of "planned" parent-input and learn from this and other examples how helpful it can really be (Pulos, 1972).

In a rural Massachusetts district the school board developed a comprehensive six-page questionnaire and mailed it to all residents seventeen years old and older. After changes were made in response to community opinions a later survey revealed that "community agreement with the board" moved significantly, with 56 percent of the changes made being in alignment with community opinion (Goodrich, 1976).

In a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (59th, Las Vegas, February 1975) the following points seem applicable to this study:

. . . increasingly, structures such as a principal's advisory committee are being mandated by school boards and legislatures in order to facilitate community representation and involvement. The once safe, or at least comparatively

safe, world of the Principal can now be classified along with the Bald Eagle. It is an endangered species. No longer can the successful (or unsuccessful) coach dream of "retiring" to the sanctity of the main office, safe in the knowledge that he need only say "jump" to hear a chorus of "how high" from his faculty, students, and community. No matter how long we bury our heads in the sand, in this modern day those demanding quality education are NOT going to go away—so you may as well formulate and utilize a Principal's Advisory Committee (Jenkins, 1975).

Twelve suggestions are offered to principals:

1. Develop an attitude of acceptance.
2. Give them firm definitions of what their role will be.
3. Let them "smell" success. Implement some suggestions.
4. Representation must come from: students, faculty, parents, and community.
5. Meet regularly.
6. Keep communications flowing.
7. Be willing to back some of their ideas.
8. Don't make them just salespeople.
9. Recognize that they are in new roles therefore provide training in:
 - (a) Group process
 - (b) Decision-making
 - (c) School organization
 - (d) Curriculum programs
 - (e) State laws and board policy
10. Avoid discussion of personalities.
11. Make meetings open to the public (also time for public input).
12. Heed "none of us are as smart as all of us."

Community participation is very much a reality. The major reason it won't work is administrative reluctance and apathy toward it. Neither is a commendable or worthy attitude. There once was a commercial which ended by the actor saying, "You can pay me now, or pay me later." You can make them or let them work for you now, or be mandated to do it later. Either way, the choice is yours (Jenkins, 1975).

Even state laws on education have begun to reveal the importance of parent participation in the educational process. In the Tennessee Code Annotated, 49-4801-4, entitled, "Parent Educational Participation Act," suggestions, guidelines, and possibilities for record-keeping are noted (Tennessee Code Annotated, 1977).

Even on a federal level, the government is found to encourage or even require parental involvement in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of school programs in the hope that not only student motivation and achievement will be improved, but also that changes in school programs will result which more adequately meet the needs of the community. An article by Nebgen was located which gives the details of this government plan. Although Nebgen's article is concerned with low income families or families who have children working below grade level, the structure of the program of parental involvement directly relates to the present research project since the ultimate goal is a parent seminar involving parents from every walk of life.

In the Title I program, parents have been encouraged to participate in many different capacities, including: (1) as observers or learners, (2) as participants, (3) as volunteers in the classroom, and (4) as participants on school advisory committees (Nebgen, 1979).

The major justification for parental involvement in Title I projects was the assumption that it would improve

children's academic performance. Secondary assumptions of the results of such involvement were that it would increase parental self-esteem and feeling of control, and result in changes in the school program to meet community needs more adequately.

The results of the research show that the more parental involvement the better the academic achievement—but such achievement gains have not been directly linked to parental involvement. However, a direct link has been found between parental involvement in the school and increased parent self-esteem and feelings of control, but no studies have shown that parental involvement in Title I projects has resulted in changes in the school program (Nebgen, 1979).

V. LITERATURE RELATED TO PROCEDURE

In searching for a format for data presentation, the writer found the two articles discussed in this section.

An administratively decentralized area in the Minneapolis, Minnesota, public school system faced the question of whether or not to provide educational alternatives (or different types of learning environments, styles, and activities). The administration encouraged a committee of parents and staff members to develop a questionnaire to learn parents' preferences (Johnson, 1975).

For the purposes of the present research, the format of reporting of the data was of primary importance, although one major finding of their study was that two-thirds of the parents felt they should be involved in major decisions effecting the school. In the Minneapolis study, one main table, which took up five pages, was utilized to present each question from the questionnaire, the possible answers, and the percent of responses to each choice. For the purpose of summary statements and conclusions, each item on the questionnaire was categorized and the total percent for each category were presented (Johnson, 1975).

The "Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools" was also used for format for presenting responses to items on a questionnaire. For some questions, figures were presented using a bar graph with the percentages of responses on top of the bar and the title of the item written on the bar. The most common form used by Gallup, however, was simply to state the question on top, with the possible responses on the left side, the different categories of people on top, and the percent of responses under the categories and beside the response possibility. The pages containing the responses were subdivided as had been the questionnaire. The responses to at least one item were presented in the form of a circle graph. For the purpose of the present research study one Gallup format was particularly

appealing. The question was on top in title form, the response possibilities formed four horizontal headings, and the breakdown in categories of people responding was in vertical form down the left side of the paper, presenting for each respondent: sex, race, age, education, community (Gallup, 1981).

VI. SUMMARY

The literature indicates a public outcry for quality education for their children which they can be assured is equal to the best.

It is pointed out that parents have the right to expect equal educational opportunities for their children and that they also have the right to actively participate in programs to assess whether or not these equal opportunities are being provided.

The literature also reveals that public opinion of educational leaders has dropped significantly over the last few years, with a plea for more research to be done to analyze the public's attitudes toward education.

Because of the importance of education as a part of society's total existence, administrators should take the leading role in planning programs for parent participation. Lawmakers and implementors from written state laws, required federal programs, to speeches by the United States

Commissioner of Education stress the importance of parent participation as a part of the total process of education.

Encouraging were the many examples in print indicating that parent participation is being accomplished with much success in many fine school systems all over the country. It was indicated that when it is not in practice that administrators must expect that eventually parents will band themselves together in an organized effort to become involved.

The chapter was concluded with articles which were included simply because their format of presentation of data were needed as a guide, although they also contained other facts pertinent to the present study.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

I. INTRODUCTION

Chapter III contains a description of the procedures used in the study. Specific areas discussed are as follows:

1. The instrument.
2. The sample.
3. Administration of the instrument.
4. Data analysis procedures.

II. THE QUESTIONNAIRE

One of the most difficult and time-consuming tasks of the entire study was the formulation of the questionnaire. Because a questionnaire could not be located that would fulfill the purpose for the present research, the instrument had to be designed as an original. Gallup material was studied to get ideas on how to start, and each section had to be formulated to fulfill the hypotheses to be tested. Professors, public school teachers, other doctoral students, and a few parents were called upon to offer in-put into the material needed and how it should be dealt with. University professors forming the doctoral committee required that it be refined several times before they would release it

for field testing. Before finally being accepted, the questionnaire had to be reviewed and approved by the Human Subjects Committee.

The field testing was done during the 1980-81 academic school year. Because the school communities to be served were 12 in all, it was decided that 24 questionnaires should be sufficient for the field study; two for each school. Of the two families selected for each school district, one was to be from the two lower income ranges (below \$10,000 to \$15,000 total annual family income) and the other would be from the three higher ranges (\$15,000 to above \$50,000). Only 2 blacks, 2 fathers, and 2 above the \$50,000 annual income were included in the 24 families selected since they represent the minority of Hamblen County parents with students in elementary school. Of the 24 questionnaires which were delivered door-to-door and picked up the same way, 15 were completed, representing a return rate of better than 50 percent. Neither black parents returned the questionnaire. One of the two fathers returned it, and both of the above \$50,000 annual income parents returned it. Many useful comments were offered by several of the parents who returned the questionnaires. From these comments additions, deletions, rearrangements of the format, and changes in terminology served to restructure the instrument. The least amount of time recorded for how long it took to complete the

questionnaire was 15 minutes. The greatest amount of time taken was one hour by one parent, and the average amount was 30 minutes. Of the 15 parents who returned the questionnaire, all but one checked that they felt the amount of time required was reasonable. The one who felt the amount of time required was unreasonable was the one who had been able to effectively complete it in 15 minutes. Of the six parents who did not complete it, the most common reason given was that they hadn't had time to do it. They had been given two weeks to complete the questionnaire. Of all the 24 families approached for the field study, not one family refused to take part when initially approached. The researcher administered all the instruments during the field study. After making the necessary changes as suggested by the parents, the instrument was resubmitted several more times to the doctoral committee before final acceptance was received.

Including the cover letter on the front, the questionnaire consists of nine pages. See the Appendix for a copy of the questionnaire.

Part I is simply the section seeking personal information including sex, community residence, salary, and education level. Because it was so important and there was a possibility that it could be overlooked on the part of the person filling out the questionnaire, a small initial was

made on the front of each questionnaire by the researcher or assistant indicating the school where the child/children of that household should attend and the race of the family. Race was noted in this manner in order not to intimidate anyone who might be sensitive to that.

Part II contains general questions asking parent's opinion on the amount of input they feel they should have on various decisions in the process of public school education. They were asked to respond by placing a check in the appropriate space by the question. Their choices were: completely involved, frequently involved, occasionally involved, and never involved for each of the educational decisions described. There were fifteen major questions in all with one question having four subparts, making a total of eighteen points of this nature. A second part (B) under this section asked parents to check the type of activity in which they think parents should take an active role. They could choose one or all of eight activities and still list others. They were also given the opportunity to rank the ones they checked in the order of their preference for their importance.

Parents were given the opportunity to stop completing the questionnaire at this point.

Part IV deals with motivation, or for what reason(s) they would like to learn more about education, if they do. This section seeks to find out what types of parent-student

activities they deem important and how much time they were willing to invest in their child/children's learning activities.

Part V becomes very specific, asking parents to rank categories of learning as to that which is the most important down to the one that is the least important to them.

They were then given the opportunity to check whether or not they were interested in becoming a part of a parent seminar to learn more about the process of education.

They were asked from whom they would like this type of seminar to be offered, the amount of time and money which would be reasonable, and the type of learning experiences they would prefer.

At the very end they were given the opportunity to actually sign up for a seminar of this nature, to be offered beginning Fall, 1982. If they were interested they were to fill in their name, address, and telephone number. No where else were they asked for identification.

III. THE SAMPLE

The random sample crosses all income ranges from less than \$10,000 to \$50,000+, represents both black and white, mothers and fathers.

Type of family dwelling was used as an indication of income. In most cases this was a rather adequate method.

The primary objective in arriving at the sample was to represent the various sections of Hamblen County, including Morristown City. This was done via census data. Further refinement was to include all school communities (12 in all), the numbers estimated being based upon the population data from the census reports. Effort was made to obtain a balance of mothers and fathers, blacks and whites, and the various socio-economic groups. Of course, more subjects were sought from mid-income levels since extremely low and extremely high are the exception rather than the rule in the group of parents who have children in elementary school. Also, many more whites were sought since Hamblen County is predominantly a white area. More mothers were found who were willing to participate because many fathers were out of the home during the hours when the questionnaire was administered, many who were home reported that the mothers usually attended to school matters such as homework, conferences, and other meetings and activities connected with education. Also, many broken homes were discovered with custody usually given to the mother; therefore, the father was not available.

Inflated salaries during this time period (at least 10 percent in many cases between the 1970's and 80's) caused the income brackets to fluctuate upward, therefore changing the number of families estimated in the lower income brackets, thus causing a greater number of families to fall in the

middle and higher income ranges than was anticipated. It was also discovered that fewer families with K-5 age children fall in the below \$10,000 income range than was estimated. This is because many of these people being reported to the U.S. Census Bureau are those on fixed incomes (such as Social Security recipients) whose children are no longer in school. The same was found to be true of those in the very highest income bracket (\$50,000+), since most couples with elementary students have not yet become firmly established and experienced in their business or profession. Usually by the time they reach the \$50,000+ income range their children are in high school or out of public schools. This fact is substantiated by an article in Day Care and Early Education, Summer, 1981, p. 27, which reported the following information on distribution of family income:

Over \$50,000—Rich. Less than 3 percent of the population. Primarily middle-aged. Most do not have young children.

Between \$35,000-\$50,000—Affluent. 6 percent of population. Also middle-aged. Two-parent professionals. Usually do not have young children.

\$25,000 and \$30,000—Upper Middle-class. 13.5 percent of population. Primarily age. Some may have elementary children.

\$20,000-\$25,000—Middle class. 21 percent of population. Many young with children, many middle-aged.

\$15,000-\$20,000—Lower middle class. 15.5 percent of total families. 2 in 5 are young with young children.

\$10,000-\$15,000—Below middle-class. 40 percent young, likely to have young children.

\$5,000-\$10,000—Poor. 18 percent of all families. The more older families, but also some with small children.

Under \$5,000. Starving. Primarily older people (mostly women) living on fixed incomes.

Although the salary ranges used in this study (based upon the same divisions used in the census reports) do not adhere to the ones quoted above, this does reveal the basis for some of the frustrations when trying to locate elementary students' families in specific income categories.

In order for the reader to form an overall view, a general description of Hamblen County in East Tennessee seems necessary, with a brief description of each school community also given. Because Hamblen County includes Morristown City and the two school systems are separate, they are presented that way for the purpose of description in this section.

Throughout the dissertation the word "rural" is used to refer to any county school, but the county system could include suburban communities as well. The Whitesburg community would come closer to being an actual "rural" area than any of the other county schools.

Hamblen County was selected primarily because the researcher had convenient access to this area. For this type of research which can be considered a very sensitive area by some people, it is important that the researcher be

considered one of the group rather than an outsider coming in to ask these kinds of questions. Hamblen County could be considered representative of the general area of East Tennessee in which it is located, since the income levels, educational level, and races are very similar to other areas in the general location.

Any statistical information is based on information from the United States Census Bureau for the decade 1970-1980.

Hamblen County

Hamblen County is in East Tennessee, separated from Knox County (home of The University of Tennessee), only by Jefferson County. It is in the foothills of The Great Smoky Mountain National Park with small farms on the outskirts and Morristown City in the center.

There has been very little foreign influx except a few wives who were brought back by men in the armed forces. Very few blacks are in the area, with most of them being found in the federal project areas of Morristown City.

Occupation is primarily small factories (usually furniture), American Enka which produces textile filament, farming (tobacco, dairy and beef, and truck farming), and professional occupations.

The school system is that of the small neighborhood school concept with 12 elementary schools, 1 primary school, 4 middle schools, and 2 high schools.

Most of the people tend to be friendly, trusting, hospitable, and very interested in their children, although they tend to take a back seat approach in educational affairs.

1. Alpha. This is the largest populated area, located in the west end of Hamblen County. Over the past ten years it had grown in population with prestigious subdivisions being built on land which was previously farming land. There are very few black or poor families now, with Title I funds recently being withdrawn because of lack of eligibility. There is one large elementary school (grades 3-5) and a new primary school (K-2), but for the purpose of this research both school populations were combined to include K-5.

Most adults commute to Morristown for their various jobs or professions. Two working parents are common. Most parents in this community are social climbers who expect a lot out of a school system and do not easily accept anything less than the best for their children.

2. Whitesburg. Although much more sparsely populated, especially with young children, the area in the east end of Hamblen County is very wide-spread. Large, old, well-kept farms are still tended, with the population being mostly older folk who no longer have children in school. Many are financially very well-off, but they live a very community-centered, slow-paced life. The one small elementary school is housed in an old building in the center of the community.

Parents seem to be very pleased with the educational system and are generally satisfied with the status quo. Most parents work in Morristown, Enka, or Greeneville, but many mothers still do not take jobs outside the home. Few, if any, black attend the elementary school.

3. Russellville. Russellville is a small community on the outskirts of Whitesburg, going toward Morristown, where most families stay home most of the time unless they are going to Morristown to work. Their views and life-style are very similar to their Whitesburg neighbors, but having fewer farms and a greater population of young folk, a large elementary school and one of the county-wide middle schools is located in this community. Russellvillians boast of the most successful school in academics, athletic, and 4-H events. They are very school-minded although most of them would be considered average in income range or social accomplishments. A few black families reside in this community.

4. Fairview-Marguerite. Being the "borderline" school whose population is divided between city and county residents, Fairview-Marguerite has never seemed to gain the stability or recognition as some of its neighboring communities. Being mostly factory workers who are neither farmers nor social climbers, these families seem to accept the status quo, whether or not they like it. Having only a few blacks, many mothers who do not work outside the home, and small one-

family dwellings, this community might also be considered "borderline" low-middle class/upper-lower class America.

5. Union Heights. Perhaps one of the most varied of all communities listed, this small south Hamblen County community is the home of farmers, professionals, and factory workers. Since American Enka is in its back door many of the laborers are of the high-average wage earners with several farming as a side-line. Most families are prestige-minded although they may live next door to someone with the opposite view. As a whole they are competitive while at the same time very family-centered as are most Hamblen Countians. Most of the dwellings are neat with some acreage all the way to some of the largest farms in the county. Small, well-kept subdivisions are common, but it is not unusual to see a \$150,000 home out on a few acres joining a \$10,000 dwelling.

One active elementary school accommodates the elementary students. Only two or three black families are represented. Most mothers work outside the home.

6. Witt. Being a smaller neighbor to Union Heights, this community has fewer students, although some very prominent families claim it as home. However, none of the wealthy families have students in elementary school. Most homes have only lots, but many have some acreage. No large farms are in this area, although the Wallace Hardware Corporation and estate, and a few other smaller corporations

are in this area. Only one black family with students in elementary school could be located.

7. Manley. Manley, like Alpha, is a community caught in the flux of change, but in the opposite direction from Alpha. A decade ago this was the school toward the west end of the county getting all the growth and attention. However, when the county began reaching farther westward toward Jefferson County Alpha began to grow and change and Manley because the suburban community with several upper-low and low-middle income level apartment complexes and mobile home parks moving in. This changed the total socio-economic level of the community and school. Manley is no longer the academic and athletic competitive school that it once was. Since more families with young children move to the extreme west end, the school is not growing in the same proportion as the Alpha community. More and more black families can be found in this area, although still not many.

8. Southern Heights. One of the most poverty stricken communities of Hamblen County is Southern Heights, comprised mainly of the extreme poor or the very low-middle class families. Surprisingly so, however, only one black family could be found, and they had no children in the one, small, run-down elementary school which is very lacking in the necessary upkeep expected for a school in a county as successful as Hamblen.

However, the parents were very receptive and cooperative, although a large sample was not necessary.

Morristown City

The town of Morristown is a very progressive area in excess of 30,000 people who work at Berkline or in the various furniture factories, Enka, shops, and the common professions. The town is very neat, clean, and well-planned, notorious for its downtown overhead sidewalks, although not much apparent development has come from them. It is apparent that most shoppers crowd the various small shopping centers right outside town, rather than shopping downtown.

When viewing the schools in the city it is like another world from the 1940 and 1950 structures found in the county system. All the city schools are very modern, updated, with the latest equipment, while the county seems to be functioning on bare minimum. Fewer, but generally larger, elementary schools are found in the city rather than the neighborhood effect found in the county.

All the city schools are open-spaced, team-teaching facilities with carpet, air-conditioning, and other modern features. In the county only one school for elementary students has these modern features, and that is the one primary school.

When administering the questionnaires it was found that many families are willing to pay tuition for their children

to attend city or private schools rather than attend the county schools, but only one was found during this research whose children were taken from the city into the county schools.

1. Lincoln Heights Center. Housed in this modern school complex is a middle school, a learning center for students with disabilities, and an elementary school. Near the middle of town, the school definitely has characteristics of the inner city type. Many of its students come from the nearby federal project area which houses low income whites and blacks. However, the facility and its program are very updated to meet the needs of the community it serves.

2. West Elementary. Recently consolidating three schools into one, this remodeled former black high school is a very modern structure housing an unusual grouping of students. Some of the most wealthy whites of the Morristown area attend elementary school here with many of the poorest black and white. There are also some middle class represented, but it is primarily a school of the two extremes.

3. John Hay. Also taking some of the overflow when the West Elementary consolidation was taking place, this school which sits on a hill in the eastern part of the city system, serves a varied population. Being the first open-spaced, non-graded, team-teaching school in Morristown or Hamblen County as a whole, this school with the unusual shape also has an unusual "personality." Having very few poor or

blacks, the school population is primarily middle and upper middle class with the values and goals usually associated with this group.

4. Hillcrest. Before 1968 when John Hay was constructed, Hillcrest was considered the elite school. Still very proud and housed in a remodeled physical plant, the parents and staff seem very interested in high goals and accomplishments, although the school population has changed over the years to include more and more students who are below the upper middle class.

IV. ADMINISTRATION OF THE INSTRUMENT

The questionnaire was administered by the researcher and an assistant to 282 parents of elementary school students in Hamblen County in East Tennessee during the 1981-82 academic school year.

Only six families refused to take the questionnaire when its purpose was carefully explained. Arrangements for pick-up was made for a later time in order to give the parent ample time to respond to the questionnaire. They were told that it would take approximately thirty minutes to complete. It was discovered that a greater return rate was experienced when one day was given between the time the questionnaire was left and picked up. When a certain day and approximate time was given the return rate was also increased. This way, arrangements could be made for it to be left in the door or

mailbox if the parent had to be gone at the time of pick-up. It was found that one week between drop-off and pick-up was too much time in between, and a few hours wasn't enough time. This was a burden to the researcher who was trying to deliver and return on such a tight schedule. However, this arrangement still represented a better return rate than the one with the week interval.

Besides dogs, one of the most frustrating situations was to return time after time to find no one home and no questionnaire left at the determined place. It was finally decided that if the questionnaire was not picked up on the second trip it should be marked off as lost. The most helpful situation was to ask parents or children in the community where families lived who had students in elementary school. Out of the 282 questionnaires, 157 were returned. Four people were so cooperative that they mailed their questionnaire at their own expense when contact had not been made. This is approximately a 55 percent return rate. Babbie (1973) feels that a return rate of at least 50 percent is adequate for analysis and reporting. However, the researcher feels that two changes would result in a greater return rate: never having more than two days between drop-off and pick-up and the shortening of the questionnaire. The assumption is that a fifteen minute questionnaire would capture the most important information and be more appealing

to parents, although the field testing didn't reveal the time factor as a problem.

V. DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

After collecting the questionnaires, all information and answers had to be assigned a computer code number and this information placed on "Green Sheets" in order for cards to be typed from this information. Each person (or each questionnaire) required two lines on the green sheets, therefore two cards for the computer.

The computer was programmed to arrive at frequencies and percents for most information and averages for some of the information.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of the present study was to determine the feelings of a selected sample of parents about their role in the process of public school education.

Discussions and tables are included in this chapter to test hypothesis regarding parents' feelings concerning their involvement in educational decision making, parents' feelings about their knowledge of the process of education, parents' knowledge of what goes on in various schools and systems, parental interest in increasing their knowledge and participation in education, parents' motivation for wanting to learn more about the process of education, the amount of time parents have to invest in activities related to education, parental interest in a seminar to learn more about the process of education, and the actual opportunity for parents to sign up for an educational seminar of this nature.

Analyses of the findings in these tables are in the form of frequencies, percents, and in two cases, averages. When necessary, weightings were assigned to determine differences. This was done when rank order was used in two places to indicate parental preferences.

When interpreting percentages, 50 percent was used as the mean, with anything 50 percent or above being considered

high and anything below 50 percent a low response number. Percentages were computed from the actual number of responses on that item, rather than on the 157 questionnaires that were actually submitted.

I. PARENTS' THOUGHTS ABOUT THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS

After hearing comments from parents over the years, maintaining that they thought they should have some input into various educational decisions affecting their children, the researcher formulated a hypothesis that would document these parent ideas. In Chapter II it was pointed out that Willigen, Spence, and Sadker maintained that parental involvement is accepted as a valuable goal by parents (Willigen, Spence, Sadker, 1972). Parents want to be involved. They need only to be led.

Hypothesis A, which was formulated from this reasoning, states that parents in this study will feel they should have a significant voice in many aspects of public education.

In order to test Hypothesis A it was necessary to include a section in the questionnaire that would give parents the opportunity to indicate the amount of input they felt they should have in each type of decision. Questionnaire items Part II, A, 1-15, deal with this rating of categories. The data to test Hypothesis A are presented in Table I.

Table I presents frequencies and percentages for parents' responses to these items. "High involvement" was formed by combining "completely involved" and "frequently involved." "Low involvement" was formed by combining "occasionally involved" and "never involved." The columns were added vertically and horizontally, with totals given for both. The percentage of the average was presented for the vertical totals.

For an example of how to read Table I, refer to line one on determining school goals. One hundred eleven parents checked "completely" or "frequently involved" on that category, giving a percent of 72. Therefore, only 43 parents had a check in the "occasionally" or "never involved" column, making that percent 28. Of the 157 parents who returned questionnaires, 154 responded to that particular item. Three people did not respond to that item.

Of 18 categories of types of decisions for "High involvement" (combination of completely-frequently involved) parents responded above 50 percent in 12 categories.

Of 18 categories for "Low involvement" (combination of occasionally-never involved) parents responded above 50 percent in six categories.

More specifically, 50 percent or more of the parents thought they should have high involvement in determining

TABLE I

FREQUENCY AND PERCENT OF PARENTS' THOUGHTS ABOUT HOW MUCH THEY
SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS

Decisions	High Involvement ¹		Low Involvement ²		Total	Response
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
1. Determining school goals	111	72	43	28	154	3
2. Deciding what skills	94	61	61	39	155	2
3. What facts taught	78	51	76	49	154	3
4. Choosing textbooks	63	41	91	59	154	3
5. What materials used	72	46	83	54	155	2
6. Teaching methods used	64	41	91	59	155	2
7. Type of evaluation	81	52	74	48	155	2
8. Type of reporting	104	67	51	33	155	2
9. School organization	113	73	42	27	155	2
10. Features of building	107	69	48	31	155	2
11. Play equipment	112	73	42	27	154	3
12. Special services	111	72	44	28	155	2
13. Competitive sports	100	65	55	35	155	2
14. Individualization	94	61	59	39	153	4
15. Parents as volunteers						
a. Helping teachers	117	76	36	24	153	4
b. Helping reading groups	71	47	80	53	151	6
						55

TABLE I (continued)

Decisions	High Involvement ¹ (Completely - Frequently)		Low Involvement ² (Occasionally - Never)		Total	Response
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
c. Checking papers	57	38	92	62	149	8
d. Supervising games	69	46	82	54	151	6
Total Responses		High --- 1,618	Low --- 1,150			
Average of Total Responses		High --- 90	Low --- 64			
Percent of Average		High --- 57	Low --- 41			

¹Combined the categories of completely and frequently.

²Combined the categories of occasionally and never.

school goals, deciding what skills should be taught, determining what facts should be taught, the type of evaluation that would be used, deciding on the type of reporting, what type of school organization should be used, the features of the building, the type of play area and equipment to be used, special services that would be offered, whether or not competitive sports would be a part of the elementary school program, whether or not individualization would be stressed, and deciding whether or not parents would help teachers with menial tasks.

Parents indicated they should have "Low involvement" in choosing textbooks, deciding what materials should be used, what teaching methods should be used, and helping decide whether or not parents should be allowed to hear reading groups, check papers, and supervise games.

It is interesting to note that parents felt most strongly that they should be involved in decisions concerning parents helping teachers with menial tasks (76 percent), selecting play equipment (73 percent), school organization (73 percent), determining school goals (72 percent), and offering special services (72 percent).

An unusual phenomena that seems noteworthy is the fact that a large number of parents did not respond to individualization and the several categories under "Parents as volunteers." There may have been some confusion in parents'

minds on exactly what they were to do here. The high percentage of 53 percent on "Low involvement" on parents hearing reading groups and also 62 percent on parents checking papers and 54 percent concerning "Low involvement" of parents supervising games may have indicated they thought parents should not do this rather than "Low involvement" concerning the decision-making process.

The percent of the average for "High involvement" was approximately 57 percent (vertical), and the percent of the average for "Low involvement" was approximately 41 percent (vertical).

Hypothesis A was accepted since 50 percent of the parents felt that in 12 out of 18 categories they should be completely or frequently involved. This finding is supported by Johnson's study which reported that two-thirds of the parents felt they should be involved in major decisions effecting the school (Johnson, 1975).

Therefore, the researcher finally concludes that parents feel they should have a significant "voice" in many aspects of public education.

II. PARENTS' THOUGHTS ABOUT THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF THE PROCESS OF EDUCATION

Although no study was located which asked parents how they viewed their knowledge, the Nebgen article reported in Chapter II, indicated a direct link had been found between

parental involvement in the school and increased parent self-esteem and feelings of control. In order to report an increased self-esteem, the parents must have had low self-esteem relating to school matters before they became involved in the program that was planned for them (Nebgen, 1979). As a teacher for nearly two decades, the researcher in the present study has always been told by parents that they would help their children or get involved in school affairs if they just knew more about what to do and how to do it. This is perhaps why they reported not wanting to do these things in number fifteen, Table I. Duff and Adams also agree that parents simply are not informed on how they can help their children in reading and other subjects (Duff and Adams, 1981-82).

Hypothesis B, which was formulated because of this apparent need, states that parents think that their knowledge of the process of education is inadequate.

In order to gain the information that was needed to test Hypothesis B, parents were given an opportunity to rate their present knowledge of the process of public school education and indicate whether or not they were pleased with that rating (or if they felt it was adequate for them). Questionnaire items Part III, A and B calls for this information. The data to test Hypothesis B are presented in Tables II and III.

TABLE II

FREQUENCY AND PERCENT OF PARENTS' RATINGS OF
THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF EDUCATION

	Parent Rating of Their Knowledge							No Resp.
	<u>Below Average¹</u>		<u>Average²</u>		<u>Above Average³</u>			
	Very				Very			
	Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Good	Excellent	Total	
Number of Parents	8	16	61	53	15	3	156	1
Percent	5	10	39	34	10	2	100	
Total Number		24		114		18		
Percent		15		73		12		

¹Combined very poor and poor.

²Combined fair and good.

³Combined very good and excellent.

TABLE III

FREQUENCY AND PERCENT OF PARENTS' THOUGHTS ABOUT THEIR
RATING OF THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF EDUCATION

	YES, Pleased with Knowledge	NO, Not Pleased with Knowledge	Total	No Response
Number of Parents	56	100	156	1
Percent	36	64	100	

Table II is divided into three levels which describe the ratings parents gave themselves on their present knowledge of the process of education. These levels are: below average, average, and above average. Below average was formed by combining the responses to "very poor" and "poor." Average was formed by combining "Fair" and Good." Above average was formed by combining "Very Good" and "Excellent."

Table II presents frequencies and percents of parent responses on how they rate their knowledge of education on a scale with three major levels: below average, average, and above average. This was item III, A on the questionnaire. For example, eight parents checked "very poor" for their rating of their knowledge of the process of public school education, and 16 parents checked "Poor," for a total of 24 parents whose overall rating came out "Below Average." The percentage for "Below Average" was 15. In the "Average" category, 114 parents were recorded for 73 percent. The "Above Average" category showed 18 parent responses all totaled, for 12 percent. More than the majority felt their knowledge based on educational matters was "Average." One person did not answer item III, A.

Parents' Thoughts about Their Rating of Knowledge

In order to complete the necessary information to test Hypothesis B, parents had to be asked whether or not they

were pleased with the rating they had to give themselves on educational knowledge. It was assumed that if they were pleased with their self-rating it was because they felt it was adequate. If they were not pleased it was because they viewed their knowledge as inadequate.

Table III also presents frequencies and percentages of parent responses on item III, B on the questionnaire, but this time it is for "Yes" if they were pleased with their self-rating on knowledge of education or "No" if they were not pleased with the amount of knowledge in this area that they felt they had. Fifty-six parents were pleased with their self-rating on educational knowledge, for 36 percent of the parents. One hundred parents were not pleased with their self-rating, representing 64 percent which was a great majority. One person who returned the questionnaire did not answer item III, B.

As a result of evaluating the data from Tables II and III, Hypothesis B is accepted. Although parents indicated in Table II that the majority viewed their educational knowledge as being "Average" (73 percent), 64 percent of the parents indicated (as shown in Table III) that they were not pleased with the rating they had to give themselves, indicating they felt their knowledge of the process of education was inadequate.

The final conclusion is that parents in this study view their knowledge of the process of education as being inadequate.

III. PARENTS' KNOWLEDGE OF OTHER SCHOOLS AND SYSTEMS

No literature was found which dealt with parents' knowledge of other schools or systems besides the ones their children attended. However, during the past five years the researcher has verbally asked many parents if they had ever visited other schools in other systems or even in the same system where their children attended. The answer was always that they had not. Many of them expanded to say they would like to be aware of programs, buildings, and materials enjoyed by students in other places.

Because of this awareness, the researcher formulated Hypothesis C which states that parents will know little about what actually goes on in various schools and systems.

In order to test Hypothesis C, item III, I had to be placed in the questionnaire which allowed parents to respond to a simple "Yes" or "No" question as to whether or not they were aware of various educational opportunities of neighboring schools or systems. The data to test Hypothesis C are presented in Table IV.

Table IV presents frequencies and percents of parent response to item III, I on the questionnaire. On this item,

TABLE IV
FREQUENCY AND PERCENT OF PARENTS' KNOWLEDGE OF
OTHER SCHOOLS OR SYSTEMS

	YES Knowledgeable	NO, Not Knowledgeable	Total	No Response
Number of Parents	56	100	156	1
Percent	36	64	100	

58 parents checked "Yes," to indicate that they were aware of programs, services, and various educational opportunities of neighboring schools or systems. This was 37 percent of the 156 parents who responded to this item. However, 98 parents checked "No," indicating that they were not aware of opportunities in other schools or systems. The percent of parents lacking in knowledge of opportunities in other schools and systems was 63, which was a large majority.

Table IV indicates that parents are not particularly aware of what goes on in other schools and systems other than the ones their children attend. Therefore, they have no reference point with which to compare whether or not their children are receiving equal educational opportunities. This lack of knowledge can be very serious since the differences between systems can be minor, with no detrimental effects, or they can be major, therefore perpetuating inequality as was pointed out by Carlson, Greenbaum and Guthrie in Chapter II (Carlson, 1972; Greenbaum, 1971; and Guthrie, 1971).

Because 63 percent of the parents stated that they were not aware of programs, services, and various educational opportunities of neighboring schools or systems, Hypothesis C is accepted.

The final conclusion is that parents know little about what actually goes on in various schools and systems and therefore are unable to assess whether or not their children

are receiving equal educational opportunities until they gain knowledge in this area.

IV. PARENTS' INTEREST IN INCREASING KNOWLEDGE

The New Haven, Connecticut, plan for parent involvement in the school program is a classic example that parents do want to increase their knowledge in matters concerning the process of education. Although the program offers many opportunities for parents to learn about the process of education, the segment of their program that seems to best apply to this portion of the present research study is the one called, Courses for Parents. In this program two ten-week courses for parents had been so popular with parents that it had been repeated several times (Criscuolo, 1982). Parents have told the researcher of the present study that they realize they need to increase their knowledge in the area of education (as indicated in Table III, page 60), but that they really don't know where to start unless they go to college and study education.

Hypothesis D was formulated which says that parents will be interested in increasing their knowledge and participation in public school education.

In order to test Hypothesis D, several items were placed in the questionnaire to obtain information from parents. These were items III, C, III, G, the last part of III, I (top page 5 on questionnaire), and III, E.

Table V presents frequencies and percents of parent responses on how they would like to be able to rate their knowledge of education on a scale with three major levels: below average, average, and above average. Table V was constructed in the exact same manner as Table II (page 60). Below Average was formed by combining the responses to "very poor" and "poor." Average was formed by combining "Fair" and "Good." Above Average was formed by combining "Very good" and "Excellent." The questionnaire item for Table V is III, C.

Table V is also read the same way as Table II (page 60). For example, an unusual phenomena was that five parents indicated they would like to be able to rate their knowledge of education as Below Average (1 checked very poor, 4 checked poor). This could have been a result of misunderstanding the question, or it could have been intentional indicating that there was no interest in educational matters. Forty-eight parents would like to be able to rate their knowledge in the area of education in the Average range (27 checked fair, 21 checked good). The Average range was 33 percent . The remainder of parents (or 93 in all) would like to be able to rate their knowledge in the area of public school education as Above Average. This was 64 percent of the 146 parents who responded to that item. There was a large number of "No Response" because, if they were already pleased with how they rated themselves, they could skip some items.

TABLE V
FREQUENCY AND PERCENT OF HOW PARENTS WOULD LIKE TO
BE ABLE TO RATE THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF EDUCATION

	Parents' Desired Rating of Knowledge							
	<u>Below Average¹</u>		<u>Average²</u>		<u>Above Average³</u>		Total	No Resp.
	Very				Very			
	Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Good	Excellent		
Number of Parents	1	4	27	21	50	43	146	11
Percent	.7	3	18	14	34	29		
Total Number		5		48		93		
Percent		3		33		64		

¹Combined very poor and poor.

²Combined fair and good.

³Combined very good and excellent.

When comparing Table V to Table II (page 60), the findings indicate that parents overwhelmingly indicated that there is a complete difference between how they rate their knowledge of education and how they would like to be able to rate their knowledge in that area. In Table II (page 60), 73 percent had to rate their knowledge as Average (fair-good), but in Table V, 64 percent would like to be able to rate it Above Average (very good-excellent), showing that parents would like to increase their educational knowledge.

Parents' Desired Rating of Educational Knowledge

Questionnaire item III, C, was used to gain the information that was placed in Table V. However, three more questionnaire items were needed to satisfy Hypothesis D. Questionnaire item III, G, and the last part of III, I (top of page 5 on questionnaire) are to be understood in relation to each other and the rest of the survey. Also, Questionnaire item III, E, will satisfy the aspect of Hypothesis D dealing with parent participation.

Because so much importance has been placed on parents gaining enough knowledge of the process of education for them to be able to recognize quality education and equal education, it seemed necessary to delve even more deeply into how much parents know about equal educational opportunities and

whether or not they feel they need to know more about this. Because the Declaration of Independence includes equality and several writers have already been mentioned who deem equality as most important (Carlson, 1972; Greenbaum, 1971; and Guthrie, 1971) it seemed imperative to gain knowledge of the importance parents place on knowledge of education and their expressed need for increased knowledge in the area of education. The information gained from Questionnaire item III, G, in Table VI and the last part of Questionnaire item III, I, in Table VII will further satisfy the requirements for Hypothesis D dealing with parents' interest in gaining more knowledge.

Table VI will supply data to answer the question of whether or not parents feel they have reason to question if their children's educational opportunities are equal to those in surrounding schools and systems. Table VII follows that with a "Yes" or "No" question of whether or not parents feel they need more knowledge or information to be sure their children are receiving equal educational opportunities.

Table VI presents frequencies and percents on parent responses to Questionnaire item III, G, on whether or not they question equal educational opportunities for their children. Table VI was divided into two major parts: the negative answer which indicates no more information or knowledge is needed for them to be sure the educational

TABLE VI
FREQUENCY AND PERCENT OF PARENTS QUESTIONING
EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

	No Information Needed No, Not Questioning	More Information Needed Yes, Questioning	Not Sure	Total	No Response
Number of Parents	55	43	56	154	3
Percent	36	28	38	100	
Total Number	55	99			
Percent	36	64			

TABLE VII
FREQUENCY AND PERCENT OF PARENTS NEEDING MORE INFORMATION
CONCERNING EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

	Need More Information YES	Need No More Information NO	Total	No Response
Number of Parents	120	34	154	3
Percent	78	22	100	

opportunities were needed. This was represented by the third of the table called, "No Information Needed." The other two-thirds of Table VI was devoted to parents who are questioning the equal opportunities or who are not sure. Either of these answers indicate that more knowledge is needed in order to be sure. Only 55 parents (or 36 percent) indicated that they needed no more information to be sure. The other 99 out of a total of 154 who responded to that item indicated more information was needed for them to be sure. The 99 parents represented 64 percent or a large majority of the parents.

Parents Needing More Information

Table VII was developed from information received from the last part of Questionnaire item III, I, on top of page five of the questionnaire. It also presents frequencies and percents of parent responses, but this time to a specific "Yes" or "No" as to whether or not they feel they need more information to be sure their children are receiving equal educational opportunities.

It is observed that an overwhelming majority of parents, when limited to a "Yes" or "No" indicated a need for more information on equal educational opportunities.

To satisfy the portion of Hypothesis D which deals with parent participation, a simple "Yes" or "No" response was again sought. It has already been pointed out several times

through the literature and additional comments that parents do want to participate more in educational activities, but their lack of knowledge prevents them from so doing.

Increased Parent Participation with Increased Knowledge

Table VIII is a frequency and percent chart which gives the responses when parents were asked if they would take a more active role in trying to influence the process of education if their educational knowledge were increased.

Since 117 parents of the 146 answering item III, E, indicated they would participate more if their knowledge of education increased, the percentage of their response was 80. Only 29 parents (or 20 percent) said they would still not be any more active than they were already.

Because the data in all the tables (V [page 68], VI, VII [page 71], and VIII) which present information to substantiate Hypothesis D are so convincing, Hypothesis D is accepted as it stands. Table V (page 68) indicates that a great majority of parents would like to be able to rate their knowledge of education as Above Average, rather than Average, as they had felt they should rate it in Table II (page 60). Surprisingly, the exact same percentage of parents (64 percent) as in Table V (page 68) indicated in Table VI (page 71) that they felt they needed more information to feel sure their children's educational opportunities were

TABLE VIII
FREQUENCY AND PERCENT OF PARENT RESPONSE CONCERNING
INCREASED PARTICIPATION WITH INCREASED KNOWLEDGE

	Would Participate YES	Would Not Participate NO	Total	No Response
Number of Parents	117	29	146	11
Percent	80	20	100	

equal to others in nearby schools or systems. Table VII (page 71) even more glaringly maintained that they needed more information, when only given a choice between "Yes" and "No." Finally, in order to satisfy the last part of Hypothesis D, Table VIII indicated that parents would definitely take a more active part in education if they had an adequate amount of knowledge on the subject.

The researcher concludes that all of Hypothesis D was accepted. Parents are definitely interested in increasing their knowledge and participation in public school education.

V. PARENTS' MOTIVATION FOR LEARNING ABOUT EDUCATION

Because the literature did not become specific on why parents want to learn more about education, the researcher of the present study felt it would be most important to discover this fact in order to better meet the needs of parents when planning an educational program for adults. From talking with parents it was discovered that the focus of their interest always seems to be upon the most immediate need, and that is to help their own children.

Hypothesis E was formulated because of the overt expressions of parents that their primary interest was to be able to help their children at home. Hypothesis E states

that parents will be motivated to learn more about public school education to better help their child.

Parent Motivation as Indicated
by Selected Activities

In order to test Hypothesis E the researcher presented a variety of educational activities and then gave parents an opportunity to indicate with which activities children would probably need their help, and if so, how strong the need would be. The section of the questionnaire under Part IV, A, supplies this needed information. The data to test Hypothesis E with Part IV, A, are presented in Table IX.

Table IX has the same format as Part IV, A, in the questionnaire, with frequencies and percentages for parent responses on these items being given.

In Table IX, the "highest priority" items were those which were checked by parents as being "very necessary." For example, since "Talking to them" under "Time with Child" was checked by 111 parents (79 percent), it is considered the very highest out of the four highest priority areas checked by parents.

The next motivational forces, because of their indicated importance by parents, were those which had been checked as "Necessary." Number one in importance on this level was "Regular Homework" with 94 parents checks (66 percent).

TABLE IX

FREQUENCY AND PERCENT OF PARENTS' MOTIVATION FOR LEARNING
ABOUT EDUCATION ACCORDING TO ACTIVITIES SELECTED

Category	Activity	Need for Parent Involvement										Total	Response		
		Parent Not Necessary		Parent Necessary		Parent Very Necessary		Parent Very Necessary		Parent Very Necessary					
		Number		Percent		Number		Percent		Number				Percent	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent				
Curr. Curr.	HOMEWORK														
	Regular	21	15	94	66	28	20	143	14						
	Supplementary	34	24	78	55	30	21	142	15						
Pol. Pol. Pol.	ELECTIONS														
	Attending Meetings	22	15	80	56	40	28	142	15						
	Campaigning	58	41	59	42	25	18	142	15						
	Voting	19	13	56	39	68	48	143	14						
Pol. Pol.	EXPRESSING OPINIONS														
	At Meetings	14	10	72	51	56	39	142	15						
	Special Appointments	18	13	73	52	50	35	141	16						
Curr. Curr.	EXTRA ACTIVITIES														
	Hiring Tutors	23	16	66	46	53	37	142	15						
	Private Lessons	24	17	72	51	46	32	142	15						
Curr. Curr. Curr. Curr. Curr.	MATERIALS														
	Toys and Games	28	20	59	42	55	39	142	15						
	Books	21	15	54	38	67	47	142	15						
	Tapes and Records	26	18	57	40	59	42	142	15						
	Resource Materials	24	17	52	37	66	46	142	15						

TABLE IX (continued)

Category	Activity	Need for Parent Involvement							
		Parent Not Necessary		Parent Necessary		Parent Very Necessary		Total	Response
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
TIME WITH CHILDREN									
Curr.	Reading to them	9	6	23	16	109	77	141	16
Curr.	Talking to them	5	4	25	18	111	79	141	16
Curr.	Trips with them	16	11	32	23	93	66	141	16
Curr.	Helping them practice	6	4	41	29	94	67	141	16

The activities least likely to motivate parents were discovered because they were checked as "Not Necessary." Since "Campaigning" received 58 checks (41 percent) it could be considered to be the activity which would least likely motivate parents toward involvement.

Presented in order of their importance to parents, the following areas received the highest priority (very necessary) for motivating parents: Spending time talking to their children, reading to their children, helping them with practice, taking educational trips. It should be further noted that these are all activities related to curriculum (marked curr.), or helping their children gain knowledge.

The next motivational forces in order of their importance to parents (marked as being necessary) are: regular homework, attending political meetings, supplementary homework, special appointments to express opinions, and expressing opinions at regular meetings and providing private lessons were tied.

The activity least likely to motivate parents for involvement according to Table IX is campaigning for political candidates (also marked pol.).

Of the four activities receiving at least 50 percent of the responses as parent help being very necessary, all four are in the area of curriculum or dealing directly with helping their children.

Of the six activities receiving at least 50 percent of the responses as parent help being necessary, three were dealing directly with helping their children (curr.) and the remaining three dealt with politics (pol.).

The one activity indicated as the least likely to motivate parents dealt directly with the political spectrum of public school education (pol.).

Therefore, on a weighted point system, giving the "very necessary" responses + 2 points each, the "necessary" + 1 point each, and those least likely to motivate a - 1, the total was 11 points for activities related to helping children learn (curr.) and 2 points for activities of a political nature (pol.).

It seems noteworthy that 66 percent of the parents responding felt that it is necessary to help children with their regular homework. Also, 77 percent felt that reading to their children is very necessary. Even more noteworthy figures show that 79 percent felt that talking to children is very necessary. However, on the other end of the continuum is the fact that 41 percent of the parents responding felt that campaigning for political candidates, who have a great amount of influence on their child's school, is not necessary.

Hypothesis E is supported by the information in Table IX. Parents are motivated to study the process of education to be able to better help their children at home.

Parent Motivation as Indicated
by Reasons Selected

Besides educational activities that were selected by parents, it was also felt that more data should be collected to test Hypothesis E. The second method chosen was to have parents check, from nine reasons, the one(s) they considered to be reasons why they would want to know more about the process of education. From the ones they checked they could rank them in order of their preference, but for the purpose of data to test Hypothesis E, parent rank was determined by the number of people who check the reason as being important. Questionnaire item IV, B, supplied the necessary data that was placed in Table X.

Table X also presents frequencies and percentages of parent responses for each reason listed in item IV, B, on the questionnaire. However, in order to arrive at rank order of preference and the category of the reason parents want to learn more about education, a weight was also assigned to each rank with position number one receiving nine points, all the way down to position nine receiving one point.

"Helping My Child at Home" was placed in Table X in the first position because it was checked by more parents as being the reason they would want to know more about the process of education (127 out of 140 parents responding to this item, or 91 percent). It also had a weight of 1,143.

TABLE X

RANKING OF REASONS PARENTS ARE MOTIVATED AS INDICATED BY
FREQUENCY, PERCENT, AND WEIGHT

Category	Reason	Number Checked	Number Not Checked	Total	Percent	Weight	Rank
Curr.	Help my children at home	127	13	140	91	1,143	1
Curr.	Know what to expect of good school and teaching	110	30	140	79	880	2
Curr.	Evaluate my child's progress and school programs	108	32	140	77	756	3
Pol.	Help to choose and elect more capable politicians	91	49	140	65	546	4
Curr.	Select home learning materials	89	51	140	64	445	5
Pol.	Ask better questions	67	73	140	48	268	6
Curr.	Offer assistance as a volunteer	66	74	140	47	198	7
Pol.	Serve more effectively on School committees	57	83	140	41	114	8
Pol.	Make more suggestions to School officials	51	89	140	36	51	9
Total Curr. Points = 3,422							
Total Pol. Points = 979							

For instance, "Help my children at home" was checked by 127 parents. Because this was the largest number, and percent (91), this reason was placed in first position. The number nine would be the largest possible weight that could be given for first position because there are only nine reasons in all. By multiplying the weight points (9) by the total number of parents checking that reason, the total weight for that reason can be found. Then it is possible to add all the total weights for curriculum and all the total weights for politics to make a comparison of those two categories.

Total curriculum weighted points (curr.) were 3,422. These are reasons dealing directly with parents wanting to help their children learn. Political weighted points (pol.) were 979, meaning that these are reasons only indirectly with the learning process. Because there were only four items listed which dealt with politics, the researcher added the maximum total weight possible (1,143) to the total political response weight (979). Even by doing that, the reasons dealing with politics could only have 2,122 weighted points.

Therefore, it is concluded that data in Table X also supports Hypothesis E which states that parents will be more motivated to learn about public school education in order to better help their child.

Parent Motivation as Indicated
by General Reasons

Because some parents might not want to take the time to respond to such lengthy items as IV, A or B, Questionnaire item IV, C, was constructed. It narrowed down the choices still trying to gather data to test Hypothesis E. The last choice, dealing with being a better parent is the reason that would test Hypothesis E.

Table XI presents frequencies and percentages for parent responses to item IV, C. Table XI clearly indicates that parents' primary motivation for wanting to learn more about education is simply to be a better parent and community member. Hypothesis E was again supported.

Because the data in Tables IX (page 77), X, and XI all clearly support Hypothesis E, it is accepted for the purpose of the present study.

The researcher concludes that parents are motivated to learn more about public school education in order to better help their child.

VI. TIME FOR CHILDREN

With no literature found for this study to support the hypothesis that parents have enough time to become involved in the process of education, the researcher proceeded to test this hunch, based only upon personal experience as a mother. As a matter of fact, a very common statement heard

TABLE XI
FREQUENCY AND PERCENT OF PARENT MOTIVATION AS
INDICATED BY GENERAL REASONS

General Reasons for Motivation	Number	Percent	Total	No Response
Detected weaknesses in schools	41	30	157	0
Like to make comparisons	54	39	157	0
Like to be better parent	122	88	157	0

by parents over almost two decades of classroom teaching is that "they do not have enough time" to work with their children or to become involved in matters relating to education. Based upon the schedule of a full-time working mother with all the household duties of wife and mother of two, plus always part-time employment (college teaching, tutoring, piano lessons, or sales), and a graduate student, the minimum amount of time spent daily with the two children's academic pursuits would always be an hour per child. Most of the time it could be listed as much more.

Based upon the fact as stated above, Hypothesis F was formulated which states that parents will have ample time to become involved in activities to better help their child.

The best method for collecting this data seemed to be simply to ask parents how much daily time they felt they would have to devote to educational matters.

At the end of Part IV, on the bottom of page 6 of the questionnaire, parents were asked the approximate amount of time that they could spend daily. Because the data were so simple, no table seemed necessary.

The average amount of time reported was approximately one hour and forty-five minutes, daily. Since the average number of children per family was reported to be approximately two, each child could receive an approximate

average of 53 minutes daily of direct involvement from an adult on matters related to learning. With an established minimum of approximately one hour daily (per child), based upon the researcher's personal experience despite a hectic schedule, the amount of time reported by parents as what they could spend is very similar. The researcher feels that Hypothesis F could be accepted, based upon these facts.

The final conclusion drawn is that parents do have ample time to become involved in activities to better help their child.

VII. PARENT INTEREST IN STUDY GROUP

Based upon Criscuolo's report of the success of the various programs receiving maximum participation by parents in the New Haven, Connecticut School System, the researcher formed a hunch that parents would be willing to participate in a study group to learn more about public school education (Criscuolo, 1982). This assumption is further substantiated by the literature of Eleanor Duff and Margaret Adams who point out that the only reason parents are not involved is that they simply are not informed on how they can help their children. They suggest that school personnel take the lead in encouraging parent participation and that the parents will follow (Duff and Adams, 1981-82). From the experience the researcher has had with parents, more of them do want to be informed and active, and will when given the opportunity.

From the above knowledge base, Hypothesis G was formed. It simply states that parents will be willing to participate in a study group to learn more about public school education.

Table XII was analyzed for the variables sex, race, education, income, and system in order to provide information to test Hypotheses I, J, and K in this study.

However, for the data needed to test Hypothesis G, the only information required can be found at the bottom of Table XII in the form of "Totals Indicating Interest."

It is very important for the reader to note that there are several points in the questionnaire where parents can elect not to complete the remainder of the questionnaire. This accounts for the dropping in number from the original 157 who turned in a questionnaire. On questionnaire item III, D, 146 parents responded, 11 did not respond. The interest as indicated by the number of "Yes" responses was 85 percent, or a very positive level of response. However, as parents were given the opportunity to stop the questionnaire at the next point, interest remained positive with 56 percent "Yes" responses, but at that point in the questionnaire only 131 people were still completing the questionnaire. Then it is noted, that by the time the opportunity was given to actually sign up for the seminar, 50 parents signed up. The 50 signing up is obviously the majority of 87, even without presenting the percent.

TABLE XII

FREQUENCY AND PERCENT OF PARENTS INTERESTED IN STUDY GROUP

Variable	Interest in Educational Program Questionnaire Item, III, D					Interest in Parent Seminar Questionnaire Item, V, C					Registering for Seminar Sign-Up At End	
	Yes, Int.	Yes, Int.	Not Int.	Percent	Total	Yes, Int.	Yes, Int.	Not Int.	Percent	Total	Number	Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Response	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Response	Number	Percent
Sex::												
Male	35	83	7	17	2	42	15	44	19	56	10	44
Female	89	86	15	14	9	104	58	60	38	39	16	112
												75
												54
Race:												
White	117	85	21	15	10	138	67	54	55	45	25	124
Black	7	88	1	12	1	9	6	75	2	25	1	9
												47
												60
Income:												
Below \$10,000	20	83	4	17	1	25	9	43	12	57	4	25
\$10,000-15,000	27	84	5	16	3	35	15	52	14	48	6	35
\$15,000-25,000	47	82	10	18	3	60	24	50	23	48	13	60
\$25,000-50,000	27	90	3	10	3	33	23	77	7	23	3	33
Above \$50,000	3	100	0	0	0	3	2	67	1	33	0	3
												2
												100
Education:												
Not Fin. H.S.	27	84	5	16	3	35	12	41	17	59	6	35
H.S. Grad.	48	84	9	16	2	59	25	49	25	49	9	59
Some College	30	91	3	9	3	36	21	78	6	22	9	36
A.S. Degree	6	86	1	14	0	7	4	54	3	43	0	7
B.S. Degree	8	73	3	27	1	17	6	55	5	45	1	12
M.S. Degree	2	100	0	0	1	3	3	100	0	0	0	3
Above M.S.	3	75	1	25	0	4	2	67	1	33	1	4
												2
												100

TABLE XII (continued)

Variable	Interest in Educational Program Questionnaire Item, III, D						Interest in Parent Seminar Questionnaire Item, V, C						Registering for Seminar Sign-Up At End	
	Yes, Int.			No Int.			Yes, Int.			No Int.			Total	Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
System:														
City (Urban)	41	79	11	21	2	21	23	48	25	52	6	48	15	36
County (Rural)	83	88	11	12	9	103	50	60	32	39	20	102	35	58
Totals Indicating Interest from Information in Questionnaire Item, III, D = Yes = 124 or 85 percent = No = 22 or 15 percent No response = 11 Total responses = 146														
Totals Indicating Interest from Questionnaire Item, V, C = Yes = 73 or 56 percent = No = 57 or 44 percent No response = 11 Total responses = 131														
Total Actually Signing up — 50 out of 87 Completing Questionnaire														

However, 50 is less than one third of the total number of 157 who turned in a questionnaire.

The researcher feels that Hypothesis G should be accepted since 85 percent of 146 parents indicated that they were interested in a program that would give them an opportunity to learn more about education (Questionnaire item III, D). Even after being given the option to not complete the questionnaire, once again 56 percent of the 131 parents who continued gave a positive response when asked if they would be interested in being a part of a parent seminar (or parent study group) to learn more about education. The reader will note that Questionnaire item V, C, became much more specific than item III, D, had been. Becoming even more specific is the opportunity for actually signing up for a seminar of this nature. Of the 131 parents who continued the questionnaire, 87 parents completed the entire questionnaire. At the end, 50 of these 87 registered for the seminar. If generalized from the 157 who completed the questionnaire, approximately one-third (32 percent) of those parents actually registered for the seminar at this time. If generalized to the total number of questionnaires actually administered, which was 282, it is noticed that approximately one-fifth of that number actually registered for a seminar at this time. However, just because they did not actually register at this time is no sign that they will not register at all.

Hypothesis G stated that parents will be willing to participate in a study group. Questionnaire items III, D, and V, C, supported that interest or willingness. Hypothesis G did not state that parents would sign up for a seminar. A study group does not necessarily have to be in the form of a weekly structured seminar.

It seems necessary at this time to present some comments that were repeated enough times throughout many questionnaires to indicate they should be given important consideration. At various points in the questionnaire parents were told that they could make comments or suggestions. The most common comments or suggestions were: parents with advanced children do not feel their needs are being met in the public schools; parents are interested in learning about education but could not always be able to obligate themselves to a weekly meeting; many parents are interested in learning about education but just did not feel they could afford the fees required. Even parents who could afford it commented that some method should be sought to make it possible for those who could not afford it to be included. One of the most common concerns was that the study group should be conducted by someone knowledgeable, but someone who would not be swayed by political bias.

When considering the above comments by many parents, Hypothesis G is strengthened. The final conclusion of the

researcher is that parents are willing to participate in a study group. However, an ingenious plan will have to be formulated to meet the various needs of parents.

VIII. CURRICULUM VERSUS POLITICS

Although several writers who have already been mentioned several times have called for parent interest in equality of education with emphasis on the political spectrum, the researcher's experience base in public school education indicates that parents show more interest in matters of curriculum (or what is actually taught and learned) than they do in the politics of education. Parents don't seem to consider the fact that the two go together, since the effects of politics is felt in the classroom.

Hypothesis H states that in a study group to learn more about public school education, parents will be more motivated to learn about areas related to curriculum than they will be in areas related to politics.

Table IX (page 77) showed that activities related to curriculum received 11 weighted points and activities concerning politics only received 2 weighted points. This Table's data support Hypothesis H.

Table X (page 82) indicated 3,422 weighted points for curriculum reasons as motivating parents while there were only 979 weighted points for political reasons motivating

parents. Again, Hypothesis H is supported by the data in Table X (page 82).

Because the purpose of Tables IX and X (pages 77 and 82) was primarily to deal with motivation of parents, it was felt that a specific hypothesis dealing with curriculum vs. politics and a ranking table was necessary. This time, one more category was listed for politics since curriculum had more categories in the other tables.

Table XIII presents the data from parent rankings of Part V, A. The results of the ranking order in Table XIII indicates that parents are more interested in learning about curriculum than they are in learning about politics. Therefore, Hypothesis H, which states that in a study group to learn more about public school education, parents will be more motivated to learn about areas related to curriculum than they will be in areas related to politics, is accepted.

The final conclusion is that although the politics of education has much to do with the outcome of curriculum (Carlson, 1972; Greenbaum, 1971; Guthrie, 1971; Weaver, 1979; and Perry, 1981), parents are much more interested in learning about curriculum, not seeming to be aware of the connection between curriculum and politics of education.

TABLE XIII
PARENT RANK ORDER OF AREAS OF STUDY DEALING
WITH CURRICULUM AND POLITICS

Category	Important Areas of Study	Number of Parents* giving rank	Rank Given
Curr.	School curriculum	73	1
Curr.	How children learn	51	2
Pol.	Parental rights and responsibilities	57	3
Pol.	Parental influence	53	4
Pol.	Politics of education	90	5

*Of 139 responding

IX. VARIABLES AFFECTING MOTIVATION OR INTEREST IN LEARNING ABOUT EDUCATION

The Nebgen article was the only literature in Chapter II of this study which specified the involvement of minority groups. However, it did not contain the type of information that will be presented in the data in the present study. Nebgen did show that Title I parents, who primarily represent minority groups, are involved with Title I activities in schools (Nebgen, 1979). However, it has been the experience of the researcher that black parents, low income parents, less educated parents, and fathers are not as involved with their children's education as white mothers who are more educated and have more income. It was also assumed that urban parents would show more interest.

The following hypotheses were formulated from the above assumptions:

Hypothesis I. White parents with more education and income will be more highly motivated to become more involved in the educational process than black parents, parents with low income, or uneducated parents.

Hypothesis J. Urban parents will be more highly motivated than rural parents to learn more about the process of education.

Hypothesis K. Mothers will be more highly motivated than fathers to learn more about the education process.

Questionnaire items III, D; V, C; and the Sign-Up provide the data to test the three hypotheses above. The data for Hypotheses I, J, and K are presented in Table XII (page 89). In Table XII (page 89), the first line indicates that 35 fathers, for 83 percent of all fathers responding, said that they would be interested in a study group on the process of education. Seven fathers were not interested in that type of activity. Their percent rate was 17. Two fathers did not respond, giving the total fathers returning the questionnaire as 42. The entire table is read the same way.

The percentage of blacks being interested in a study group was slightly greater than whites, therefore questioning Hypothesis I, which stated that white parents would be more interested. However, because so many black parents did not return a questionnaire, the researcher felt that insufficient data was received to reject Hypothesis I from the data in Table XII (page 89). Also, the number of low income parents returning the questionnaire was very low. But Table XII (page 89) does show that lower income parents did not indicate as high of percentage of interest as did higher income parents. However, more interest was indicated by the \$25,000-\$50,000 income range than was indicated by the very top range of above \$50,000.

Interest also increased as the amount of education increased. Again, the parents with the very highest level of educational attainment did not reveal as much interest as the Masters' level. This was the same finding as with the \$25,000-\$50,000 income range showing more interest than the above \$50,000. The researcher assumed that with increased education and responsibility as associated with positions paying more money, lack of time may have entered as a factor.

Table XII (page 89) rejects Hypothesis J, since much more interest was shown by rural (county) parents than urban (city). However, on actual sign-up there was not a significant amount of difference. It should be noted that many more urban parents failed to return their questionnaire than rural parents. Many of the urban parents failing to return their questionnaire were also black.

The data in Table XII (page 89) also causes the researcher to accept Hypothesis K (which states that mothers are more highly motivated than fathers to learn more about the education process) since a much greater percentage of mothers indicated an interest in a study group than fathers. Although the "Sign-Up" showed that 75 percent of the fathers signed up (of the 12 fathers out of 87 completing the questionnaire), there seems again to be insufficient data since many more fathers failed to turn in their questionnaires than did mothers.

Several unusual phenomena occurred in the data in Table XII (page 89). Parents who had finished the Associate or Bachelor's degree in college didn't indicate as great amount of interest as did those parents who only attended college but didn't receive a degree. On sign up, however, the Bachelor's degree parents made a great jump from the original interest indicated and the actual completing of the questionnaire, including signing up. However, the Associate degree parents dropped even more in interest and intent, with only 20 percent of that group signing up.

The researcher draws the final conclusions, after considering all circumstances surrounding the analysis of the data dealing with variables:

1. There was no conclusive evidence as to whether or not race is a factor in determining parents motivation for studying education.
2. High income parents are more motivated to study education than low income parents.
3. Educated parents are more motivated to study education than uneducated parents.
4. Rural parents are more motivated to study education than urban parents.
5. Mothers are more motivated to study education than fathers.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The concluding chapter presents a restatement of the hypotheses, limitations, summary of findings, conclusions of the study, and recommendations for further research and future proceedings.

I. HYPOTHESES

This study was conducted to determine the feelings of a selected sample of parents about their role in the process of public school education. The hypotheses which were tested are as follows:

A. Parents in this study will feel that they should have a significant voice in many aspects of public education.

B. Parents will feel that their knowledge of the process of education is inadequate.

C. Parents will know little about what actually goes on in various schools and systems.

D. Parents will be interested in increasing their knowledge and participation in public school education.

E. Parents will be motivated to learn more about public school education to better help their child.

F. Parents have ample time to become involved in activities to better help their child.

G. Parents will be willing to participate in a study group to learn more about public school education.

H. In a study group to learn more about public school education, parents will be motivated to learn about areas related to curriculum than they are in areas related to politics.

I. White parents with more education and income will be more highly motivated to become more involved in the educational process than black parents, parents with low income, or uneducated parents.

J. Urban parents will be more highly motivated than rural parents to learn more about the process of education.

K. Mothers will be more highly motivated than fathers to learn more about the education process.

II. LIMITATIONS

The study was limited to 282 parents of elementary school students (grades K-5) in Hamblen County in East Tennessee. Although 55 percent of the parents returned their questionnaire, this was less than expected since it was delivered door to door. It was recognized that several factors would probably improve the return rate: deletions in the questionnaire to eliminate any items not absolutely necessary for the study, establishing a very specific time for pick-up for the next day after delivery, and returning

at least two additional times if contact was not made at the specified time. Besides the above weaknesses, it was also recognized that more effort should have been made to obtain more black participation. Although the area studied have very few black students, the participation should have been greater than was obtained. More participation from fathers should have been sought.

III. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The first finding is that parents in this study do think they should have a significant voice in many aspects of public school education (Hypothesis A). It should be noted that out of 18 categories of types of decisions for "High involvement" parents responded above 50 percent in 12 categories. This means that over 50 percent of the parents responding to that item felt that they should have high involvement in 12 of the 18 categories listed.

The data also supported the hypothesis that parents will think that their knowledge of the process of education is inadequate (Hypothesis B). Although a majority (73 percent) of the parents felt that their knowledge of matters relating to education was average, they further indicated (64 percent) that average knowledge on educational matters is inadequate.

From the data it was further surmised that parents are not aware of what actually goes on in various schools and

systems other than the ones their children attend, therefore being unable to assess the type of differences that may exist or the significance of these differences (Hypothesis C). Sixty-four percent of the parents indicated that they were not aware of what went on in schools other than the ones their children attended.

Although parents admit that they have inadequate knowledge in areas related to the process of education, they also indicated through their responses that they are very interested in increasing their knowledge and their participation in matters dealing with public school education (Hypothesis D). Although the majority of the parents rated their knowledge of the process of education as being average, 64 percent indicated that they would like to be able to rate their knowledge of educational matters above average. Sixty-four percent of the parents responding indicated that they were questioning whether or not their children were receiving equal educational opportunities or were not sure whether or not they were receiving equal educational opportunities. Seventy-eight percent of the parents responded that they need more information concerning equal educational opportunities and their children's education in public school. Also as a part of Hypothesis D, 80 percent of the parents responding indicated that they felt that if their knowledge of the process of education were to increase

their participation in educational matters would also increase.

The data indicate that parents' primary interest in learning more about education is to be able to better help their child at home (Hypothesis E). Ninety-one percent of the parents placed "Helping my child at home" in first position of a rank order chart of reasons for being motivated to learn more about the process of education.

From the information received it was decided that parents have ample time to become involved in activities that would result in being more prepared to help their child (Hypothesis F). The average amount of daily time reported by parents was close to two hours (1 hour, 45 minutes). Since the average number of children being reported was approximately two, one hour per child was considered an adequate amount of time. However, because some parents have more children than the average number of two, it is recommended that if both parents could become actively involved with their children the amount of time devoted to children's educational activities could be doubled.

The data indicate that parents are willing to participate in a study group (Hypothesis G). Eighty-five percent of the parents responding (146 parents) gave a positive answer to whether or not they would be interested in a program to

study the process of education. Fifty-six percent of those electing to continue the questionnaire (131 parents) indicated that they would be interested in a weekly seminar. At the end of the questionnaire, 50 parents actually signed up for the seminar soon to be offered. This was approximately one-third of the total (157) parents who completed a questionnaire.

Although the politics providing the education of children have a direct relation to curriculum, parents indicate a much greater motivation to learn about areas related to curriculum than they do those areas dealing with educational politics (Hypothesis H). On a rank order scale which included weighted points for analysis, curriculum-related areas received 3,422 points and political-related areas received 979 weighted points from parents.

The data in this study were not conclusive enough to indicate that race is a determining factor in parental interest in studying the process of public school education (Hypothesis I). Only nine black parents returned the questionnaire. Although Hamblen County has a very small population of black students, the data would have been much more revealing if more of the black parents had returned the questionnaire. The black parents who did return their questionnaire were very positive toward learning about education (88 percent) with 60 percent of the ones returning

the questionnaire actually signing up for the seminar, but a greater number of respondents would have resulted in more conclusive results. Also tested for Hypothesis I was whether or not education and income are determining factors concerning parent interest in studying education. Education and income were indicated as two determining factors. Those parents with more education and more income indicated that they were more highly motivated to study the education process than were the parents who were not highly educated and who did not have a high income. Forty-three percent of the low income group indicated an interest in a seminar to study the process of education while 77 percent of the high income group indicated an interest in the seminar. However, only 67 percent of the very highest income group (over \$50,000 annually) indicated an interest in the seminar. Very similar results were found concerning educational attainment. However, when seeking information on initial interest in studying the process of education, the differences between the variables was not significant at all. The conclusion was drawn that lack of money and possibly self-confidence may have possibly prevented the uneducated and low income group from actually showing an interest in the seminar and signing up.

The data rejects Hypothesis J, which states that urban parents will be more highly motivated to study education.

Parent responses on all levels, interest in studying, interest in seminar, and actual sign up was more positive with the county (or rural) parents. The comparisons were county, 88 percent positive on interest with the city 79 percent. Interest in a seminar was 60 percent county and 48 percent city. Actual sign-up was 58 percent county and 36 percent city. Also, many more city parents did not even return the questionnaire, and many of the nonreturns in the city were black, low income, and uneducated.

From the data recorded in this study it would appear that mothers are more interested than fathers to learn more about the education process. Here again, on initial interest that was shown there was very little difference, but when data became specific on interest in a seminar, 44 percent of the males indicated an interest, with 60 of the females showing an interest. However, a very surprising phenomena occurred when only 54 percent of the mothers actually signed up, while 75 percent of the fathers actually signed up for the seminar. This fact was counter-acted by the fact that very few fathers showed an interest in even completing a questionnaire (44) as opposed to 113 mothers.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The researcher derived the following conclusions from this study:

1. Parents should have a significant voice in many aspects of public education.

2. Parents would take a more active part in the process of education if they were given the opportunity to increase their knowledge of educational matters.

3. Parents have the time and interest to better help their child at home if they were only directed as to how they could be effective helpers.

4. Although educational attainment, geographic location, and income level have an effect on the amount of parent involvement that is desired and expected, this study indicated that race may not be a factor in parent involvement in the process of education.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Because this study discovered such high concern on the part of parents in learning more about the various aspects of public school education, the researcher feels that much should be done on the part of educators from all levels to offer parents this information for which they are asking.

The following recommendations should be considered as a guide for future proceedings of educators:

1. School superintendents and central office staff should provide parent education.

2. School principals should provide a regular program of parent education.

3. Teachers should regularly provide parent education on the classroom level, keeping parents informed of skills being studied, possible home activities, and assessment of individual student progress toward goals being set.

4. School personnel should involve parents in educational decision-making.

5. A program for parent education should be developed by a qualified individual who would not be influenced by biased politics. Attention should be given to a method to provide involvement opportunities for men, low income, and the uneducated.

6. A survey should be conducted to find out more about what school systems are doing about:

- a. Parent education
- b. Parent participation in decisions
- c. Parents helping teachers

7. An improved questionnaire should be developed to gain parent information.

8. The replication of the present study should be conducted with a better sample.

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REFERENCES

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APPENDIX

Dear Parents,

In order for me to complete the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at The University of Tennessee, I must conduct a research project on some phase of education. I have decided that parent involvement in the process of education is so important that much time and effort should be spent to learn more about this aspect of educating children.

I have prepared a questionnaire that should take approximately thirty minutes to complete. I hope you will be willing to take that much time to complete the questionnaire. I will leave it with you and return in a few days to pick it up. If you have any questions about any part of it you could ask me when I return to pick it up or call me at home after 6:00 (581-0334). At the end of the questionnaire you will be given a choice as to whether or not you want to give your name, address, and phone number. I can assure you that the questionnaire will never be seen by anyone else, and no information within will be shared with anyone. The overall information only will be presented in the form of a research report which will in no way include your identity. When I return for the questionnaire you will be able to place it in a box with many others, mixing them in any way you choose. I will need to take your telephone number in order to call to see when it is ready to be picked up, you may call me, or you could tell me now when I should return for it. Your completion and return of the questionnaire constitutes informed consent.

Your participation in this project is greatly needed and sincerely appreciated.

I am,

Delorice Sykes Bell
Rt. 9, Box 401
Morristown, Tennessee

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNING THEIR
INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROCESS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION

PART I. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Sex _____ Age _____ Number of children _____ Ages of children _____

Job Description _____

Please check below the area of Hamblen County where you live:

☐ Alpha	☐ Morristown City
☐ Whitesburg	☐ Other

Please circle the school system where your child/children attend or will attend:

Morristown City Schools or Hamblen County Schools

YOUR Formal Education: (Check one below)

☐ Didn't finish High School	☐ Associate Degree
☐ High School Graduate	☐ Bachelor's Degree
☐ Some college	☐ Master's Degree

If above Master's Degree, please specify below:

Income Range (check one for TOTAL family income range)

☐ Below \$10,000	☐ \$25,000-\$50,000
☐ \$10,000-\$15,000	☐ Above \$50,000
☐ \$15,000-\$25,000	

PART II. GENERAL QUESTIONS ON PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

EXPLANATION FOR PART II—In this part you are not being asked about how you personally feel about the different items; you are only being asked how much input or "voice" parents should be allowed to have concerning these matters.

A. To what extent should parents share in making the following decisions about schools: (Check one below)

	completely involved	frequently involved	occasionally involved	never involved
1. Determining overall goals of school—Ex. Should music be taught?				
2. Deciding what skills should be taught in the different subjects, such as Reading and Math.				
3. What facts should be taught in Soc. Stu. and Science?				
4. Choosing textbooks.				
5. What type of materials should be used? (Such as films, science equipment, library books, etc.)				
6. What teaching methods should be used? (Such as lectures, field-trips, drill, games, etc.)				
7. What type of evaluation should be used? (Such as tests, observation, homework, conferences)				
8. What type of reporting should be used? (Such as grade cards, parent conferences, letters to parents)				
9. What type of school organization should be used? (Graded or non-graded, Open Space or Individual classrooms, Team-Teaching, Departmentalization, etc.)				
10. What type of features should be included in the building? (Gym or playroom, open areas or separate rooms, carpet or hard floors, air conditioning or none)				

	completely involved	frequently involved	occasionally involved	never involved
11. Deciding whether or not there should be an outdoor play area, if so, what kind of equipment?				
12. What type of Special Services should be offered (Such as Music Art, Speech, Guidance, Librarian, P.E., Remedial/Advanced Class)				
13. Deciding if competitive sports between schools should be a part of elem. school activities				
14. Deciding whether or not all children in a room should be given the same 10 math problems, or if some should be given easier and some harder (individualization).				
15. Deciding if parents will be used as volunteers by:				
a. Helping teachers supervise trips, mix paint, prepare other materials . . .				
b. Hearing reading groups.				
c. Checking student papers				
d. Supervising table games, drill games, and other learning centers.				

B. Check below the type of activities in which you think parents should take an active role: (Check one, more, or all).

- () _____ PTA (Parent-Teacher Association, if offered)
 () _____ Homeroom Volunteer (for room parties, etc.)
 () _____ Volunteer Aide (Actual helping in room)

- () _____ Resource Speaker (on topics in which parent is very knowledgeable)
- () _____ Advisory Committee (to help establish priorities, policy, etc.)
- () _____ School Evaluation Committee (to insure equality of education)
- () _____ Parent Study Group (to learn more about modern materials, methods)
- () _____ Child Study Group (to study age level characteristics, and how children grow and develop)
- _____ Other, please list:

In the () above, please go back and rank those checked, 1 being the most important, and right on down the line with 2 next, etc.

PART III. QUESTIONS CONCERNING YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT YOUR PRESENT KNOWLEDGE OF THE PROCESS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION

- A. Please rate your present knowledge concerning the process of public School education:
- ____ very poor; ____ poor; ____ fair; ____ good; ____ very good; ____ excellent
- B. Are you pleased with how you had to rate your present knowledge in in this area?
- ____ YES ____ NO (if YES, please answer F on next page.)
- C. How would you like to be able to rate yourself on knowledge in this area?
- ____ very poor; ____ poor; ____ fair; ____ good; ____ very good; ____ excellent
- D. Would you be interested in a program that would give you the opportunity to learn more about the process of public education?
- ____ YES ____ NO
- E. Do you think that you would take a more active role in trying to influence the process of education if your knowledge in that area were increased?
- ____ YES ____ NO
- F. If you are already satisfied with your knowledge in this area, are you also pleased with the amount of influence you are having on the process of public school education?
- ____ YES ____ NO

- G. Do you question whether or not the educational opportunities in your child's school or system is at least equal to those in surrounding or neighboring schools or systems?

☐ Yes, I think I have reasons to question whether this is true.
☐ No, I do not think I have reasons to question this. I think that I know their opportunities are at least equal.
☐ I'm not sure, but would like to know more to be sure.

- H. How do you learn about the educational opportunities in your child/children's school or system? (Check one, more, or all)

☐ From school officials ☐ From going and observing
☐ From other parents ☐ All the above
☐ From own children ☐ Other, please list:
☐ from newspapers, t.v., radio

- I. Are you aware of the programs, services, and various educational opportunities of neighboring schools or systems?

☐ YES ☐ NO

If YES was marked for the last question above, from whom do you get your information? (Check one, more, or all below)

☐ Read about it ☐ From educators
☐ From other parents ☐ From visits to schools
☐ From students ☐ Other, please list:

Do you think you need more information on the types of programs, services, or educational opportunities offered in other schools and/or systems to be sure your child or children is/are receiving equal educational opportunities?

☐ YES, I think I need more information to be sure about this.
☐ NO, I think I have all the information I need.

If YES was marked for the last question, from whom (or what) would you want this information? (Check one, more, or all)

- () ☐ From public school teachers
 () ☐ From administrators (principals, supervisors, superintendents)
 () ☐ From school board members
 () ☐ From going and observing yourself
 () ☐ From reading educational books and magazine articles
 () ☐ From other parents
 () ☐ From college and university professors knowledgeable on the subject
 () ☐ All the above
☐ Other, please list:

In the () above, please go back and rank those checked, 1 being the most important and right on down the line with 2 next, etc.

PART IV. QUESTIONS CONCERNING MOTIVATION—WHY YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROCESS OF EDUCATION (Assuming you DO . . . If you feel your knowledge is adequate and you do not wish to complete this questionnaire you may stop here.)

- A. Please check the column at the right which shows how you view your responsibility for the educational activities at the left:

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY	STRENGTH OF NEED FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT		
	Parent assistance NOT NECESSARY	Parent assistance NECESSARY	Parent assistance VERY NECESSARY
1. Homework			
a. Teacher assigned			
b. Supplementary			
2. School Official Election			
a. Attending meetings			
b. Actively campaigning			
c. Voting			
3. Expressing Opinions to School Officials			
a. At meetings			
b. Special appointments			
4. Extra Activities for Your Children			
a. Hiring tutors if needed			
b. Providing private lessons (music, etc.)			
5. Providing Home Learning Center			
a. Toys and Games			
b. Books			
c. Tapes and Records			
d. Resource materials (such as encyclopedia)			
6. Spending Time with Your Children			
a. Reading to him/her			
b. Talking to him/her (about school, etc.)			
c. Taking him/her on educational trips			
d. Helping him/her practice			

NOTE: Concerning number 6 above, approximately how much time daily could you or would you be able or willing to spend being directly involved in your child/children's educational activities (as was mentioned in number 1 and 6). Please give the TOTAL amount. For instance, if you have 2 children and can devote 1 hour that would be approximately 30 minutes for each child. Therefore, you would put down 1 hour.

Approximate amount of time possible daily _____.

B. Please check below WHY you would like to know more about the process of public school education: (Check one, more, or all)

To be able to:

- () _____ Help my child/children more at home
- () _____ Select home learning materials
- () _____ Offer my assistance as a volunteer to the school
- () _____ Evaluate my child's progress and school programs
- () _____ Make more suggestions to school officials
- () _____ Know what to expect of a good school and good teaching
- () _____ Ask better questions
- () _____ Serve more effectively on school committees
- () _____ Help to choose and elect more capable politicians to key positions such as school board members, court members, and/or school superintendent

_____ Other, please list:

In the () above, please go back and rank those checked, 1 being the most important, and right on down the line with 2 next, etc.

C. Do you wish to know more about the process of public school education because: (Check one, more, or all)

- _____ You have detected possible weaknesses in your child's school or system.
- _____ You would like to be able to make comparisons with other school systems in order to be able to detect strengths and/or weaknesses in your child's school and/or system
- _____ You would just like to become more knowledgeable in order to be a better parent and community member

PART V. MORE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS AS TO WHAT AND HOW YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEARN ABOUT EDUCATION

A. Please rank the following in the order of their importance to YOU, in the () making number 1 your most important, 2 next, and on down to 5 as the least important:

- () The school curriculum (what is taught and learned)
- () How children learn
- () Parental rights and responsibilities
- () The politics of education (process of election and/or appointment to educational positions, etc.)
- () Parental influence on the educational process

B. Use the space below to list others you consider important for study:

C. Would you be interested in being a part of a PARENT SEMINAR (or PARENT STUDY GROUP) to learn more about the process of public school education?

____ YES

____ NO

If YES was marked on the above question, please fill out the remainder of the questionnaire, including the very last information so it would be possible to contact you if a seminar is organized.

D. Concerning the organization of a seminar:

1. By whom do you think that parent education on the process of education should be offered? (Check ONE below)

____ By the public school system

____ By the local college

____ By a qualified educator, but not as a part of the public school system or local college

____ By either of the above, just as long as it is available

2. Concerning TIME and MONEY for such a course, would it be reasonable for fees and time schedule to be similar to colleges:

Fees—Approximately \$30.00 per quarter

Time—6:00-8:45 weekly

Quarter Length—approximately 10 weeks

____ YES this is reasonable

____ NO this is not reasonable

(Please note your suggestions)

E. Rank the type of learning experiences you would prefer. Make number 1 represent your favorite, on down the line, with the largest number your LEAST favored activity.

- () Lecture and/or Visiting Speakers
- () Informal Group Discussion
- () Visitation to various schools/systems and sharing what we find by using slides, etc.

- () Reading Material and sharing informally
- () An equal combination of the above

Other suggestions, please note:

PLEASE USE THE SPACE BELOW TO MAKE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS CONCERNING ANY PART OR ALL OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE:

IF YOU HAVE A CHILD/CHILDREN WHO YOU FEEL IN ANY WAY WOULD BE "SPECIAL" OR "DIFFERENT" PLEASE DESCRIBE HERE:

IF INTERESTED IN SEMINAR PLEASE FILL OUT BELOW:

Name _____ Address _____
Phone _____

THANKS AGAIN FOR YOUR TIME!

VITA

Delorice Sykes Bell was born in Morristown, Tennessee, on May 11, 1944. She was graduated from Morristown High School East, Morristown, Tennessee, in May 1961.

She attended Carson-Newman College at Jefferson City, Tennessee, and received her Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from that institution in 1964. She received her Master's degree in Elementary Education from The University of Tennessee in 1970. In 1976 she received the Specialist in Education degree with a major in Curriculum and Instruction from The University of Tennessee.

In 1964-1967 she taught elementary school (grade three) at Alpha School in the Hamblen County School System. During the Summer of 1967 she served as Head Teacher over the Morristown-Hamblen County Head Start Program. In the Morristown City School System she taught on the lower intermediate team and served as team coordinator at John Hay Elementary School from 1967-1970. During the Summer of 1970 she also served as Director of the Morristown City Summer School Program for Elementary School. From 1970-1974 she was Title I Coordinator at Sherwood Elementary School in the Morristown City School System. From 1974 to 1976 she was a kindergarten teacher at Lincoln Heights Elementary School in the Morristown City School System before returning to the

Hamblen County School System in 1977. She has taught at Union Heights Elementary School in Hamblen County from the time period 1977-1982. At that school she has served in many different capacities: kindergarten teacher, fourth and fifth grade teacher, and librarian beginning the Fall of 1982. During her stay at Union Heights she also served as an adjunct faculty member of Walters' State Community College in Morristown, Tennessee. Her teaching experience from 1964 through the 1982 school year includes all grades K-5, plus librarian and five quarters of college teaching.

She began work on the Doctorate of Education degree in 1977, and received this degree in August 1982 with a major in Curriculum and Instruction.

Her professional memberships have included Alpha Delta Kappa, Pi Lambda Theta, National Education Association, Tennessee Education Association, East Tennessee Education Association, the Morristown Education Association, and the Hamblen County Education Association. She has held several offices in these organizations.

She is married to Roy Gene Bell and has two children, Bethany and Brandl. They live near Lowland in Morristown, Tennessee.