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# Exploring the Perceptions of Parents on Parent Involvement in County Community School Students' Academic Achievement

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# Exploring the Perceptions of Parents on Parent Involvement in County Community School Students' Academic Achievement

A Dissertation by

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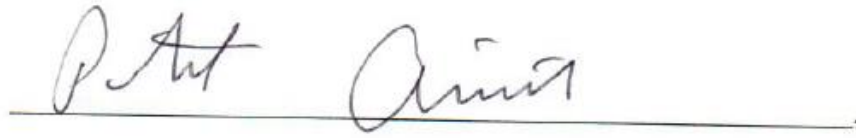

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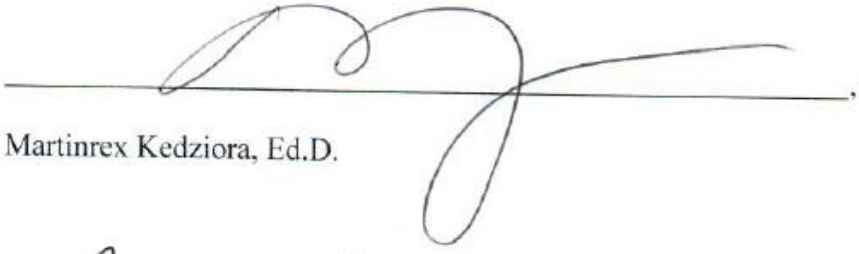

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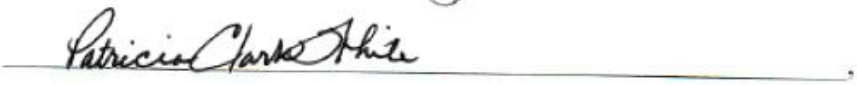

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ABSTRACT

Exploring the Perceptions of Parents on Parent Involvement in County Community School Students' Academic Achievement

by Maria I. Haro

**Purpose:** The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to understand and explain how parents perceive parent engagement affects high school academic achievement within county operated community schools in Riverside County California. An additional purpose of the study was to understand and explain actions parents believe are necessary to increase parent engagement within county community schools in Riverside County.

**Methodology:** This qualitative phenomenological study explored the perspectives of 16 parents who had students attending County Community Schools in California. The research focused on parent engagement and the actions necessary to involve parents in their children's education. The researcher in conjunction with a thematic dissertation partner, Sandra Hernandez, created an in depth semi-structured interview consisting of eight interview questions correlated to the research questions and five demographic questions. The thematic dissertation partner helped in vetting the research question and helped to code the data collected in this research study.

**Findings:** Examination of phenomenological data revealed 15 themes, which led nine major findings and one unexpected finding. Major finding were:

- Parents want to be involved with the county community school their child attends.
- Communication is an important factor to increase parental involvement.
- Parents support their children at home.

- Parents want to participate in school activities.
- Schedule activity times that parents can attend.
- Parental notifications of events need to be done in a timely manner.
- Parents want parent education and trainings.
- Interviews evoke emotional responses from parents.

**Conclusions:** The study concludes that parents perceived that their involvement in their child's education helps their children succeed academically. Parents want to be involved at the school site and in their child's academic journey, but the schools do not provide opportunities for involvement.

**Recommendations:** Further research is recommended to explore different areas of what county community schools can do to actively engage parents to be involved at the school sites.

# PREFACE

Following several conversations two doctoral students discovered that they had a common interest in exploring the perceptions of parent engagement not only from a school staff perspective, but also from the perspective of parents. This process resulted in a thematic study conducted by the research team of Maria Haro and Sandra Hernandez. A qualitative phenomenological study was designed with a focus to explain and understand the perceptions and lived experiences of parents, teachers, and principals in the area of parental involvement as a means to increase students' academic achievement. Data was collected from parents, teachers, and principals from Riverside County Community Schools. Each doctoral student interviews focused on a specific set of individuals. One student interviewed 16 parents and the other student selected 20 county community school staff members; seven principals and 13 teachers.

A shared methodology was developed. Interviews were conducted by each research to determine what perception each interview group had on parental involvement. To ensure thematic consistency, the team co-created the purpose statement, research questions, definitions, interview questions, study procedures, and consent forms. Researchers worked together to develop interview questions and demographic questions for this study. The demographic questions provided the researchers context of who the interviewee was, and provided additional information that was pertinent to this study. Throughout the study, the term "dissertation partner" is used to refer to the researchers who conducted this thematic study.

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# CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Having a negative school experience can be catastrophic for a young person (K. L. Henry, Knight, & Thornberry, 2012). As such, being expelled from a comprehensive high school can be the catalyst for a student to academically disengage from their academics (K. L. Henry, 2007). In addition, students who have been expelled are considered at-risk due to their engagement in risky behaviors that led to the student to be expelled from their home school district. These students violated the school code of conduct and have demonstrated academic failure, social-emotional complications, truancy, and have disengaged from school and/or their family (Gregg & Appalachia Educational Lab, 1998; K. L. Henry, 2007; K. L. Henry et al., 2012; Hodgman, 2016; C. M. Lange, Sletten, & National Association of State Directors of Special Education, 2002; Quinn et al., 2006). In addition, Roberson (2015) declares that youth who encounter challenges such as little to no guidance and support, are exposed to hostile and underprivileged environment, and lack of stable family relationships become at-risk. These at-risk youths habitually live in poverty-stricken communities, experience violence, and are deprived of resources and the foundation that would empower them to be successful academically. These young people are more likely to not finish high school when compared to youths who are not at-risk (Gregg & Appalachia Educational Lab, 1998; K. L. Henry, 2007; K. L. Henry et al., 2012; Hodgman, 2016; C. M. Lange et al., 2002; Quinn et al., 2006). Such behaviors and circumstances lead to students dropping out of high school becoming a widespread problem, which had to be addressed (K. L. Henry et al., 2012).

State and federal law mandates that students be offered the opportunity to receive an appropriate free education to address the student's individual needs, student have the right to earn a high school diploma in a quality public school (C. M. Lange et al., 2002; U. S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2014). Alternative education, as seen by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) (2014), establishes programs that meet the needs of students that cannot be met in a comprehensive school. These programs provide students who have behavior problems, academic deficiencies, social-emotional issues with an education (Gregg & Appalachia Educational Lab, 1998; K. L. Henry, 2007; K. L. Henry et al., 2012; Hodgman, 2016; C. M. Lange et al., 2002; Porowski, O'Conner, & Luo, 2014; Quinn et al., 2006). According to Roberson (2015) and Hodgman (2016) there are three types of alternative education programs: (a) Type I programs are full-time and voluntary for students who are in need of individualized instruction or innovation, (b) Type II programs address the needs of students with disciplinary issues; (c) Type III programs assist students with academic or social-emotional problems who desire to return to a regular school setting.

In the United States, some alternative education programs serve academically advanced students, students seeking vocational and technical education, but most serve students who are at-risk of academic and school failure or students who are marginalized from a traditional school system (C. M. Lange et al., 2002; Porowskiet al., 2014). Alternative education programs according to Porowski, O'Conner, and Lou (2014), provide support and educational services for students who will not likely succeed in a traditional high school setting and otherwise not complete their high school education. In addition, alternative education programs provide these students with a means to obtain a

high school certificate, provide a safe and secure learning environment that is tailored to the student's individualized needs, provides the opportunity for credit recovery and/or tries to provide students with a vocation that will ensure that these students become productive citizens in society and not a burden (Hodgman, 2016; Porowski et al., 2014; USDOE, 2014; C. A. Williams, 2009).

## Background

In the mid-1950s and early 1960 to combat the problematic social and educational issue of academic failure, alternative education initiatives developed as alternatives for students failing in public schools, thus alternative education was born to meet the needs of these students (Hodgman, 2016; Quinn et al., 2006). Alternative education programs developed during the Civil Rights Movement and have assumed many forms, all to assist students with learning difficulties, disciplinary issues, poor attendance, and substance abuse (Hodgman, 2016).

Alternative education serves academically advanced students, as well as students seeking vocation and technical education, pregnant and parenting teen, and students who fell behind academically (Porowski et al., 2014). In recent years, alternative education primarily services students who have been identified as having behavioral concerns. Due to disciplinary actions, students are often placed in alternative education schools and/or programs (Gregg & Appalachia Educational Lab, 1998; Porowski et al., 2014). In most cases, this placement is necessary due to safety and concerns regarding perceived appropriate student behavior(s) (C. A. Williams, 2009). These programs are categorized as punitive programs, typically as alternatives to suspension, in some cases they are the

last placement after expulsion. Their emphasis is to isolate and provide intervention for disruptive students (M. A. Raywid, 1994).

Alternative education schools include characteristics of having small classroom size, with a supportive and safe student-centered environment. In addition, schools provide students the opportunity for students success, utilizing creative teachers who hold specific credentials, and provides a flexible structure emphasizing student empowerment (Hodgman, 2016). In California, these programs are designed to maximize a student's opportunities to develop self-reliance, a foster a desire to learn, and encourage students to follow their own interest (Porowski et al., 2014).

**Historical Perspective of Alternative Education**

By the end of the 1960s, public education agencies incorporated a new alternative model that offers education alternatives outside of public education and within the public school system (C. M. Lange et al., 2002). Schools outside public school, at the time called freedom schools, focused on educating minority students according to a community school model that emphasized student achievement. Within public schools, alternative schools took the form of open schools that focused on a student-center approach in which learning was autonomous and non-competitive. In the 1980s, alternative education became more conservative, taking a remedial form, focusing on serving students who were disrupting or failing in their home school (Hodgman, 2016; C. M. Lange et al., 2002).

In the United States, there are over 20,000 alternative education schools and programs currently operating within the United State in the public and private education system (Hodgman, 2016). These alternative education schools include public, private,

home-school, charter schools and correctional institutions (Hodgman, 2016; C. M. Lange et al., 2002). Through the 1980s, alternative schools began to narrow in scope and became more conservative and remedial. However, alternative schools focus shifted to serving students who were disruptive and failing in the comprehensive high school (Hodgman, 2016; C. M. Lange et al., 2002).

**Alternative Education in American Schools**

According to Porowski et al. (2014), alternative education has a formal definition and vary from state to state. They found that 43 states have a formal definition that includes a target population, setting, services, and structure. The alternative education services that are most common are programs that provide regular academic instruction, counseling, behavior services, job readiness and social-emotional and life skills (Gregg & Appalachia Educational Lab, 1998; K. L. Henry, 2007; K. L. Henry et al., 2012; Hodgman, 2016; C. M. Lange et al., 2002; Quinn et al., 2006). The USDOE's definition is consistent with most recent literature, that alternative schools primarily serve students labeled "at-risk" (C. A. Lehr, Tan, & Ysseldyke, 2009). The USDOE, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2002) defines alternative education as services for students that are at risk of failing, are experiencing academic problems, have high absenteeism, show disruptive classroom behavior, or any related factors connected with temporary or permanent expulsions from the traditional school.

**Alternative Education in the Public-School System**

In the public school systems, alternative education schools began as Open Schools, which were characterized as student and parent choice (C. M. Lange et al., 2002). With time, *open schools* influenced the creation of alternative schools that

included schools without walls, schools within schools, multicultural schools, continuation schools, learning centers, fundamental school, and magnet schools. These schools are characterized as follows:

- Schools without walls that emphasized community-based learning, non-competitive assessment, and as a child-centered (C. M. Lange et al., 2002). Schools have various locations within a community, and they provided students with an education and training programs.
- Schools within a school, in which individual groups were designed to meet the needs and interest of the students (C. M. Lange et al., 2002). These have strong ties to parents and have access to regular school resources (Reimer, Cash, & National Dropout Prevention Center, 2003).
- Multicultural schools, were designed to integrate a specific culture and ethnicity into the curriculum (C. M. Lange et al., 2002).
- Continuation schools, provide academic options to student that are failing in the regular school system and these schools were individualized and less competitive (C. M. Lange et al., 2002). Their focus is for students to get their high school diploma, catch up on credits or the General Education Development (GED) certificate. They can be academies, job-related training centers or parenting centers (California's Continuation Schools, Research Summary, 2008; Reimer et al., 2003).
- Learning centers, provided students with resources that met the student's individual needs (C. M. Lange et al., 2002).

- Fundamental schools, which emphasized rigor and a back to basics approach (C. M. Lange et al., 2002).
- Magnet schools, emphasized theme curriculum to attract a diverse group of students from various racial and cultural backgrounds (C. M. Lange et al., 2002). They are designed to focus on specific subject areas such as math and science, the arts or communication (Reimer et al., 2003).
- Charter Schools, are autonomous agencies operated between the state and local school sponsors that have more freedom and flexibility in operating their schools. They are independent public schools with rigorous curriculum program and unique educational approaches.
- Community schools serve students with serious disciplinary or behavior issues. County run community schools enroll adjudicated or expelled youth or are on probation and referred by their home school or the juvenile justice system. (California's Continuation Schools, Research Summary, 2008).

**Alternative Schools in California**

The California Education Code section 58500 through 58512 allows districts to establish and maintain alternative schools and programs (California Department of Education [CDE], 2016). These schools and programs provide different means of addressing students' needs while providing grade-level standards by providing programs of choice. These schools provide students with instructional strategies such as independent study, and community-based education. According to Coats (2016), California state law authorizes three types of alternative schools: (a) continuation schools,

(b) county community schools, and (c) community day schools to serve high school students who are "at-risk" of dropping out of school.

Continuation schools are an alternative for students to obtain their high school diploma in accordance with California Education Code sections 44865, 46170, 48400-484438, and 51055 (CDE, 2017c). California Department of Education (CDE) (2017c) states that these schools provide an education to student who are 16 years of age or older, have not graduated high school, are at-risk of not graduating. Many of the students the continuation schools serve are behind in high school credits and/or need of a flexible school schedule to accommodate employment or family needs. Students in continuation schools are offered independent study, job-placement services, and concurrent college enrollment.

Community day schools, according to CDE (2017b) are operated by school districts and county offices of education in accordance with Article 3 of California Education Code section 48600-48667. They serve expelled students, high-risk students, and others referred by a review board. The community day school instructional day consists of a minimum of 360-minutes, provides a rigorous curriculum, and offers individualized instruction. These schools are intended to have low student-teacher ratio. In addition, community day schools also focus on pro-social skill development, student self-esteem and resiliency. Students can receive collaborative services from counselors, therapist, vocational counselors, law enforcement, probation and human services agencies.

County community school are public schools that are run by county offices of education (CDE, 2017e). They aim to meet the individual needs of students by providing

academic as well as life skills for student to be able to graduate from high school. Community schools offered by county office of education are used by school districts as an alternative placement for expelled pupils who fail to meet the terms of their rehabilitation plan or pose a threat to others (CDE, 2017b). According to CDE (2017d), county community schools serve students in grades kindergarten to twelve. They provide educational placement to expelled students, by parent/ guardian request, probation referral, students not attending school or homeless students. County community schools are required to provide students with a 240 minutes' minimum instructional day (California Education Code Sections 1980 through 1986).

**Expulsion in California**

The CDE gives school districts specific rules and regulations to follow when students are expelled from the traditional high schools and required to seek an alternative educational placement (CDE, 2016a). California law provides school districts with guidelines and mandates regarding student expulsion (CDE, 2016a). In addition, school districts have the burden of proof to provide evidence that the student has committed an expellable offense for behaviors explicitly listed in the California Education Code (EC) 48915(a-c).

**Expulsion Rates**

The overall number of K-12 students being expelled from California schools is on the decline, but in recent years' certain subgroup expulsion rates are increasing. The Suspension and Expulsion Report for 2014-15 (CDE, 2017a), which contains data from the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS), shows that there were a total of 5,758 statewide cases of expulsion; 58.8% of the students were

Hispanic or Latino of any race. Major violations leading to expulsion were illicit drug related violations (33.5%), violent incidents with no physical injury (25.7%), violent incidents with physical injury (18.8%), weapon possession (17.5%), and other reasons for expulsion (0.5%). Out of the 5,758 students who were expelled, there were 66 students who were expelled more than once. In recent years, due to changes in local funding, school districts are creating community schools within the school district for their students and not expelling them from the district. School districts are doing this as a way to decrease expenditure and retain some of the money they would otherwise would need to pay other agencies for providing services to expelled student (Peterson, 2017).

**Drop Out Rates**

A student dropout is defined as a student, 16 to 24 years old, who was enrolled in school and has not obtained a high school diploma or GED certificate. Students who have transferred to another school, died, moved to another country, or who are out of school due to illness are not considered dropouts (USDOE, 2014). In the state of California (CDE, 2017b) dropout rate for 2014-15 academic year was 10.7%. In the latest data from the graduating class of 2015, 488,612 students were scheduled to graduate high school, and 52,249 students did not complete their high school graduation.

Understanding school dropout rates and its consequences are important (K. L. Henry, 2007; K. L. Henry et al., 2012). Three consequences that are of importance when it comes to students dropping out of school are financial hardship/poverty, drug dependency and a financial burden in communities. Burrus and Roberts (2012) declare that students who drop out of school experience financial hardship and live in poverty. In addition, student dropout's ages 16 to 24 made up 40% of people who received some

form of public assistance, thus causing a burden on society (Burrus & Roberts, 2012). Researchers found that each dropout student who becomes involved with drugs costs the nation $1.7 to $2.3 million throughout their lifetime, leading to a billion-dollar revenue loss to the American economy (Achieve, 2006; Christenson & Thurlow, 2004). Consequently, once a youth drops out of school it becomes difficult for them to be contacted and receive the educational services they may need. Dropping out of school, however, is a process that typically begins earlier in the educational careers and a strategy is needed to recognize early student school disengagement and potential dropout (Bayne, 2013; K. L. Henry, 2007; K. L. Henry et al., 2012).

**Student Disengagement**

School disengagement is a trajectory that unfolds over time, and movement along that trajectory is related to other trajectories and age-graded transitions, such as a successful or unsuccessful transition to adulthood (K. L. Henry et al., 2012). In addition, it effects not only the child's academics, but it is also strongly related to the likelihood of dropping out of school, as well as movement along problem behavior trajectories of drug use and crime. Several indicators of disengagement point to parental–teen difficulties: (a) teen anger, (b) parent–teen conflict, and (c) possibly authoritarian parenting, thus parent having a major influence on their child's academic success (Hooven, Pike, & Walsh, 2013). Having a strong positive attachment to parents and school decreased the risk for externalizing problems, while friends' delinquency and moral disengagement raised risk for externalizing problems (Salzinger, Feldman, Rosario, & Ng-Mak, 2010).

**Parent-School Relationship**

According the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) (2015), parent involvement in schools is defined as parents and school staff working together to support and improve the learning, development, and health of children and adolescents. Parent involvement in schools is a shared responsibility in which schools, other community agencies and organizations are committed to reaching out to engage parents in meaningful ways. Parents' need to be committed to actively supporting their children's and adolescents' learning and development (Bayne, 2013; P. Garcia-Reid, Peterson, & Reid, 2015; Hill & Wang, 2015; Wang & Eccles, 2012). This relationship between schools and parents cuts across and reinforces children's health and learning in multiple settings; at home, in school, in out-of-school programs, and in the community (Bayne, 2013; P. Garcia-Reid et al., 2015; Hill & Wang, 2015; Wang & Eccles, 2012).

The establishment of positive relationships between home and school has long been recognized as a desirable state, which can have a significant bearing upon the success of students both academically and socially (Hill & Wang, 2015; Wang & Eccles, 2012). Teachers and parent connection and social support increased students' success and completing high school (Johnson, 2013; Wang & Eccles, 2012). Research indicates that as teacher and parent support increases, students' poor school behaviors decrease (P. Garcia-Reid et al., 2015). Caring relationships with teachers and parents that instill a value in education, and high expectations, might be the most important form of capital. Parents and teachers need to be effectively involved for students to be academically successful (Vongprateep, 2015). In addition, if parents and students feel supported and engaged by teachers and school staff, this in turn will transfers over to student

engagement and school performance. Thus, parents who are supported are more likely to take an active role in their child's education (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2014).

**Parent Disengagement**

Parental disengagement serves as a risk factor for students. Factors that lead to parental disengagement include: (a) minimal home-school collaboration, (b) low-income status, (c) single-parent household, (d) parental high stress levels, (e) parent low education levels, and (f) a lack of outside support (Kohl, Lengua, & McMahon, n.d.; Raffaele & Knoff, 1999). These factors may lead to academic, behavioral, and emotional concerns in which students fail to complete high school (Kohl et al., 2000).

When relationships between schools and parents falter, the consequences can be detrimental to all (K. L. Henry et al., 2012; Hooven et al., 2013). In some instances, it can lead to dissatisfaction and the perpetuation of negative attitudes towards schooling (Rose, 2008). A gradual withdrawal of parents from active family management provides the opportunity for the youth to engage in antisocial behavior and become involved with deviant peers, who further promote antisocial behavior and substance use (Van Ryzin, Stormshak, & Dishion, 2012).

**Parent Involvement**

There is a positive relationship between parental academic involvement and adolescent academic achievement (Rath et al., 2008). Rath et al. (2008) conclude that home and school are the major ecological settings for youth and thus provide a context to understand factors that may relate to positive academic outcomes. In the context of home, parental involvement, family related variables, and monitoring have been well documented as protective factors for numerous adolescent health outcomes.

Additionally, parental monitoring can include knowing what youth are doing when they are not at home, knowing youths' friends, or how youth spend their money, which postulates that parenting style is a key factor in promoting healthy psychosocial youth development (Bayne, 2013; P. Garcia-Reid et al., 2015; K. L. Henry et al., 2012; Jacobs, 2014; Van Ryzin et al., 2012). Research also exists for parental monitoring as it relates to specific domains, such as academics, which includes knowing what classes your child is taking and knowing when your child has misbehaved at school (K. L. Henry, 2007).

Parents of successful students were involved at school significantly more than parents of struggling students (Rath et al., 2008). Research reveals that parents' involvement in education is imperative for students to be successful academically (K. L. Henry et al., 2012; Hooven et al., 2013; Rath et al., 2008). In addition, caring relationships that instill a value in education, and high expectations might be the most important form of capital parents need to be effectively involved (Vongprateep, 2015). In addition, parental monitoring had a stronger and more positive relationship with grade point average and behavioral engagement (Hill & Wang, 2015).

The importance of parenting practices, especially establishing a warm and supportive relationship, helps youth develop their aspirations and see meaning in their work. These practices help young adults become self-motivating and keep youth engaged in school and on the right track post high school (Hill & Wang, 2015). Parent involvement in schools is closely linked to better student behavior, higher academic achievement, and enhanced social skills. In addition, parental involvement also makes it more likely that children and adolescents will avoid unhealthy behaviors, such as sexual risk behaviors and tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use (Centers for Diseae Control

[CDC], 2015). When parents participate in their children's education, such as assisting with homework, monitoring grades, achievement scores and courses, and attending parent teacher conferences, their involvement increases their student's academic success.

## Statement of the Research Problem

Parent involvement and teacher support are essential for student academic success (P. Garcia-Reid et al., 2015; Hill & Wang, 2015; Jacobs, 2014; Rath et al., 2008; Richards, 2006; Van Ryzin et al., 2012). Parent involvement in alternative education academic settings is low or non-existent (Bayne, 2013). Research indicates that as teacher and parent support increases, students' poor school behaviors decrease (P. Garcia-Reid et al., 2015). Caring relationships that instill a value in education, combined with high expectations might be the most important form of capital parents need to be effectively involved and students to be academically successful (Vongprateep, 2015).

Parent involvement can be beneficial to student academic success in an alternative school setting. Students who have been expelled, or are on probation, have failed academically and have low to no school bonding, low academic expectations, are academically deficient, and probability of graduating high school is low (Bayne, 2013). Bayne (2013) states that there is little research available on the issue of parent involvement and provide positive opportunities in the school for parents to be engaged in their student's academic career in a non-traditional school.

Parental involvement can play a role in academic success, promote school bonding and be a conduit for college preparation and one's future in the workforce (USDOE, 2014). Parent involvement strategies that are successful and used in traditional schools include (J. L. Epstein et al., 2009):

- Create a welcoming school climate.
- Provide families with information related to child development and creating supportive learning environments.
- Establish effective school-to-home and home-to-school communication
- Strengthen families' knowledge and skills to support and extend their children's learning at home and in the community.
- Engage families in school planning, leadership and meaningful volunteer opportunities.
- Connect students and families to community resources that strengthen and support students' learning and well-being.

In alternative education, these strategies have been unexplored to work. Studies on parent engagement in alternative education are few (Bayne, 2013).

Alternative education differs from the traditional approaches used in comprehensive high schools for prevention and intervention. Most parent involvement research, though, primary focuses on prevention and intervention approaches (Bayne, 2013; Rose, 2008). Very few studies address the strategies for parent engagement, whose students attend alternative education programs (Bayne, 2013). Recent studies focus on parental factors that contribute to high school graduation after an expulsion and the effects of alternative education schools have on students (Bayne, 2013; Coats, 2016).

County community schools are facing increasing pressure to increase student performance (Bayne, 2013). Parent engagement can help to support the students enrolled in these schools (Bayne, 2013; Coats, 2016). There is a lack of information and research exploring parental perceptions regarding their lived experience in supporting students in

the county community schools. Understanding what parents experience in their interactions with the school, as well as their perspectives on what steps can be taken to increase parent involvement, can assist community school leaders to better engage parents to assist students to succeed.

## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to understand and explain how parent engagement affects student achievement, as perceived by parents of high school students enrolled within county operated community schools in Riverside County California. An additional purpose of the study was to identify actions that parents believe are necessary to increase parent engagement within county operated community schools in Riverside County.

## Research Questions

This study was guided by two central questions. Each central question was divided into sub-questions.

### Central Question 1

Central Question 1 sought to answer: How do parents perceive their involvement affects the academic achievement of their high school student within the community schools in Riverside County?

**Sub-Question 1**. There were three sub-questions designed to answer Central Question 1:

1.1. How do parents perceive they are involved in supporting their child's academic achievement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County?

1.2. What do parents perceive influences whether or not parents are involved with their child's academic achievement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County?

1.3. What supports or barriers do parents perceive exist that affect parent involvement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County?

**Central Question 2**

Central Question 2 sought to answer: *What do parents perceive are the actions necessary for the community schools in Riverside County to implement to improve parent involvement to increase high school student achievement?*

**Sub-Question 2**. There were two sub-questions designed to answer Central Question 2:

2.1. What actions do parents believe the county operated community schools in Riverside County can take to increase parent involvement to improve their child's academic achievement?

2.2 What actions do parents believe need to be implemented as a priority to increase parent involvement to improve their child's academic achievement?

## Significance of the Problem

High school dropout rates are a nationwide problem that continues to exist in every community (Gregg & Appalachia Educational Lab, 1998; K. L. Henry, 2007; K. L. Henry et al., 2012; Hodgman, 2016; C. M. Lange et al., 2002; Quinn et al., 2006). Traditional high schools have worked hard to successfully graduate large numbers of students. Schools have implemented prevention and intervention strategies to ensure

students' get the help they need to graduate (K. L. Henry et al., 2012). However, not all schools have been successful in graduating all students (Hartman, 2008). When students are not successful in the traditional high school settings, or are expelled from their home district schools for inappropriate behaviors, they are required to seek an alternative education (Caroleo, 2014). In some cases, students are ordered by the court to attend alternative education schools in order for students to meet their probationary programs and requirements which monitors their behaviors inside and outside of school (CDE, 2017e; USDOE, 2014).

Parental involvement in alternative education is a significant factor that continues to need to be researched (Creemers, 1994; Iwaoka, 2008; Smalls, 2010). Parent involvement is essential for student academic success in an alternative school setting. Students who have been expelled, or are on probation, have often failed academically and typically have low to no school bonding, low academic expectations, are credit deficient, and their probability of graduating high school is low. In addition, students who are at-risk who do not get support at home or school will find it in with their peers (B. N. Young, Helton, & Whitley, 1997) or by other means that can lead to a path of self-destruction. By increasing parental involvement, students are expected to be academically successful, promote school bonding, decrease risk factors, increase protective factors and be prepared for college and the workforce (Riverside County Office of Education [RCOE], 2016a; Gregg & Appalachia Educational Lab, 1998; K. L. Henry, 2007; K. L. Henry et al., 2012; Hodgman, 2016; C. M. Lange et al., 2002; Quinn et al., 2006). Research indicates that as parent support increases, students' poor school behaviors decrease (P. Garcia-Reid et al., 2015). Caring relationships that instill a value

in education, and that high expectations might be the most important form of capital, parents need to be effectively involved and students to be academically successful (Vongprateep, 2015).

This study addressed the gaps in the research to help determine what factors contribute to parental involvement and disengagement in an alternative education setting. County community schools are dealing with very high-risk students who have often been expelled or adjudicated for criminal behavior (Bayne, 2013; K. L. Henry et al., 2012). These students show up with various educational deficits and behavioral/social emotional issues. They were often not successful in the school system and have had negative school experiences (K. L. Henry et al., 2012). Indeed, these students often struggle in their studies, often experience little success, have little to no positive experiences with school staff, and few students graduate system wide (P. Garcia-Reid et al., 2015; K. L. Henry et al., 2012). Consequently failing to obtain a high school diploma often dooms theses students to low-income occupations, receive public assistance, become victims of abuse, engage in criminal behavior, and struggle with substance abuse (P. Garcia-Reid et al., 2015; K. L. Henry et al., 2012; Richards, 2006; Sullivan, 2016). Failing to break this cycle of failure has many negative costs/consequences to their families and communities.

According to the Center for Public Education (2011), it is essential to identify barriers to parental involvement by surveying parents to understand their perspective and investigate how parents want to be involved. There are no known studies of parent engagement in county community schools. It is imperative that research in this field be conducted to better understand why parents have not been engaged in their child's education and what they believe the school should do to support their engagement. This

study can bring further understanding of parent engagement with county community schools and lead to new approaches for helping this highly at-risk population find success. In addition, this study can benefit school districts, superintendents, teachers, school administrators, parents, and the community by increasing student academic success by successfully providing parental opportunities for involvement.

## Definitions

This section defines all the terms that are relevant to the study are listed. Theoretical definitions come from previous research studies.

*Academic Achievement.* According to Cyril (2015) it means knowledge attained and skill developed in the school subjects usually designated by test scores or by marks assigned by teachers or by both. It is the ability to attain success in school by having procedural knowledge and skills to be successful in an academic setting. This includes: (a) obtaining good grades, (b) attending school, (c) GPA greater than 2.0, (d) graduating from high school.

*Alternative Education.* For this study it means an educational setting, which is outside a comprehensive high school district in which a student gets placed there by a referral process (ACLU of California, 2016). The referral can be driven by an expulsion or by probation placement.

*At-risk.* Students who have academic, social, and/or emotional complications within the general population environment, in school and within their community.

*Comprehensive Traditional schools.* Public schools, governed by school districts, and where the majority of children get their primary and secondary education (Dictionary.com)

*County Community School.* For this study is defined as a comprehensive instructional program for district and probation referred students (RCOE, 2016a). The community school is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and provides students with a rich curriculum and instruction to ensure that students graduate from high school well prepared for college and the work force.

*Drop-out.* Any student who leaves school before graduation or completion of a program of studies without transferring to another educational system (Bonneau, 2008).

*Elements of Engagement.* The active and continual participation and communication between parents and the school staff, practice of good parenting skills, parent volunteering at school, parents attending school sponsored events and the continual involvement in school related decision-making process, thus parents understanding school process, expectations, and how their child is doing academically and socially (S. L. Christensen & Cleary, 1990; J. L. Epstein, 1995).

*Expelled Students.* Students who violated the educational code at their home district and can no longer attend their designated school. Students go through a formal process of expulsion that is board approved (ACLU of California, 2016). Expulsion comes with a rehabilitation plan in which students need to complete to return to their home district.

*Expulsion.* An action taken by the local educational agency who removes a child from his/her regular school and school district for disciplinary purposes. Expulsion can be with and without the continuation of educational services, for the remainder of the school year or longer in accordance with local educational agency policy (USDOE, 2014).

*Parent Engagement.* Will be used simultaneously with parent involvement. Both defined as parents working to support and improve the learning, development, and health of children and adolescents (CDC, 2015). Parents being actively involved in their child education by taking an active role at the school their child attend and actively monitor their child.

*Probation Referral.* Referrals given to students to attend county community schools by the juvenile justice system. (California's Continuation Schools, Research Summary, 2008).

*Regional Learning Centers.* Education establishments, within RCOE, that promotes student achievement and provides a diversity of student programs to students of all ages; for example, community school, Come Back, Independent Studies, Career and Technical Education (CTE), and more (RCOE, 2016a).

*School disengagement.* Is viewed as a trajectory that unfolds over time and movement along that trajectory and age-graded transitions, such as a successful or unsuccessful transition to adulthood. Consistent with these expectations, we find that early school disengagement is strongly related to the likelihood of: (a) school dropout, (b) parent –teen difficulties, (c) teen anger, (d) parent–teen conflict, which leads to a trajectory of problem behavior, drug use and crime (K. L. Henry et al., 2012, Hooven, 2013).

## Delimitations

This study is delimited to parents of students enrolled in the RCOE schools, located in three alternative education centers; Betty Gibbel, Val Verde and Arlington Regional Learning Centers.

## Organization of the Study

This study is arranged in five chapters and concludes with references and appendices. Chapter II consists of a detailed literature review related to the study, theoretical framework, characteristics of engaged and disengaged students, and engagement factors. Chapter III presents the research design and study methodology along with populations sample selection description, data gathering procedures and instruments used. Chapter IV contains data analysis and findings of the study with descriptions of common themes that emerge. Interpretation of the findings is presented and described using graphs and charts. Chapter V discussed the findings of the study, study conclusion and recommendations for future study. The document ends with references and appendices used in this paper.

# CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter II examines the research and literature relative to parent engagement, alternative education, and county community schools. The literature review examines how parent involvement in their child's education can make a difference in their child's academic success, behavior and in their future adult life. Chapter II begins with a historical analysis of alternative education in the United States and the state of California. It explores the issues and factors that are related to parent involvement and its effect on student academic performance. This chapter reviews the literature pertaining to the purpose of this study, and it includes a synthesis matrix that was used to identify the themes and factors that emerged from the literature.

## Historical Prospective Related to Alternative Education

Alternative education is defined as a school setting that falls outside of a traditional school system or setting, such as charter schools, home schooling, community day schools, county community day schools, and independent study (Quinn et al., 2006; USDOE, 2014). These school settings were originally designed to meet the academic needs of students who were not successful in traditional schools (Lovett, 2010). They have a distinct purpose of offering an alternative to a traditional school education that specialized on special instructional needs of the student and assist students with academic and behavior problems (Gregg & Appalachia Educational Lab, 1998). M. A. Raywid (1994) states that alternative education schools are a new reform to education and that they are at the "cutting edge" (p. 47).

## Development of Alternative Education

In the mid-1950s and early 1960s to combat the problematic social and educational issue of academic failure, alternative education initiatives developed as alternatives for students failing in public schools (Hodgman, 2016; Quinn et al., 2006). Alternative education was born during the Civil Rights Movement and has assumed many forms which assist students with learning difficulties, disciplinary issues, poor attendance, substance abuse (Hodgman, 2016). Alternative education intended to provide new approaches to learning and teaching (Quinn et al., 2006; Sullivan, 2016).

Alternative education programs are vital to help students whose needs are not being met in a traditional school (Barr & Parrett, 2011; M. Raywid 1989; B. N. Young et al., 1997). These programs serve academically advanced students, students seeking vocation and technical education, pregnant and parenting teen, students who fell behind academically and provided student with a successful path (Porowski et al., 2014). Alternative education schools include characteristics of small size, a supportive and safe student-centered environment, provides students the opportunity for students success, and creative teachers that hold specific credentials, and a flexible structure that emphasis student empowerment (Hodgman, 2016).

T. W. Young (1990) declared that from the inception of education in America, education has been based on race, gender, and social class; and allowed the development of education to meet the flourishing standards. Regardless of when alternatives in education began, what is practiced today is grounded in the social drive of the civil rights movement (C. M. Lange & Sletten, 2002).

## Alternative Education in American Schools

By the end of the 1960s, public education agencies incorporated a new alternative model that offers education alternatives outside public education and within the public school system (C. M. Lange et al., 2002). Such schools are freedom schools which outside public school that focused on educating minority students, according to a community school model that emphasized student achievement. Within public schools, alternative schools took the form of open schools that focused on a student-center approach in which learning was autonomous and non-competitive.

In the 1970s as described by Young (1990), alternative education schools focused on assisting the low social-economical and culturally diverse ethnic background students. They opened a new path for the continually changing education system in American Schools. In the 1980s, alternative education became more conservative, taking a remedial form, focused on serving students who were disrupting or failing in their home school (Hodgman, 2016; C. M. Lange et al., 2002). By 1981, M. A. Raywid (1994) declared that approximately 10,000 alternative education schools served three million students. These schools were believed to be founded for political or social issues, alleged to be serving mainly white, middle and upper-class students (Reimer et al., 2003).

In public school systems, alternative education schools began as Open Schools, which were characterized as student and parent choice (C. M. Lange et al., 2002). With time, open schools influenced the creation of alternative schools that included schools without walls, schools within schools, multicultural schools, continuation schools, learning centers, fundamental school, and magnet schools. According to Roberson (2015) and Hodgman (2016) there are three types of alternative education programs.

- Type I programs are full-time and voluntary for students who are in need of individualized instruction or innovation.
- Type II programs address the needs of students with disciplinary issues.
- Type III programs assist students with academic or social-emotional problems who desire to return to a regular school setting.

These schools are characterized as follows:

- Schools without walls that emphasized community-based learning, non-competitive assessment, and as a child-centered (C. M. Lange et al., 2002). Schools have various locations within a community, and they provided students with an education and training programs.
- Home schooling program is a different way that parents can educate their children at home. Parents have the options to do it through an existing curriculum among the private or charter school, or an independent program.
- Early college high schools are an innovation partnership between charter and non-charter schools and community colleges. Secondary schools that work as a collaborative system between district schools and community colleges that serve high-risk students.
- Schools within a school, in which individual groups were designed to meet the needs and interest of the students (C. M. Lange et al., 2002). These have strong ties with parents and have access to regular school resources (Reimere et al., 2003).
- Multicultural schools that were designed to integrate a specific culture and ethnicity into the curriculum (C. M. Lange et al., 2002).

- Continuation schools provide academic options to student that are failing in the regular school system and these schools were individualized and less competitive (C. M. Lange et al., 2002). Their focus is for students to get their high school diploma, catch up on credits or GED, can be academies, job-related training centers or parenting centers (California's Continuation Schools, Research Summary, 2008; Reimer et al., 2003).
- Learning centers that provided students with resources that met the student's individual needs (C. M. Lange et al., 2002).
- Fundamental schools, which emphasized rigor and a back to basics approach (C. M. Lange et al., 2002).
- Magnet schools emphasized thematic curriculum to attract a diverse group of students from various racial and cultural backgrounds (C. M. Lange et al., 2002). They are designed to focus on specific subject areas such as math and science, the arts or communication (Reimer et al., 2003).
- Charter Schools, which are autonomous agencies operated between the state and local school sponsors. Charter schools have more freedom and flexibility in operating their schools, but have a higher level of accountability from the state.
- Community schools that serve students with serious disciplinary or behavior issues. County run community schools enroll adjudicated or expelled youth or are on probation and referred by their home school or the juvenile justice system (California's Continuation Schools, Research Summary, 2008).

- Opportunity schools assist students who have truancy, academic, and behavioral issues. Opportunity programs are a temporary placement for students to receive support and guidance in regaining their academic engagement. Overcoming the learning barriers helps students return to their traditional class atmosphere.
- Private and parochial schools run their own programs and have the option of accreditation by the WASC, they are not required to follow the state's adopted content standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).
- Juvenile court schools provide educational settings for students who are under the protection of a juvenile court system. These schools are focused on delivering education to incarcerated youth in juvenile halls, juvenile homes, day centers, juvenile ranches, or juvenile camps.

The USDOE (2014) defines alternative education as services for students that are at risk of failing, are experiencing academic problems, have high absenteeism, show disruptive classroom behavior, or any related factors connected with temporary or permanent expulsions from the traditional school. According to Porowski et al. (2014) alternative education has a formal definition and every state has its own definition. They found that 43 states that have a formal definition that includes a target population, setting, services, and structure. These definitions vary per state (Porowski et al., 2014). The alternative education services that are most common include programs that provide regular academic instruction, counseling, behavior services, job readiness and social-emotional and life skills (Gregg & Appalachia Educational Lab, 1998; K. L. Henry, 007; K. L. Henry et al., 2012; Hodgman, 2016; C. M. Lange et al., 2002; Quinn et al., 2006).

In the United States, there are over 20,000 alternative education schools and programs currently operating within the United State in the public and private education system (Hodgman, 2016). Alternative education schools include public, private, home-school, charter schools and correctional institutions (Hodgman, 2016; C. M. Lange et al., 2002). The term alternative defines the educational settings designed for students whose academic needs are not being met at the traditional school environments (Dynarski, 1999). According to Kilpatrick, McCarten, McKeown, and Gallagher (2007), alternative education provides a different method of education that it is intended to combine the social and academic curriculum that focuses on meeting the needs of the students.

In the United States, some alternative education programs serve academically advanced students, students seeking vocation and technical education, but most serve student who at risk of academic and school failure or students who are marginalized from a traditional school system (C. M. Lange et al., 2002; Porowski et al., 2014). Alternative education programs according, to Porowski et al. (2014), provide support and an education for students who will not likely succeed in a traditional high school setting and otherwise not complete their high school education. Alternative education programs provide these students with a means to obtain a high school certificate, provide a safe and secure learning environment that is tailored to the student's needs, provides the opportunity for credit recovery and/or tires to provide students with a vocation that will ensure that these students become productive citizens in society and not a burden (Hodgman, 2016; Porowski et al., 2014; USDOE, 2014; C. A. Williams, 2009).

In recent years, alternative education primarily services students who have been identified as having behavioral concerns which placements is due to disciplinary actions

has placed students in alternative education schools and/or programs (Gregg & Appalachia Educational Lab, 1998; Porowski et al., 2014). In most cases, this has become necessary due to safety and concerns regarding perceived appropriate student behavior(s) (C. A. Williams, 2009). These programs are categorized as punitive programs, typically as alternatives to suspension. Their emphasis is to isolate and provide intervention for disruptive students (M. A. Raywid, 1994).

## Alternative Schools in California

In California, alternative education was established in 1919. From 1920 to 1945 alternative education schools were run as a part-time schooling center for working youth (Hwang, 2003, D. Kelly 1993). From 1945 to 1960 community schools were redesigned to assist student with psychological issues that were excluded from the traditional schools. In Los Angeles, Play Mountain Place, founded by Phillis Fleishman in 1945, is one of the oldest alternative education schools in California. The school's mission was to provide an experiential learning environment to meet the students individualized learning styles (Play Mountain Place, 2017). From 1960 until today, alternative education schools gained a new image. Nevertheless, these schools have always served the same type of student population including, dropouts, threats to society, and academic failures, while having a flexible schedule, independent studies programs, and life skills preparation (Hwang, 2003; D. Kelly, 1993). Table 1 lists the various types of schools in the state of California. In California during the 2016-17 academic year, there were 10,041 public schools, with 948 schools defined as alternative education schools, representing 9.4% of the student population in the state.

Table 1

*Types of Schools in the State of California*

| Schools by Type | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alternative | 254 | 265 | 263 | 261 | 259 |
| Community Day | 258 | 273 | 205 | 193 | 177 |
| Continuation | 479 | 484 | 461 | 452 | 441 |
| County Community | 78 | 93 | 75 | 74 | 71 |
| Elementary | 5,779 | 5,812 | 5,826 | 5,858 | 5,869 |
| High School | 1,324 | 1,357 | 1,337 | 1,339 | 1,313 |
| Junior High | 46 | 47 | 46 | 48 | 48 |
| Juvenile Court | 80 | 88 | 75 | 74 | 67 |
| K-12 | 210 | 229 | 244 | 262 | 325 |
| Middle | 1,274 | 1,302 | 1,301 | 1,298 | 1,300 |
| Opportunity | 34 | 33 | 23 | 21 | 20 |
| Preschool | N/A | N/A | 40 | 10 | 11 |
| Special Education Schools | 136 | 148 | 138 | 134 | 133 |
| State Special Schools | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Youth Authority Facilities | N/A | N/A | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Total | 9,955 | 10,134 | 10,041 | 10,031 | 10,041 |

*Note.* Adapted from Ed Data Education Data Partnerships. Retrieved from https://www.ed-data.org/state/CA

**Types of Schools Cohort Graduation Rates**

Current state and federal laws mandates that students need to be offered the opportunity to receive an appropriate free education to address the student's individual needs, student have the right to earn a high school diploma in a quality public school (C. M. Lange et al., 2002; USDOE, 2014). California Education Code section 58500 through 58512 allows districts to establish and maintain alternative schools and programs (CDE, 2016a). They provide different means of addressing students' needs while providing grade-level standards by providing programs of choice. According to Coats (2016) California state law authorizes three types of alternative schools: (a) continuation schools,

(b) county community schools, and (c) community day schools to serve high school students who are "at-risk" of dropping out of school (see Table 2).

Table 2

*Different School Types*

| School Type | Description |
|---|---|
| Continuation | District schools that refer 10-12 graders at risk of not graduating from high school, and provide flexible schedules allowing students to earn credits at a faster pace. |
| Independent Charter | Public school run by a chartering authority that can be district, county office of education, or state board of education. These schools are independent and have more flexibility to experiment and design innovative instructional curriculum. |
| Community | Community schools focus on students that need academic support, and social/emotional rehabilitation. After successful treatment, rehabilitation, and completion of requirements students are readmitted to their comprehensive schools. |
| School of Choice | Provide different means of achieving grade-level standards and meeting students' needs, and are voluntary. |
| Community Day | Provide challenging curriculum that focus on individual student needs. They also help students develop pro-social skills, self-esteem, and resiliency. These schools also provide school to career and other real-world connections as part of the curriculum. |
| Juvenile Court | Teach students under the protection of the juvenile court system while incarcerated in places such as: halls, camps, day centers, or regional youth facilities. |
| Opportunity | Provide additional support for students who are habitually truant from instruction, non-attendance, insubordinate, low academic performance. They are operated by districts or county offices. |

*Note*. Adapted from California's Continuation Schools: Research Summary, 2008. Retrieved from http://libproxy.chapman.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=eric&AN=ED501466&site=eds-live; "Community Day Schools," by California Department of Education, 2015. Retrieved from http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/eo/cd/; "Alternative Schools & Programs of Choice- CalEdFacts," by California Department of Education, 2017; Education Data Partnership, 2017. Retrieved form https://www.eddata.org/state/CA; "The California Legislature's Nonpartisan Fiscal and Policy Advisor," by P. Warren, 2007. Copyright by Legislative Analyst's Office, Sacramento, CA.

Continuation schools are an alternative for students to obtain their high school diploma in accordance with California Education Code sections 44865, 46170, 48400-484438, and 51055 (CDE, 2017d). In California, these programs are designed to maximize student's opportunities to develop self-reliance, a desire to learn, and encourage students to follow their own interest (Porowski et al., 2014). CDE (2017d) states that these schools provide an education to student who are 16 years of age or older, have not graduated high school, or are at risk of not graduating. Many students are behind in high school credits and/or need a flexible school schedule to accommodate employment or family needs. Students in continuation school were often offered independent study, job-placement services, and concurrent college enrollment.

Community day schools, according to CDE (2017c) are operated by school districts and county offices of education in accordance with Article 3 of California Education Code section 48600-48667. They serve expelled students, high-risk and other students referred by a review board. Their instructional day consists of a minimum of 360-minutes and provides rigorous curriculum and individualized instruction. Community day schools also focus on pro-social skill development, student self-esteem and resiliency. They are intended to have low student-teacher ratio. These students can receive collaborative services from counselors, therapist, vocational counselors, law enforcement, probation and health and human personnel (CDE, 2017e).

County community schools are public schools are run by county offices of education (CDE, 2017h). They aim to meet the individual needs of students by providing academic as well as life skills for students to be able to graduate from high school. Community schools offered by county office of education are used by school districts as

an alternative placement for expelled students who fail to meet the terms of their rehabilitation plan or pose a threat to others (CDE, 2017e). According to California CDE (2017e), county community schools serve students in grades K through 12. They provide educational placement to expelled students or by parent/ guardian request, probation referral, students not attending school or are homeless. County community schools are required to provide students with a 240 minutes' minimum instructional day, California Education Code Sections 1980 through 1986.

## Community Schools in California

In California, more than 10% of the student population that attend traditional schools attends one type of alternative education programs (J. S. Williams, 2008). Due to the lack of data, researchers found limitations when trying to make comparisons between traditional public schools and community schools, causing the findings to be misleading (J. Ruiz de Velasco & Gonzales, 2017). Even though some students or their parents have chosen this type school environment, other students are placed in alternative schools. J. Ruiz de Velasco and Gonzales (2017) stated that confirmation of size, accountability, and demography of alternative education schools is impossible due to two reasons. First is the transiency of students that makes it impossible to maintain a count of students across or within the districts. Second, school participation in the Alternative School Accountability Model (ASAM), is voluntary and data does not coincide with the numbers identified by the CDE (J. Ruiz de Velasco & Gonzales, 2017). This model is no longer administered by the CDE. In 2013 California's accountability system scientifically changed with the adoption of Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) (CDE, 2017b).

Alternative schools that participated in ASAM are no longer held accountable to the same standards established for traditional schools and are in the process of developing and accountably indicators for alternative schools. This alternative is the Dashboard Alternative School Status (DASS) which will up in running in the fall of 2018 in accordance with California Educating Code Sections 52052 (g) (CDE, 2017f):

> The Superintendent, with the approval of the State Board of Education, shall develop an alternative accountability system for schools under the jurisdiction of a county board of education or a county superintendent of schools, community day schools…and alternative schools serving high-risk pupils, including continuation high schools and opportunity schools. (para. 2)

Moreover, alternative education schools, also known as community schools are broken down into different types such as community and community day schools (J. S. Williams, 2008).

**Community Day Schools**

The purpose of the community day schools is to provide challenging classes, and prepare students with the necessary skills to continue into higher education. These schools gave counselors and other professionals to assist students (CDE, 2017c). The schools run a daily 360-minute minimum instructional day that includes academic programs by providing a challenging curriculum, individual support to all students and focus on the development of pro-social skills and student self-esteem and resilience. In addition, the community day schools are designed to have a low student-teacher ratio, and benefit from the support services of counselors, psychologist, academic and

vocational counselor and pupil discipline personnel. Students enrolled in the community day schools, also benefit from the community resources such as the probation and the health and human personnel that work with the at-risk youth (CDE, 2017).

According to the CDE (2015), there were a total of 204 community day schools in California reporting an enrollment of 7,353 students. The school districts or county offices of education run community day schools. Currently, there are 192 active community day schools. Community day schools serve students that have been expelled from their traditional schools, or who have had attendance or behavior issues and must be placed in an alternative setting. Students are placed within the district community day school or referred out to county run community schools (CDE, 2017c).

**County Community School**

The purpose of the county community school is to serve students in grades kindergarten through high school who are expelled from their traditional schools, referred by the School Attendance Review Board (SARB), or referred by the counties local probation department in accordance with pursuant to the *Welfare and Institutions Code* sections 300, 601, 602, 654, homeless, or sometimes at the request of the parent or guardian. According to the latest CDE (2017) report as of December 2017, there are a total of 78 active county community schools within the 58 county offices of education. These schools served a total of 93,117 students. The county community schools' program runs 240 minute per days focusing on providing learning opportunities in academic and independent life skills, social behaviors, and positive self-concepts. Students can graduate from the county community schools, but the schools' goal is to

assist students in transitioning back to their traditional schools, continue to secondary education or employments (CDE, 2017h).

## Expulsion

Being expelled and having a negative school experience can be catastrophic can be the catalyst for a student to academically disengage for a young person (K. L. Henry, 2007; K. L. Henry et al., 2012). Students who have been expelled are considered at-risk because they have engaged in risky behaviors and at times unlawful behaviors that have led to the student to be expelled from their home school district. These students have violated the school code of conduct and have demonstrated academic failure, social-emotional complications, truancy, and have disengaged from school and/or their family (Gregg & Appalachia Educational Lab, 1998; K. L. Henry, 2007; K. L. Henry et al., 2012; Hodgman, 2016; C. M. Lange et al., 2002; Quinn et al., 2006).

Currently the number of K-12 students being expelled from California schools is on the decline, but in recent years' expulsion rates are increasing in certain subgroup. The Suspension and Expulsion Report for 2014-15 (CDE, 2017a), which contains data from the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS), shows that there were a total of 5,758 statewide cases of expulsion, 58.8% of the students were Hispanic or Latino of any race. Major violations for expulsion were illicit drug related violations (33.5%), violent incidents with no physical injury (25.7%), violent incidents with physical injury (18.8%), weapon possession (17.5%), and other reasons for expulsion (0.5%). Out of the 5,758 students expelled, there were 66 students who were expelled more than once. In recent years, due to changes in local funding, school districts are creating community schools within the school district for their students and not

expelling them from the district. School districts are doing this as a way to decrease expenditure and retain some of the money they would otherwise would need to pay other agencies for the expelled student (Peterson, 2017).

According to the National Education Association (NEA) (2008) 41% of inmates in the state and federal prisons have less than a high school education. Inmates who were dropouts were more likely have served a prior prison sentence and more likely sentenced as a juvenile. Obtaining a high school diploma significantly reduces criminal activity that leads to incarceration. In 1990, data demonstrated that a 1% increase in graduation rates would reduce crime be nearly 1000 fewer crimes committed (National Education Association [NEA], 2008). One year of increase in the average years of schooling reduces murders and assault arrests by 30%, vehicle theft by 20%, arson by 13%, and burglary and larceny by 6% (NEA, 2008). Society has lost as much as $2,100 per year in costs of crime for each male non-graduate. In terms of cost savings, 1% increase in the high school completion rate of men ages 20 to 60 would save the United States as much as $1.4 billion per year in criminal justice costs (NEA, 2008). In a more recent report by the Alliance for Excellent Eduation (2018) states that the nation could save as much as 18.5 billion in annual crime cost if the high school graduation rates increased by 5%.

Roberson (2015) states that youth, who encounter challenges such as little to no guidance and support, are exposed to hostile and underprivileged environment, and lack of stable family relationships become at risk. These at-risk youths habitually live in poverty-stricken communities, experience violence, and are deprived of resources and the foundation that would empower them to be successful. These at-risk youths are more likely to not finish high school when compared to youths who are not at risk (Gregg &

Appalachia Educational Lab, 1998; K. L. Henry, 2007; K. L. Henry et al., 2012; Hodgman, 2016; C. M. Lange et al., 2002; Quinn et al., 2006). With no parental support or guidance, students who have expelled, have failed academically and have low to no school bonding, low academic expectations, are academically deficient, and probability of graduating high school is low (Bayne, 2013).

## School Drop Outs

After a 25 year review of school district data, R. W. Rumberger and Lim (2008) state that the United States faced a dropout crisis. Once a youth drops out of school it becomes difficult for them to be contacted and receive the educational services they need. Dropping out of school, however, is a process that typically begins earlier in the educational career (K. L. Henry et al., 2012). A dropout is someone who abandons an attempt, activity, or chosen path (Merriam-Webster, 1930). The USDO, NCES (2014) defines a student dropout as a student 16 to 24 years old who was enrolled in school and has not obtained a high school diploma or GED certificate. Students who have transferred to another school, died, moved to another country, or who are out of school due to illness are not considered dropouts. In the State of California dropout for 2014-15 academic year was 10.7% (CDE 2016b; CDE, 2017c). In the data from the graduating class of 2015, 488,612 students were scheduled to graduate high school, and 52,249 students did not complete their high school graduation.

A variety of environmental factors contribute to the academic failure of students causing them to drop out of school. The three major environmental factors are: (a) poverty, (b) homelessness, and (c) becoming a parent as an adolescence (Fowler, Toro, & Miles, 2009; Freudenberg & Ruglis, 2007; Somers, 2006). According to Freudenberg

and Ruglis (2007), poverty is an issue because it can lead to student health issues, hunger, and the inability to concentrate in the classroom, consequently causing disruptive behaviors and other issues. The factor of homelessness is also a key. According Fowler, Toro, and Miles (2009) students can become a financial contributor for the family, eventually dropping out of school to meet the financial necessities of the family. Becoming a teen parent correlates with students not completing their education (Somers, 2006). In the United States, 30% of the high school dropouts were attributed to be related to student pregnancy. In California, schools are not required to collect data on pregnant and parenting teens, making it difficult to measure the extent of student dropout rates are in a traditional or alternative education high schools (Salceda, Milionis, & White, 2015).

Not being academically successful and feeling rejected or excluded can result in behavior issues that lead to students to disengage from school and eventually dropout. Behavior problems in the classroom such as aggression, withdrawal, low interest in school, and low academic achievement are risk factors for student disengagement (Farrington et al., 2012). Farrington et al. (2012) state that academic decline, attendance problems, and lack of academic credits can lead to dropping out. Factors that contribute to a student to drop out are not always school related. Risk factors include (RCOE, 2012):

- Community characteristics, such as higher unemployment and crime rates, and lower socioeconomic status.
- Family characteristics, such as parents with lower levels of education, single parents, or the primary spoken language is different from the school's primary language, having a pregnant teenager in the house, familial disputes, family

health problems, and lack of educational support in the form of parents being engaged and aware of school-related activities, events, and programs.

- Student demographics and specific responsibilities play a significant role in increasing the likelihood a student will drop out including:
  - Students who are ethnic minorities; African American, Hispanic, and American Indian.
  - Male students.
  - Students with disabilities.
  - Students with adult responsibilities, such as working more than 20 hours a week or parenting responsibilities.
- Students with behavioral problems, such as: (a) drug and alcohol use, (b) violent behavior, (c) expulsion, and (d) committing crimes.
- Academic performance can signal a student is at-risk. Such as a student being behind in credits. Students may feel that they do not have the opportunity to graduate, and therefore will decide to drop out.
- Students with high amounts of absences or are truant are also more at-risk of dropping out. Students who are absent, often miss essential academic instruction making it difficult for them to keep up with their peers.

A report by the National Dropout Prevention Center, identified alternative education as one of the most effective strategies to help with school development and dropout prevention (Hammond, 2007). Bielefeld, Stubblefield, and Templeton (2009) identified four components from literature that relate to the success of alternative education and are youth development principles. M. A. Raywid (2001) identified eight

consistently repeating factors in research, on the effectiveness of successful alternative education programs.

- Presence of caring and knowledgeable adults such as; teachers, counselors, principals, caseworkers, and community members.
- Sense of community-feeling of belonging.
- Assets approach.
- Respect for students.
- High Expectations.
- Multi-dimensional developmental curriculum.
- Authentic connection.
- Support and sustainability.

In alternative education, there are no data specific to the number of students who drop out or the dropout rates for alternative education programs (Dan S., Personal communication). Nationally, the dropout rate was 5.9% in 2015 (NCES, 2017). In California, the most recent data shows that the dropout rate in the state is 10.7% as of 2015 (CDE, 2016b). Appendix A shows cohort dropout rates and graduation rates for the state of California, while Appendix B shows the student dropout data by counties within the state. Although state data demonstrate a decline in dropout rate about 2647 students for the graduation class of the 2014 and 2015, the number of dropouts for the 2016 graduation class increased 16,499 compared to the previous year. Blue (2012), states that school dropouts at whatever rate becomes a dilemma that needs to be addressed nationally, and researched immediately. The neglect of the school dropouts is an alarming threat and burden to society (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison, 2006).

## Parental Factors

Parental practices help predict students' academic success or failure (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2014). Parental engagement is attributed to the academic failure of students that can lead to students dropping out of school. Roberson (2015) states that youth who encounter little to no parental guidance and support, are exposed to hostile and underprivileged environment, and lack of stable family relationships become at-risk. These at-risk youths habitually live in poverty-stricken communities, experience violence, are deprived of resources, and lack of parental involvement at home and at school, leading to students dropping out of high school (Gregg & Appalachia Educational Lab, 1998; K. L. Henry, 2007; K. L. Henry et al., 2012; Hodgman, 2016; C. M. Lange et al., 2002; Quinn et al., 2006; Roberson, 2015).

## Effects of Drop Outs

Students who drop out are at higher risk of making bad choices that will affect their physical and emotional well-being. Some of the negative factors that contribute to the dropout students' well-being are (a) teenage pregnancies out of wedlock, (b) shorter life spans due to poor health decisions, and (c) social-emotional distress (Pleis & Lucas, 2009). Dropout rates increase on a yearly basis leading to a growing epidemic problem (Burrus & Roberts, 2012). Governmental data gathered from the 2009-2010 school year shows that only 31% of the dropouts got a job.

In the United States public schools, 607,789 students dropped out of school in the 2008-2009 school year, and there were approximately 1.3 million youths that did not graduate (R. W. Rumberger, 2011). Burrus and Roberts (2012) and Center for Labor Market Studies (2007) estimate that students that drop out of high schools will earn

$9,200 less than students who graduate, their lifetime incomes will gross $375,000 less than high school graduates and $1 million less that college graduate. The increasing dropout rate not only causes financial hardships for the individuals, but also disturbs society's economy that can lead to unemployment, poverty stricken lifestyles, public assistance dependence, unhealthy conditions, imprisonment, divorce, single parent households that lead to raising children who will also drop out of school (Bridgeland et al., 2006; Burrus & Roberts, 2012). In 2001, dropouts ages 16 to 24 made up 40% of people who received some form of public assistance, and for each dropout student who becomes involved with drugs, it will cost the nation $1.7 to $2.3 million throughout their lifetime leading to a billion-dollar revenue loss (Achieve, 2006; Burrus & Roberts, 2012; Christenson & Thurlow, 2004).

**California Drop-Out Rate**

The state of California recent data shows that the dropout rates in the state are 10.7% as of 2015 and has increased from previous years (CDE, 2016b; Stuit, Springer, & Foundation for Educational, 2010). This is an enormous financial weight put on to the tax payers (Yatchisin, 2017). A study conducted by the California Dropout Research Project (CDRP) at the University of Santa Barbara found that applying the proven interventions will positively generate financial and social remunerations totaling $392,000 per student (Yatchisin, 2007). Thus, over the course of their lives these same student dropouts will cost the state $46.4 million and the state loses $2.5 billion for expenses designated to cover crime causing costs (R. W. Rumberger, 2011).

### Riverside County Drop-Out Rates

According to a 2014-2015 school year report, in the Riverside County, the number of students graduating is increasing, and therefore diminishing the dropout rate. Students are preparing for college at greater rates ever recorded (RCOE, 2017a). Data shows that Riverside County's graduation rate is ranked third in the state, however Riverside County has a dropout rate of 6.22%.

## Theoretical Foundation

According the CDC (2015), parent involvement in schools is defined as parents and school staff working together to support and improve the learning, development, and health of children and adolescents. Furthermore, parent engagement is the collaboration of families and communities, building a positive and caring educational environment for students (S. L. Christensen & Cleary, 1990; J. L. Epstein, 1995). J. L. Epstein (1995) defines parent engagement as the active participation and communication between parents and the school staff, practice of good parenting skills, parent volunteering at school, and the continual involvement in school related decision-making process. S. L. Christensen and Cleary (1990) state that active parent engagement leads to the parental understanding of the school's performance and expectations.

Parent involvement in schools is a shared responsibility in which schools, other community agencies and organizations are committed to reaching out to engage parents in meaningful ways (CDC, 2015). Parents' need to be committed to actively supporting their children's and adolescents' learning and development. This relationship between

schools and parents cuts across and reinforces children's health and learning in multiple settings; at home, in school, in out-of-school programs, and in the community (CDC, 2015).

**Positive School Engagement**

The establishment of positive relationships between home and school has long been recognized as a desirable state, which can have a significant bearing upon the success of students both academically and socially. Teacher and parent connection and social support increased students' success and completion of high school (Johnson, 2013; Wang & Eccles, 2012).

Research indicates that as teacher and parent support increases, students' poor school behaviors decrease (P. Garcia-Reid et al., 2015). Caring relationships with teachers and parents that instill a value in education, and their high expectations might be the most important form of capital. Parents and teachers need to be effectively involved in the students' educational experience for the student to be academically successful (Vongprateep, 2015). If parents and students feel supported and engaged by teachers and school staff, this will transfer over to student engagement and school performance, thus parents will take an active role in their child's education (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2014). Parental awareness of how schools function helps to promote higher student academic performance (Loucks, 1992).

The most effective forms of parent involvement are those which engage parents in working directly with their youth in learning activities at home (Cotton & Wikelund, 2001). Family involvement improves academic achievement, absenteeism, and helps to build a trusting bond between parents and their children's capacity to succeed (L. E.

Garcia & Thornton, 2014). J. L. Epstein (1995) defines the six types of parental engagement that contribute to the success of students:

- Parenting – schools help families with their parenting skills by providing information on student's developmental stages and offer advice on home environments that contribute to learning.
- Communicating – schools educate families about their children's progress and school services. They provide opportunities and pathways for parents to communicate with the school.
- Volunteering – schools offer a range of opportunities for parents to volunteer. Parents can visit their children's school, actively participate in school event, train parent to work in the classroom.
- Learning at home – schools and teachers share ideas to promote at-home learning through educating parents on educational strategies so parents can monitor and help their child with schoolwork and homework.
- Decision-making – schools include families as partners in school organizations, advisory panels, and committees.
- Community collaboration – community or business groups are involved in education as partners and schools encourage family participation in the community.

Collaboration between parents and schools is so important to help increase student achievement (J. L. Epstein, 1995). Effective parental engagement occurs when both parents and schools are committed to the partnership of the students' academic success (J. L. Epstein & Sanders, 2000).

## Student Disengagement

School disengagement is a trajectory that unfolds over time and movement along that trajectory is related to movement along other trajectories and age-graded transitions, such as a successful or unsuccessful transition to adulthood (K. L. Henry et al., 2012). Consistent with these expectations, school disengagement is strongly related to the likelihood of school dropout, as well as movement along problem behavior trajectories of drug use and crime. Several indicators of disengagement point to parental–teen difficulties: (a) teen anger, (b) parent–teen conflict, and (c) possibly authoritarian parenting (Hooven et al., 2013). Attachment to parents decreased risk for externalizing problems, while friends' delinquency and moral disengagement raised risk for externalizing problems (Salzinger et al., 2010)

## Parental Disengagement

Parental disengagement serves as a risk factor for students. Factors that lead to parent disengagement are (a) minimal home-school collaboration, (b) low-income status, (c) single-parent household, (d) parental high stress levels, (e) parent low education levels, and (f) a lack of outside support (Kohl et al., 2000; Raffaele & Knoff, 1999). These factors may lead to academic, behavioral, and emotional concerns in which students fail to complete high school.

When relationships between schools and parents falter, the consequences can be detrimental to all (K. L. Henry et al., 2012; Hooven et al., 2013). In some instances, it can lead to dissatisfaction and the perpetuation of negative attitudes towards schooling (Rose, 2008). A gradual withdrawal of parents from active family management provides

the opportunity for the youth to engage in antisocial behavior and become involved with deviant peers, who further promote antisocial behavior and substance use (Van Ryzin et al., 2012).

**Parent Involvement**

Rath et al. (2008) concludes that home and school are the major ecological settings for youth and thus, provide a context to understand factors that may relate to positive academic outcomes. Parental involvement can play a role in academic success, promote school bonding and be a conduit for college preparation and one's future in the workforce (USDOE, 2014). In the context of home, parental involvement, family related variables, and monitoring have been well documented as protective factors for numerous adolescent health outcomes. Caring relationships instill a value in education, and high expectations might be the most important form of capital parents need to be effectively involved and students to be academically successful (Vongprateep, 2015). Parental monitoring can include knowing what youth are doing when they are not at home, knowing youths' friends, or knowing how youth spend their money, which postulates that parenting style is a key factor in promoting healthy psychosocial youth development. Research also exists for parental monitoring as it relates to specific domains, such as academics, which includes knowing what classes your child is taking and knowing when your child has misbehaved at school (K. L. Henry, 2007).

Strong student relationship with their parents averts negative outcomes, especially the issues of internalizing problems and relationships with friends (Salzinger et al., 2010). Parents of successful students were involved at school significantly more than parents of struggling students (Rath et al., 2008). Research reveals that parents' involvement in

education is imperative for students to be successful academically (K. L. Henry et al., 2012; Hooven et al., 2013; Rath et al., 2008). Caring relationships that instill a value in education, and high expectations might be the most important form of capital parents need to be effectively involved (Vongprateep, 2015). Parental monitoring had a stronger and more positive relation with grade point average and behavioral engagement (Hill & Wang, 2015).

The importance of parenting practices, especially establishing a warm and supportive relationship, help youth develop their aspirations and see meaning in their work. These practices help young adults become self-motivating and keep youth engaged in school and on the right track post high school (Hill & Wang, 2015). Research shows that parent involvement in schools is closely linked to better student behavior, higher academic achievement, and enhanced social skills. Parent involvement also makes it more likely that children and adolescents will avoid unhealthy behaviors, such as sexual risk behaviors and tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use (CDC, 2015). When parents participate in their children's education, such as assisting with homework, monitoring grades, achievement scores and courses, and attending parent teacher conferences parents will see an increase their student's academic success.

## Academic Achievement in Alternative Education

Since the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), academic achievement has undergone a drastic change in the United States. The Adequate Yearly Progress concept (AYP) helped to ensure that the annual measurable growth be met by all students attend public schools (Bielefeld, Stubblefield, & Templeton, 2009). AYP also required that all states have the same standards of academic

achievement for all students. Due to these expectations, states have adopted higher academic standards that help all students achieve the accountability standards. School districts invested more time and money into the alternative education programs that help support the diverse needs and learning styles of the underperforming students (Aron, 2003).

In 2015 President Obama signed The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), thus a new system of accountability was created. ESSA made provision for state and local education agency report card guidance which are based on performance metrics (USDOE, n.d.). The state of California adopted the new dashboard system, the Dashboard Alternative School Status (DASS), which monitors the academic performance to local school districts. The DASS system was specifically designed for alternative education programs.

Schargel and Smink (2001) also identified eight "consistent" characteristics of successful alternative programs related to academic achievement and student success:

- Maximum teacher/student ratio of 1:10.
- Small student base not exceeding 25 students.
- Clearly stated mission and discipline code.
- Caring faculty with continual staff development.
- School staff having high expectations for student achievement.
- Learning program specific to the student's expectations and learning style.
- Flexible school schedule with community involvement and support.
- Total commitment to have each student be a success.

RCOE's (2016a) LCAP outlined pupil outcomes for academic success. The 2016-17 LCAP for the 2017-18 school year outline student success by increasing student performance on standardized tests, scores on the Academic Performance Index, preparing students to be college and career ready, increasing English the learner reclassification rate, increasing the number of pupils that pass advanced placement exams with three or higher. Other indicators were increasing student's attendance rates, reducing absenteeism rates, reducing dropout rates while increasing graduation rates. Expected annual outcomes for the academic year 2017-18 are:

- The percent of students scoring at meeting standards in English language arts (LEA) on the SBAC (CAASPP) will increase by 5% in 2017-2018.
- The percent of students scoring at meeting standards in math on the SBAC (CAASPP) will increase by 5% in 2017-2018.
- The percent of students scoring 70% or higher on the alternative education short-cycle assessments in ELA will increase from 8.4% in 2016-2017 to 13.4% in 2017-18.
- The percent of students scoring 70% or higher on the alternate education short-cycle assessments in math will increase from 6.4% in 2016-2017 to 11.4% in 2017-18.
- The high school graduation rate will increase from 87.7% in 2015-2016 to 88.7% in 2016-2017 (data reported form the prior year).
- The percent scoring College Conditional Ready on the Early Assessment Program (EAP) in ELA and math will increase by 5% in 2017-2018.

- The percent of students enrolled in CTE courses will increase from 67.1% in 2016-2017to 69.1% in 2017-2018 (most students are enrolled for one semester and sometimes two semesters, which is not sufficient time to complete a CTE sequence of courses).
- The percent of students completing UC a-g courses will increase from 67% in 2016-2017 69% in 2017-2018.
- The student attendance rate will increase from 89.3% in 2016-2017 to 90.3% in 2017-2018.
- Chronic absenteeism will be reduced from 14.4% in 2016-2017 to 13.4% in 2017-2018.
- The suspension rate will decrease from 14.3% in 2014-2015 to 13.3% 2015-2016 at the community school and will decrease from 7% in 2015-2016 to 6% at the court school in 2015-2016 (data reported from prior year).
- The middle school dropout rate will remain at 0.002% in 2016-2017 (data reported from prior year).
- The high school dropout rate will remain at 1% in 2016-2017 (data reported from prior year).
- The percent English learner students demonstrating annual growth (AMAO 1) on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) will increase by 2% in 2017-2018.
- The percent of English learner students in U.S. schools more than five years scoring Early Advanced or Advanced (AMAO 2) on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) will increase by 2% in 2017-2018.

- The percent of continuously enrolled students in community school earning 30 credits or more during a semester toward high school graduation will increase from 22% in 2015-2016 to 24% in 2016-2017 (RCOE, 2016b).

**Student Outcomes in Alternative Education**

Students who attend alternative schools and programs are typically at risk are students who have experienced educational failure for reasons such as poor grades, truancy, disruptive behavior, pregnancy, or similar factors associated with temporary or permanent withdrawal from school (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2014; K. L. Henry et al., 2012; USDE, 2010). The level of "at-risk," is a term that has a negative connotation and negatively affects students more than internal and external factors (Sanders, 2000). Sometimes traditional schools do not meet the learning styles, needs, and learning capacities of many students (M. A. Raywid, 2001). The creation of a successful alternative education school program is necessary to assist in promoting student success, and supporting the needs of the at-risk students. Bielefeld et al. (2009) state that a team effort between students, parents, school staff, and the community must be established to help students reach their academic potential.

In 2012-13, The *Hechinger Report* stated that more than 66,500 students were enrolled in alternative education schools. However, only 22,361 reached graduation, and approximately 12,259 dropped out of school (Jackson, 2015). However, there are no known records showing how many of the high school graduates continued to college, and strikingly only 10% or less of those graduates were four-year university candidates. Unfortunately, the state has no instrument that collect student data to conclude which schools do better in serving the alternative education population (Butrymowicz, 2015).

## Alternative Education in RCOE

Riverside County spans over 18,910 square kilometers, roughly 290 kilometers wide with a population of 2,387,74 (Census, 2010) being the fifth largest county in California. County community school districts in the state of California serve 449,493 students from urban, suburban, and rural communities (see Appendix C). Riverside County Office of Education (RCOE) services 316 students in County Community Schools throughout the county at 11 different sites.

Alternative education is part of the RCOE Student Programs and Services division. The division provides specific student populations with educational programs and related services, which students develop the competencies needed to expand their potentials for success (RCOE, 2017b). Alternative Education at RCOE program includes the county community school and court school. The WASC accredit these schools. RCOE schools provide students with curriculum, instruction, and assessment to ensure that they graduate from high school and are well prepared for college and the workforce. The county community schools provide a comprehensive instructional program for district and probation referred student. Table 3 lists the 11 Riverside County Community Schools it operates.

Table 3

*RCOE Community School Locations*

| Name of Community School | Location |
|---|---|
| Arlington Regional Learning Center | Riverside, CA |
| Betty G. Gibbel Regional Learning Center | San Jacinto, CA |
| Blythe Community School | Blythe, CA |
| Corona Community School | Corona, CA |
| David L. Long Regional Learning Center | Murrieta, CA |
| Don F. Kenny Regional Learning Centre | Indio, CA |
| Hemet Cal-Safe | Hemet, CA |
| Moreno Valley Cal-Safe | Moreno Valley, CA |
| Palm Springs Community School | Palm Springs, CA |
| Safe House Community School | Riverside, CA |
| Val Verde Regional Learning Center | Perris, CA |

Note. Adapted from "RCOE Community School Locations," by Riverside County office of Education, 2019. Retrieved from https://www.rcoe.us/student-program-services/alternative-education/community-schools/

## Synthesis Matrix

Roberts (2010) states that synthesizing literature involves comparing, contrasting, and merging disparate pieces of information into one coherent whole that provides a new perspective. A high-quality literature review reflects a careful analysis of all sources and synthesis previous studies and information and how they are related to each other (Roberts, 2010). The synthesis matrix developed for this study highlights the literature that was reviewed and identify key points of the study (Appendix D).

The Synthesis Matrix divides the literature into 11 categories:

1. Parent involvement
2. At risk youth
3. Risk factors to dropping out of school
4. Academic success
5. Improved behaviors
6. Academic achieve
7. Preventive factors
8. Interventions
9. Expulsion
10. Community Schools
11. Alternative Education

Parental involvement is highlighted as having a positive effect on student academic success, academic achievement, improved and student behaviors. The lack of parent involvement puts students to be classified at-risk, dropping out of school, being expelled and thus attending alternative education sites such as community schools.

## Summary

County Community Schools are facing increasing pressure to increase student performance (J. Ruiz de Velasco & Gonzales, 2017). The literature review highlight parent engagement/involvement can help to support the students enrolled in alternative education schools. Parent involvement is critical for student academic success and graduating from high school. There is a lack of information and research exploring parental perceptions regarding their lived experience in supporting students in the county

community schools. Understanding what parents experience in their interactions with the school, as well as their perspectives on what steps can be taken to increase parent involvement, can assist community school leaders to better engage parents to assist students to succeed. The Methodology described in Chapter III of this study is designed to gather data to better understand parent involvement in the Riverside County Community Schools.

# CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

## Overview

This chapter presents the methodology for the phenomenological study conducted. It focuses on the methodology and research design used, as well as the procedural components for this research study. It also provides the rational for the research of parent engagement in county community schools. The chapter also includes the research design, population and target population, sample, instrumentation, reliability and validity, data collection, data analysis, and limitations as they pertain to this study.

## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to understand and explain how parent engagement affects student achievement, as perceived by parents of high school students enrolled within county operated community schools in Riverside County California. An additional purpose of the study was to identify actions that parents believe are necessary to increase parent engagement within the county.

## Research Questions

This study was guided by two central questions. Each central question was divided into sub-questions.

### Central Question 1

Central Question 1 sought to answer: How do parents perceive their involvement affects the academic achievement of their high school student within the community schools in Riverside County?

**Sub-Question 1**. There were three sub-questions designed to answer Central Question 1:

1.1. How do parents perceive they are involved in supporting their child's academic achievement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County?

1.2. What do parents perceive influences whether or not parents are involved with their child's academic achievement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County?

1.3. What supports or barriers do parents perceive exist that affect parent involvement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County?

**Central Question 2**

Central Question 2 sought to answer: *What do parents perceive are the actions necessary for the community schools in Riverside County to implement to improve parent involvement to increase high school student achievement?*

**Sub-Question 2**. There were two sub-questions designed to answer Central Question 2:

2.1. What actions do parents believe the county operated community schools in Riverside County can take to increase parent involvement to improve their child's academic achievement?

2.2 What actions do parents believe need to be implemented as a priority to increase parent involvement to improve their child's academic achievement?

## Research Design

The methodology used in this research study was a qualitative phenomenological study. The methodology captured and described the perceptions and experiences of parent involvement; how it is perceived, explained, felt, and judged. (M. Q. Patton, 2015b; Vagle, 2014; Van Manen, 2014). A qualitative phenomenological methodology was selected to describe and obtain meaning by lived experiences, thus providing rich meaningful answers to the research questions. This was achieved by interviewing people that interact with county community schools on a daily basis: (a) teachers, (b) parents and (c) principals.

A Phenomenological study is designed to describe the meaning of a lived experience or situation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Van Manen, 2014). This study is part of thematic study working in conjunction with the researcher, Sandra Hernandez. As part of the study, both researches are interested in researching lived experiences and perceptions that attribute to parent involvement. Ms. Hernandez research focused on perceptions teachers and principals have regarding parental involvement, this researcher focused on the perceptions parents or guardians have. Information was gathered through semi-structured interviews, autobiographical accounts or anecdotes (Vagle, 2014).

For this study in-depth interviews were conducted to gain a deep understanding of the parents' lived experiences and perceptions that attribute to parental involvement (M. Q. Patton, 2015b). The qualitative data collection and analysis were conducted in six phases as part of a thematic:

1. Phase 1: Planning. Analyzes of the problem statement and research questions allowed for an in-depth analysis of the instrumentation that would be used for interviews and the process in which parents would be selected.
2. Phase 2: Countywide Assessment and Procedures. Research purpose statement and research questions were given to the assistant superintended of Alternative education for review and county board approval. After board approval (see Appendix E) county guidelines were followed for the parent selection process and county approved letters to parents and principals.
3. Phase 3: Beginning Data Collection. Researcher obtained countywide data and school site contacts for a preliminary analysis information gathered regarding parents and site procedures and contacts. Letters were sent out to parents who were randomly selected from the three sites which included a letter of invitation (see Appendix F) and a letter of introduction (see Appendix G). Researcher followed up with a phone call and set up interview appointments.
4. Phase 4: Data Collection. The researcher vetted research instrument. Consent was obtained from parents and interviews were recorded and stored with no markers identifying the interviewee to maintain confidentiality (see Appendix H).
5. Phase 5: Closing Date Collection. The researcher conducted the last interview. Parents were then sent a thank you letter for participation in the study.
6. Phase 6: Data Analysis and Completion. Consisted of coding the interview responses and blending them into a formal data analysis. When trends were

7. observed, they were then recorded in charts to represent the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

The completion of the six phases described above occurred between January and August of 2018. This study is part of a thematic study to understand parent and school staff perception on parent engagement. The researcher worked in conjunction with another researcher, Sandra Hernandez. Hernandez's study focused on the perceptions of teachers and school administrators and what is their perception of parent engagement. This study focused on parent's perception of their involvement and actions that affect their child's educational performance and the need for parent involvement in the county community high schools. The collaboration of both participants facilitated the identification of the appropriate methodology for this thematic dissertation, the development of interview questions, the collection of references, and the selection of phases to collect and analyze the data from the interviewees.

## Population

A population is a group of elements or causes, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which researchers intend to generalize the results of the research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). A population is defined by Roberts (2010) as a description of the individuals who participated in the study. McMillian and Schumacher (2009) state that a population is composed of "a group of individuals or events from which a sample is drawn and to which results can be generalized" (p. 489). The overall population of this study was parents of students enrolled in alternative schools in the state of California.

In California, according to EdData Partnership (2017), there are 6,405,496 students enrolled in public schools statewide. The data indicates that the total enrollments in California schools increased between 2015-16 and 2016-17 academic school years (EdData Partnership, 2017). At the same time the number of students expelled stayed constant within the state (EdData Partnership, 2017).

Education Code 48926 requires a countywide plan for expelled students (CDE, 2017). Often expelled students enroll in one of the many alternative school programs in California run by local school districts and county offices of education. In the last three years in California school districts identify alternative placement for students are expelled and placed in county run community day schools (CDE, 2017a; CDE, 2017e). Alternative schools also enroll students who have learning or social-emotional emotional issues, are adjudicated youth, or whose parents believe it is a better placement for their child (CDE, 2017a, 2017e).

Table 4 displays the total number of schools in California, including alternative schools (EdData Partnership, 2017). The State of California collects data for six types of schools broadly identified as alternative schools, including: (a) alternative, (b) community day, (c) continuation, (d) county community, (e) juvenile court, and (f) opportunity. While the term alternative schools generally apply to these six types of schools, districts are allowed to choose the term alternative for schools that are different from the other five established forms of alternative schools (CDE, 2017a). Total number of alternative schools 2016-17 school year was 1,035. This represents 10% of the total number of schools in California. The number of alternative schools declined between the 2012-13 and 2016-17 school years. The reason for the decrease in the number of

alternative schools is unknown. With the change to the LCFF model, and the advent of other education reforms in recent years, it is clear that districts are finding ways of retaining students in the regular school program who may have previously been referred to an alternative school (CDE, 2017g).

Table 4

*Types of Schools in the State of California*

| Schools by Type | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alternative | 254 | 265 | 263 | 261 | 259 |
| Community Day | 258 | 273 | 205 | 193 | 177 |
| Continuation | 479 | 484 | 461 | 452 | 441 |
| County Community | 78 | 93 | 75 | 74 | 71 |
| Elementary | 5,779 | 5,812 | 5,826 | 5,858 | 5,869 |
| High School | 1,324 | 1,357 | 1,337 | 1,339 | 1,313 |
| Junior High | 46 | 47 | 46 | 48 | 48 |
| Juvenile Court | 80 | 88 | 75 | 74 | 67 |
| K-12 | 210 | 229 | 244 | 262 | 325 |
| Middle | 1,274 | 1,302 | 1,301 | 1,298 | 1,300 |
| Opportunity | 34 | 33 | 23 | 21 | 20 |
| Preschool | N/A | N/A | 40 | 10 | 11 |
| Special Education Schools | 136 | 148 | 138 | 134 | 133 |
| State Special Schools | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Youth Authority Facilities | N/A | N/A | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Total | 9,955 | 10,134 | 10,041 | 10,031 | 10,041 |

*Note.* Adapted from "Demographics," by Ed Data Education Data Partnerships, n.d. Retrieved from https://www.ed-data.org/state/CA

County Offices of Education serve many students in various county-run programs. In the 2017-2018 academic year, there were a total of 34,451 students enrolled in county schools (see Appendix I). Appendix I lists the total enrollment in each county Office of Education in California. Unfortunately, the State of California does not specifically track student enrollments in county community schools.

The California Superintendent of Public Instruction, with the approval of the State Board of Education, adopted the DASS by fall 2018 in accordance with California Education Codes Sections 52052 (g) (CDE, 2017f). DASS is a local accountability system that contains state indicators and standards to help identify a school's strengths, weaknesses, and areas of improvement in non-traditional schools (California Education Code Section 52052g). In addition, DASS is designed to help identify individual schools' and school districts strengths, weaknesses, and areas of improvement. Every fall the DASS will be updated with the most recent data and design improvements will be made from user comments. DASS replaces the ASAM which was the alternative education accountability program developed in the 2000 school year (CDE, 2017f). The DASS will help to fill the current void in the data in future years.

The county community schools (CDE, 2017e) educate a unique population within the alternative education system, serving students who are not enrolled in school or academically successful at the local school district level. Students attending county community schools are often very high-risk students, who are expelled, are adjudicated, and/or are placed in the county community schools by the county probation departments (CDE, 2017a, 2017c, 2017e).

In the state of California 2016-2017, according to the EdData Partnership (2017), there are 78 county community day schools in the 58 California County Offices of Education, 57 counties operate and run county community school (CDE, 2017f; Sackheim, 2017). There were a total of 10,991 students enrolled in county community schools in the state of California in the 2016-17 school year. The number of students who attended county community schools in the 2016-17 school year represented 5.89%

of the students enrolled in alternative education in California (see Appendix J). Further, the community school enrollment makes up 48%, nearly half, of the students enrolled in County Office of Education programs statewide.

The general population of this study was the community schools in California. The rationale for examining parent involvement in the county community schools included:

1. The county community schools are a unique population within the alternative education system, serving students who are not served at the local school district level.
2. The students in the community schools are often very high-risk students, who have been expelled, are adjudicated, and/or placed in the county community schools by the county probation.
3. Parents have historically lacked involvement in their child's education after being enrolled in the county community schools. Likewise, the county community schools have not systematically involved parents in the educational process.
4. The literature review revealed that there was little research on the county community schools in California and no research regarding parent involvement in those schools.

Riverside County in southern California was chosen as the focus of this study. Riverside County spans over 18,910 square kilometers, roughly 290 kilometers wide with a population of 2,387,74 (Census, 2010) being the fifth largest county in California. Riverside County, serves students 449,493, K-12 students from urban, suburban, and

rural communities. RCOE services 316 students in county community schools throughout the county at 11 different sites (Appendix K). The remaining students are served by two other alternative education programs, Come Back Kids and Riverside County Education Academy.

Riverside County is the 5th largest county operated community school systems in California. Riverside County Community School enrollment represents .0047% of the total statewide student enrollment, and 1.8% of county community schools. Throughout the Riverside County Community Schools, all parents and guardians are required to participate in the enrollment in person, and are periodically asked to meet with the teachers or principals to discuss their academic progress, attendance, reentry requirements and/or behavior issues. This fact ensures that the parents or guardians most likely to have experienced one or more times when they had some engagement with the community schools, and could be available to participate in this study. Therefore, the population of this study was the parents and guardians of the 316 students enrolled in Riverside County Community Schools.

**Target Population**

The target population represents a version of the larger population (McMillian & Schumacher, 2009). The target population was selected from the 11 county community schools. These 11 community school sites provide a comprehensive instructional program for district and probation referred students (RCOE, 2016a). The target population were three of the eleven Riverside County Community Schools. The three sites selected were Arlington Regional Learning Center, Betty Gibbel Regional Learning Center, and Val Verde Regional Learning Center. These three schools serve 212

students, which represented 67% of the entire Riverside County Community School student population. These three sites also serve large regions of the county that are urban, suburban, and rural, reflecting the general demographics of Riverside County. The population is also within reasonable proximity to the researcher to conduct the interview data collection with the three county community schools (McMillian & Schumacher, 2009). Further, the leadership at the RCOE has expressed an interest in increasing parent involvement within the county community schools and support for this study methodology. Therefore, the target population for this study is the parents of the 212 students enrolled in in the three designated Riverside County Community School sites.

## Sample

McMillian and Schumacher (2009) state that a sample represents an identified population from whom data are collected. The sample was chosen from the target population. Parents or guardians related to the students enrolled in the RCOE Community School Centers comprised the target population. For this study, the term parents also include guardians, or caregivers who have legal custody of the students. This can include, but is not limited to, grandparents, foster parents, stepparents, and other court appointed guardians. One parent or guardians per child from the target population were asked to volunteer to participate in the interview process.

The sample size is related to the nature of the research study. "The insights generated from qualitative inquiry depend more on the information richness of the cases and their analytical capabilities of the researcher than on the sample size" (McMillian & Schumacher, 2009, p. 328). The sample for this study was 16 parents from three school

sites. This comprises an adequate number of subjects that can yield results sufficient to explain the phenomena under investigation (M. Q. Patton, 2015a). The sample was limited to 21parents whose child had been enrolled in the community school for a minimum of six months, to help ensure a minimum depth of knowledge and experiences related to their engagement with the schools.

Approval was obtained by the RCOE Cabinet to conduct the research. The principals at the three sites were contacted and a meeting was held to explain the nature of the research, the interview process, and to explain the parent sample selection process. Seven parents were selected from each site. A letter of invitation to parents, including a letter of consent was sent to the principals, asking them to send the letter to the parents of students enrolled for a minimum of one semester or six months. The invitation consisted of an introduction stating the intended purpose of the study, the flexibility to withdraw from the study if participant felt the need to leave, the explanation of protected confidentiality and anonymity, and a thank you for their participation in the study. Parents were asked to respond to the researcher via email, or telephone.

After receiving the parent responses of acceptance, researches sought to obtain equal participation from all sites (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2012). To ensure this occurred an even distribution was uses for each site. An even distribution was used to get equal participation from the three sites to obtain equal representation from each site. To ensure that all interviews selected were not from a single site when there were no more than seven participants from each site.

## Instrumentation

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010) instrumentation is the effect of variations in measurement. M. Q. Patton (2015) indicates that instrumentation is the tool for measurement in formal research. A threat to the results can be caused by changes in the instruments or the people collecting the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). . Instrumentation was developed using the concepts that emerged from the literature review synthesis matrix. The researcher is the primary instrument in the interview data collection and data analysis, and must remain neutral during the process.

For this qualitative phenomenological study, a semi-structured interview instrument containing eight open-ended questions was created as a guide. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) define a semi-structured interview as a process that allows the researcher to decide the sequence and wording of the questions during an interview. To understand the lived experience of the parents and a semi-structured interview was designed from a phenomenological perspective. According to McMillian and Schumacher a phenomenological interview is an in-depth interview used to study the meaning or essence of a lived experience among selected participants. Assisting the interviewees to be relaxed allows the interview to run smoother, thus helping the interviewees feel comfortable during the interview. To ensure thematic consistency, the team co-created the interview questions, demographic questions and interview procedures.

Interview questions were created and designed in sequence and the researcher asked follow-up questions when necessary, probing for a deeper understanding of the parent experience (see Appendix L). The specific question allowed for individual, open-

ended responses. According to McMillian and Schumacher (2009) the questions follow these factors:

- Interview proves are initial questions which open the interview.
- Statement of the research's purpose and focus.
- Order of questions.
- Demographic question.
- Complex, controversial, and difficult questions.

Demographic data were collected at the beginning of the interview. The demographic questions were asked to better understand the context of the lived experiences of the interview participants. Demographic questions also serve as an icebreaker and help the interviewee feel comfortable not only with the interview but the interviewer. Demographic questions that asked as part of the interview process.

The semi-structured interview was designed to solicit the opinions of parents based on the purpose and research questions for this study. To assist in developing the instrument and obtain valid data, the researcher considered the types of interview questions shared by McMillan and Schumacher, (2010) (see Table 5). Together, the researcher and thematic dissertation partner developed eight open-ended interview questions that were similar, but which were modified to align with the population and sample in each study. The questions also focused on the common findings from the synthesis matrix review by both researchers.

Table 5

*Types of Interview Questions*

| Type | Description |
|---|---|
| Experience/Behavior | Elicit what a person does or has done through the description of experiences, behaviors, actions, activities |
| Opinions/Values | Elicit what a person thinks about his or her experiences, which can reveal a person's intentions, goals, and values. |
| Feelings | Elicit how the person reacts emotionally to his or her experiences. |
| Knowledge | Elicit information the person has or what the person considers as factual. |
| Sensory | Elicit a person's description of what and how he or she sees, hears, touches, tastes, and smells in the world. |
| Background/Demographic | Elicit a person's description of himself or herself to aid the researcher in identifying and locating the person in relation to other people. |

Mrs. Hernandez and the researcher worked together to modify existing design and create the interview questions to ensure the questions would yield valid and reliable results. An alignment table was created to ensure the research questions were aligned to the literature review (see Appendix M). The synthesis matrix was utilized to ensure that interview questions were consistent with the research questions. Additional efforts were made to ensure that the discoveries gained from the review of literature were supported with each interview question. This ensured that research questions, interview questions, and knowledge from the literature review were aligned. The interview questions were

customizable, allowing for up to eight open-ended questions to be asked of parents to gauge areas of special concern and solicited their feedback on what parent engagement is to them.

The interview questionnaire was designed to measure parent engagement in the education process of their children. The questions elicited open-ended responses, with parents giving information on parental agreement or disagreement in their child's school. The questions cover primary factors from the literature review, with a total of six categories included:

- Involvement in Learning
- Communication
- Leadership and Participation
- Support Services
- Educational Quality
- School Climate

**Reliability and Validity**

In research, the reliability and validity of the instrument need to be tested. A test is said to be reliable if the necessary condition for validity yield consistent results (McMillian & Schumacher, 2009; M. Q. Patton, 2015a). Reliability is the consistency that occurs when measuring the results of data from an instrument that is free from error. If minimal error occurs, then the instrument is considered reliable (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Validity is the degree to which the instrument being used measures

what it is set to measure, and the instrument performs as designed (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Both reliability and validity are important to the instrument used in a research study.

The thematic dissertation partners created interview questions. The questions were written based on the review of the literature (M. A. Raywid, 1994; Reimer & Cash, 2003; J. Ruiz de Velasco & Gonzales, 2017; J. Ruiz de Velasco et al., 2008) and the synthesis matrix. An Interview Question Matrix (see Appendix N) was used to validate the interview questions with the literature. The synthesis matrix was also used to ensure that all questions asked were consistent with each research question. The questions were created to understand and explain the lived experiences of parents in alternative education county community schools.

An expert in alternative education, Dr. Diana Walsh-Reuss, Assistant Superintendent for RCOE, reviewed the interview questions to help ensure content validity. Dr. Walsh-Reuss has over 30 years of experience in education and has been a leader at the local, county, and state level in administering, advocating, and evaluating educational programs and services. She currently oversees alternative education to ensure compliance with the federal and mandates; she supervises the research and grants written in her department.

**Field Test**

To ensure instrument validity, the researcher led a field test (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Roberts, 2010). Three parent participants, not included in the study, were interviewed for the field test. The researcher and the thematic dissertation partner were present for the field test interview. The dissertation partner took notes, and

observed the body language of the participant. They both closely observed the participants changes in tone while responding to questions. The field test allowed the researcher to run through the interview questions, and the procedures used for the interview. After the field test interview was completed, parents were asked to fill out a field test questionnaire (Appendix O) to determine if the instructions were easily understood, if the interview questions were clear, if there was enough time to give complete answers, and if they had any suggestions for improving the questions, or improving the interview process. The researcher reviewed parent feedback. The field test results analyzed by the researcher to determine if interview questions needed rewording and ensure the responses were aligned to the research questions. No revisions were determined to be necessary following the analysis of the field test results.

**Intercoder Reliability of Data**

Once the researcher completes the data collection, transcribes and codes the data, the researcher moves into validating the data. M. Q. Patton (2015) describes intercoder reliability as the process of utilizing a third-party evaluator to analyze, verify, and determine the same conclusion for the data collected. For this study, the researcher provided a peer researcher with three transcribed interviews. After the thematic researcher completed the verification of the data, the researcher looked for the level of intercoder reliability. Lombard, Synder-Duch, and Campanella Bracken (2004) establish intercoder reliability as, "coefficients of .90 or greater are nearly always acceptable, .80 or greater is acceptable in most situations, and .70 may be appropriate in some exploratory studies for some indices" (p. 3). The process of crosschecking the data with an independent researcher created a level of reliability (M. Q. Patton, 2015). To

accomplish this, Sandra Hernandez thematic dissertation partner, independently coded 10% of the information from the interviews to identify themes that emerged from the data. Ms. Hernandez results were compared to the researchers' results to help establish ensure consistency of the results and intercoder reliability (McMillian & Schumacher, 2009; Patten, 2012).

## Data Collection

Before the data collection process began, the researcher submitted an application to conduct the study to the Brandman University Instructional Review Board (BUIRB). The BUIRB process ensures that the research project protects the rights of human participants in the research study, assuring compliance with regulations from the Department of Health and Humans Services, the Office for Protection from Research Risks, the Food and Drug Administration, and all other applicable state and local laws. Approval was received from the BUIRB on April 10, 2018. Following the approval from the BUIRB, the researcher commenced the data collection on March, 2018 and completed the data collection on November, 2018.

Potential parents were selected to participate in the study using a purposive convenience sampling method. The parents were chosen from three RCOE alternative education, learning centers; Arlington, Betty Gibbel, and Val Verde Regional Learning Centers. Each site principal of parents who had children attending county community school for a semester or longer compiled a list. Each parent was given a packet by the principal, which included a letter regarding the study and a Parent Consent of Participation form, a self-addressed returned envelope and the researchers' business card with her contact information. The letter outlined the purpose of the study and the steps to

be followed as a participant in the interviews. The Parent Consent of Participation form gave a brief description of the study. If parents wanted to participate in the study, they returned the form to the school office with their contact information or mailed it to the researcher in the self-addressed envelope that was provided. Participants could also contact the researcher by phone, if they chose too. A number was given to each signed letter of participation and an even distribution was used to obtain seven participants from each site.

After the selection of interviewees was completed, the researcher contacted the individual parents, via phone, and set up possible dates and times for scheduling the interview at their convenience. Participants were offered multiple modes of participating in the interviews to make the interview process convenient and comfortable. The interviewer made her contact information (email, work phone and cell phone numbers) available to parents, as well as school staff to answer any questions or concerns parents may have. Modes of interviews that were offered included a phone interview, a face-to face interview, or a Zoom video-conference. The researcher made an effort not to impose or disrupt the daily family routine. Researcher offered to interview in Spanish, if a parent was more comfortable speaking in Spanish. A semi-structured interview was used to collect data. According to (Patten, 2012), semi-structured interviews are by far the most widely used types of measure for collecting data for qualitative research that combines a pre-determined set of open-ended questions with the opportunity for the interviewer to further explore responses. It provides the interviewer with a guide of a clear set of instructions to follow and not to stray from the interview while providing the opportunity new ways of seeing and understanding the topic at hand (Foundation, 2008).

Once the interviews were scheduled, the researcher confirmed appointment time and location two days prior to the scheduled interview. Before beginning the interview, participants signed an informed consent form as well as a consent form giving permission for the interview to be recorded (Appendix P). Parent participants also received information clarifying the means of maintaining confidentiality along with an informed consent form and the Research Participants Bill of Rights (see Appendix Q). As stated by M. Q. Patton (2015), the privacy of all research participants should be protected. To ensure confidentiality, participants were advised that identification numbers replaced their name and school location when the data were recorded and processed by the researcher. Participants were also informed that only the researcher had access to the identification numbers.

The interviews were audio recorded as a means of data collection. The interviews were then transcribed by using transcribing computer software. The data were processed using the assigned participant to guarantee confidentiality. To further ensure confidentiality, the interview data were stored in a secure location, only accessible by the researcher.

## Data Analysis

Data was gathered and analyzed from three RCOE alternative education sites. Inductive analysis was used to analyze the data. Qualitative research uses inductive analysis as a process in which data is syntheses and meaning is obtained from the data in which patterns and categories emerge (McMillian & Schumacher, 2009). While analyzing the data, the researcher compiled and categorized the data. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed using NVivo (Ltd, 2017). NVivo is a powerful software used

for qualitative data analysis to reach valid defensible conclusions. A pre-coded chart was created to upload the interview responses into NVivo. Upon identification of common themes, the researcher created a visual chart to keep data organized. Preliminary analysis found patterns and/or trends in parent responses for each interview question. Once common themes were established the research to the research question.

This study compared perspective of parents from different points of view (M. Q. Patton, 2015b) for response analysis and to determine themes. Triangulation of data was used to determine the themes within the study. Triangulation was selected to ensure a minimum of three participants gave similar answers for the researcher to determine a theme. Once common themes were established, the researcher identified findings related to the research questions. The data were organized, themes emerged from the data, and findings were formulated and presented in Chapter IV.

## Limitations

There were five limitations related to the methodology use in this study. The limitations were the population of the study, only three sites were used, the sample size, documentation, and the researcher.

1. The population of the study only focused on parents in who had students enrolled in one county in the entire state of California.
2. The study focused on three out of seven county community school sites, and did not include all parents in all the Riverside County Community Schools.
3. The sample size was small in comparison with the overall county community school population. Only 16 parents from three sites were interviewed, 16 parents out of 321 students enrolled.

4. The study documentation, introductory correspondence and interview questions, may have been difficult for parents who were monolingual in another language other than English, and for parents who lacked the academic vocabulary necessary to express their thoughts.
5. The researcher may have inadvertently communicated biases that influenced the interviewee.

**Researcher as an Instrument of the Study**

When piloting qualitative research, the researcher is known as the instrument (Patten, 2012; M. Q. Patton, 2015). Due to the researcher being the instrument in a qualitative study, Pezalla, Pettigrew, and Miller-Day (2012) contended that the unique personality, characteristics, and interview techniques of the researcher may influence how the data is collected. As a result, the study may contain some biases based on how the researcher influenced the interviewee during the qualitative interview sessions.

For this study, RCOE employed the researcher and thematic partner. As a result, the researcher brought a potential bias to the study based on personal experiences in a setting similar to those that were studied. The researcher conducted qualitative interviews with the research participants. The interview questions and responses were conducted face-to-face, by phone or video conferences and were recorded digitally via a hand-held recording device.

## Summary

The aim of this chapter was to inform the reader of the purpose of the study, the research questions posed, and process that was carried out in the study. The population were parents who had students attending county community day schools for a semester or

longer. Individual school sites sent out a letter of consent to parents. Once consent was received, purpose of convenience sampling was used to determine the sample of parents who participated in the study. Semi structured one-on-one interviews were conducted. The field test was conducted to help the researcher ensure reliability and validity of the interview instrument. Sixteen interviews were conducted, the data were collected and stored securely. The data were then organized to identify themes and findings. The final two chapters of the study revealed major findings and provided recommendations for future study.

# CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

As alternatives for students failing in public schools in the mid-1950s and early 1960s alternative education initiatives developed (Hodgman, 2016; Quinn et al., 2006). Alternative education was born and has assumed many forms that assists students with learning difficulties, disciplinary issues, poor attendance, and substance abuse during the Civil Rights Movement, (Hodgman, 2016). Policymakers and educators both believe that alternative education provided successful paths to at-risk youth, which are vital to help students whose needs are not being met at the traditional schools (Barr & Parrett, 2011; M. Raywid, 1989; Wehlage & Rutter, 1987; Young, 1990).

The California Education Code section 58500 through 58512 allows districts to establish and maintain alternative schools and programs (CDE, 2016a). They provide for different means of addressing students' needs, ensuring grade-level standards are met by providing programs of choice. These schools offer students instructional strategies such as independent study and community-based education. According to Coats (2016), California state law authorizes three types of alternative schools: (a) continuation schools, (b) county community schools, and (c) community day schools to serve high school students who are "at-risk of dropping out of school.

County community schools are facing increasing pressure to increase student performance (J. Ruiz de Velasco & Gonzales, 2017). There is a lack of information and research exploring parental perceptions regarding their lived experience in supporting students in the county community schools. Understanding what parents experience in their interactions with the school, as well as their perspectives on what steps can be taken

to increase parent involvement, can assist community school leaders to better engage parents to assist students to succeed.

This chapter is designed to analyze data to better understand parental perceptions of their involvement in the Riverside County Community Schools. This chapter also reviews the purpose statement, research questions, research methodology, and the data collection methods utilized. It also summarizes the data results from the parent interviews and research findings for each central and sub-question. This chapter also presents the themes that emerged from the data analysis.

## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to understand and explain how parent engagement affects student achievement, as perceived by parents of high school students enrolled within county operated community schools in Riverside County California. An additional purpose of the study was to identify actions that parents believe are necessary to increase parent engagement within the county.

## Research Questions

This study was guided by two central questions. Each central question was divided into sub-questions.

### Central Question 1

Central Question 1 sought to answer: *How do parents perceive their involvement affects the academic achievement of their high school student within the community schools in Riverside County?*

**Sub-Question 1**. There were three sub-questions designed to answer Central Question 1:

1.1. How do parents perceive they are involved in supporting their child's academic achievement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County?

1.2. What do parents perceive influences whether or not parents are involved with their child's academic achievement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County?

1.3. What supports or barriers do parents perceive exist that affect parent involvement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County?

**Central Question 2**

Central Question 2 sought to answer: *What do parents perceive are the actions necessary for the community schools in Riverside County to implement to improve parent involvement to increase high school student achievement?*

**Sub-Question 2**. There were two sub-questions designed to answer Central Question 2:

2.1. What actions do parents believe the county operated community schools in Riverside County can take to increase parent involvement to improve their child's academic achievement?

2.2 What actions do parents believe need to be implemented as a priority to increase parent involvement to improve their child's academic achievement?

## Research Design/Methods and Data Collection Procedures

The research method used for this study was qualitative research, a phenomenological study, which is a systematic approach to understanding the qualities, or the essential nature, of a phenomenon within a particular context (Odom et al., 2005). In this study, the phenomenological method is used to understand parents' perception of parental involvement and their perception of what needs to be changed or added to increase parental involvement in alternative education sites. The methodology captured and described the perceptions and experiences of parent involvement; how it is perceived, explained, felt, and judged (M. Q. Patton, 2015b; Vagle, 2014; Van Manen, 2014).

Information for the study was gathered through interviews, autobiographical accounts or anecdotes of parents who had children enrolled in county community school (Vagle, 2014). For this study in-depth interviews were conducted to gain a deep understanding of the parents' lived experiences and perceptions that attribute to parental involvement (M. Q. Patton, 2015b). Parents were selected from three county community schools in Riverside County in the state of California.

The researcher and RCOE county community staff collaborated to identify 16 parents/guardians of children who attend have attended county community schools for a semester or more. The research focused on parent perception on their involvement and how it affects their child's academic achievement. The researcher determined that including parents who had their child in the schools for a semester or longer, had more experiences and interactions with the school and school staff that would add to the richness of the data collected, and those parents were more likely to participate in the study. Due to the low student numbers of students that met the criteria, only 16 parents

were identified dropping the number from the 21 parents that were projected at the beginning of the data collection process.

Interviews were scheduled with parents based on their consent at the location of their choice and on the date of their choice. A one-month time frame was allotted for data collection, which needed to be extended to seven months. Interviews were conducted in person during May through November 2018. Prior to the interviews, the researcher gave parents who met the research requirements an invitation letter, which they filled out and returned indicating they were interested in participating in the research study. Due to logistical issues, summer vacation, and change of staffing not many parents turned in intent letters. The researcher tried to contact parents personally to inform them of the study and obtain a verbal consent for participation; many parents did not answer the phone or return phone calls. To accommodate for this issue, the researcher went to the specific school sites and contacted parents using the school's telephone number, and scheduled the appointments. School staff also suggested the researcher come to the school site and meets the parents at the orientation and enrollment. This approach resulted in several interviews conducted while the parents were on campus, or appointments were set for a later date and time. Being at the school site allowed for parents to meet and interact with the researcher and it gave school staff an opportunity to discuss the research study and its components to parents. These actions helped to convince parents of the importance of their participation in the study. During the fall of the academic year, the researcher also went to the three school sites when school staff informed her that parents would be present. This likewise resulted in additional interviews being conducted.

A demographic questionnaire was given to parents as part of a structured interview. The researcher served as a translator if parents' native language was needed. A semi-structured interview was used to collect data. Semi-structured interviews are by far the most widely used types of measure for collecting data for qualitative research (Patten, 2012). Interview questions were field tested by researchers to ensure reliability and validity. The semi-structured interviews were scheduled with parents based on their choice to interview in person, by telephone, or by videoconference. Participants were given a letter of consent that included the Participant's Bill of Rights and permission to audio record the interview. When each interview was finished, the interview was transcribed using gotrancribe.com and coded using the NVivo software program to identify common themes and patterns within the interview data.

## Population

Researchers frequently draw a sample from a population, which is the group in which researchers are ultimately interested in studying (Patten, 2012). A population is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which researchers intend to generalize the results of the research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In the state of California 2016-2017, according to the EdData Partnership (2017), there are 78 county community day schools in the 58 California County Offices of Education, 57 counties operate and run county community school (CDE, 2017f: Sackheim, 2017 ). In California, according to EdData Partnership (2017), there are 6,405,496 students enrolled in public schools statewide. Total number of alternative schools 2016-17 school year was 1,035; this represents 10% of the total number of schools in California. There were a total of 10,991 students enrolled in county

community schools in the state of California representing 5.89% of the students enrolled in alternative education in California. The sample population was taken from Riverside County community schools 321students.

The RCOE Alternative Education County Community School was the population for this study. RCOE has seven county community schools; learning centers spans over 18910 square kilometers. In Riverside County, school districts serve 449,493 students from urban, suburban, and rural communities. RCOE services 321 students in county community schools throughout the county at 11 different sites, seven being county community schools or learning centers.

The target population for this study was selected from a larger group of persons, identified as the population, the group of subjects from whom data were collected; even though the subjects were not selected from the population (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). With 11 different sites covering a wide geographic area, three out of the seven county community schools were selected as the target population: Arlington Learning Center in the city of Riverside, Betty Gibbel Regional Learning center in the city of San Jacinto, Val Verde Learning Center in the city of Perris.

## Sample

An even distribution was used to select individuals from the various sites. Participants in the study focused on parents and legal guardians with children attending county community schools for a semester or longer. The sample for this study was drawn from the target population of parents/legal guardians who had children enrolled in Riverside County, county community schools.

Qualitative samples must be large enough to ensure that most of the perceptions that might be important are uncovered, but at the same time, if the sample is too large, data become repetitive and eventually superfluous (M. Q. Patton, 2015). Saturation is used as one guiding principle that affects the sample size in a qualitative study. Single case studies should generally contain 15 to 30 interviews (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013). In addition Patton (2002) states that rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what's at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with the available time and resources.

Sixteen parents agreed to participate in the study. Initially researcher wanted a sample of seven parents per site, 21 parents total, due to the constraints of the research only 16 parents were identified to meet the study interview criteria, thus a total of 16 participants were interviewed. The parents who participated in this study met the following criteria: each participant had to (a) be a parent of a student who had attended a RCOE county community school for a semester or longer, (b) student must have attended the community school for a semester or longer, and (c) student were enrolled in one of the three identified county community schools from RCOE.

## Presentation and Analysis of Demographic Data

The 16 parent participants involved in the study were asked to provide demographic details as part of the interview questionnaire. The demographic questionnaire included: (a) their highest level of education, (b) did they ever attend an alternative education school, (c) their child's grade level classification, (d), (e) participant's highest degree of education, (f) duration of enrollment, (g) and the

reason their child was attending the learning center (see Table 6). Participants were assured that the demographic information would be used solely for statistical purposes and to provide a context for the final results of the dissertation study.

Table 6

*Parent Demographic Questionnaire Results*

| Participant Number | Parent Highest Level of Education | Parent attend an alternative education school | Child's current grade level | How long the attended the learning Center | Reason the child is attending the learning center |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Technical College | No | 11 | 12 months | Expelled |
| 2 | Some College | No | 12 | 18 months | Expelled |
| 3 | High School Diploma in Mexico | Yes | 12 | 48 months | Expelled |
| 4 | College Graduate | No | 11 | 6 months | Expelled |
| 5 | 10th grade | No | 9 | 9 months | Expelled |
| 6 | 3 semesters of Community College | No | 11 | 24 months | Probation Placement |
| 7 | Associates Degree | Yes | 10 | 24 months | Expelled |
| 8 | Working on high school diploma | Yes | 8 | 18 months | Expelled |
| 9 | High School Diploma in Mexico | No | 11 | 10 months | Expelled |
| 10 | Master's of Science | No | 10 | 6 months | Expelled |
| 11 | High School Diploma | No | 9 | 6 months | Probation Placement |
| 12 | 10th grade | No | 10 | 5 months | District Placement |
| 13 | High School Graduate | No | 8 | 6 months | Expelled |
| 14 | Community College Graduate in Mexico | No | 12 | 24 months | Expelled |
| 15 | Did not go to school | No | 11 | 7 months | Expelled |
| 16 | 6th grade | No | 9 | 12 months | Expelled |

An analysis of the demographic data (see Table 7) revealed that 68.75% of the participants graduated from high school, 25% of the parents dropped out of school, 6.25% never attended any type of formal education. Out of the 68.75% of the parents who graduated high school, 44% had attended college or community college and 13% of the parents have a bachelor's degree and 6.25% have a master's degree. All participants were legal guardians, 75% of the students were with their parents and 25% were being raised by family members, grandparents, and aunts/uncles. Eighty-one percent of the parents never attended an alternative education school, while 19% of the parents did attend a form of alternative education school.

Table 7

*Summary of Parental Education Demographic*

| Education | Percent of Parents |
|---|---|
| High school graduate | 5.5% |
| Never had a formal education | 6.25% |
| Master's degree | 6.25% |
| Bachelor's degree | 13% |
| Did not complete high school | 25% |
| Attended community college or college but did not graduate | 44% |
| High school graduate | 68.75% |

*Note*. Data sorted with Percent of Parents controlling the sort.

Parents participating in the study had students in grades 8 through 12 (see Table 8). Thirteen percent attended middle school and 88% of the students attended high school:

- 19% in 9th grade
- 19% in 10th grade

- 31% in 11th grade
- 19% in 12th grade

Most of the students had attended the county community school from five months to three years:

- 31% of the students had attended for at least 6 months
- 25% have attended for 6 months to one year
- 25% of the students attended 12 to 23 months
- 19% of the students attended the learning center for two to three years

Eighty-one percent of the students were district referred due to expulsion, the department of probation referred 13%, and 6.25% were district placed for safety and security issues.

Table 8

*Summary of Student Grade Level Demographics*

| Grade Level | Percent of Students per Grade Level |
|---|---|
| 8th Grade | 13% |
| 9th Grade | 19% |
| 10th Grade | 19% |
| 11th Grade | 31% |
| 12th Grade | 19% |
| Middle School | 13% |
| High School | 88% |

## Presentation of Interview Observational Data

During the interviews, parents were very engaged and sat upright, the researcher and the participants sat face-to-face to ensure eye contact. All of the participants answered all of the research questions that were asked of them, the majority of the responses were emotional, detailed, concise, and straight to the point. For responses that appeared to be vague, the researcher used the probing questions to draw out more details

and, in some cases, the researcher followed up to gain further insight into the participants' experiences.

During the interviews, four participants broke down emotionally and cried or became angry when asked questions. Some of the questions brought up positive and negative experiences. Two of the parents expressed their anger towards school staff while two participants were very thankful and appreciative of the staff help, in which they became very emotional and started to cry. Participant 4 became angry and her voice began to get louder as she stated that, "first, they attack the student, stating the conversation is not with you. The way they express themselves…. I feel the teachers will retaliate against my child if I say something bad about them or complain about them."

Participant 4's emotional response evoked memories from her experience dealing with the school while during the expulsion process. On the other hand, Participant 8 became emotional and started to cry while she stated,

> Honestly like I have said this has been the best experience ever with a learning center … I really did not want her to go. I felt very negative. She made a 180 degree turn around because the experience I've received from the school with her academics and with her grades was exceptional.

Participant 8 became emotional as she described the positive effect, the learning center had on her child. She was happy with the school and did not want her child to go back to a "regular" school setting.

## Presentation and Analysis of Interview Data

The analysis of the one-on-one interviews is organized and presented in relationship to the two essential research questions and five-sub question. Discussions of

themes were addressed by each research question. Additionally, examples related to the themes are providing to further expand and understand of each theme. To determine the level of agreement necessary to establish a theme, the researcher inputted transcribed interviews into NVIVO in which interviews were coded. Then the participant responses were coded and grouped into themes. Table 9 displays the themes, interview scores, percentages of parental responses and the frequency for each research question.

Table 9

*Intentionality Themes*

| Research Questions | Themes | Interview Sources | Percent of Parents | Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How do parents perceive their involvement affects the academic achievement of their high school student within the community schools in Riverside County? | Communication at Home Between Students and Parents | 15 | 94% | 21 |
| | Parents and Teachers Met to Discuss Student Behavior | 9 | 56% | 21 |
| 1.1. How do parents perceive they are involved in supporting their child's academic achievement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County? | Parents' Communications with the School Staff is Important | 11 | 69% | 16 |
| | Parents Support Their Children at Home | 16 | 100% | 25 |
| 1.2. What do parents perceive influence whether or not parents are involved with their child's academic achievement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County? | Positive interactions with School Staff Supports Parent Involvement. | 16 | 100% | 85 |
| | School Staff Are Welcoming to Parents | 14 | 88% | 20 |
| | Not being Invited to Participate at School | 9 | 56% | 16 |

(continued)

Table 9

*Intentionality Themes*

| Research Questions | Themes | Interview Sources | Percent of Parents | Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.3. What supports or barriers do parents perceive exist that affect parent involvement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County? | Events Are Scheduled During Parent Working Hours | 7 | 44% | 19 |
| | Parents Want to be Involved, but are not Invited | 7 | 44% | 13 |
| | Parents Want Notification of Events | 7 | 44% | 16 |
| What do parents perceive are the actions necessary for the community schools in Riverside County to implement to improve parent involvement to increase high school student achievement? | Provide School Sponsored Events That Parents Can Attend | 14 | 89% | 53 |
| | Increase Communication with Parents | 15 | 94% | 52 |
| | Provide School Sponsored Parent Trainings or Workshops | 7 | 44% | 15 |
| 2.1. What actions do parents believe the county operated community schools in Riverside County can take to increase parent involvement to improve their child's academic achievement? | Invite Parents to Participate | 13 | 81% | 53 |
| | Schedule More Events at Times When Parents Can Attend | 10 | 63% | 18 |
| 2.2 What actions do parents need to be implemented as a to increase parent involvem improve their child's acade achievement? | Increase Communication with Parents | 13 | 81% | 53 |
| | Inform Parents of Scheduled Events or Activities | 14 | 88% | 36 |

In some cases, the answers given to a particular interview question also provided relevant input to the other research questions and themes. This section presents the findings and supporting data for each of the research questions and sub-questions.

**Central Question 1**

Central Question 1 sought to answer: *How do parents perceive their involvement affects the academic achievement of their high school student within the community schools in Riverside County?*

**Theme 1: Communication at home between students and parents**. Fifteen participants, 94% of the parents interviewed, stated that communication at home affected their child's academic achievement. Participants indicated that communication at home was essential to finding out what was happening at school and thus helping to motivate and encourage their children. Participant 8 stated,

> I would ask her, and I would question whatever answer she would give me then I would tell her, 'ok well then you need to follow up with your teacher and let them know that I was upset' or whatever the case may be.

Participant 9 was detailed in what she perceived as her involvement, "always telling him to be good, do this, listen to your teachers, do your homework, always behind the child." Eleven parents gave 16 responses, that having communication at home and finding out how the school day was, being encouraging, giving students advice was essential for students' academic success. Participant 11 disclosed that, "I don't help him with the school work, but I do talk to him a lot about what he did, and what he ate, and my concerns, and his well-being."

When relationships between schools and parents falter, the consequences can be detrimental to all (K. L. Henry et al., 2012; Hooven et al., 2013). Parental monitoring includes how their child is doing at school, academically and socially, and relates to students' academic success (K. L. Henry, 2007; Vongprateep,

2015). Parents reported that at home, communication was essential in knowing how the students were doing academically, including activities they participated in and interactions they had with their peers. This allowed the parents to be kept in the loop of what was going on at the school site and with their child's academic progress.

**Theme 2: Parents and teachers met to discuss student behavior**. Nine participants, 56% of study participants, identified that attending meetings with teachers affected their child's academic achievement. Parents reported that having meetings with teachers and having good communication was important. That meeting with school staff allowed them to know what how their child was doing behaviorally, but not academically. Eleven parents mentioned that staff was respectful, but teachers did not give them tools to help their child academically. Parents stated that even though they meet with school staff for bad student behavior they would like more information on how their child was doing at school. Parents saw themselves being involved by attending meetings to discuss their child's behavior as being involved. For example, Participant 4 said, "sometimes they says negative thing about my child, but it's okay that because they make it work, they are a good guys."

Even though parents go in to the school and meet with school staff regarding negative student behaviors, parents know that it is for the benefit of the child to correct the behavior. Another example is Participant 15 stated that after several meetings with the teacher that, "At first, he was being rude to him (the teacher), but now they get along. The teacher is a good person, he (student) likes him a lot… and is doing good."

Nine parents commented that having parent/teacher or meetings with staff was beneficial to their child's academic achievement. They saw their involvement as a way to help their child academically as well as a means to build relationships with the teachers. Parents referenced this point 21 times throughout the study. When relationships between schools and parents falter, the consequences can be detrimental to all (K. L. Henry et al., 2012; Hooven et al., 2013). Parents are seeking to communicate and build a relationship with the teacher to better help their child academically. When parents participate in their children's education, such as monitoring grades, achievement scores and courses, and attending parent teacher conferences parents see an increase in their student's academic success (CDC, 2015).

***Sub-question 1.1***. Sub-Question 1.1 sought to answer: *How do parents perceive they are involved in supporting their child's academic achievement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County?*

*Theme 1: Parents' communications with the school staff is important*. Eleven parents, 69% of the parents interviewed, perceived that communication with the school staff supports their child's academic achievement by being informed of their child's behavior at school as well being aware of schools rules and regulations. Parents described communication as personal phone calls from staff informing them when their child misbehaves and the consequences for such behaviors. Participant 2 stated,

> I see him personally calling me (principal) to tell him that he needs to meet with me was one of the one of the things that pushed me to get there, because I felt OK the principal's calling now it's serious, but I was just a friendly even if he was just a phone call.

Participant 6 also concurred with, “Any time I've ever been there or ever called with a concern that there is something that might be serious or very minor. They're always they always listen they're always concerned, and they always give me answers.”

A positive relationship between home and school has long been recognized as a desirable state, which can have a significant bearing upon the students’ academic (Johnson, 2013; Wang & Eccles, 2012). The parents interviewed went into detail explaining how positive their interactions were with the principal and teachers. They were telling them not only what their child did wrong, but also what the school was going to do to help them. Eleven parents stated 16 times in the course of the study that any type of communication with the school staff was essential in supporting their child academically.

*Theme 2: Parents support their children at home*. All sixteen parents, 100% of study participants, stated that they are involved in their child’s education by giving them help at home as well as monitoring their child’s school activities. At home parent involvement consisted of helping their child academically, communication with the school and providing resources for their child. Eleven parents stated that having open communication with their child by asking questions, monitoring students’ behavior, and providing guidance was the way they were involved in their child academics. For example, Parent 5 said, “Telling her, helping her and asking her about her assignments, asking her how she feels, what she would like to change, what she would like to be doing in the future.”

All parents described how and what they do at home is how they see them being involved in their children’s academic achievement. Participant 7 mentioned that, “At

home I told him what's right and encourage him to ask for help and tell school staff when he doesn't understand something, so he can learn."

Thus, giving children the encouragement, love, support, guidance and the tools to advocate for themselves is important for the parents, parents communicated this to the researcher in 25 occasions. The importance of parenting practices that establishing a warm and supportive relationship, helps youth develop their aspirations and see meaning in their work (Hill & Wang, 2015). In the context of home, parental involvement and monitoring have been well documented as protective factors for numerous adolescent health outcomes. (Bayne, 2013; P. Garcia-Reid et al., 2015; K. L. Henry et al., 2012; Jacobs, 2014; Van Ryzin et al., 2012)

***Sub-question 1.2.*** Sub-Question 1.2 sought to answer: *What do parents perceive influences whether or not parents are involved with their child's academic achievement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County?*

*Theme 1: Positive interactions with school staff supports parent involvement.* All 16 parents, 100% of the parents interviewed, stated 85 times that having positive interactions with school staff influenced them whether or not they were going to be involved in child's academic achievement. All parents reported that when they had any type of positive interaction, they were more willing to go to meetings and attend events. One parent, Participant 13 stated,

> I haven't really been involved in the school… it just makes me so nervous because I was new to all of this. So, I am always just so nervous that I personally do not… After I come to one meeting, I felt better and not scared. Teachers were nice, they were not bad.

Participant 5 stated that when she had a negative experience she did not want to get involved or communicate with the staff regarding her child. She stated that "When I first started coming I did not like the way some teachers, how the teachers talk to the students. I did not want to talk to them" (Participant 5). But after having several positive experiences Participant 5 mention that, "I spoke with the principal, did not want to but did. He said he would talk to them and as off now everything is good. Good, we talk about my son, and I feel they listen now."

As Participant 5 stated that any negative experiences discouraged her from becoming involved at school, and that it took several meetings to feel comfortable going back. This sentiment was expressed 20 times throughout the study. Seven parents mentioned that the positive interaction of school staff listening to parents very meaningful. Participant 2 stated that the positive interaction was when staff listens to parents, "They listen... They seem very open to any conversations we have had with them. They are willing to sit down and discuss anything with you. They always seem like they make the time for us." Participant 10 stated that, "I feel like my voice is heard. I feel like my concerns are always addressed… I just think you know staff availability and the constant communication with me is to be really makes it easier… They genuinely care."

Effective parental engagement occurs when both parents and schools are committed to the partnership of the students' academic success (J. L. Epstein & Sanders, 2000). All parents stated that having any type of positive staff interactions will get them more involved in their child's academic at the school site. Continual positive

communication between parents and the school staff allows for positive interactions, thus increasing parental involvement (S. L. Christensen & Cleary, 1990; J. Epstein, 1995).

*Theme 2: School staff are welcoming to parents*. Fourteen of the 16 parents, 88% of parents interviewed, expressed that when school staff is welcoming to parents, they are more inclined to be more involved. Parents throughout the interview stated that when they go to the school all school staff in constantly welcoming and thus want to be more actively engaged. For example, Participant 8 stated that,

> very welcoming very warm. I really like that…I've always had good interactions with staff. But to be honest with this school, this experience between regular school and the learning center, it's a lot more different and I don't know if it's because it's that they care … it's a family, we are part of the school family… I would do anything they ask, like going to meetings on Sundays.

Participant 1 stated that,

> I felt particularly welcome, when I walked in and they recognized me by name and who I was parent off… the beauty of having the learning centers is that its small and everybody kind of knows each other and they… pushed me to get there.

Schools that create a welcoming school climate for parents, students succeed academically (J. L. Epstein et al., 2009). Parents reiterated throughout the interview that having a welcoming environment allowed them to feel more comfortable and attend events and meetings at the site, they felt comfortable going and address their concerns regarding their child.

***Sub-Question 1.3***. Sub-question 1.3 sought to answer: *What supports or barriers do parents perceive exist that affect parent involvement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County?*

*Theme 1: Parents are not invited to participate.* Nine parents, 56% of the parents, stated that a barrier that affects parent involvement is that the school staff do not invite them to be involved at the school. For example, Participant 9 indicated that, "My son has been there, all year… They did not invite me to any event."

While Participant 16 informed the researcher that, "I only have been invited to IEP meetings, I have not been invited to any functions."

Parents mentioned that to increase parent involvement, parents need to be invited. Parents stated that creating positive interactions would increase parent involvement and to do so parents need to be invited to school functions, activities, and events. Four out of the 16 parents have not been invited to attend any event at the school site. Four parents expressed that they only are invited to their child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) annual meeting and no other event. For example, Participant 14 stated that, I only get invited to his IEPs, I don't get invited to anything else. I only get invited to his IEPs, I don't get invited to anything else."

Eight parents get minimal or no opportunities for involvement. The participants stated that they would like to be invited to "chaperon a field trip or sports game" (Participant 10), "to meet together and talk or invitation to a meeting" (Participant 9), and "visit the classrooms and the school" (Participant 13). Participant 11 discussed, "I would like more invitations. I want to be involved in sports, every time I ask to chaperone, they say no."

The nine parents indicated that the lack of invitation or not being invited at all to participate in any school event was a barrier to get involved. If invited, it is to meetings that are mandated to comply with state mandates or federal legislation, IEPs. Research shows that parent involvement in schools is closely linked to better student behavior and higher academic achievement, when parents are invited to school events (Hill & Wang, 2015). Parents perceive that if they get an invitation, they will be more involved at the school, thus more involved in their child's academic journey.

*Theme 2: Events are scheduled during parent working hours.* Seven parents, 44% of study participants, mentioned that the time of the events made it difficult for them to attend. That the school had parent events during working hours as well as right after school making it impossible for them to attend any of them. All seven parents mentioned that the times of the events made it difficult for them to or any other family member difficulty to attend. Participant 2 mentioned that,

> Some of these activities are at 3:30 in the afternoon. I know with my job I couldn't get there. There's as I commuted … there was no physical way for me to be there. Maybe doing something's like… regular school were always at five thirty, six o'clock.

Participant 14 mentioned changing the time of school events, "Maybe alternating meeting times, some in the morning and others in the afternoon. Some of us work and with traffic we can't make the meetings directly after school."

Five parents mentioned that having meetings in the afternoon would make it feasible for them to attend. Only one parent mentioned that they would be able to attend in the morning due to their work schedule. When parents participate in their children's

education, such as attending parent teacher conferences, parent meetings or school activities there is an increase a student's academic success (CDC, 2015; Hill & Wang, 2015). Participant 1 stated: "You know everybody my family works you know it would be different or even evening around 5:00 p.m. change the time when they had events to later." Participant 9 stated along those lines: "Only that they have meeting in the afternoon when I do not have to work or by telephone" and as explained by Participant 1, "at night because my work schedule doesn't allow me to attend to the morning events that they have." Participant 2 felt that "meeting after working hours and more toward the evening because at two o'clock in the afternoon is t's hard to get, get off of work."

*Theme 3: Parents want to be involved, but are not invited.* Seven parents, 44% of the parents that took part in the study, mentioned that they would be more involved if they were invited to attend a school function. All 16 parents mentioned that they only get involved at the school when their child gets in trouble, but nine parents said that they never were invited to attend any school function. Three parents disclosed that the only time they were invited to attend the school was for their child's IEP. For example, Participant 16 said,

> I only got invited to the IEP meetings, I have not been invited to any school functions. I would like an invitation to go visit the classroom, more communication with the teacher about his academics or behavior even if he is doing well. Like a meeting how to help them with their academics at home. Invite us to come in, just an invitation.

Participant 11 mentioned that, "More invitations. I want to be more involved in sports, school…every time I ask to chaperone, they say no."

All seven parents want to be involved at the school, but they feel they are not welcomed because they are not invited. One parent stated that she invites herself,

> I am always here checking up on my daughter, I call and contact the teachers. I would like them to take the initiative and call me instead of me calling them… I would like for them to call me or them to schedule meetings instead of me calling to schedule them. (Participant 5)

The seven parents were from two of the three sites, most parents mentioned that they were not invited to events, and the parents that were invited mentioned that if they were invited it was the day of the event, or the events were at times they could not attend. The thirds site parents mentioned that the school made efforts to invite parents, but they wished they had more opportunities for involvement. Parent that are given the opportunity to be involved at the school site via volunteering at school, attending school sponsored events and the continual involvement in school related decision-making process enhances parental involvement and student academic success (S. L. Christensen & Cleary, 1990; J. Epstein, 1987b). Five parents mentioned, during the survey, that the invitations, the personal contact by staff made them want to participate in events and that it made them feel welcomed. Fourteen parents mentioned 52 times that having positive interactions with school staff made them feel good about the school, they just wished they would get invited to school functions or just visit the school.

*Theme 4: Parents want notification of events.* Seven parents, 44% of the parents, mentioned that they would like notification of events days or even weeks ahead of time. Parents stated that they were notified the day of the event making it impossible for them to ask for time off work or make the necessary changes to their daily schedule to be able

to make it to events. For example, Participant 16 stated that, "They called me, it was the same day of the event. I could not make it." Participant 2 mentioned that,

> Just sometimes the notice, we get the notice the night before… it made it a lot more difficult when the school calls the night before to have everything rescheduled for the next morning. That makes it a little difficult to try to rearrange your schedule.

Schools that provide opportunities and pathways for parents to communicate with the school and participate in school events help increase students' academic achievement (J. L. Epstein, 1995).

As one parent stated, "Getting messages ahead of time, send a reminder weeks before hand." (Participant 1). Another parent mentioned, "I want to be notified in a timely manner, "send a flier, a paper, a schedule or give us a phone call to inform us about the event." (Participant 2) Parents want to be notified days or weeks ahead of time so they can make plans.

**Central Question 2**

Central Question 2 sought to answer: *What do parents perceive are the actions necessary for the community schools in Riverside County to implement to improve parent involvement to increase high school student achievement?*

**Theme 1: Provide school sponsored events that parents can attend**. Through the course of interviews, parents stated that having school sponsored events would improve parent involvement would help increase students achieving. Fourteen parents, 88% of the parents interviewed, mentioned 36 times that having any type of event or school activity encouraged them to participate.

Parents also mentioned having positive events such as movie night, game night, back to school nigh, award ceremonies, and achievement celebrations. Parents also would like activities in which they could interact with school staff in a positive and fun environment. Participant 5 mentioned that, "Have a movie night, open house, game night, events where you can participate in a positive way… and get to know teachers in a positive way… instead of when my child gets in trouble."

Participant 16 reiterated that, "Have fun activities at the school, like family nights or game nights. Something fun for the family. Then parents aren't intimidated or scared of the school and they would want to come to parent meetings."

Eleven parents mentioned that teachers do not give them any tools to help their child at home. Ten out of the 16 parents mentioned that they would like to have parent teacher conferences, on a regular basis, to know how their child is Participant 5 mentioned that she would like, "schedule teacher conferences once a quarter to know where my child is academically, not me calling to schedule them have scheduled as part of their calendar… Like I said before, event and parent teacher conferences." Participant 15 stated that, "parent teacher conferences to know how to help my child at home… letting us know how are children are doing at school, meeting to discuss grades, how we can help them academically at home."

Parents attending school sponsored events increases the likelihood of their child succeeding academically and graduating from high school (S. L. Christensen & Cleary, 1990; J. Epstein, 1987a). Parents are seeking to attend school events as a means to help them and their children succeed not only academically but seeking help for themselves.

**Theme 2: Increase communication with parents**. Fifteen parents, 94% of the study participants, mentioned 52 times that having better communication between parents and school would increase parent involvement. Parents mentioned "having feedback on how my child is doing academically" (Participant 5), "different communication like texting" (Participant 10), "getting reminders weeks before hand" (Participant 1), "more communication between parents and teachers" (Participant 15), "more communication because my son does not tell me everything" (Participant 9). Participant 10 stated that, "I mean of course of communication. I guess just different ways to get everybody learns different to me: e-mail, texts… positive communication have more positive communication with the parents." Participant 11 mentioned that, "Get the parents involved in positive ways and by positive communication will get parents involved."

Five parents mentioned having positive communication "not just for behavior issues" (Participant 16), "he did his work today or he did awesome today" (Participant 10), "not just letting me know when he did something wrong but also the positive" (Participant 16). Academic achievements can be achieved thorough communication between school and home (J. L. Epstein et al., 2009). Increasing parent and school communication is important, parents suggested having a variety of way to communicate would allow them to be more involved.

**Theme 3: Provided school sponsored parent trainings or workshop**. Seven parents, 44% of the parents interviewed, stated that they would like to have parenting classes or workshops for parents to give them advice or guidance, how as a parent they could confront and deal with certain circumstances with their children. Participant 1 mentioned, "It would be nice to have workshop or

something where the school can give us some tips or guidance." Participants 15 disclosed, "I need strategies, once your child gets to this school, we need help, I want the help, but I feel there are no resources available. I want to come to parent meetings."

Parent stated they would like "Parent meetings where we can ask questions, and find ways to help our children" (Participant 8 8), "parent or information meetings to learn and be better parents" (Participant 15), "meetings or training for resources" (Participant 11). S. L. Christensen and Cleary (1990) stated that giving parents the opportunity for parents to attend school-sponsored events contributes to increasing parental involvement and student academic success. Attending school-sponsored events such as meetings, conferences as a mean for parents to participate in their child's education (CDC, 2015). Parents are seeking help via training and resources not only for themselves but also for their children.

***Sub-Question 2.1***. Sub-Question 2.1 sought to answer: *What actions do parents believe the county operated community schools in Riverside County can take to increase parent involvement to improve their child's academic achievement?*

*Theme 1: Invite parents to participate*. Parents consistently said, that to increase parent involvement parents need to be invited. Thirteen parents, 81% of the parents interviewed, stated that creating positive interactions would increase parent involvement and to do so parents need to be invited to school functions, activities, and events. Four, of the 16 parents, or 25%, have not been invited to attend any event at the school site. Participant 9 stated that, "my son had been there, like nine months, ten months... They did not invite me to any event." Parent number 5 discussed, "Some parents want to

participate and don't know how. The school does not make it easy to get involved… all they need to do is invite."

Parent 16 talked about, "Invite us to come in, just an invitation. I want to be invited, may be chaperon a field trip or a sports game." Whereas Participant 8 stated,

> Having volunteer opportunities, helping the teacher with the kids or you knows in the classrooms. Having the opportunity to volunteering as a chaperones as well as for the games, maybe you are having some sort of I don't know if you guys have fundraisers but something within that area.

Parents that are given the opportunity to be involved at the school site through volunteering opportunities, attending school sponsored events and the continual involvement in school related decision-making process enhances parental involvement and student academic success (Christensen & Cleary, 1990; J. Epstein, 2015). Parents were looking for the school and school staff to invite them to go the school site. Four parents mentioned that they wanted invitations interact more with the staff and to come to be invited to have more interactions amongst each other to not only get to know staff but also their child's friends and families. Five parents mentioned that they would like to be invited to visit the classroom and get to know how the school functions or to volunteer and help.

*Theme 2: Schedule more events at time when parents can attend*. Parents mentioned that to increase parental involvement the school site should have more scheduled events, activities or meetings. Parents mentioned that the schools have community breakfasts, award ceremonies, back to school night, orientations, and IEPs. Fourteen parents mentioned that they would like regular schedule events for them to

attend. Fourteen parents, 88% of the study participants, mentioned that they would like a back to school night or bimonthly or quarterly scheduled parent teacher conferences, trainings, resources, family events, and parent meetings. Participant 2 mentioned that "I would like an event where we get to know staff and just acquaint yourself with the campus and knowing where everything is and how it works."

Parent number 6 talked about,

> I would like to be invited to events where students receive awards. I think awards are wonderful. They are positive and they can be done monthly or every two months. An event where we can celebrate the students would get parents involved.

Parent number 11 stated that, "I would like more meetings that talk to the parents on how they could talk to their kids, how to have eye on children, what kids doing, what to look out for, different involvement opportunist at the school."

Fourteen parents suggested having different types of events for them to be involved. Six parents mentioned having events in which children and parents have fun positive experiences at the school to change parent perceptions of the school. As Participant 9 stated "I thought that this school was exclusive for adults and for children who behave behavior issues or behave badly. I thought there was no academics…but then I found out it was not like that, I like the school." Parental awareness of how schools function and are actively involved helps to promote higher student academic performance (Loucks, 1992).

***Sub-Question 2.2.*** Sub-Question 2.2 sought to answer: *What actions do parents believe need to be implemented as a priority to increase parent involvement to improve their child's academic achievement?*

*Theme 1: Increase communication with parents*. Fifteen parents, 94% of the interviewees, mentioned that to increase parent involvement communication is a priority. Communication included sending reminders home, phone conversations, invitation to school events or activates, or just letting parents know how their child is doing academically and how they can help at home. Participant 13 suggested,

> live communication, communication that's quick, because we're on the go all the time and work is like you can't just sit there and talk on the phone…letting parents know when there is an event, for example letting parents know when they have their games so parents can go cheer them on. Communication is key. If the school does not tell you, we don't know what's going on or how to get involved, if they want us involved.

Other parents mentioned that they want the school to communicate with them "what's going on at the school" (Participant 16), "what is going on with their child (Participant 1)," "did my child go to school" (Participant 12), "a phone call to invite parents" (Participant 10), "just a call to tell me how my child was doing" (Participant 9). Participant 1 stated that, "Getting messages, send a reminder weeks before hand. Not getting a phone all about an event the day of the event, communicating with parents on a timely manner." Fifteen parents mentioned that the communication is a priority 29 times threw the course of the study. Having various forms of communication to keep parents informed was a priority to the parents as a means of parental involvement. Schools that

provide opportunities and pathways for parents to communicate with the school helps increase students' academic achievement (J. L. Epstein, 1995).

*Theme 2: Inform parents of scheduled events or activities*. Four parents, 25% of people interviewed, mentioned that having regular events or activities were a priority. Parents mentioned that events to celebrate student achievement, to get to know staff and student, parent student night would be beneficial. Participant 16 discussed,

> Invite the parents to events, not just to meetings when they miss behave. Do something fun for parents and teacher to get to know each other, like a game night. A game night where parents and their children can have fun and get to know school staff…A priority are fun activities at the school, like family nights or game nights. Something fun for the family. Then parents are not intimidated or scared of the school and they would want to come to parent meetings. In my experience the expulsion process was difficult, and I was upset at the education system, something in which parents don't feel bad about their kids being their but more of the good things, like a fresh start. Do different things that the other school did not do for our kids.

Participant 8 also mentioned,

> The events were very numbered. So maybe a little bit more of event more interactions with the school. I don't know, some sort of events that you know you guys can held out there academically with the kids you guys do a great job… Events like back to school night, movie night… like opportunity positive opportunities… Meetings and other events to get them a little bit more engaged.

Parents informed that events in which parents and their children can interact in a positive way at the school site are a priority to the parents. They believe it will increase parental involvement and increase their child's academic performance. Parents and teachers need to be effectively involved in the students' educational experience through a variety of ways for the student to be academically successful (Vongprateep, 2015).

## Unexpected Finding

Nearly half of the parents' interviewed informed the researcher that their child had an IEP. This was unexpected finding that arose from the interviews, 44% of the parents surveyed had children with IEPs. During the interviews, parents mentioned attending IEP and transitional IEP meetings at the county community school. They also described the frustrations they had regarding communication about the special education services their child receives.

## Summary

Chapter IV presented the results and findings of this study from the one-to-one interviews conducted. The data were analyzed to provide answers to the research questions. This collection of data and subsequent analysis developed a base of information regarding parental perceptions on what their involvement has been and what changes county community schools can do to increase parent involvement. Table 10 presents a summary of the research questions and findings and the level of agreement associated with the research questions.

Table 10

*Summary of Research Questions, Findings, and Percentage of Agreement*

| Research Question | Themes | Percent of Agreement |
|---|---|---|
| How do parents perceive their involvement affects the academic achievement of their high school student within the community schools in Riverside County? | Communication at home | 94% |
| | Meetings with teachers | 56.% |
| 1.1. How do parents perceive they are involved in supporting their child's academic achievement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County? | Parent Communication with school | 69% |
| | Helping student at home | 100.00% |
| 1.2. What do parents perceive influence whether or not parents are involved with their child's academic achievement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County? | Positive Interactions with staff | 100.00% |
| | If school staff are welcoming to parents | 88% |
| 1.3. What supports or barriers do parents perceive exist that affect parent involvement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County? | Invitation from school staff | 56% |
| | Time of events and notifications | 44% |
| | opportunities for involvement | 44% |
| | Timely Manner of Notification of Events | 44% |
| What do parents perceive are the actions necessary for the community schools in Riverside County to implement to improve parent involvement to increase high school student achievement? | Communication | 81% |
| | Positive Interactions | 94% |
| | School Sponsored Parent Trainings or Workshops | 38% |
| 2.1. What actions do parents believe the county operated community schools in Riverside County can take to increase parent involvement to improve their child's academic achievement? | Positive Communication | 81% |
| | Having scheduled Parent/teacher conferences | 63% |
| 2.2 What actions do parents believe need to be implemented as a priority to increase parent involvement to improve their child's academic achievement? | Communication | 81% |
| | Scheduled event or activities | 88% |

## Major Themes

Throughout the study, several themes that were identified overlapped or were repeated. The following consolidated list of major findings emerged from the analysis of the data.

**Parents want to be involved with the Community School their Child Attends**

Parents mentioned that they want to be involved, but the schools did not offer opportunities for their involvement. Parents see the lack of involvement opportunities as a barrier. As a suggestion to increase parental involvement at the school sites parents recommended for the school sites to create opportunities for parents to get involved, such as invitation to events or activities, volunteer opportunities, parent meeting, et.

**Parents view Communication as an Important Factor to Increasing their Involvement**

Parents expressed that they liked having staff personally contacting them and having meeting, but they would like more communication. Parents mentioned that they would like teachers and staffs to communicate with them about their child's academics, behavior, keep them informed about what is occurring at the school site and the classroom. Some parents mentioned they wanted daily and immediate communication via text, phone calls, e-mails, etc.

**Parents are Supporting their Children at Home**

Parent mentioned that they are involved in their child's education by being proactive at home. Parents involvement includes assisting with homework, as well as asking how their day was, and giving them advice and suggestions. A barrier for them has been getting advice or suggestion from teacher on how they can help their child academically at home.

**Parents want to Participate in a Wide Range of School Activities**

Parents mentioned that they wanted the school to not only sponsor parent meeting, but also training, activities, and events. They see the lack of school-sponsored

events as a barrier for them to be involved at the school site as well as a recommendation. Parents expressed that they need training and resources, but they would also like the schools to have events in which they can interact with their child and staff in a positive way.

**Staff is Welcoming when the Parents are on Campus**

Parents mentioned that every time they go to the schools sites the staff is always welcoming, even when they have to deal with their child's negative behavior. Parents feel welcomed by the school security, front office staff, administration, and teachers. Throughout the interview, parents mentioned that even though they are not invited to events or activities at the school they do feel welcomed and that staff is there for them.

**School Events and Activities are Schedule at times when Parents cannot Attend**

Parents mentioned that they want to get involved but the time of the events are a barrier for them to attend. They suggested that to increase their involvement the school could schedule events when parents were out of work. Having different times for meeting, activities or events that are feasible for parents was a recommendation as a means for them to increase their involvement.

**Notifications of Activities and Events are Late or not provided**

Parents mentioned that a barrier for them to be more actively involved was when event or activity notices were given. Parents shared that they were never notified, and if they were, it was the same day or the day before. Parents recommended having notices of events sent weeks ahead of time so they can make changes to their schedule and get time off if needed.

**Parent's want Parent Education and Training Opportunities to Increase their Effectives as Parents**

Parents mentioned that they would like to have more parent training opportunities as a means to be involved not only academically in their child's education, but also at the school site. They see the lack of parent training as a barrier for involvement, but they recommend that school have schedule parent trainings.

**For some Parents, Involvement with the Community School Evokes an Emotional Response**

Parents describe that having a child at the community school has been a negative experience and process and has evoked anger, frustration and helplessness. At the same time, they suggested if they have opportunities for involvement to get to know about the school and their staff. Some parents have mentioned that having their child attend a community school is the best thing that has happened for their child.

Chapter V presents a summary of the major findings from the analysis in Chapter IV, conclusions resulting from the findings, implications for action, recommendations for further research and concluding remarks and reflections from the researcher.

# CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Summary

In the mid-1950s and early 1960s, alternative education initiatives developed that provided alternatives for failing student who were enrolled in public education (Hodgman, 2016; Quinn et al., 2006). In today's school systems, alternative education programs provide regular academic instruction, counseling, behavior services, job readiness and social-emotional and life skills (Gregg & Appalachia Educational Lab, 1998; K. L. Henry, 2007; K. L. Henry et al., 2012; Hodgman, 2016; C. M. Lange et al., 2002; Quinn et al., 2006). The USDOE (2002) defines alternative education as services for students who are at risk of failing, are experiencing academic problems, have high absenteeism, show disruptive classroom behavior, or any related factors connected with temporary or permanent expulsions from a traditional school. Parent involvement can be beneficial to student academic success in an alternative school setting (Bayne, 2013). It impacts students' academic achievement both directly and indirectly (Burke, 2013).

Chapter I, introduced the preliminary literature for this study. Chapter II, contained a review of literature that pertains to the purpose of this study. Chapter III, presented the procedural components and the methodology used to conduct the research in this study. Chapter IV, presented the themes and major findings from the data that were collected during one-to-one, semi structured interviews and data analysis.

Chapter V analyzes and summarizes the data related to parental involvement and perceptions or parent involvement in a county community school. Additionally, in this chapter, the purpose of the study is restated along with the research questions, research methodology, and data collection methods utilized. The population and sample are

outlined, followed by the presentation of the themes and data analysis. The major findings for each research question are summarized. The major findings are followed by the conclusions, implications for action, and recommendations for further research. Lastly, the chapter concludes with remarks and reflections.

## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to understand and explain how parent engagement affects student achievement, as perceived by parents of high school students enrolled within county operated community schools in Riverside County, California. An additional purpose of the study was to identify actions that parents believe are necessary to increase parent engagement within county operated community schools in Riverside County.

## Research Questions

This study was guided by two central questions. Each central question was divided into sub-questions.

### Central Question 1

Central Question 1 sought to answer: How do parents perceive their involvement affects the academic achievement of their high school student within the community schools in Riverside County?

**Sub-Question 1**. There were three sub-questions designed to answer Central Question 1:

1.1. How do parents perceive they are involved in supporting their child's academic achievement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County?

1.2. What do parents perceive influences whether or not parents are involved with their child's academic achievement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County?

1.3. What supports or barriers do parents perceive exist that affect parent involvement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County?

**Central Question 2**

Central Question 2 sought to answer: *What do parents perceive are the actions necessary for the community schools in Riverside County to implement to improve parent involvement to increase high school student achievement?*

**Sub-Question 2**. There were two sub-questions designed to answer Central Question 2:

2.1. What actions do parents believe the county operated community schools in Riverside County can take to increase parent involvement to improve their child's academic achievement?

2.2 What actions do parents believe need to be implemented as a priority to increase parent involvement to improve their child's academic achievement?

## Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

The research method used for this study was a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is a systematic approach to understanding qualities, or the essential nature, of a phenomenon within a particular context (Odom et al., 2005). It captures and describes the perceptions and experiences of parent involvement; how it is perceived, explained, felt, and judged. (M. Q. Patton, 2015b; Vagle, 2014; Van Manen, 2014). A qualitative

phenomenological methodology was selected to describe and obtain meaning by lived experiences, thus providing rich meaningful answers to the research questions. For the purpose of this qualitative study, the phases of data collection and analysis that are shown in in Chapter III were implemented.

The instrumentation chosen was a semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews are widely used type of measure for collecting data for qualitative research (Patten, 2012). The semi-structured questions were fairly specific that allowed for individual, open-ended responses (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

The thematic dissertation team created the semi-structured interview questions after a review of literature was conducted. Before the data collection process could begin, the researcher submitted an application to conduct the study to the BUIRB. Upon approval, the semi-structured interview questions were field tested with parents who had children attending a county community school not involved in the study. The research questions were field tested to ensure reliability and validity. Parents were asked to review the interview questions to determine: (a) whether the questions were clear, (b) if they believed a parent could understand the questions, (c) what answer they would give to each question, (d) if they had suggestions for improving any of questions, and (e) whether they could provide any additional feedback regarding the instrument. The feedback from the field-test participants was reviewed by the researcher.

Interviews were scheduled with parents based on their consent at the location of their choice and on the date of their choice. A one-month time frame was allotted for data collection, which needed to be extended to seven months. Interviews were conducted in person during May and November 2018, this was due to lack of parent's

availability. The interviews were done in a consistent manner. The researcher asked each participant the interview questions in the same order. During the interview process, the researcher asked probing question to participants, for them to elaborate and go into further detail on some questions for which they had additional information to share or did not know how to answer.

Each interview was audio recorded upon participant signing a consent form, in order to transcribe their responses upon completion. The participants sat directly in front of the researcher to make eye contact. A total of eight interview questions and five demographic questions were asked of each participant. After each interview, the researcher thanked the participant for participation in the study, asked if they had anything else to add to the study and reiterated that all data would be kept confidential and anonymous.

After each interview, the researcher transcribed the data word for word using Microsoft Word, and uploaded the interview into NVivo, a computer-based data collection tool. Upon the identification of common themes, the researcher coded in NVIVO themes and exemplary quotes from each interview. To ensure coder reliability and accuracy, another member of the thematic dissertation team coded 15% of the data.

## Population

A population is defined by Roberts (2010) as a description of the individual who participated in the study. In the State of California, according to EdData Partnership (2017), there are 6,405,496 students enrolled in public schools statewide. The state collects data for six types of schools broadly identified as alternative schools, including Alternative, Community Day, Continuation, County Community, Juvenile Court, and

Opportunity. The total number of alternative schools 2016-17 school year was 1,035. This represents 10% of the total number of schools in California. County offices of education serve many students in various county-run programs. In the 2017-2018 academic year, there was a total of 34,451 students enrolled in county schools (Ed Data Partnership, 2017). Appendix R lists the total enrollment in each county office of Education in California. Unfortunately, the state of California does not specifically track student enrollments in county community school.

The county community schools educate a unique population within the alternative education system, serving students who are not enrolled in school or not academically successful at the local school district level (CDE, 2017e). Students attending county community schools are often high-risk students, who are expelled, are adjudicated, and/or are placed in the county community schools by the county probation departments (CDE, 2017a, 2017c, 2017e). In the state of California 2016-2017, according to the EdData Partnership (2017), there are 78 county community day schools in the 58 California County Offices of Education, which operate and run county community school (CDE, 2017f: Sackheim, 2017). There were a total of 10,991 students enrolled in county community schools in the state of California in the 2016-17 academic year. The number of students who attended county community schools represented 5.89% of the students enrolled in alternative education in the state of California.

The target population represents a version of the larger population (McMillian & Schumacher, 2009). Three county community schools in Riverside County was chosen as the target population of this study; Arlington Regional Learning Center, Betty Gibbel Regional Learning Center and Val Verde Regional Learning Center. RCOE services 316

students in county community schools throughout the county at 13 different sites. The target population was selected from the 11 county community schools. These 11 community school sites provide a comprehensive instructional program for district and probation referred students (RCOE, 2016a). The three sites selected for the purpose of this study, made up 67%, 212, of the entire Riverside County Community School student population. The three sites that were selected were Arlington Regional Learning Center, Betty Gibbel Regional Learning Center, and Val Verde Regional Learning Center.

## Sample

The sample was selected from the target population, parents whose child attended county community school sites for a semester or longer. For this study, the term parents also include guardians, or caregivers who have legal custody of the students. This can include, but is not limited to, grandparents, foster parents, stepparents, and other court appointed guardians. One parent or guardians per child from the target population were asked to volunteer to participate in the interview process. The sample for this study was 16 parents from three school sites. This comprises an adequate number of subjects that can yield results sufficient to explain the phenomena under investigation (M. Q. Patton, 2015a).

## Major Findings

The analysis of the interviews was conducted using NVivo to code participant responses. During that process, the researcher identified 16 themes that emerged from the data. To be considered a theme for this study 40% of the parent participants gave similar response during the interviews. The themes that were identified from the

interview data are organized by two central questions and five sub-research questions (see Table 11).

Table 11

*Research Themes*

| Research question | Themes |
|---|---|
| How do parents perceive their involvement affects the academic achievement of their high school student within the community schools in Riverside County? | Communication at Home Between Students and Parents<br>Parents and Teachers Met to Discuss Student Behavior |
| 1.1. How do parents perceive they are involved in supporting their child's academic achievement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County? | Parents' Communications with the School Staff is Important<br>Parents Support Their Children at Home |
| 1.2. What do parents perceive influence whether or not parents are involved with their child's academic achievement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County? | Positive interactions with School Staff Supports Parent Involvement.<br>School Staff Are Welcoming to Parents |
| 1.3. What supports or barriers do parents perceive exist that affect parent involvement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County? | Not Being Invited to Participate at School<br>Events Are Scheduled During Parent Working Hours<br>Parents Want to be Involved, but are not Invited<br>Parents Want Notification of Events |
| What do parents perceive are the actions necessary for the community schools in Riverside County to implement to improve parent involvement to increase high school student achievement? | Provide School Sponsored Events That Parents Can Attend<br>Increase Communication with Parents<br>Provide School Sponsored Parent Trainings or Workshops |
| 2.1. What actions do parents believe the county operated community schools in Riverside County can take to increase parent involvement to improve their child's academic achievement? | Invite Parents to Participate<br>Schedule More Events at Times When Parents Can Attend |
| 2.2 What actions do parents believe need to be implemented as a priority to increase parent involvement to improve their child's academic achievement? | Increase Communication with Parents<br>Inform Parents of Scheduled Events or Activities |

**Finding 1: Parents want to Be Involved with the County Community School their Child Attends**

A major finding is that parents want to be involved with the county community school their child attends. Parents mentioned that they want to be involved at the school site, but the schools do not offer opportunities for their involvement. Parents see the lack of school involvement opportunities as a barrier. Christensen and Cleary (1990) stated that giving parents the opportunity to attend school-sponsored events contributes to increasing parental involvement and student academic success. Parents identified that not having opportunities for involvement was a barrier for them to be actively engaged/involved at each school site. Parents suggested that to increase parental involvement, county community school sites can create opportunities for parents to get involved, such as invitation to events or activities, volunteer opportunities, parent meeting, et.

**Finding 2: Communication is an Important Factor to Increase Parental Involvement**

Parents perceive communication as an important factor to increase their involvement in their child's academic journey. Academic achievements can be achieved thorough communication between school and home (J. L. Epstein et al., 2009). Parents expressed that they liked having staff personally contacting them and having meetings with them, but they would like more communication. Parents expressed that they would like teachers and school staff to communicate with them about their child's academics, student classroom behavior, and letting them know what is happening at the school site and the classroom. Parents want to feel connected and know what is occurring at the

school site as well as know how their child is performing academically, socially, or if there are any issues hindering their child's academic performance.

Some parents disclosed that they wanted daily and immediate communication via text, phone calls, e-mails, etc. Parents wanted the county community schools to use various means of communication. Two parents expressed using real time communication in which they can know how their child is doing period-by-period. Seven parents explained that their work schedule sometimes does not allow them to take calls and having other ways of school can communicate would be a better option. The current minimal forms of communication were seen as a barrier.

**Finding 3: Parents Support their Children at Home**

Parents shared that they are supporting their children at home in various ways. The most effective forms of parent involvement are those parents who engage in working directly with their youth at home (Cotton & Wikelund, 2001). Parents mentioned that they are involved in their child's education by being proactive at home. Parent involvement includes assisting with homework, as well as asking how their day was, being encouraging, giving them advice and suggestions. Parents disclosed that they would like feedback from school staff on how they can better assist their child at home. Parents perceive that the lack of advice or suggestions from teachers on how they can help their child academically at home is a barrier in supporting their children.

**Finding 4: Parents want to Participate in School Activities**

Parents disclosed that they want to participate in a wide range of school-sponsored activities. Collaboration between parents and schools is an important factor to help increase student achievement (J. L. Epstein, 1995). Parents stated that they wanted

the schools to sponsor parent meeting, training, activities, and school events. Parents expressed that they need training and resources for themselves and their child. They see the lack of school-sponsored events as a barrier for them to be involved at the school site. Research states that when relationships between schools and parents falter, the consequences can be detrimental to all (K. L. Henry et al., 2012; Hooven et al., 2013). Parents view the lack of opportunity to be involved is detrimental and as a recommendation for parents to be actively involved parents recommend having more scheduled school activities or events.

Most parents stated that celebrating students' success was essential. Parents said that they would like the schools to have events in which they can interact with their child and staff in a positive way. Parents also said that they would like events in which they could celebrate children's success, such as having awards for academic achievement or winning sport games.

**Finding 5: County Community School Staff is Welcoming to Parents**

Various parent participants stated that staff is welcoming when the parents are on campus. Positive relationships between home and school have long been recognized as a desirable state, which can have a significant bearing upon the success of students both academically and socially (Hill & Wang, 2015; Wang & Eccles, 2012). Parents mentioned several times that every time they set foot at the school campus the staff is always welcoming, even when they have to deal with their child's negative behavior. Parents shared that they feel welcomed by the school security, front office staff, administration, and teachers.

Throughout the interview, parents shared that even though they are not invited to events or activities at the school, they do feel welcomed and that staff is there for them when the parent is on campus. Research states that parents and teachers need to be actively involved in the students' educational experience through a variety of ways for the student to be academically successful (Vongprateep, 2015). Parents feeling welcomed is perceived as a way for parents to be engaged and actively involved in school sponsored events and trainings.

**Finding 6: Schedule Activities Times that parents can Attend**

School events at the county community schools and activities are schedule at times when parents typically cannot attend. Parents mentioned that they want to get involved, but the few times events were held, the scheduled time of the event was a barrier for them to attend. They suggested that to increase their involvement the school could schedule events when parents were out of work. Parents suggested having different times for meeting, activities, or events that are feasible for parents was a recommendation as a means for them to increase their involvement. Ideas shared were to have events both in the morning or late afternoon. It was difficult for them to attend a county community school event directly after school.

**Finding 7: Parental Notifications of Events need to be done in a Timely Manner**

Academic achievements can be achieved thorough timely communication between school and home (J. L. Epstein et al., 2009). Notifications of activities and events at the school sites were late or not provided. Schools that provide opportunities and pathways for parents to communicate with the school helps increase students' academic achievement (J. L. Epstein, 1995). Parents disclosed that a barrier for them to

be more actively involved was the time the notification of events or activity notices were given. Parents shared that they were never notified, and if they were, it was the same day or the day before and event. Parents recommended having notices of events sent weeks ahead of time or have a scheduled calendar of events so they can make changes to their schedule and get time off work if needed.

**Finding 8: Parents want Parent Education and Trainings**

Parents disclosed that they want parent education and training opportunities to increase their effectives as parents. Parents mentioned that they would like to have more parent training opportunities as a means to be involved not only academically in their child's education, but also at the school site. They see the lack of parent training as a barrier for involvement, but they recommend that school have schedule parent trainings. Parents attending school sponsored events increases the likely hood of their child succeeding academically and graduating from high school and (Christensen & Cleary, 1990; J. Epstein, 2015).

Parents who are supported at school are more likely to take an active role in their child's education (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2014). Parents are seeking to attend school events as a means to help them and their children succeed not only academically, but also seeking help for themselves. Some parents disclosed that they need help with the challenges their child has behaviorally and academically. Parents expressed that their child is difficult and need resources, support and trainings to be better parent their child.

**Finding 9: Interviews Evoked Emotional Responses from Parents**

For some parents, discussing their involvement with the county community school evoked an emotional response. During the interview some parents showed an

emotional response by crying out of frustration or happiness. Parents describe that having a child at the county community school has been a negative experience and process. The parents disclosed that having their child in a county community school evoked anger, frustration and helplessness. At the same time, they suggested if they have opportunities for involvement they would get to know about the school and their staff. Some parents mentioned that once parents got the opportunity to meet the school staff, know how the school functions, and the school's expectations, they tended to lose the fear they have regarding the school. Parental awareness of how schools function and are actively involved helps to promote higher student academic performance (Loucks, 1992).

The majority of the parents got emotional when they mentioned that having their child attend a community school is the best thing that has happened for their child. They mentioned at the county community school was were their child was successful academically for the first time and if it was up to then they would like their child to stay at the school. Particularly at one site, parents were emotional regarding the interaction they and their children had with the school staff and teachers. They disclosed that the site staff knew the child and they were a family, and they felt honored as a parent to be included as a school family member.

The researcher recognized that several themes that were identified overlapped or were repeated. After combining and consolidating the key concepts from the themes, nine major findings emerged (see Table 12).

Table 12

*Major Findings*

| Finding Number | Findings |
|---|---|
| 1 | Parents want to be involved with the county community school their child attends |
| 2 | Communication is an important factor to increase parental involvement |
| 3 | Parents support their children at home |
| 4 | Parents want to participate in school activities |
| 6 | Schedule activities times that parents can attend |
| 7 | Parental notifications of events need to be done in a timely manner |
| 8 | Parents want parent education and trainings |
| 9 | Interviews evoked emotional responses from parents |

## Unexpected Finding

An unexpected finding that arose from the interviews was that 44% of the parents surveyed mentioned that their child had and IEP. After the interviews were transcribed and coded, this finding emerged as a noticeable trend. During the interviews, parents mentioned attending transitional IEP meetings and frustrations they had regarding communication about the special education services their child receives. Nearly half of the parents' involvement with the community school is related to their children's special needs, and the related decision-making that occurs during the IEP process.

## Conclusions

The focus of this study was to describe parental perspectives as they relate to their involvement and their child's academic success. A variety of perceptions were expressed by the 16 participants in the study, which resulted in findings relevant parent engagement

in county community schools. The following conclusions can be made regarding the findings of this study:

- Parent involvement with the county community schools is diminished when the schools do not provide scheduled events or activities in which they can participate. Engagement (2019) states that for over 30 years, research continues to show that increased student achievement is correlated to active parent involvement. The school sites do not have programmed scheduled events or activities, in which, parents can attend. Parents want to be involved in their child's school, but the school does not provide them with enough opportunities to be involved. Parents are seeking invitations or opportunities to volunteer, help, or just attend meetings or events.
- Communication between school and parents is essential for improving the students' academic achievement. J. Epstein (2015), and Christensen and Cleary (1990) state that continual positive communication between parents and the school allows for positive interactions, thus increasing parental involvement. Parents want to know how their child is doing at school and want teachers and staff to communicate to them the bad and the good. Parents suggested that the schools have various forms of communication such as text messages, e-mails, and access to a portal to access missing assignments and student's grades. Parents want daily or immediate notification regarding their child's behavior, grades, and incomplete assignments.
- Parents are actively involved in their academics. They perceive their involvement occurs when they ask their children about homework, how the

student's day was, and give encouragement, they view themselves as being involved in their child' education. Gaustad (1992), states that students' academic achievement is greatly influenced by parent involvement. Parents see themselves involved by knowing what happened at school that day and providing assistance when the see their child needs it. Parents have historically lacked involvement in their child's education after being enrolled in county community schools. Likewise, the county community schools have not systematically involved parents in the educational process.

- Thirteen parents mentioned 53 times, that they want to participate with the school, but the school sites do not offer them meaningful resources or opportunities for involvement. Parents are seeking parent meetings, training, activities, and school events. They want positive events or activities in which their children are recognized and get to know school staff. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2012) stated that parent involvement requires general invitations, demands, and opportunities for involvement. If the schools offered parenting courses, training, and resources on how to support their children, the parents will be better equipped to support their children's learning process.
- Parents are seeking resources to assist them with their child's education and success. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2012) stated that the parental sense of efficacy for helping their children succeed needs to be addressed. Parents are looking for support and guidance on how to work with their child. Parents expressed that they do not know how to help their child once they arrived at the county community school.

- When parents have the occasion to visit the county community school campuses, the staff is positive and welcoming, which encourages their involvement. Parents feel welcomed at the various school sites, this was mentioned 20 times by 14 parents. Parents felt that all staff is welcoming and wants to them on campus. Parents mentioned that as soon as they walked into the school they are greeted by name and it makes them feel good and wanting to be more actively engaged. M. Kelly (2019) stated that a strong parent involvement bond with the school is central and to promoting a healthy, intellectual, social-emotionally prepared students. The bond starts with having positive, safe and welcoming environment. The positive parent perception of feeling welcomed can be used to foster and encourage parent to be actively involved.
- Parents perceived that school activities and events are not held at times parents can attend, that the school does not value their involvement. Nine parents mentioned that they are not invited to participate and seven parents mentioned that events and meeting are held times they are not available. Meetings and activities are scheduled during parent working hours, and are held at times that would allow parents to attend if their work hours end later than the school or they have to drop off other children at other schools.
- When the county community schools give parents late notice of school events, parents are less likely to attend the events, and perceive the school is not welcoming. Parents disclosed that meeting notifications are given a day, or the same day of the event and they cannot attend. A late notification does

not allow parents to change schedules to accommodate for the time of the meetings. If parents were notified various times prior to meetings, they could make arrangements to attend any school function.

- Despite the problems parents perceive limits their involvement with the county community schools, they generally appreciate the educational opportunities and support their children are receiving at school. All 16 parents mentioned, 85 times, that they had positive interactions with the school staff. Parents for the most part like what the county community school has to offer. Several parents expressed that they felt that the placement was where their child was successful academically. Parents expressed that the staff is caring and committed to helping their child be successful, that they were part of a "family." Parents stated that it was the best thing that happened to their child and if they could, they would love to have their child stay and graduate from the county community school.
- A disproportion number of students in alternative education are classified as special education, 44% of the parents surveyed stated they had students with IEPs. According to Lehr (2003) a significant number of youth with disabilities are attending alternative education programs, which can provide a unique opportunity for the community school staff to effectively communicate, inform, and constructively involve the parents in the decision making process. With nearly half of the parents interviewed, it is apparent that the IEP process is central to the parents' involvement with the community schools. Their frustrations with the process negatively affect their attitudes

and involvement at the community school. The IEP process offers an opportunity for the community schools to positively engage and involve parents.

## Implications for Action

The following are implications for action to encourage parental involvement at county community schools. Riverside County Community Schools need to commit to increasing parental involvement by providing parents opportunities for involvement, increase communication and have a calendar of events. The following are recommendations for action:

### Recommendation for Action 1: Hold Regularly Scheduled Parent Meetings and Events to Involve Parents

County community schools need to establish regular parent meeting and training for parents. It is also necessary for the leadership and staff to conduct positive events in which students are recognized and their success celebrated and have family events in which parents can interact positively with their children and school staff. Events can include game night, movie night, etc. Events can be scheduled monthly or quarterly.

### Recommendation for Action 2: Implement a Formal System of Communication with Parents

Adopt a formal system of communication with parents that needs to be implemented at all county community school sites. Parents need to be informed of school events, children's academic success on a regular basis. Despite the problems parents perceive limits their involvement with the county community schools, they generally appreciate the educational opportunities and support their children are receiving

at school. A system must include parent's receiving school communication on a weekly, monthly, or quarterly basis, using a calendar, providing updates on a website, and a creating a dedicated parent-teacher portal.

**Recommendation for Action 3: Implement a Communication Model**

County community school need to implement a communication model that incorporates the following components: daily communication (e.g., texts, emails, call home, and attendance calls); weekly communication (e.g., a weekly progress check, highlights on what occurred at school or in the classroom, upcoming event); monthly communication (e.g., monthly school highlight, student success stories, newsletter, upcoming events); and quarterly communication (e.g., report cards, parent teacher meetings, upcoming events). Cole (2018) states that a process of communication is essential in supporting the parents who have questions related to school policies, grades, and the curriculum. When positive communication is established with parents, it fosters collaboration to build a trusting relationship.

**Recommendation for Action 4: Involve Parents as Stakeholders**

County community schools must involve parents as stakeholders in designing parental involvement opportunities so that they have ownership and input as to how the schools can effectively communicate/collaborate with them. The parental involvement strategies by Epstien (2009) can provide as framework:

a. Parenting - helping all families, understand child and adolescent development and establishing home environments that support students.
    - Communicating - designing and conducting effective forms of two-way communication about school programs and children's progress.

- Volunteering - recruiting and organizing help at school, home, or other locations to support the school and students' activities.

b. Involvement in learning activities at home-providing information and ideas to families about how to help students with homework and curriculum-related activities.

c. Involvement in decision making-having parents from all backgrounds serve as representatives and leaders on school committees and, with their leadership, obtaining input from all parents on school decisions.

**Recommendation for Action 5: Conduct Informal Parent Surveys**

Community schools need to conduct informal parent surveys on best time to schedule parent meetings and events at times when parents can attend. Parents mentioned that the time of meeting and event was not feasible for them to attend. Parent meeting and activities can be scheduled during the day as well as in the late evening. Scheduling events at different times gives parents the opportunities to attend depending on their work schedule.

**Recommendation for Action 6: Hold Regular Parent/Teacher Meetings**

Schedule regular parent teacher meetings to discuss students' academic progress as well as give parents strategies on how they can help at home. Meetings should be scheduled quarterly and provide parents with a quarterly report card, at this point teachers can give parents ideas, suggestions or material to assist their child at home. School administrators should create a yearly calendar in which these meeting should take place. If parents or students need more assistance regular student success team meetings can be scheduled bi-weekly or monthly, depending of the needs of the student.

**Recommendation for Action 7: Provide Parenting Classes**

Schools should provide trainings for parents on parenting skills to address the needs of their family. Parents are seeking assistance to help their child not only academically but also with family dynamics. RCOE can conduct parental survey to focus on parental needs for each county community school. Once parents express their needs RCOE contract specific services providers to provide on-site parental trainings, which address the need of every specific school site. RCOE administration can create a memorandum of understanding with the service providers. Service providers can be Riverside County Mental Health Services, law enforcement departments, behavioral health, and other agencies depending on parental needs.

**Recommendation for Action 8: Contract with Mental Health Services**

RCOE can contract with mental health services and provide parents the opportunity to meet and have parent and family therapy groups on campus on a regular basis, bi weekly or monthly. Parents are seeking to understand and help their child and providing services by a professional service provider allows them to meet the needs of their family.

**Recommendation for Action 9: Improve IEP Meetings by Encouraging Parent Input**

Improve the parent experience during IEP meetings by ensuring that parents know they are an important contributing partner in their child's education by offering opportunities for involvement at the school site that are individualized to their child.

**Recommendation for Action 10: Positive Recognition for Students and Parents**

Implement a reward system for students and parents in which the school provides positive opportunities for them to be recognized. A monthly award ceremony in which

students are recognized for their academic achievement, sports, behavior, or other accomplishments can be scheduled. This would be an opportunity to celebrate student success. At that time parents can also be recognized for their parental involvement or assistance to the school, thus encouraging other parents to take an active role at the school site.

**Recommendation for Action 11: Effective Parent Communication Teacher Training**

Train teachers on effective parent communication strategies that can be implemented as part of their daily routine. Districts must provide teachers with dedicated time in their schedule to communicate with parents effectively.

## Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings from this research study, it is recommended that further research be conduct on parent and students attending county community schools. This research suggest the following recommendations to expand further research in this area:

- Conduct a mix methods research study on the implications of parents lacking education have on students' academic success.
- Conduct a mix method study to explore the effects of the expulsion or probation process effects parental involvement in county community schools.
- Conduct a phonological study on what parents experience and assistance at the comprehensive high school has been before their child was expelled.
- Conduct a qualities research study to determine if there is a difference in parental involvement in findings from parents with lower educational levels or higher education levels.

- Conduct a mixed methods study to determine what factors influence the high numbers of special education placements in county community schools and what steps can be taken to ensure parents are actively involved in the IEP planning and placement process.
- Conduct a quantitative study that focuses on factors of students being expelled with IEPs; focusing on the student's disabilities, ethnic group and expellable offence.
- Conduct a replication study in a different county, city, or state to determine if the same parental sentiment is shared regarding parent perceptions of county community schools.
- Conduct a mix method research study to explore the mental health and emotional conditions of parents who have children attending county community schools and what services parents need.
- Survey parents on how to best communicate with school and school staff on a regular basis. County community schools have a high turnover rate, parents needs change as new children enter the school.
- Conduct a replication study for all county community schools in Riverside County.
- Conduct a mix method study on parent involvement in at least three different county offices of education to identify effective strategies that have been implemented successfully in county community schools.
- Conduct a survey on what are the needs of parents who have children attending county community schools. Research allows for target intervention

to provide program and services that parents need to assist their child and increase their parent participations.

- County community schools need to conduct research on reasons, ethnicity, and students disabilities for being expelled from their home school to address the high numbers of students with special needs at their school sites.
- Conduct a quantitative study to research and compare and contrast the number of students with special needs enrolled in each county community school.
- Conduct a qualitative study or reasons students get expelled and/or referred to county community schools. Finding the reasons for expulsion will assist in providing services the student and parents need.

## Concluding Remarks and Reflections

For 20 years, I have worked with at risk students in various capacities. I started my teaching journey, as a teacher's assistant in an elementary school assisting struggling students in the areas of mathematics and science. I was then given the opportunity to work as a leadership and pro-social skills instructor at WestEd in the implementation of the Student Success Team research group. During that time working with at risk children, I found my passion. A colleague encouraged me to apply to the RCOE as a County Community School Liaison and I was hired. A teaching position opened up at the site I was working at and I applied, and was hired. This was the start of my journey as a Specialized Academic Instructor for the county community school.

Working six years in the county community school, I realized I needed to learn skills to help me implement effectively new programs and services for my students. At this point, I was contemplating going back to school and obtain my doctorate degree in

transformational change. In a discussion with my coworker and now thematic dissertation partner, Sandra Hernandez, we discussed obtaining a doctorate degree. We immediately decided jump on board and applied for Brandman University's doctorate program in Organizational Leadership.

Before searching for a dissertation topic, Sandra and I agreed that we would choose a topic that was meaningful enough to benefit us in our current position with the RCOE. We contacted and reached out Dr. Diana Walsh-Reuss and explained our need for a topic, she inspired us to embark on our journey and find out how increase parent involvement at our county community schools.

Having worked with students at various grade levels, I was curious about parental involvement and how it changed as a child got older. Working in an elementary school I observed parents were engaged and involved during their child elementary years and saw that parental involvement dropped as the child went to middle school and high school. I was then curious on what motivated parents to become involved in their children's education and if parental involvement could increase student academic achievement. Having worked in alternative education county community school, I have seen parents seeking ways for them to be actively involved in the community school. This study allowed me interview parents and learn from their lived experiences and learn from the parents. This allowed me to become a more effective teacher and implement parent suggestions in my classroom.

My journey in the dissertation process opened doors for future studies in the area of county community school. This journey opened my curiosity to conduct further research in this field of study. I want to research barriers and solutions that effect the

county community school population and the effects it may have on the future of these students. There is so much to do in this field, I feel that I need to develop as a teacher and a researcher to find solutions and identify barrier that affect my students.

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# APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

## Difference between Class of 2014 and Class of 2015 Cohort Graduation and Dropout Rates

| Year | Cohort Students | Cohort Graduates | Cohort Graduation Rate | Cohort Dropouts | Cohort Dropouts Rate | Cohort Special Ed Completers | Cohort Special Ed Completers Rate | Cohort Still Enrolled | Cohort Still Enrolled Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2013-14 | 492,971 | 399,041 | 81.0 | 56,756 | 11.5 | 2,981 | 0.6 | 33,422 | 6.8 |
| 2014-15 | 488,612 | 401,957 | 82.3 | 52,249 | 10.7 | 3,192 | 0.7 | 30,775 | 6.3 |
| Difference | -4,359 | 2,916 | 1.3 | -4,507 | -0.8 | 211 | 0.1 | -2,647 | -0.5 |

*Note.* Retrieved from https://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr16/yr16rel38.asp

APPENDIX B

## California Graduation and Dropout Rates by Counties 2015-16

| CDS | County | Students | Grads | Grad. Rate | Dropout | Dropout Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Alameda | 16,659 | 14,278 | 85.71 | 1,430 | 8.58 |
| 2 | Alpine | * | * | * | * | * |
| 3 | Amador | 314 | 276 | 87.9 | 35 | 11.1 |
| 4 | Butte | 2472 | 2,145 | 86.77 | 221 | 8.94 |
| 5 | Calaveras | 538 | 506 | 94.05 | 12 | 2.23 |
| 6 | Colusa | 365 | 326 | 89.32 | 31 | 8.49 |
| 7 | Contra Costa | 13,247 | 11,781 | 88.93 | 770 | 5.81 |
| 8 | Del Norte | 345 | 268 | 77.68 | 32 | 9.28 |
| 9 | El Dorado | 2,233 | 2,030 | 90.91 | 101 | 4.52 |
| 10 | Fresno | 14,532 | 12,119 | 83.4 | 1,467 | 10.1 |
| 11 | Glenn | 543 | 402 | 74.03 | 103 | 19 |
| 12 | Humboldt | 1,454 | 1,262 | 86.8 | 124 | 8.53 |
| 13 | Imperial | 2,742 | 2,428 | 88.55 | 156 | 5.69 |
| 14 | Inyo | 1,009 | 344 | 34.09 | 406 | 40.2 |
| 15 | Kern | 13,347 | 11,248 | 84.27 | 1,441 | 10.8 |
| 16 | Kings | 2,005 | 1,664 | 82.99 | 206 | 10.3 |
| 17 | Lake | 633 | 540 | 85.31 | 70 | 11.1 |
| 18 | Lassen | 424 | 363 | 85.61 | 42 | 9.91 |
| 19 | Los Angeles | 120,723 | 98,460 | 81.56 | 12,631 | 10.5 |
| 20 | Madera | 2,211 | 1,867 | 84.44 | 213 | 9.63 |
| 21 | Marin | 2,286 | 2,088 | 91.34 | 131 | 5.73 |
| 22 | Mariposa | 160 | 149 | 93.13 | * | * |
| 23 | Mendocino | 1,022 | 871 | 85.23 | 111 | 10.9 |
| 24 | Merced | 4,200 | 3,744 | 89.14 | 318 | 7.57 |
| 25 | Modoc | 109 | 100 | 91.74 | * | * |
| 26 | Mono | 392 | 144 | 36.73 | 139 | 35.5 |
| 27 | Monterey | 4,999 | 4,274 | 85.5 | 341 | 6.82 |
| 28 | Napa | 1,680 | 1,532 | 91.19 | 82 | 4.88 |
| 29 | Nevada | 1,824 | 920 | 50.44 | 612 | 33.6 |
| 30 | Orange | 39,749 | 36,186 | 91.04 | 2,060 | 5.18 |
| 31 | Placer | 5,635 | 5,157 | 91.52 | 282 | 5 |
| 32 | Plumas | 177 | 146 | 82.49 | 14 | 7.91 |

(continued)

| CDS | County | Students | Grads | Grad. Rate | Dropout | Dropout Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 33 | Riverside | 32,592 | 29,137 | 89.4 | 2,027 | 6.22 |
| 34 | Sacramento | 18,373 | 14,952 | 81.38 | 1,879 | 10.2 |
| 35 | San Benito | 880 | 795 | 90.34 | 65 | 7.39 |
| 36 | San Bernardino | 32,695 | 27,119 | 82.95 | 3,311 | 10.1 |
| 37 | San Diego | 39,643 | 32,480 | 81.93 | 3,133 | 7.9 |
| 38 | San Francisco | 4,705 | 3,778 | 80.3 | 472 | 10 |
| 39 | San Joaquin | 11,025 | 9,164 | 83.12 | 1,150 | 10.4 |
| 40 | San Luis Obispo | 2,886 | 2,663 | 92.27 | 137 | 4.75 |
| 41 | San Mateo | 6,579 | 5,883 | 89.42 | 449 | 6.82 |
| 42 | Santa Barbara | 5,224 | 4,630 | 88.63 | 376 | 7.2 |
| 43 | Santa Clara | 21,011 | 17,449 | 83.05 | 2,506 | 11.9 |
| 44 | Santa Cruz | 3,140 | 2,696 | 85.86 | 301 | 9.59 |
| 45 | Shasta | 2,147 | 1,902 | 88.59 | 172 | 8.01 |
| 46 | Sierra | 34 | 33 | 97.06 | * | * |
| 47 | Siskiyou | 417 | 383 | 91.85 | 20 | 4.8 |
| 48 | Solano | 4,825 | 4,086 | 84.68 | 514 | 10.7 |
| 49 | Sonoma | 5,339 | 4,505 | 84.38 | 517 | 9.68 |
| 50 | Stanislaus | 8,336 | 6,994 | 83.9 | 827 | 9.92 |
| 51 | Sutter | 1,520 | 1,320 | 86.84 | 130 | 8.55 |
| 52 | Tehama | 660 | 580 | 87.88 | 53 | 8.03 |
| 53 | Trinity | 104 | 93 | 89.42 | * | * |
| 54 | Tulare | 7,217 | 6,147 | 85.17 | 724 | 10 |
| 55 | Tuolumne | 522 | 461 | 88.31 | 41 | 7.85 |
| 56 | Ventura | 11,036 | 9,509 | 86.16 | 807 | 7.31 |
| 57 | Yolo | 2,240 | 2,009 | 89.69 | 171 | 7.63 |
| 58 | Yuba | 1,055 | 818 | 77.54 | 146 | 13.8 |
| Statewide Totals | | 486,126 | 407,208 | 83.77 | 47,274 | 9.72 |

*Note*. CDS = County District Schools ; Grads = Graduates; Grad. = Graduation. Retrieved from https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/page2.asp?level=County&subject=Dropouts&submit1=Submit

APPENDIX C

## County Community Schools in the State of California

| County Office of Education | Name of School | Type of School | County Office of Education | Name of School | Type of School |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alameda County Office of Education | Alameda County Community | County Community | Orange County Department of Education | Access County Community | County Community |
| Alameda County Office of Education | Opportunity Academy | County Community | Placer County Office of Education | Placer County Pathways Charter | County Community |
| Amador County Office of Education | County Community | County Community | Placer County Office of Education | Placer County Community Schools | County Community |
| Butte County Office of Education | Butte County Community - LEAD | County Community | Plumas County Office of Education | Plumas County Community | County Community |
| Calaveras County Office of Education | Calaveras River Academy | County Community | Riverside County Office of Education | Riverside County Education Academy | County Community |
| Calaveras County Office of Education | Oakendell Community | County Community | Riverside County Office of Education | Come Back Kids | County Community |
| Colusa County Office of Education | S. William Abel Community | County Community | Riverside County Office of Education | Riverside County Community | County Community |
| Contra Costa County Office of Education | Golden Gate Community Charter | County Community | Sacramento County Office of Education | Elinor Lincoln Hickey Jr./Sr. High | County Community |
| Del Norte County Office of Education | Del Norte Community | County Community | Sacramento County Office of Education | North Area Community | County Community |
| El Dorado County Office of Education | Charter Alternative Program (CAP) | County Community | Sacramento County Office of Education | Gerber Jr./Sr. High | County Community |

(continued)

| County Office of Education | Name of School | Type of School | County Office of Education | Name of School | Type of School |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| El Dorado County Office of Education | Charter Community School Home Study Academy | County Community | San Benito County Office of Education | Pinnacles Community | County Community |
| Fresno County Office of Education | Violet Heintz Education Academy | County Community | San Bernardino County Office of Education | Community School/Independent Alternative Education | County Community |
| Glenn County Office of Education | William Finch | County Community | San Diego County Office of Education | Monarch | County Community |
| Humboldt County Office of Education | Eel River Community | County Community | San Diego County Office of Education | San Diego County Community | County Community |
| Humboldt County Office of Education | Eureka Community | County Community | San Francisco County Office of Education | S.F. County Civic Center Secondary one.Charter | County Community |
| Humboldt County Office of Education | Southern Humboldt Community | County Community | San Joaquin County Office of Education | | County Community |
| Imperial County Office of Education | Valley Academy | County Community | San Joaquin County Office of Education | San Joaquin Building Futures Academy | County Community |
| Inyo County Office of Education | Jill Kinmont Boothe | County Community | San Joaquin County Office of Education | San Joaquin County Community | County Community |
| Kern County Office of Education | Kern County Community | County Community | San Joaquin County Office of Education | Venture Academy | County Community |
| Lake County Office of Education | Lloyd Hance Community | County Community | San Luis Obispo County Office of Education | San Luis Obispo County Community | County Community |

(continued)

| County Office of Education | Name of School | Type of School | County Office of Education | Name of School | Type of School |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Los Angeles County Office of Education | Soledad Enrichment Action Charter High | County Community | San Mateo County Office of Education | Gateway Center | County Community |
| Los Angeles County Office of Education | East Los Angeles County Community | County Community | San Mateo County Office of Education | Canyon Oaks Youth Center | County Community |
| Los Angeles County Office of Education | Renaissance County Community | County Community | Santa Barbara County Office of Education | Santa Barbara County Community | County Community |
| Madera County Superintendent of Schools | Madera County Independent Academy | County Community | Santa Clara County Office of Education | Santa Clara County Community | County Community |
| Madera County Superintendent of Schools | Enterprise Secondary | County Community | Santa Cruz County Office of Education | Santa Cruz County Community | County Community |
| Madera County Superintendent of Schools | Pioneer Technical Center | County Community | Solano County Office of Education | Division of Unaccompanied Children's Services (DUCS) | County Community |
| Marin County Office of Education | Marin's Community | County Community | Solano County Office of Education | Solano County Community | County Community |
| Marin County Office of Education | Phoenix Academy | County Community | Sonoma County Office of Education | Sonoma County Alternative Education Programs | County Community |
| Mariposa County Office of Education | County Community | County Community | Stanislaus County Office of Education | Stanislaus Alternative Charter | County Community |
| Mendocino County Office of Education | Mendocino County Community | County Community | Stanislaus County Office of Education | Stanislaus County Institute of Learning | County Community |
| Merced County Office of Education | Valley Merced Community | County Community | Stanislaus County Office of Education | John B. Allard | County Community |
| Merced County Office of Education | Valley Los Banos Community | County Community | Stanislaus County Office of Education | Petersen Alternative Center for Education | County Community |

(continued)

| County Office of Education | Name of School | Type of School | County Office of Education | Name of School | Type of School |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Merced County Office of Education | Valley Atwater Community | County Community | Sutter County Office of Education | Feather River Academy | County Community |
| Mono County Office of Education | TIOGA Community | County Community | Trinity County Office of Education | Trinity County Community | County Community |
| Mono County Office of Education | Sawtooth Ridge Community | County Community | Tulare County Office of Education | Tulare County Community | County Community |
| Mono County Office of Education | Jan Work Community | County Community | Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools | Tuolumne County Community/ISP | County Community |
| Monterey County Office of Education | Salinas Community | County Community | Ventura County Office of Education | Gateway Community | County Community |
| Napa County Office of Education | Napa County Community | County Community | Yolo County Office of Education | Cesar Chavez Community | County Community |
| Nevada County Office of Education | Earle Jamieson Educational Options | County Community | Yuba County Office of Education | Thomas E. Mathews Community | County Community |

*Note*. Retrieved from https://www.cde.ca.gov/SchoolDirectory/results?search=1&counties=0&districts=0&name=&city=&zip=&cdscode=&status2=3&types=10&nps=&charter=0&magnet=0&yearround=0

APPENDIX D

## Synthesis Matrix

| Resource | PARENT INVOLVEMENT | AT RISK YOUTH | RISK FACTORS TO DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL | ACADEMIC SUCCESS | IMPROVED BEHAVIORS | ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT | PREVENTIVE FACTORS | INTERVENTION | EXPULSION | COMMUNITY SCHOOL | ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Achieve, Inc. (2006). Identifying potential dropouts: Key lessons for building an early warning data system | | | X | | | X | | | | | |
| Alvarez, C. (2009). Effective strategies and practices to increase parent involvement in Title I schools. Ann Arbor, University of La Verne. | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| Armstrong. L., & Barber, R. (1997). An uneven start: A report on alternative education in Mississippi. A paper presented to the Mississippi Human Services Agenda. Jackson, Mississippi | | | | X | | X | | | | | X |
| Aron, L. (2003). Towards a typology of alternative education programs: A compilation of elements from literature. Urban Institute. | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Aron, L. Y. (2006). An overview of alternative education. The Urban Institute. | | | | | | X | | | X | | X |
| Atha, R. D. (1998). A comparison of perceived attitudes toward parent involvement among selected secondary level administrators, teachers, and parents with secondary age students. (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Missouri-Kansas City). ProQuest Digital Dissertations. No. AAT 9830215. | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| Association, N. E. (2008). Preventing Future High School Dropouts An Advocacy and Action Guide for NEA State and Local Affiliates. Retrieved from Washington, DC: http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/dropoutguide1108.pdf | | | | | | X | | | | | |
| Balfanz, R., Bridgeland, J., Bruce, M., & Fox, J.H. (2013). Building a grad nation: Progress and challenge in ending the high school dropout epidemic, 2012 Annual Update. | | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. Psychological Review, 84, 191–215. doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.84.2.191 | | | | | X | | | | | | |
| Banerjee, M., Harrell, Z., & Johnson, D. (2011). Racial/ethnic socialization and parental involvement in education as predictors of cognitive ability and achievement in African American children. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 40, 595-605. | X | | | | | X | | | | | |
| Barge, J., & Loges, W. (2003). Parent, student, and teacher perceptions of parental involvement. Journal of Applied Communication Research, 31(2), 140-163. | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| Barnet, B., Arroyo, C., Devoe, M., & Duggan, A. K. (2004). Reduced school dropout rates among adolescent mothers receiving school-based prenatal care. American Medical Association. Archived Pediatric Adolescent Medical, 158, 262-268. | | X | X | | | | | | | | |

| Resource | PARENT INVOLVEMENT | AT RISK YOUTH | RISK FACTORS TO DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL | ACADEMIC SUCCESS | IMPROVED BEHAVIORS | ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT | PREVENTIVE FACTORS | INTERVENTION | EXPULSION | COMMUNITY SCHOOL | ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Barr, R. D., & Parrett, W. H. (1997). How to create alternative, magnet, and charter schools that work. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service. | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Barr, R. D., & Parrett, W. H. (2001). Hope fulfilled for at-risk youth and violent youth: K-12 programs that work (2nd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon. | | X | | | | | | | | | |
| Barrington, B. L. & Hendricks, B. (1989) 'Differentiating characteristics of high school graduates, dropouts and non-graduates', Journal of Educational Research. 82. 309–319. | | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Bayne, S. R. (2013). Parental Factors That Contribute to Students' High School Graduation after Expulsion: A Case Study | | X | X | X | | | | | | | |
| Beam, T. W. (2012). A program evaluation of an alternative school in the southeast United States. Ann Arbor, Wingate University. 3527888: 111. | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Belfield, C., & Levin, H.M. (2007). The price we pay: Economic and social consequences of inadequate education. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press. | | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| Bielefeld, W. C., Stubblefield, A., & Templeton, Z. (2009). An analysis of state policies connected with alternative school programs. Saint Louis University, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2009. 3406215. | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Blank, M., Heifets, O., Shah, B., & Nissani, H. (2004). Community Schools: Engaging Parents and Families. | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| Blondal, K. S., & Adalbjarnardottir, S. (2014). Parenting in Relation to School Dropout Through Student Engagement: A Longitudinal Study. | | X | | | | | | | | | |
| Bridgeland, J. M., Dilulio, J. J., & Balfanz, R. (2009). On the Front Lines of Schools: Perspectives of Teachers and Principals on the High School Dropout Problem. | | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| Bridgeland, J. M., Dilulio, J. J., & Morison, K. B. (2006). The silent epidemic. Civic Enterprises, LLC. Retrieved from http://www.civicenterprises.net/pdfs/thesilentepidemic3-06.pdf | | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| Brown, L.H., & Beckett, K.S (2007). Parent involvement in an alternative school for students at risk of educational failure. 39(4) 498-523. | X | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Burger, J. D. (2006). A descriptive study of three California accredited model continuation high schools. Ann Arbor, University of La Verne. | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Burrus, J. & Roberts, R. D. (2012). Dropping out of high school: Prevalence, risk factors, and remediation strategies. R & D Connections. ETS Center for Academic and Workforce Readiness and Success. | | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Butrymowicz, S. (2015). There's no good way to know how California's alternative schools are working. The Hechinger Report. | | | | | | | | | | | X |

| Resource | PARENT INVOLVEMENT | AT RISK YOUTH | RISK FACTORS TO DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL | ACADEMIC SUCCESS | IMPROVED BEHAVIORS | ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT | PREVENTIVE FACTORS | INTERVENTION | EXPULSION | COMMUNITY SCHOOL | ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cairns, R. B., Cairns, B. D. & Neckerman, H. J. (1989) 'Early school dropout: configurations and determinants', Child Development, 60, 1437– 1452. | | | X | | | | | | | | |
| California, A. C. L. U. o. (2016). Know Your Rights School Discipline. | | X | X | | | | | | X | X | |
| California's Continuation Schools. Research Summary. (2008) | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| California's Continuation Schools. Research Summary. (2008). Retrieved from http://libproxy.chapman.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=eric&AN=ED501466&site=eds-live | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Carney Hall, K. C. (2008). Understanding current trends in family involvement. New Directions for Student Services, 2008(122), 3-14. | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| Caroleo, M. (2014). An examination of the risks and benefits of alternative education. Relational Child & Youth Care Practice, 27(1), 35-45. | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Center for Disease Control (2015) | X | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Center for Labor Market Studies (2007). Left behind in America: The nation's dropout crisis. | | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Chavkin, N. F. (1989). A multicultural perspective on parent involvement: Implications for policy and practice. Educational Horizons, 6(2), 87-89. | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| Christensen, S. L., & Cleary, M. (1990). Consultation and the parent-education partnership. A Christensen, S. L., & Cleary, M. (1990). Consultation and the parent-education partnership. A perspective. (1), 219-241. | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| Christenson, S. L., & Thurlow, M. L. (2004). School dropouts: Prevention considerations, interventions, and challenges. Current Directions in Psychological Science, 13, 36–39. | | | | | X | | | X | X | | |
| Clark, R. M. (1993). Homework-focused parenting practices that positively affect student achievement. In N. F. Chavkin (Ed.), Families and schools in a pluralistic society (pp. 85-105). Albany, NY: State University of New York | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| Coats, S. K. (2016). The Twilight Program: The effects of an alternative education program on ninth and tenth grade at-risk high school students. (77), ProQuest Information & Learning, US. Retrieved from http://libproxy.chapman.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=psyh&AN=2016-31151-056&site=eds-live Available from EBSCOhost psyh database. | | | | | X | X | X | X | | | X |
| Comer, J.P. (2001). Schools that develop children. The American Prospect, 12(7), 3-12. | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Community Foundation. (2017). Riverside, CA. | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Resource | PARENT INVOLVEMENT | AT RISK YOUTH | RISK FACTORS TO DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL | ACADEMIC SUCCESS | IMPROVED BEHAVIORS | ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT | PREVENTIVE FACTORS | INTERVENTION | EXPULSION | COMMUNITY SCHOOL | ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cairns, R. B., Cairns, B. D. & Neckerman, H. J. (1989) 'Early school dropout: configurations and determinants', Child Development, 60, 1437– 1452. | | | X | | | | | | | | |
| California, A. C. L. U. o. (2016). Know Your Rights School Discipline. | | X | X | | | | | | X | X | |
| California's Continuation Schools. Research Summary. (2008) | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| California's Continuation Schools. Research Summary. (2008). Retrieved from http://libproxy.chapman.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=eric&AN=ED501466&site=eds-live | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Carney Hall, K. C. (2008). Understanding current trends in family involvement. New Directions for Student Services, 2008(122), 3-14. | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| Caroleo, M. (2014). An examination of the risks and benefits of alternative education. Relational Child & Youth Care Practice, 27(1), 35-45. | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Center for Disease Control (2015) | X | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Center for Labor Market Studies (2007). Left behind in America: The nation's dropout crisis. | | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Chavkin, N. F. (1989). A multicultural perspective on parent involvement: Implications for policy and practice. Educational Horizons, 6(2), 87-89. | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| Christensen, S. L., & Cleary, M. (1990). Consultation and the parent-education partnership. A Christensen, S. L., & Cleary, M. (1990). Consultation and the parent-education partnership. A perspective. (1), 219-241. | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| Christenson, S. L., & Thurlow, M. L. (2004). School dropouts: Prevention considerations, interventions, and challenges. Current Directions in Psychological Science, 13, 36–39. | | | | | X | | | X | X | | |
| Clark, R. M. (1993). Homework-focused parenting practices that positively affect student achievement. In N. F. Chavkin (Ed.), Families and schools in a pluralistic society (pp. 85-105). Albany, NY: State University of New York | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| Coats, S. K. (2016). The Twilight Program: The effects of an alternative education program on ninth and tenth grade at-risk high school students. (77), ProQuest Information & Learning, US. Retrieved from http://libproxy.chapman.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=psyh&AN=2016-31151-056&site=eds-live Available from EBSCOhost psyh database. | | | | | X | X | X | X | | | X |
| Comer, J.P. (2001). Schools that develop children. The American Prospect, 12(7), 3-12. | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Community Foundation. (2017). Riverside, CA. | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Resource | PARENT INVOLVEMENT | AT RISK YOUTH | RISK FACTORS TO DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL | ACADEMIC SUCCESS | IMPROVED BEHAVIORS | ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT | PREVENTIVE FACTORS | INTERVENTION | EXPULSION | COMMUNITY SCHOOL | ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Conrath, J. (2001). Changing the odds for young people, Phi Delta Kappa, 82(8), 585-587. | X | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Cotton, K., & Wikelund, K. R. (2001). School improvement research series (SIRS). Retrieved March 20, 2007, from http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/3/cu6.html | | | | | X | | | | | | X |
| Creemers, B. P. M. (1994). The effective classroom. London: Cassell. | X | X | | | X | | | | | | |
| Dahlberg, K., Drew, N., & Nystrom, M. (2001). Reflective lifeworld research. Lund, Sweden: Studentlitteratur. | | X | | | | | | | | | X |
| De La Ossa, P. (2005). "Hear my voice:" Alternative high school students' perceptions and implication for school change. American Secondary Education, 34(1), 24-39. | | | | | X | | | | | | X |
| Donovan, J. A. (1999). A Qualitative Study Of A Parental Involvement Program In A K-8 Catholic Elementary School | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| Dynarski, M. (1999). How can we help? Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. | X | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Edgar, E., & Johnson, E., (1995). Relationship building affiliation activities in school-based dropout prevention programs. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration. | | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Education, C. D. o. (2015, December 2, 2015). Community Day Schools. Retrieved {, #1} | | X | X | | | | | | X | X | |
| Education, C. D. o. (2016, June 7, 2016). Administrator Recommendation of Expulsion Matrix. | | | | | | | | | X | | |
| Education, R. C. O. o. (2017b). Student Programs and Services. Retrieved fromhttp://www.rcoe.us/student-program-services/ | | | | | | | | | | X | X |
| Education, R. C. O. o. (2012). Understanding Drop Out: Accuracy of Reporting and Risk and Protective Factors. Retrieved from https://www.rcoe.us/educational-services/files/2012/08/Understanding-Drop-Out.pdf | | | | X | X | X | | | | | |
| Education, C. D. o. (2017, May 3, 2017). Countywide Plan for Expelled Students. Retrieved from http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/eo/ex/ | | | | | | | | | X | X | X |
| Education, C. D. o. (2017, May 3 2017). Countywide Plan for Expelled Students. Retrieved from http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/eo/ex/ | | | | | | | | | X | | X |
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| Resource | PARENT INVOLVEMENT | AT RISK YOUTH | RISK FACTORS TO DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL | ACADEMIC SUCCESS | IMPROVED BEHAVIORS | ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT | PREVENTIVE FACTORS | INTERVENTION | EXPULSION | COMMUNITY SCHOOL | ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION |
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| Resource | PARENT INVOLVEMENT | AT RISK YOUTH | RISK FACTORS TO DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL | ACADEMIC SUCCESS | IMPROVED BEHAVIORS | ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT | PREVENTIVE FACTORS | INTERVENTION | EXPULSION | COMMUNITY SCHOOL | ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION |
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| Resource | PARENT INVOLVEMENT | AT RISK YOUTH | RISK FACTORS TO DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL | ACADEMIC SUCCESS | IMPROVED BEHAVIORS | ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT | PREVENTIVE FACTORS | INTERVENTION | EXPULSION | COMMUNITY SCHOOL | ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION |
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| Resource | PARENT INVOLVEMENT | AT RISK YOUTH | RISK FACTORS TO DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL | ACADEMIC SUCCESS | IMPROVED BEHAVIORS | ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT | PREVENTIVE FACTORS | INTERVENTION | EXPULSION | COMMUNITY SCHOOL | ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION |
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| Resource | PARENT INVOLVEMENT | AT RISK YOUTH | RISK FACTORS TO DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL | ACADEMIC SUCCESS | IMPROVED BEHAVIORS | ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT | PREVENTIVE FACTORS | INTERVENTION | EXPULSION | COMMUNITY SCHOOL | ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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| Resource | PARENT INVOLVEMENT | AT RISK YOUTH | RISK FACTORS TO DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL | ACADEMIC SUCCESS | IMPROVED BEHAVIORS | ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT | PREVENTIVE FACTORS | INTERVENTION | EXPULSION | COMMUNITY SCHOOL | ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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| *The Parenting Imperative: Investing in Parents So Children and Youth Succeed.* | X | | | | X | X | X | X | | | |

| Resource | PARENT INVOLVEMENT | AT RISK YOUTH | RISK FACTORS TO DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL | ACADEMIC SUCCESS | IMPROVED BEHAVIORS | ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT | PREVENTIVE FACTORS | INTERVENTION | EXPULSION | COMMUNITY SCHOOL | ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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| Vongprateep, K. P. (2015). Parents' Social and Cultural Capital\| One Parent Group's Influence on Student Engagement in an Upper Middle Class High School. | X | | | X | | | | | | | |
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| Resource | PARENT INVOLVEMENT | AT RISK YOUTH | RISK FACTORS TO DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL | ACADEMIC SUCCESS | IMPROVED BEHAVIORS | ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT | PREVENTIVE FACTORS | INTERVENTION | EXPULSION | COMMUNITY SCHOOL | ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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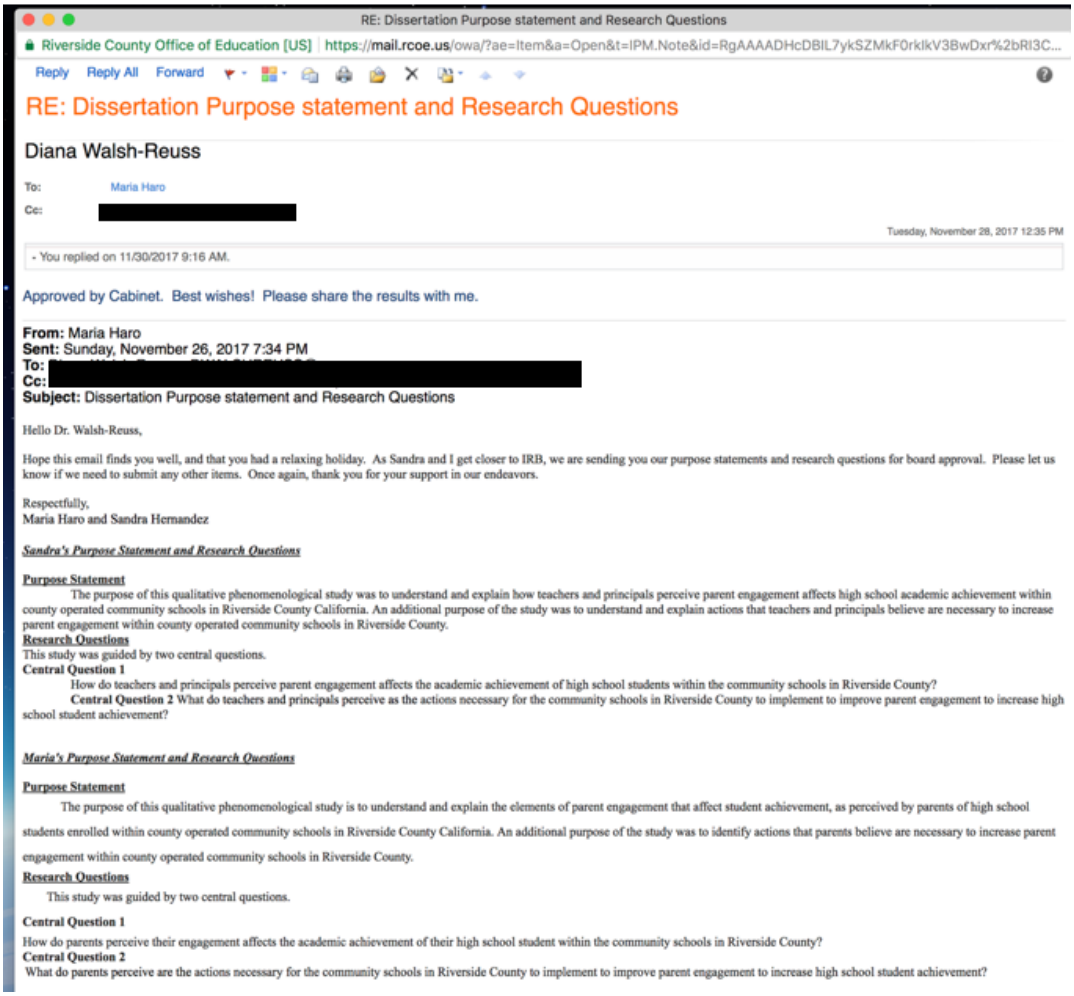
APPENDIX E

## Approval by RCOE Committee Approval



RE: Dissertation Purpose statement and Research Questions

Riverside County Office of Education [US] | https://mail.rcoe.us/owa/?ae=Item&a=Open&t=IPM.Note&id=RgAAAADHcDBIL7ykSZMkF0rkIkV3BwDxr%2bRI3C...

Reply Reply All Forward

RE: Dissertation Purpose statement and Research Questions

Diana Walsh-Reuss

To: Maria Haro

Cc: [redacted]

Tuesday, November 28, 2017 12:35 PM

- You replied on 11/30/2017 9:16 AM.

Approved by Cabinet. Best wishes! Please share the results with me.

**From:** Maria Haro
**Sent:** Sunday, November 26, 2017 7:34 PM
**To:** [redacted]
**Cc:** [redacted]
**Subject:** Dissertation Purpose statement and Research Questions

Hello Dr. Walsh-Reuss,

Hope this email finds you well, and that you had a relaxing holiday. As Sandra and I get closer to IRB, we are sending you our purpose statements and research questions for board approval. Please let us know if we need to submit any other items. Once again, thank you for your support in our endeavors.

Respectfully,
Maria Haro and Sandra Hernandez

***Sandra's Purpose Statement and Research Questions***

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to understand and explain how teachers and principals perceive parent engagement affects high school academic achievement within county operated community schools in Riverside County California. An additional purpose of the study was to understand and explain actions that teachers and principals believe are necessary to increase parent engagement within county operated community schools in Riverside County.

**Research Questions**

This study was guided by two central questions.

**Central Question 1**

How do teachers and principals perceive parent engagement affects the academic achievement of high school students within the community schools in Riverside County?

**Central Question 2** What do teachers and principals perceive as the actions necessary for the community schools in Riverside County to implement to improve parent engagement to increase high school student achievement?

***Maria's Purpose Statement and Research Questions***

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to understand and explain the elements of parent engagement that affect student achievement, as perceived by parents of high school students enrolled within county operated community schools in Riverside County California. An additional purpose of the study was to identify actions that parents believe are necessary to increase parent engagement within county operated community schools in Riverside County.

**Research Questions**

This study was guided by two central questions.

**Central Question 1**

How do parents perceive their engagement affects the academic achievement of their high school student within the community schools in Riverside County?

**Central Question 2**

What do parents perceive are the actions necessary for the community schools in Riverside County to implement to improve parent engagement to increase high school student achievement?

APPENDIX F

**Invitation Letter to Potential Participants**

February 14, 2018

Dear Potential Participant:

Hello, my name is Maria I. Haro and I am a Doctoral Candidate at Brandman University's Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership Program. Currently, I am working on a dissertation that focuses on the need for parent engagement in alternative education schools. I am seeking the participation of alternative education parents who will support my research by participating in an interview.

The purpose of this research is to understand and explain how parents perceive their involvement with the county operated community schools affects their students' academic achievement. An additional purpose is to understand and explain actions that parents believe are necessary to increase parent involvement within county operated community schools in Riverside County.

You are invited to participate in this research, you are identified as the parent or guardian of a student enrolled in a Riverside County Office of Education community school. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without fear of repercussions. All information gathered from interviews will remain confidential. Participant names and schools will be numerically coded, and there are no identified risks to your participation in this study.

The interview will consist of eight open-ended questions, and will last approximately thirty to sixty minutes. The results from this study will be used to further assist the alternative education system and to help increase the research on this topic.

Thank you, in advance. Should you decide to participate in this study please fill out the Informed Consent Letter either by mail in the self-addressed envelope provided or return it to the school office. If you have further questions feel free to contact me by phone or email. My information is included below.

Respectfully,

Maria I. Haro
[redacted]
[redacted]

APPENDIX G

## Letter of Introduction

**Introduction**

- You are being asked to be in a research study of parent involvement.
- You were selected as a possible participant because your child attended a county community school for a semester.
- Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

**Purpose of Study**

- The purpose of the study is to understand and explain how parent engagement affects student achievement.
- Ultimately, this research will be published as part of a graduate degree dissertation.

**Description of the Study Procedures**

- If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to answer eight interview questions.

**Benefits of Being in the Study**

- The benefits of participation are that the results will be shared with county community school to be used as a means to increase parental involvement at the various school sites.

**Confidentiality**

- This study is anonymous. We will not collect or retain any information about your identity.
- The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Research records will be kept in a locked file, and all electronic information will be coded and secured using a password-protected file. Audio recordings will be kept in a password enabled computer in which the researcher only has access too. We will not include any information in any report we may publish that would make it possible to identify you.

**Right to Refuse or Withdraw**

- The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study *at any time* without affecting your relationship with the researcher and school of this study. Your decision will not result in any loss or benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely from the interview at any point during the process.

If you agree, please fill out the bottom portion of this document and return it to the school.

Participants Name (print): _____ Date: _____

Participants Signature: _____ School Site _____

I would like to be contacted at the following number _____

Best time and date for me to meet with you is _____

APPENDIX H

## Informed Consent Form

**INFORMATION ABOUT:** The organizational socialization process experienced by first-year principals

**RESPONSIBLE EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION**: BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY 16355 LAGUNA CANYON ROAD IRVINE, CA 92618

**RESPONSIBLE RESEARCHER:** Maria Isabel Haro, Doctoral Candidate

**PURPOSE OF STUDY:** The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to understand and explain parent engagement that affects student achievement, as perceived by parents of high school students enrolled within county operated community schools in Riverside County California. An additional purpose of the study was to identify actions that parents believe are necessary to increase parent engagement within county operated community schools in Riverside County.

By participating in this study, I agree to respond to the survey and possibly participate in an interview. The one-on-one interview will last between 30 – 60 minutes and will be conducted in person, by phone or electronically. Completion of the surveys and interviews will take place in February and March 2018.

I understand that:

a) There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the Investigator will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identifying codes and research materials in a locked file drawer that is available only to the researcher and dissertation chair.

b) I understand that the interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will be available only to the researcher and the professional transcriptionist. The audio recordings will be used to capture the interview dialogue and to ensure the accuracy of the information collected during the interview. All information will be identifier-redacted and my confidentiality will be maintained. Upon completion of the study all recordings, transcripts and notes taken by the researcher and transcripts from the interview will be destroyed.

c) The possible benefit of this study to me is that my input may help add to the research regarding county community schools and programs pertaining to the student academic achievement. The findings will be available to me at the conclusion of the study and will provide new insights about the perceptions of parent in parent involvement in county community schools. I understand that I will not be compensated for my participation.

d) Any questions I have concerning my participation in this study will be answered by Maria I. Haro at [redacted] or by phone at [redacted] or Dr. Patrick Ainsworth (Dissertation Chair) at painswor@brandman.edu

e) My participation in this research study is voluntary. I understand that I may refuse to participate or may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. I can also decide not to answer particular questions during the interview if I so choose. Also, the investigator may stop the study at any time.

f) I understand that the interview portion of the study will be audio-recorded, and the recordings will not be used beyond the scope of this project.

g) I understand that the audio recordings will be used to transcribe the interviews. Once the interviews are transcribed, the audio and electronic interview transcripts will be kept for a minimum of five years by the investigator.

h) I understand no information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and that all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent re-obtained.

i) I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the "Research Participant's Bill of BUIRB Written Informed Consent Revised October 10, 2017 6 Rights." I have read the above and understand it and hereby consent to the procedure(s) set forth.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant or Responsible Party Date

_____ _____

Printed Name of Participant or Responsible Party Date

_____ _____

Signature of Principal Researcher Date

APPENDIX I

**Enrollment in California County Community Schools 2017-18**

| County Office of Education | Name of School | Number of Students Enrolled | County Office of Education | Name of School | Number of Students Enrolled |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alameda County Office of Education | Alameda County Community | 242 | Orange County Department of Education | Access County Community | 2137 |
| Alpine County Office of Education | Opportunity Academy | 208 | Placer County Office of Education | Placer County Pathways Charter | 228 |
| Amador County Office of Education | County Community | 12 | Placer County Office of Education | Placer County Community Schools | 36 |
| Butte County Office of Education | Butte County Community - LEAD | 20 | Plumas County Office of Education | Plumas County Community | 7 |
| Calaveras County Office of Education | Calaveras River Academy | 28 | Riverside County Office of Education | Riverside County Education Academy | 243 |
| Calaveras County Office of Education | Oakendell Community | 16 | Riverside County Office of Education | Come Back Kids | 598 |
| Colusa County Office of Education | S. William Abel Community | 4 | Riverside County Office of Education | Riverside County Community | 302 |
| Contra Costa County Office of Education | Golden Gate Community Charter | 53 | Sacramento County Office of Education | Elinor Lincoln Hickey Jr./Sr. High | 97 |
| Del Norte County Office of Education | Del Norte Community | 35 | Sacramento County Office of Education | North Area Community | 144 |
| El Dorado County Office of Education | Charter Alternative Program (CAP) | 172 | Sacramento County Office of Education | Gerber Jr./Sr. High | 139 |
| El Dorado County Office of Education | Charter Community School Home Study Academy | 483 | San Benito County Office of Education | Pinnacles Community | 17 |

(continued)

| County Office of Education | Name of School | Number of Students Enrolled | County Office of Education | Name of School | Number of Students Enrolled |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fresno County Office of Education | Violet Heintz Education Academy | 120 | San Bernardino County Office of Education | Community School/Independent Alternative Education | 601 |
| Glenn County Office of Education | William Finch | 69 | San Diego County Office of Education | Monarch | 283 |
| Humboldt County Office of Education | Eel River Community | 58 | San Diego County Office of Education | San Diego County Community | 598 |
| Humboldt County Office of Education | Eureka Community | 48 | San Francisco County Office of Education | S.F. County Civic Center Secondary | 107 |
| Humboldt County Office of Education | Southern Humboldt Community | 18 | San Joaquin County Office of Education | one.Charter | 223 |
| Imperial County Office of Education | Valley Academy | 209 | San Joaquin County Office of Education | San Joaquin Building Futures Academy | 143 |
| Inyo County Office of Education | Jill Kinmont Boothe | 3 | San Joaquin County Office of Education | San Joaquin County Community | 1035 |
| Kern County Office of Education | Kern County Community | 867 | San Joaquin County Office of Education | Venture Academy | 1616 |
| Lake County Office of Education | Lloyd Hance Community | 17 | San Luis Obispo County Office of Education | San Luis Obispo County Community | 124 |
| Los Angeles County Office of Education | Soledad Enrichment Action Charter High | 1038 | San Mateo County Office of Education | Gateway Center | 17 |
| Los Angeles County Office of Education | East Los Angeles County Community | 78 | San Mateo County Office of Education | Canyon Oaks Youth Center | 9 |

(continued)

| County Office of Education | Name of School | Number of Students Enrolled | County Office of Education | Name of School | Number of Students Enrolled |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Los Angeles County Office of Education | Renaissance County Community | 165 | Santa Barbara County Office of Education | Santa Barbara County Community | 27 |
| Madera County Superintendent of Schools | Madera County Independent Academy | 379 | Santa Clara County Office of Education | Santa Clara County Community | 88 |
| Madera County Superintendent of Schools | Enterprise Secondary | 10 | Santa Cruz County Office of Education | Santa Cruz County Community | 626 |
| Madera County Superintendent of Schools | Pioneer Technical Center | 175 | Solano County Office of Education | Division of Unaccompanied Children's Services (DUCS) | 15 |
| Marin County Office of Education | Marin's Community | 47 | Solano County Office of Education | Solano County Community | 45 |
| Marin County Office of Education | Phoenix Academy | 15 | Sonoma County Office of Education | Sonoma County Alternative Education Programs | 99 |
| Mariposa County Office of Education | County Community | N/A | Stanislaus County Office of Education | Stanislaus Alternative Charter | 454 |
| Mendocino County Office of Education | Mendocino County Community | 47 | Stanislaus County Office of Education | Stanislaus County Institute of Learning | 215 |
| Merced County Office of Education | Valley Merced Community | 235 | Stanislaus County Office of Education | John B. Allard | 124 |
| Merced County Office of Education | Valley Los Banos Community | 75 | Stanislaus County Office of Education | Petersen Alternative Center for Education | 194 |
| Merced County Office of Education | Valley Atwater Community | 70 | Sutter County Office of Education | Feather River Academy | 104 |
| Mono County Office of Education | TIOGA Community | N/A | Trinity County Office of Education | Trinity County Community | N/A |
| Mono County Office of Education | Sawtooth Ridge Community | N/A | Tulare County Office of Education | Tulare County Community | 63 |

(continued

| County Office of Education | Name of School | Number of Students Enrolled | County Office of Education | Name of School | Number of Students Enrolled |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mono County Office of Education | Jan Work Community | 15 | Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools | Tuolumne County Community/ISP | 25 |
| Monterey County Office of Education | Salinas Community | 234 | Ventura County Office of Education | Gateway Community | 102 |
| Napa County Office of Education | Napa County Community | 123 | Yolo County Office of Education | Cesar Chavez Community | 87 |
| Nevada County Office of Education | Earle Jamieson Educational Options | 6 | Yuba County Office of Education | Thomas E. Mathews Community | 19 |
| | | | Total | 10,991 | |

*Note*. Retrieved from https://www.cde.ca.gov/SchoolDirectory/results?search=1&counties=0&districts=0&name=&city=&zip=&cdscode=&status2=3&types=10&nps=&charter=0&magnet=0&yearround=0

APPENDIX J

## Total Enrolled in California County Office of Education, 2016-17

| CDS | District | Total Enrollment | CDS | District | Total Enrollment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 110017 | Alameda County Office of Education | 2870 | 3010306 | Orange County Department of Education | 6485 |
| 210025 | Alpine County Office of Education | 2 | 3110314 | Placer County Office of Education | 794 |
| 310033 | Amador County Office of Education | 222 | 3210322 | Plumas County Office of Education | 23 |
| 410041 | Butte County Office of Education | 1213 | 3310330 | Riverside County Office of Education | 8520 |
| 510058 | Calaveras County Office of Education | 542 | 3410348 | Sacramento County Office of Education | 2214 |
| 610066 | Colusa County Office of Education | 4 | 3510355 | San Benito County Office of Education | 48 |
| 710074 | Contra Costa County Office of Education | 4872 | 3610363 | San Bernardino County Office of Education | 3438 |
| 810082 | Del Norte County Office of Education | 579 | 3710371 | San Diego County Office of Education | 3137 |
| 910090 | El Dorado County Office of Education | 1029 | 3810389 | San Francisco County Office of Education | 362 |
| 1010108 | Fresno County Office of Education | 2888 | 3910397 | San Joaquin County Office of Education | 4343 |
| 1110116 | Glenn County Office of Education | 477 | 4010405 | San Luis Obispo County Office of Education | 426 |
| 1210124 | Humboldt County Office of Education | 436 | 4110413 | San Mateo County Office of Education | 284 |
| 1310132 | Imperial County Office of Education | 670 | 4210421 | Santa Barbara County Office of Education | 279 |
| 1410140 | Inyo County Office of Education | 1946 | 4310439 | Santa Clara County Office of Education | 11357 |
| 1510157 | Kern County Office of Education | 4389 | 4410447 | Santa Cruz County Office of Education | 1286 |
| 1610165 | Kings County Office of Education | 396 | 4510454 | Shasta County Office of Education | 592 |
| 1710173 | Lake County Office of Education | 34 | 4710470 | Siskiyou County Office of Education | 530 |
| 1810181 | Lassen County Office of Education | 13 | 4810488 | Solano County Office of Education | 447 |
| 1910199 | Los Angeles County Office of Education | 6937 | 4910496 | Sonoma County Office of Education | 575 |
| 2010207 | Madera County Office of Education | 941 | 5010504 | Stanislaus County Office of Education | 2381 |
| 2110215 | Marin County Office of Education | 254 | 5110512 | Sutter County Office of Education | 427 |
| 2210223 | Mariposa County Office of Education | 48 | 5210520 | Tehama County Department of Education | 219 |
| 2310231 | Mendocino County Office of Education | 71 | 5310538 | Trinity County Office of Education | 94 |
| 2410249 | Merced County Office of Education | 1169 | 5410546 | Tulare County Office of Education | 2595 |
| 2510256 | Modoc County Office of Education | 33 | 5510553 | Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools | 219 |
| 2610264 | Mono County Office of Education | 383 | 5610561 | Ventura County Office of Education | 3182 |
| 2710272 | Monterey County Office of Education | 1897 | 5710579 | Yolo County Office of Education | 571 |
| 2810280 | Napa County Office of Education | 136 | 5810587 | Yuba County Office of Education | 566 |
| 2910298 | Nevada County Office of Education | 3272 | Total Enrollment | | 34,451 |

APPENDIX K

| School District | Enrollment by Site |
|---|---|
| Arlington Regional Learning Center | 58 |
| Betty Gibbel Regional Learning Center | 59 |
| Blythe Community School | 11 |
| Corona Community School | 5 |
| David L. Long Regional Learning Center | 16 |
| Don F. Kenny Regional Learning Center | 18 |
| Hemet Cal-Safe | 15 |
| Moreno Valley Cal-Safe | 10 |
| Palm Springs Community School | 24 |
| Safe House Community School | 5 |
| Val Verde Regional Learning Center | 95 |
| Total | 316 |

**Riverside County Community School Enrollment by Site**

*Note*. Retrieved from Brian Sousa, Student Data and Achievement Riverside County Office of Education November 2017

APPENDIX L

## Interview Guide

***Part 1: Read to Participant***

I would like to thank you in advance for accepting to participate in this study. As you know, I am conducting a study focused on potential actions necessary to increase parent involvement in their children's' education. Your personal experience in working with county community school students and parents is of interest to me and how it has affected you as a parent. The study's objective is to explore your perception of actions necessary to increase parent involvement and how it affects student academic performance.

The interview will take about a half hour to an hour. I may ask some follow up questions if I need further clarification. Any information that is obtained in connection to this study will be confidential. Data collected will be reported without reference to any individual or an institution. Once the information from the interviews has been collected from all the study participants, it will be analyzed to see if there are themes that are common across several participants.

There exists a possibility of unpleasant recollections originating from the questions I will ask you. However, you can skip any questions or stop the interview at any point of discomfort. If there is a question you do not understand, please feel free to ask for clarification. Your experiences will help in the collection of data for alternative education future research.

***Part II: Demographic Questions***

1. What is your highest level of education?
2. Did you ever attend an alternative education school?
3. What is your child's current grade level?
4. How long has your child attended Arlington/Betty Gibbel/Val Verde Regional Learning Center?
5. What was the reason your child is attending the learning center?

***Part III: Interview questions***

1. Please describe your experience of being involved in your child's classroom and

school? How often are you involved during the school year?

2. What classroom or school functions have you been invited to attend? When you do attend, please describe your experience. Can you give an example?
3. How welcomed do the community school staff and classroom teachers make you feel when you visit the school site? Is there an example of a time when you felt either particularly welcomed or unwelcomed?
4. Regarding academic achievement, how have you participated in your child's educational journey?
    a. What types of help and support do you offer him/her at home?
    b. How prepared do you believe you are to assist your student with their academic studies?
    c. Has the community school or your classroom teacher provided any tips, training, or materials to help you to assist your child to learn?
    d. In your experience what needs to be changed for you to be more actively involved in your child's academic studies?
5. In your experience communicating with the community school, how well does the school staff listen to parents?
    a. Are they respectful of the families' cultures, language, goals, or financial condition?
    b. What changes need to occur to increase parent staff interactions? Among the ideas you have shared, which one is most important?
6. In your opinion, what would you like to see changed or added to increase the interaction between you and the classrooms?

a. Among the ideas you have shared, which one is most important?

b. What would you tell the principal is a priority to get parents involved?

7. In your opinion, what would you like to see changed or added to increase the interaction between you and the school? What are the priorities you believe the school must take?

8. In your experience with community schools, is there anything the school can do, change or implement to encourage other parents to be actively involved at the school site? How can the school start to include parents?

***Part IV: Final Questions and Closing Remarks***

Do you have any other comments you would like to add regarding your experience with parent involvement in the County community schools?

Is there anything you want to add to our conversation that I haven't asked you and you feel is important for me to know?

Thank you so much for your time and support in this research project. I plan on completing this study by (date). If you would like a copy of my findings, once published, I would more than happy to share them with you as well. Thank you again.

APPENDIX M

## Research Question Matrix/Alignment Table

| | | How do parents perceive their involvement affects the academic achievement of their high school student within the community schools in Riverside County? | | | What do parents perceive are the actions necessary for the community schools in Riverside County to implement to improve parent involvement to increase high school student achievement? | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Interview Questions** | How do parents perceive they are involved in supporting their child's academic achievement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County? | 1.2. What s do parents perceive influence whether parents are engaged with their child's academic achievement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County? | 1.3. What supports or barriers do parents perceive exist that affect parent engagement within the county operated community schools in Riverside County? | 2.1. What actions do parents believe the county operated community schools in Riverside County can take to increase parent engagement to improve their child's academic achievement? | 2.2 What actions do parents believe need to be implemented as a priority to increase parent involvement to improve their child's academic achievement? |
| 1 | Please describe your experience of being involved in your child's classroom and school? How often are you involved during the school year? | X | | X | | |
| 2 | What classroom or school functions have you been invited to attend? When you do attend, please describe your experience? Can you give an example? | X | | X | | |
| 3 | How welcomed do the community school staff and classroom teachers make you feel when you visit the school site? Is there an example of a time when you felt either particularly welcomed or unwelcomed? | X | X | X | | |
| 4 | Regarding academic achievement, how have you participated in your child's educational journey? | X | X | | | |
| | a. What types of help and support do you offer him/her at home? | X | | | | |
| | b. How prepared do you believe you are to assist your student with their academic studies? | X | X | | | |
| | c. Has the community school or your classroom teacher provided any tips, training, or materials to | X | X | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | help you to assist your child to learn? | | | | | |
| | d. In your experience what needs to be changed for you to be more actively involved in your child's academic studies? | X | X | X | | |
| | In your experience communicating with the community school, how well does the school staff listen to parents? | X | X | X | | X |
| 5 | a. Are they respectful of the families' cultures, language, goals, or financial condition? | X | | | | |
| | b. What changes need to occur to increase parent staff interactions? Among the ideas you have shared, which one is most important? | X | X | X | X | X |
| 6 | In your opinion, what would you like to see changed or added to increase the interaction between you and the classrooms? Among the ideas you have shared, which one is most important? What would you tell the principal is the most important first step to get parents involved? | X | X | X | X | X |
| 7 | In your opinion, what would you like to see changed or added to increase the interaction between you and the school? What is the first step you believe the school must take? | X | X | X | X | X |
| 8 | In your experience with community schools, is there anything the school can do, change or implement to encourage other parents to be actively involved at the school site? How can the school start to include parents? | X | X | X | X | X |

APPENDIX N

## Interview Question Matrix of the Six Types of Interview Questions

| | Interview Questions | Types of Interview Questions | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Experience/ Behavior | Opinion/Value | Feeling | Knowledge | Sensory | Background/ Demographic |
| 1 | Please describe your experience of being involved in your child's classroom and school? How often are you involved during the school year? | X | X | | X | | X |
| 2 | What classroom or school functions have you been invited to attend? When you do attend, please describe your experience. Can you give an example? | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 3 | How welcomed do the community school staff and classroom teachers make you feel when you visit the school site? Is there an example of a time when you felt either particularly welcomed or unwelcomed? | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 4 | Regarding academic achievement, how have you participated in your child's educational journey? | X | X | | X | | X |
| | a. What types of help and support do you offer him/her at home? | X | | | X | | X |
| | b. How prepared do you believe you are to assist your student with their academic studies? | X | X | | X | | X |
| | c. Has the community school or your classroom teacher provided any tips, training, or materials to help you to assist your child to learn? | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 5 | In your experience communicating with the community school, how well does the school staff listen to parents? Are they respectful of the families' cultures, language, goals, or financial condition? | X | X | X | X | X | X |

| | Interview Questions | Types of Interview Questions | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Experience/ Behavior | Opinion/Value | Feeling | Knowledge | Sensory | Background/ Demographic |
| 6 | In your opinion, what would you like to see changed or added to increase the interaction between you and the classrooms? | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 7 | In your opinion, what would you like to see changed or added to increase the interaction between you and the school? | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 8 | In your experience with community schools, is there anything the school can do, change or implement to encourage other parents to be actively involved at the school site? | X | X | X | X | X | X |

APPENDIX O

## Field Test Critique by Participants

As a doctoral student and researcher at Brandman University, your assistance is greatly appreciated in designing this interview instrument. Your participation is crucial to the development of a valid and reliable instrument. Below are some questions that I appreciate you answering after completing the interview. Your answers will assist me in refining both the directions and the interview questions.

You have been provided with a paper copy of the interview questions, just to remind you if needed. Thank you.

1. How many minutes did it take you to complete the interview, from beginning to the ending of the interview? _____

2. Did you have any concerns when you read the consent information explained in the first part of interview? _____

3. If so, would you briefly state your concern _____
   _____

4. Was the introduction adequate in size and clear when informing you about the purpose of the study?

   If yes why? _____

   If not, what recommendations do you have for modification?
   _____
   _____

   Was the method of interview comfortable for you?

   If yes, please explain?
   _____

   If not, would you briefly state the problem_____
   _____

5. Did you feel comfortable answering the interview questions?

   If yes, please explain? _____
   _____

   If not, which question/s would you suggest be revised? _____
   _____

Thank you for your help!
APPENDIX P

**Video/Audio Release Consent Form**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to understand and explain parent engagement that affects student achievement, as perceived by parents of high school students enrolled within county operated community schools in Riverside County California. An additional purpose of the study was to identify actions that parents believe are necessary to increase parent engagement within county operated community schools in Riverside County.

The interview portion of the study will be audio-recorded, and the recordings will not be used beyond the scope of this project. The audio recordings will be used to transcribe the interviews. Once the interviews are transcribed, the audio and electronic interview transcripts will be kept for a minimum of five years by the investigator.

I / We consent to video/audio tapes being made of these sessions and to these tapes being used to aid the work.

I / We consent to the excerpts from these recordings, or descriptions of them, being used Ms. Maria Haro for the purposes of her dissertation research study. The recordings will be available only to the researcher and the professional transcriptionist. The audio recordings will be used to capture the interview dialogue and to ensure the accuracy of the information collected during the interview. All information will be identifier-redacted and my confidentiality will be maintained. Upon completion of the study all recordings, transcripts and notes taken by the researcher and transcripts from the interview will be destroyed.

Dated_____ Signed _____

I undertake that, in respect of any video/audio tapes made, every effort will be made to ensure professional confidentiality and that any use of video/audio tapes, or descriptions of video/audio tapes. Every effort will be made to protect the anonymity of all those involved in the interviews.

Dated_____ Signed _____
Researcher

APPENDIX Q

**Research Participant's Bill of Rights**

# BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

## Research Participant's Bill of Rights

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.

2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.

3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.

4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.

5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.

6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.

7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.

8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.

9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.

10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time, you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the Brandman University Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. The Brandman University Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949) 341-9937 or by writing to the Vice

Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.

APPENDIX R

**California's Student Population by County 2016-17/2015-16 School Year**

| | | 2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR | | | | 2015-2016 School Year | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | NAME OF COUNTY | Cumulative Enrollment | Total Expulsions | Unduplicated count of student expulsions | Expulsion Rates | Cumulative Enrollment | Total Expulsions | Unduplicated count of student expulsions | Expulsion Rates |
| **0** | **Statewide** | **6,405,496** | **5,657** | **5,611** | **0.09%** | **6,410,668** | **5,701** | **5,634** | **0.09%** |
| 1 | Alameda | 235,470 | 148 | 147 | 0.06% | 234,268 | 113 | 112 | 0.05% |
| 2 | Alpine | 95 | 0 | 0 | 0.00% | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0.00% |
| 3 | Amador | 4,325 | 0 | 0 | 0.00% | 4,307 | 0 | 0 | 0.00% |
| 4 | Butte | 32,834 | 125 | 124 | 0.38% | 32,602 | 102 | 100 | 0.31% |
| 5 | Calaveras | 6,030 | 5 | 5 | 0.08% | 6,077 | 4 | 4 | 0.07% |
| 6 | Colusa | 4,890 | 2 | 2 | 0.04% | 4,826 | 0 | 0 | 0.00% |
| 7 | Contra Costa | 184,036 | 69 | 69 | 0.04% | 183,047 | 79 | 79 | 0.04% |
| 8 | Del Norte | 4,585 | 0 | 0 | 0.00% | 4,511 | 0 | 0 | 0.00% |
| 9 | El Dorado | 28,459 | 30 | 30 | 0.11% | 28,330 | 17 | 17 | 0.06% |
| 10 | Fresno | 210,139 | 363 | 362 | 0.17% | 209,336 | 369 | 367 | 0.18% |
| 11 | Glenn | 5,937 | 1 | 1 | 0.02% | 6,372 | 0 | 0 | 0.00% |
| 12 | Humboldt | 18,015 | 8 | 8 | 0.04% | 19,296 | 10 | 10 | 0.05% |
| 13 | Imperial | 39,308 | 46 | 46 | 0.12% | 39,081 | 14 | 14 | 0.04% |
| 14 | Inyo | 6,492 | 14 | 14 | 0.22% | 6,972 | 12 | 12 | 0.17% |
| 15 | Kern | 195,216 | 169 | 167 | 0.09% | 190,094 | 215 | 215 | 0.11% |
| 15 | Kings | 30,687 | 132 | 131 | 0.43% | 30,187 | 134 | 133 | 0.44% |
| 17 | Lake | 10,054 | 26 | 26 | 0.26% | 10,040 | 17 | 17 | 0.17% |
| 18 | Lassen | 4,653 | 1 | 1 | 0.02% | 4,807 | 0 | 0 | 0.00% |
| 19 | Los Angeles | 1,571,756 | 549 | 549 | 0.03% | 1,586,942 | 588 | 587 | 0.04% |
| 20 | Madera | 33,160 | 42 | 42 | 0.13% | 32,767 | 106 | 98 | 0.30% |
| 21 | Marin | 34,690 | 4 | 4 | 0.01% | 34,624 | 1 | 1 | 0.00% |
| 22 | Mariposa | 2,046 | 0 | 0 | 0.00% | 2,055 | 3 | 3 | 0.15% |
| 23 | Mendocino | 13,736 | 23 | 23 | 0.17% | 13,864 | 25 | 25 | 0.18% |
| 24 | Merced | 60,890 | 132 | 131 | 0.22% | 60,621 | 149 | 149 | 0.25% |
| 25 | Modoc | 1,589 | 10 | 10 | 0.63% | 1,612 | 2 | 2 | 0.12% |
| 26 | Mono | 2,592 | 0 | 0 | 0.00% | 2,892 | 0 | 0 | 0.00% |
| 27 | Monterey | 80,444 | 50 | 50 | 0.06% | 79,557 | 67 | 67 | 0.08% |
| 28 | Napa | 21,116 | 14 | 14 | 0.07% | 21,473 | 3 | 3 | 0.01% |
| 29 | Nevada | 14,525 | 9 | 9 | 0.06% | 15,214 | 1 | 1 | 0.01% |
| 30 | Orange | 505,775 | 225 | 224 | 0.04% | 509,039 | 204 | 203 | 0.04% |
| 31 | Placer | 75,815 | 51 | 51 | 0.07% | 74,581 | 51 | 51 | 0.07% |
| 32 | Plumas | 2,299 | 0 | 0 | 0.00% | 2,362 | 2 | 2 | 0.08% |
| 33 | Riverside | 449,493 | 861 | 855 | 0.19% | 449,765 | 755 | 739 | 0.16% |
| 34 | Sacramento | 258,720 | 160 | 159 | 0.06% | 255,588 | 144 | 144 | 0.06% |
| 35 | San Benito | 11,597 | 10 | 10 | 0.09% | 11,639 | 3 | 3 | 0.03% |

Note. Retrieved from https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/content.asp