

SECONDARY STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL:  
MEASURING AMOUNT OF INVOLVEMENT AND LEVEL OF SATISFACTION

By

PAULA LEEANNE KAVANAGH

B.Ed., Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2001  
B.Sc., St. Francis Xavier University, 1999

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## ABSTRACT

Few studies have examined how parents are involved in secondary students' education and no known research has looked at secondary students' perceptions of their parents' involvement in their education. In this study the amount of parent involvement and the related level of satisfaction associated to that involvement was investigated among 87 students in grades ten, 11, and 12 at three high schools in British Columbia. Participants were surveyed using a modified version of the Home, School, and Family Partnership (HSFP) survey for high school students (Epstein, Connors, & Salinas, 1993) and a survey of satisfaction that was developed specifically for use in this study. The results indicated that the HSFP-S was a reasonably valid and moderately reliable measure of parent involvement for the discrete types of parent involvement that it represented. The four factor identified were: *Communication: Home-School*, *Communication: Parent-Child*, *Requests for Information and Support at School*, and *Requests for Information and Support at Home*. Participants reported higher amounts of *Communication: Home-School* than any other type. There was a significant effect of family status and grade associated to amount of parent involvement for certain types of activities. Further, participants reported feeling satisfied with the current amounts for both communication type parent involvement factors but showed a general trend that as amount of involvement went up, level of satisfaction went down. There was no significant relation between level of satisfaction and the other types of parent involvement. Further research is needed to determine how present models of parent involvement apply to students at the secondary school level.

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## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

As demands for knowledge and technology increase throughout the world, Canadian provincial and federal governments struggle to balance budgets and provide adequate funding for school programs. These opposing forces cultivate the notion that schools cannot be expected to independently address all the educational needs of a child (Christenson, 2000; Jacka, 2001). This has, in turn, encouraged schools, families, and communities to work together to improve children's school experiences (Catsambis, 1998; Epstein, 1995; Government of British Columbia Ministry of Education News Release, April 2002). In fact, parent involvement and family-school partnerships are considered among the most successful strategies for a child's educational and personal success (Catsambis, 1998; Dodd & Konzal, 2000; Dornbusch & Glasgow, 1996; Epstein, 1992; 1995; Haynes, Comer, & Hamilton-Lee, 1989).

For more than three decades, researchers have found higher levels of parental involvement in education to be positively correlated with better outcomes for children. Notable studies have found that high parent involvement has been associated with positive child outcomes such as higher academic achievement (Fehrman, Keith, & Reimer, 1987; Henderson, 1987; Jablonsky, 1968; Keith et al., 1993; Shade, 1973), higher self-esteem (Adkin, 1975; Loeb, Horst, & Horton, 1980), better social adjustment (Christianson, Rounds, & Gourney, 1992), fewer problem behaviour (Trusty, 1996), and a lower likelihood of dropping out of school before graduation (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Ugouroglu & Walberg, 1986). High parent involvement in education has even been linked to enhanced life outcomes in adulthood (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000; 2001).

Fostering these partnerships, however, is reliant upon building and supporting collaborative relations (Epstein, 1987; 1995).

Unfortunately, the majority of research in the area of parent involvement has focused on elementary and middle school age children. There has been little emphasis placed upon investigating the nature and effect of parental involvement on secondary students' education (Singh, Bickley, Trivette, Keith, Keith, & Anderson, 1995). Given the inherent differences in development and life stage of secondary students compared to their younger elementary and middle school counterparts, the existing findings on parent involvement do not easily generalize (Epstein, 1996).

The ability to apply the research on parent involvement to secondary student populations is further restricted by the fact that the existing research has almost entirely focused on the perspectives of the parents or teachers (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Epstein, 1996; Hickman, Greenwood, & Miller, 1995; Simon, 2001). The findings within this limited body of research seem to suggest that the amount of parent involvement typically decreases over time (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Izzo, Weissberg, Kasprow, & Fendrich, 1999), usually peaking at grades 5 or 6. This purported decline happens in spite of a small body of research that consistently suggests that secondary students still show many benefits from parent involvement (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Simon, 2001; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2001) and, more importantly, that they want their parents to be involved in their education (Deslandes & Cloutier, 2002; Epstein, 1996).

There are several proposed explanations for the decline in perceived parent involvement at the secondary level. Research on child development, for example, has suggested that adolescents are more independent than their younger counterparts (Hickman et



al., 1995) and thus require less parental involvement during the secondary school years. There are also parent variables which may explain the decline, such as parents feeling ill-equipped to help their teenage children with advanced secondary level coursework (Chavkin & Williams, 1985; Eccles & Harold, 1996) or believing that their adolescent children do not want them to be involved (Eccles & Harold, 1996). Regardless of the reasons, however, it is difficult for parents and schools to know the appropriate ways to support secondary students by being involved. Although some efforts have been undertaken to address this difficulty by investigating the perspectives of the parents and teachers, it seems pertinent and necessary to supplement these findings with direct insights from the other key stakeholder: secondary students.

The purpose of the present study was to expand the parent involvement literature by examining secondary students' perceptions of the amount of parent involvement they see happening on a regular basis. Secondary students' levels of satisfaction with that amount of parent involvement was also explored. The findings within this research serve to expand the research on parent involvement by considering the secondary student as an important stakeholder. This will hopefully spur further research into the area and potentially enhance the practice of home-school collaboration by informing schools and parents about how to encourage or become involved in ways that are mutually appreciated by schools, parents, and students.

### *Definition of Terms*

*Parent Involvement.* A review of the literature indicates that parent involvement has been defined both as broadly as parents' expectations for their child and as concretely as parental presence during school events (Catsambis, 1998). Unfortunately, there is not yet an

operational definition of parent involvement that has been universally accepted within the field (Catsambis, 1998; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2001). Of the many definitions, a consistent theme is to define parent involvement as encompassing multiple types of activities, such as involvement at school (e.g., attending parent-teacher conferences) and involvement at home (e.g., helping with homework; Epstein, 1992; Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Childs, 2000; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, Brissie, 1987; Shumow & Miller, 2001; Wandersman, Motes, Lindsay, Snell-Johns, Amaral & Ford, 2002). For the purposes of this study, parent involvement will be defined as the participation of parents in both school- and home-based activities that are intended to encourage and promote learning.

Further definitions and examples of at-school and at-home parent involvement are as follows:

- *At-school parent involvement* is defined as any activity resulting in the interaction of the parent and the student's school which involves the parent being physically present at the school, or directly involved with school personnel (Epstein, 1992; Shumow & Miller, 2001; Wandersman et al., 2002). Examples include, but are not limited to: attending parent-teacher conferences, participating in school fundraisers, or contacting teachers to discuss issues concerning the adolescent's school experience.
- *At-home parent involvement* is defined as any activity involving a direct interaction between the parent and the secondary student that occurs outside of the school environment (Epstein, 1992; Shumow & Miller, 2001; Wandersman et al., 2002). Examples include, but are not limited to: helping with homework, asking about school, or providing advice about course selection.

*Home-School Relationship.* Throughout the literature, the concept of home-school relationship is labeled interchangeably as home-school, family-school, parent-teacher, and even parent involvement (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Christenson, 1995; Christenson, Rounds, & Gorney, 1992; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Epstein, 1996). Regardless of the label, however, there is a consistent theme of defining the concept such that it refers to the ways in which the home (i.e., parents and other family members) interacts with the school (i.e., teachers, school administrators, and other school personnel) about issues concerning the student's school and learning experiences (Christenson, Rounds, & Franklin, 1992; Epstein, 1996; Swap, 1993).

*Secondary Student.* The public school system in British Columbia is organized such that some secondary schools serve the full range of grades 8-12, while others serve only grades 10-12 (Government of British Columbia, N.d.). Given that there is existing research on the early secondary grades (particularly grade 9, Deslandes & Cloutier, 2002; Epstein & Connors, 1995), and to avoid confusion about the age of the sample being targeted, this study focused on the senior secondary school grades: 10, 11, and 12. As such, for the purposes of this study, the term secondary student was used to refer to any child within the sample population being targeted by this present research.

#### *Purpose of the Present Research*

There are three purposes of this proposed research. To build an appropriate foundation for this investigation, the first purpose of this study is to examine the psychometric properties of the scales used as a valid and reliable measure of parent involvement. Based on this, the second purpose is to determine if there are significant differences in amounts of parental involvement as reported by secondary students. The third,

but equally important, purpose is to determine secondary students' feelings of satisfaction related to the amounts of parent involvement being queried.

### *Research Questions*

*Research Question One.* Does the Home, School, and Family Partnership, Student survey (Epstein, Conners, & Salinas, 1993; HSFP-S), in its adapted form, demonstrate construct validity as a reliable and valid measure of parent involvement activities? Do these activities fit within the framework of at-home and at-school parent involvement?

*Research Question Two.* Are there significant differences between secondary students' reported amounts of parent involvement? Do these differences vary as a function of student demographic variables, such as gender, grade, school achievement, ethnicity, family status, or family income?

*Research Question Three.* Do secondary students report feeling satisfied with the amounts of parent involvement being shown?

*Research Question Four.* Are there significant differences in secondary students' levels of satisfaction with reported amounts of parent involvement? Do these differences vary as a function of student demographic variables, such as gender, grade, school achievement, ethnicity, family status, or family income?

### *Summary*

The importance of parent involvement in promoting children's educational success has been clearly documented. Yet this research has disproportionately focused on children in elementary and middle school grades. Little is known about the nature of parent involvement at the secondary level. Especially lacking is information about parent involvement from those most affected- the secondary students themselves. The present study was designed to

explore secondary students' perceptions of parent involvement. These findings will benefit researchers, parents, students, and educators by informing the development of parent involvement initiatives that are appropriately suited to the specific needs identified by secondary students.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Literature Review

The increasing demand for knowledge and the available resources in schools is fostering an understanding that schools alone cannot be expected to meet all the needs of its students (Christenson, 2000; Christenson, Rounds, & Franklin, 1992; Christenson & Sheridan, 2001). This finding is paired with a wealth of research that shows that parent involvement in education has tremendous positive impacts on student learning and success (Christenson, Rounds, & Franklin, 1992; Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Comer, 1992; Epstein, 1996). Unfortunately, this extensive body of research has disproportionately focused on young children. Almost no research has investigated the effects of parent involvement at the secondary school level (Deslandes & Cloutier, 2002; Singh et al., 1995).

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature relevant to parent involvement, and in particular, the literature on parent involvement during secondary school. The objectives to be addressed are: to present the history of parent involvement practice, to discuss the prominent theories and models that are used to conceptualize parent involvement, to describe the empirical findings related to parent involvement, and finally to present the necessary directions for future research that guided the design of the present study. Given the disproportionate focus away from secondary students, the literature is presented in its broadest context (discussing parent involvement findings in general) and moves into delineating the unique facts and issues that underpin how and why parent involvement needs to be investigated at the secondary level.

#### *History of Parent Involvement*

Parents play an important role in the education and development of their children.

From the time that babies are born, parents have nurtured and educated their children using direct teaching, modeling, and guidance (Bergen, 1991). In fact, the idea that a child's learning begins at home dates back as far as records allow (Amaral, 2003). Although this is likely an idea born out of respect for the importance of parents in raising a child and guiding his/her growth, it was also perpetuated throughout much of early history by the reality that formal schooling was simply not accessible to the masses.

It was not until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that schooling became more accessible and thus, the roles of parents and teachers in a child's education became much more refined. This redefinition of roles saw parents as being primarily responsible for teaching children about the appropriate behaviour and attitudes necessary for school while teachers were the subject matter experts who had a specific knowledge to impart upon children (Finch & Crunkilton, 1999). During this time, there was little emphasis on parental involvement at school.

This distinction of roles between families and schools persisted until the mid-1900s, when research began to increasingly show a relation between early childhood education and enhanced child success during school (Berger, 1991; Coleman, 1977). Research showed strong associations between the amount of parental involvement and a child's learning (Epstein, 1987). Governments have responded by trying to develop and encourage social programs aimed at reducing the impact of known risk factors and fostering positive outcomes for children by promoting parent involvement (Moles, 1996). During the 1970s, a reflection of these efforts began to produce some debate about the importance and feasibility of including families in schooling. Although parents were recognized as being important, school-based efforts to include them were often complicated and benefits not always

apparent (Epstein, 1987; Sarason, 1996). Despite this debate, the idea has persisted that a child's optimal success is enhanced by collaborative efforts (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Epstein, 1986; Jacka, 2001) and is still evident in many school initiatives within the local context of British Columbia.

### *The Local Context of Parent Involvement*

In Canada, the impetus to maximize student success through collaboration is increasing, especially as financial limitations continue to reduce essential school resources (BC Ministry of Education News Release, April 2002). A federal report on school achievement during the secondary school years emphasized the need to create public policy that fosters positive attitudes toward schools, promotes positive family values (such as the importance of working together), and has strong teacher support (Connolly, Hatchette, & McMaster, 1998). Several such initiatives are apparent across Canada.

The Third National Forum on Education, held in May 1998, produced a report on all the trends and educational initiatives taking place in the country. There were nation-wide trends toward increased family, community, and school partnerships, with a focus on promoting parent involvement. British Columbia, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Yukon territory all responded positively to recognizing the importance of schools being held professionally accountable to parents and communities for student success. Of these, the majority indicated having goals or initiatives which addressed the need to have collaborative efforts involving parents, teachers, and school administrators. Nationally, each province and territory also indicated a commitment to increase government spending in education (Council of Ministers of Education, May 1998). However, to fully make use of those funds and successfully



implement appropriate parent involvement programs, policy makers, educators, and parents must first understand what it means for parents to be involved in a child's education.

### *Theoretical Foundation of Parent Involvement*

While current social and political factors amplify the need for collaborative home-school efforts, psychological and sociological theory has long supported such action. It has been more than 30 years since Bronfenbrenner (1979; 1992) first proposed the *ecological model* of child development. The ecological model posits that a child's growth is influenced by the many factors of parental relations, family interaction, community attitudes, and societal values. These factors, he argues, bidirectionally affect the child and those involved with the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1980; 1992).

According to Bronfenbrenner, an individual must be considered in relation to the ecological social system in which s/he is embedded. This ecological system is comprised of four interrelated and bi-directional systems: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. In addition, all interactions are influenced by the chronosystem, which is the impact of time (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

In practical terms, the microsystem is composed of each discrete interaction a child has with the major caregivers in his/her life. For example, the child-parent dynamic or the child-school dynamic are each microsystems. Enveloping these microsystems is the mesosystem, which involves the interactions of two or more microsystems. For example, parent involvement and family-school partnerships are mesosystem variables. In particular, the mesosystem recognizes that a child's at home experiences directly impact upon the school experience. This important principle is further demonstrated by the exosystem, which is described as the extraneous social contexts that impact the quality and nature of the

microsystem interactions. Thus, exosystem variables such as parental employment, school policy, and parental involvement impact the quality of a child's family and school interactions. Finally, the macrosystem represents the broad social context in which the micro-, meso-, and exo- systems exist. It is the cultural rules and social beliefs that guide action and intentions, such as the social belief that schools and parents should work together to help children learn (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The final component of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model is the chronosystem. This system does not interact hierarchically (as do the previous four systems), but it instead is the constant factor of time and development that exists throughout all systems and systemic interactions. This chronosystem is particularly important in the context of researching adolescents and secondary students because it is a period of such rapid growth and developmental change. It is also a time of important transitions related to leaving childhood and becoming an adult. These factors ensure that the chronosystem permeate all levels and interactions of the child's ecological system.

Given the ecological model's emphasis upon recognizing the interaction of a child's environments (home, school, and community), there should be little surprise that it has provided the conceptual foundation of many prominent models of parent involvement.

#### *Models of Parent Involvement*

Many prominent models of parent involvement appear to have evolved from an ecological perspective, emphasizing the need to understand the individual in relation to the whole system and recognizing the common roles that families and schools share in children's growth and development (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Epstein, 1996). The following section will outline the evolution of parent involvement models from one of the earliest

known theories, Gordon's (1977) *Model of Impact* up through to more current theories such as Grolnick and Slowiaczek's (1994) *Multi-dimensional Process Model* and Epstein's (1992) *Typology Model of Parent Involvement*.

#### *Gordon's Models of Impact*

Gordon's (1977) Models of Impact are based on the assumption that schools exist as one subsystem within the larger society that influences a child's development. Akin to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) micro-, meso-, and exo- systems within the ecological model, Gordon identified three approaches to parent involvement: the Family Impact Model; the School Impact Model, and the Community Impact Model.

The *Family Impact Model* focuses on the parent-child relationship and is based on two key assumptions: that parental behaviour influences a child's learning and that a child's well being affects academic learning. Included within this model are home-based activities such as home visits, parent workshops, and newsletters (Coleman, 1997). This model assumes that the family wants to be involved but also acknowledges that they may need to be given the knowledge of how and when to act in appropriate ways (Bergen, 1991). As such, it is the guiding framework for many school-based parent involvement programs (Amaral, 2003).

The *School Impact Model* focuses on the idea that students will benefit from increasing the presence and involvement of parents in and around the school. It includes such activities as volunteering at school events, attending parent-teacher conferences, and supporting special school events. This school-based type of involvement is believed to benefit student achievement and is inherent within most definitions of parent involvement.

The *Community Impact Model* is based on the assumption that all systems are related and that students benefit from having families and schools connected to community-based resources (Gordon, 1977). Within this model, families, schools, and communities must work collaboratively to bring services to children. Although this is often assumed within most parent involvement initiatives, the Community Impact Model is more explicit and descriptive than either Family Impact or School Impact models alone.

Whether Gordon's *Impact Models* are taken separately or collectively, there is an assumption that efforts to enhance a child's learning must focus on the interaction of variables. This is consistent with Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, particularly as it relates to the importance of recognizing both home and school as being contributing forces. This reinforces the idea that parent involvement must be understood in terms of the interactions that occur both while at-home and at-school.

#### *Grolnick and Slowiaczek's Multidimensional Model*

Grolnick and Slowiaczek's (1994) *Multidimensional Model* is based on the assumption that the child is an active agent in the process of how parents can and should show involvement. It consists of three process variables which describe the multiple categories of parent involvement: 1) behaviour, 2) intellectual-cognitive, and 3) personal.

The category of *Behavior* defines parent involvement as the overt behaviour of being in the school and being involved in regular classroom activities. Through these activities, both teacher and child are able to encourage the parent's continued participation. These interactions promote mutual benefit from the parent's knowledge and expertise. The *Intellectual/cognitive* dimension involves more at-home based interactions that serve to stimulate cognitive development, such as reading books together or having family

discussions. This dimension assumes that if these types of parent-child interactions are fostered, the learning that results will bring home and school closer together. Learning naturally occurs and fosters intellectual development and school achievement. The *Personal* dimension focuses on the parents' personal involvement with the child. Mutual encouragement and sharing of emotional and affective experiences about learning and school help children to understand that learning is important.

Although organized around different constructs than Gordon's Impact Models, Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994) show further evidence of the idea that parent involvement does not exclusively occur at school. This is a recurrent theme throughout the literature that is perhaps best articulated, or at least most explicitly, in Epstein's (1987) work, the *Typology Model of Parent Involvement*.

#### *Epstein's Typology Model of Parent Involvement*

Epstein (1987) developed a framework of parent involvement, which, like that of Bonfrenbrenner, assumes that the student is at the centre of overlapping spheres of influence which have bi-directional impacts upon the child's success or failure in school. Grounded in the research from education, psychology, and sociology, Epstein's model categorizes parent involvement into six types of activities: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community (Epstein, 1992).

*Parenting.* Activities within this category involve teaching parents how to effectively support their children by developing a positive learning environment in the home. Schools may facilitate this learning for parents but the actual parenting activity takes place at home.

*Communicating.* Communicating refers to the ongoing interaction between schools and parents to stay mutually informed about the child. Examples may be memos, notices,

phone calls, report cards, or parent-teacher conferences.

*Volunteering.* The category of volunteering is perhaps the single most identifiable activity associated to parent involvement. Parents being physically present to support students or supervise a special event are examples of parent involvement that require the parent to be physically present at the school.

*Learning at Home.* As the label implies, this category refers to those activities and opportunities for learning that parents foster for children while outside of the school. Although schools may provide training for parents to do this effectively or may promote opportunities to encourage parents to do this regularly, this type of involvement focuses on those efforts parents make to teach children and encourage learning beyond that which is required at school.

*Decision Making.* As defined within Epstein's model, *decision-making* is a more school-based involvement activity than the others, as it typically refers to having parent participation when making decisions of governance, community accountability, or setting annual goals. Examples of how decision making involvement occurs would be through such things as PTA, Goal committees, Parent Advisory Councils, and School Planning Councils.

*Collaborating with Community.* Finally, this involves establishing connections with community agencies, local businesses, and other groups to facilitate a shared responsibility and foster optimal success for the child. This type of parent involvement is especially important for children with special needs who require specialized care not generally available at school.

Although Epstein's (1992) model includes six types of parent involvement, she acknowledges that these six types also lend themselves to a more simplified dichotomy of at-

home versus at-school activities. As is apparent from the earlier descriptions of the Impact Models and the Multi-Dimensional Model, this factoring of at-home versus at-school is a consistent theme that is inherent within each model. This two-factor approach (i.e. at-home versus at-school) to interpreting parent involvement models is supported by many researchers (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Epstein, 1992; Fantuzzo, Tighe, and Childs, 2000; Ho & Willms, 1996; Shumow & Miller, 2001).

*Conceptualizing Parent Involvement as At-home Versus At-School Factors*

Despite the prolific theoretical support for this dichotomous approach to understanding parent involvement, little empirical work has been done to explore it. In fact, the only known attempt to measure parent involvement as at-home versus at-school activities was conducted by Fantuzzo, Tighe, and Childs (2000). Fantuzzo et al. developed the Family Involvement Questionnaire to measure what they considered to be the three major dimensions of family/parent involvement during early elementary school: at-home activities, at-school activities, and home-school conferencing. They chose to consider home-school conferencing as a separate entity because of its frequency and importance in the early school years. However, the primary purpose of their research was to investigate the ways in which families are involved in their children's educational experiences, not to test the validity and reliability of their proposed model of parent involvement.

As such, there is still little psychometric evidence to validate this three-factor approach to conceptualizing parent involvement. While existing models of parent involvement clearly delineate the importance of such home-school communication, home-school conferences typically considered a specific activity embedded within the interaction of family and school variables. Given that home-school conferences become increasingly

less frequent as children progress through higher grades, it has limited applicability to understanding parent involvement in secondary school. Comparatively, there is much inherent support for conceptualizing parent involvement as consisting of two dimensions of at-home and at-school activities and this two-domain model was considered the more appropriate foundation for work with secondary students and was adopted as the framework for the present research.

### *Recent Empirical Findings on Parent Involvement*

There is a clearly demonstrated relation between parent involvement and positive outcomes. The impact of parent involvement is most pronounced in the positive outcomes that directly relate to the child, but the associated benefits can be seen as far reaching as higher social awareness about the importance of parent involvement. The following is a discussion on the recent findings on parent involvement and how those findings point to a need for further research on parent involvement at the secondary level.

### *Benefits of Parent Involvement*

The most definitive benefit of parent involvement for students relates to higher academic performance and improved achievement (Christenson, Rounds & Franklin, 1992; Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Epstein 1986, 1991; Keith & Keith, 1993; Keith, Keith, Quirk, Sperduto, Santillo, & Killings, 1998, Reynolds, 1992). Other outcomes of high parent involvement are improved student attendance (Henderson, Marburger & Ooms, 1986); higher levels of student participation in learning activities (George & Kaplan, 1998); positive school orientation or disposition (Shumow & Miller, 2001); higher rates of homework completion (Brandt, 1989; Christenson, 1995; Kagan, 1984); improved student motivation (Christenson, Rounds & Gorney, 1992); improved social



functioning (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2001); higher levels of self-esteem (Christenson, Rounds & Gorney, 1992); and greater perceived competence (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994). Specifically for secondary students, parent involvement has been related to lower probability of engaging in high-risk behaviour (Resnick et al, 1997), lower drop-out rates (Barnard, 2004; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2001), increased on-time school completion (Barnard, 2004), less need for school discipline (Comer & Haynes, 1991; Kagan, 1984), higher independence (Epstein, 1996), and increased likelihood to pursue post-secondary education (Baker & Stevenson, 1986).

In addition to the extensive advantages of parent involvement for children and adolescents, the benefits also extend to parents, schools, and communities (Chavkin & Williams, 1990; Christenson, Rounds & Franklin, 1992; Epstein 1986; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Haynes, Comer, & Hamilton-Lee, 1989). Involved parents report feeling more informed about their child's school (Southwest Educational, Development Laboratory, 2001); feeling they communicate better with their child about learning (Christenson, 1995; Christenson, Rounds & Franklin, 1992); and seeing an increase in the amount of positive interactions they have with their children (Christenson, Rounds & Gorney, 1992; Epstein & Dauber, 1991). Unfortunately, there has been little research to show how parent involvement can and should be appropriately encouraged, particularly at the secondary school level. To do this, however, it is important to first recognize the many factors that impact how parents can and are involved with their children.

#### *Factors that Impact Amounts of Parent Involvement*

Several factors influence how and why parents become involved in their children's education (Pena, 2000). For one, there are student demographic variables, such as age and

gender of the child, which are associated with how parent show their support and involvement (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Eccles & Harold, 1996). Research showing that parent involvement is greater during primary and elementary school grades supports this notion (Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Deslandes & Cloutier, 2002), as does research indicating that parents are more involved with daughters than with sons (Carter & Wojtkiewicz, 2000; Hickman, Greenwood, Miller; 1995). Another prominent factor is the child's academic progress. Children who are stronger academically generally require less support than do students with special needs. Children who are weaker academically or who have special needs, however, tend to require more support and thus have greater parent involvement (Eccles & Harold, 1993; Hickman, Greenwood, Miller; 1995).

There are also pertinent family demographic variables, such as ethnicity, parental level of education, family socio-economic status, marital status, age, and sex which amount of parent involvement. These variables have been shown to be related to not only ability, but also willingness, to become involved (Baker & Stevenson, 1986; Christianson, Rounds, & Gorney, 1992; Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Eccles & Harold, 1996; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1987; Leitch & Tangri, 1988; Pena, 2000; Scott-Jones, 1988).

Additionally, there are school factors, such as school climate (Comer & Haynes, 1991), the school's solicitation and support of parental involvement, and a teacher's efforts to initiate and encourage parents to become involved (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1987; Izzo, Weissberg, Kasprow, & Fendrich, 1999). When a school and its teachers do not welcome parent involvement or are not supportive of it being initiated by parents, it is difficult and discouraging for parents to stay informed and maintain

many types of involvement with the children, particularly school-based involvement.

All these factors have a demonstrated association with parent involvement and impact the amounts and perceived need for parents to be involved. Despite the unique interplay of these factors upon a given situation, however, there are still key trends that are evident throughout the literature.

### *Trends in the Literature*

The most obvious trend in the literature on parent involvement is the fact that it almost exclusively focuses on children who are in the elementary school grades. Rarely have researchers ventured beyond that age group (Deslandes & Cloutier, 2002; Epstein, 1995; Fantuzzo, Tighe & Childs, 2000). This presents a skewed picture of how parent involvement could and should look for parents of secondary students.

One example of how this picture becomes skewed relates to the fact that there are typically more home-school connections between parents and teachers of students in the elementary grades than in the secondary school grades (Epstein, 1996). Given that parental presence at-school is often the single most salient characteristic of parent involvement, it is not surprising that studies show parental involvement as being lower as children get older (Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Dodd & Konzal, 2000; Dornbusch & Glasgow, 1996; Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Eccles & Harold, 1996; Epstein, 1986; Izzo et al., 1999). This finding seems unfortunate, however, given the conflicting evidence that schools, parents, and students believe that parent involvement continues to be important (Brian, 1994) and that it continues to be associated with positive benefits for students, such as better attendance, fewer behavioural problems, and positive life outcomes (Baker & Stevenson, 1986; Barnard, 2004; Comer & Haynes, 1991; Epstein, 1996; Kagan, 1984; Resnick et al, 1997; Southwest

Educational Development Laboratory, 2001).

### *Limitations of Existing Research*

Limitations such as the inadequate amount of research on parent involvement during secondary school and the lack of generalizability of existing research to this population make it difficult to conclusively say how or why parent involvement changes as children get older. Despite these shortcomings, however, many theorists have offered plausible explanations for consideration.

Some researchers have argued that developmental changes during the period of adolescence makes parent involvement much less necessary for students at the secondary level. Adolescents, it is argued, are more independent and require less help from their parents (Epstein, 1992). This is a reasonable explanation given that parents are also less well equipped to become involved with secondary students' learning, especially when the subject matter is advanced beyond the parent's own education and training. There is also the logistical restriction that parent-teacher conferences are much more difficult to arrange for a student who has multiple teachers per day. However, these reasons fail to completely justify why parent involvement changes, particularly when many at-home parent involvement activities do not fall within the auspices of these excuses. Further investigation is needed to determine when and how parent involvement changes, particularly with the consultation of all important stakeholders- including the adolescent (Deslandes & Cloutier, 2002; Epstein, 1995; Epstein & Connors, 1995).

### *The Secondary Student as a Major Stakeholder*

Research on successful school improvement projects in Canada indicates that an important factor in creating effective schools is recognizing that school improvement must

include everyone who has a stake in the project (Renihan, Renihan, & Waldron, 1986). This means that parents, students, teachers, administrators, and community leaders should all be involved in the process of improving educational outcomes. To date, however, little research has even explored whether parents, students, and schools hold similar perceptions about parent involvement and what it means in practice (Barge & Loges, 2003). The research that has been conducted often comes from parent reports of their children's education (Carter & Wojtkiewicz, 2000; Fantuzzo et al., 2000; Singh, et al., 1995; Trivette & Anderson, 1995). Despite being both the impetus for this change and the ones most affected by it, children are often left out of the process (Epstein, 1996; Renihan, Renihan, & Waldron, 1986).

Few studies have examined students' feelings and perceptions of having parents more involved in their education. This is in light of the recognized fact that when students play a key role in planning their education and are given opportunities for age-appropriate decision making, there are increases in students' independence and many other resultant positive life outcomes (Barnard, 2004; Epstein, 1996) and the fact that the significance of parent involvement throughout schooling has been clearly demonstrated (Barnard 2004; Epstein, 1996). As these studies demonstrate, the importance of positive parent involvement in children's learning and development through adolescence is critical and should increase rather than decline (Barnard, 2004; Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Dodd & Konzal, 2000; Dornbusch & Glasgow, 1996; Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Eccles & Harold, 1996; Epstein, 1986, Izzo et al., 1999). Further, studies by Barnard (2004), Deslandes and Cloutier (2002), as well as Epstein and Connors (1993), have found consistently that adolescents were still willing, and wanting, parents to be involved in their education. What is less clear in this research, however, is how these secondary students would have their parents be involved.

### *Rationale for Measuring Satisfaction*

Given the ongoing debate about how parent involvement should and does look for parents of adolescents, it became obvious that current research was missing an important dimension: how satisfied is each stakeholder with the current practices? No identified research has sought to ask students about their feelings and desires regarding parent involvement in their education.

There is a predicted relation between student satisfaction and learning outcomes (Espeland & Indrehus, 2003; Ramsden, 1992). This is further supported by the purported notion that learning is more influenced by students' perspectives on their learning situations than by the actual situations that may exist (Entwistle, 1987; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999). Although these ideas were postulated in reference to college students (and not secondary students, as are being studied here), there are similarities in developmental maturity which suggest that these theories may hold true for secondary students. For example, adolescence is a time of maturation that involves transitioning from the dependent child to an increasingly independent young adult. This suggests that a secondary student is arguably more like an early college student than the elementary school student to which s/he is more often compared.

Application of this notion to the context of parent involvement at the secondary level suggests that measuring students' level of satisfaction related to the amount of parent involvement is as important as measuring the parent involvement itself. To do so potentially enhances the applicability of the findings to inform the development of parent involvement efforts that directly seek to increase or sustain those parent involvement activities that secondary students most want.

*Summary*

There is historic evidence that parents play an important role in educating children and nurturing success. Over the last three decades alone, there has been clear evidence that parent involvement is associated to many positive outcomes for students (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000; 2001). However, further research is needed to explore how parent involvement is being implemented, and how it should be implemented, at the secondary level.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Methodology

The purpose of the present research was to investigate secondary students' perceptions of parent involvement in education. The main objectives were: to identify different types of parent involvement, to measure amounts parent involvement reported by secondary students, and to measure the levels of satisfaction associated with that amount of parent involvement. It was expected that several types of parent involvement activities would be identified (including at-home and at-school types of activities) and that secondary students would report that their parents show different amounts of parent involvement depending on the type of activity and that they have different levels of satisfaction related to those types of parent involvement.

#### *Participants*

The superintendent of a school district on the coast of British Columbia was approached about the possibility of conducting parent involvement research at each of the three secondary schools within the district. After reviewing the materials to be used, he provided district level consent to host the research. Previous research investigating parents' perceptions of parent involvement with students at the secondary school level had already been conducted within this district and a high level of participation from the parents was reported (Amaral, 2003).

Upon receiving notice of provisional approval from the UBC Behavioral Review Ethics Board (BREB) for the present study, the principal at each of the three secondary schools in the district was invited to participate. As part of the invitation, each principal was provided written materials that explained the purpose of the research, identified the criteria



for who would be invited to participate, outlined what the expectations and responsibilities were for the teachers and students, and provided copies of the measures to be used.

After each principal consented to hosting the research, a process for recruiting participants was discussed to determine what best suited the individual school. In the two larger schools, the principals made open requests for voluntary participation of teachers to host the research in their classes. These requests took place during regular staff meetings, in which the principal presented an overview of the research and the expectations for participation. Consenting teachers identified themselves to the principal and were provided copies of the necessary parental consent forms to be given to students (to see a copy of the parental consent letter, see appendix A), as well as a brief script which could be used to describe the project and encourage the return of consent forms (see appendix B). Additional teachers and classes were recruited directly by the researchers, after there had been opportunities to meet teachers and establish rapport during the repeated visits at each school. At the third school, which had a much smaller student body, the principal opted to personally conduct the consent process through school-wide announcements and classroom visits.

Through this multi-level recruitment process, a total of 268 students were invited to participate in the study. Several initiatives were implemented, including proactive efforts (such as provision of lottery incentives) and responsive efforts (such as personal classroom visits to build rapport and repeated follow-up reminders to return parent consent forms).

Of the 268 parent consent letters sent home, 105 parent consent forms were returned to the school. This reflects a response rate of 39.2%, which is moderate for paper-based survey research and is more than double the 18% response rate that is typically expected for parent surveys in this district (Amaral, personal communication, April 17, 2005). A response

rate of this magnitude is also reasonably encouraging given the trend of declining response rates typically being reported by survey researchers (Porter & Whitcomb, 2003; Sax, Gilmartin, & Bryant, 2003; Smith, 1995; Steeh, 1981; Tourangeau, 2004)

Of the 105 students who had signed parent consent forms, two students returned parent consent forms that denied permission for them to participate. Another 16 students had permission to participate but were unavailable for data collection either because they were: absent from school (n=6) or away from class due to a class field trip (n=10) on the day of data collection. This left a total 87 students available to participate. Of the 87 students who were available, all assented to take part in the study. This 100% response rate can be considered especially high compared to the low response rates typically reported for student samples (Dey, 1997; Porter & Whitcomb, 2003).

### *Measures*

*High School and Family Partnerships, Student Survey.* The HSFP-S was developed to measure how secondary school students, families, and schools work together (Epstein, Connors, & Salinas, 1993). The original survey consists of 10 subscales that are intended to measure all dimensions of the home-school-student relationship from the student's perspective. It measures secondary students' perceptions of: their own actions, their parents' actions, and their schools' actions as related to encouraging parent involvement; as well as their perceptions of how each of these stakeholders interact to promote parent involvement. Given the length of time required to complete the full HSFP and the broad range of information that it collects, the survey authors explicitly recommend that researchers using the HSFP select only those subscales that are pertinent to the research question(s) under investigation (Epstein, Connors, & Salinas, 1993).

As per this recommendation, only those subscales related to parent involvement activities were included. In reference to the complete survey, these were subscale three (herein referred to as the Parent Initiated scale) and subscale five (herein referred to as the Teacher Initiated scale). There was a third subscale, concerning student initiatives, that was also considered for selection. However, it consisted of items that were deemed more appropriate for younger secondary students (i.e., grades 8 and 9) and, as such, was excluded from the current study (which was purposely focused on grades 10, 11, and 12 students).

The Parent-Initiated scale consisted of 18 items which ask “how often does your parent...” initiate a specific parent involvement activity. As per the original survey design, students respond using a five-point scale of “never”, “a few times”, “monthly”, “weekly”, and “daily”. For the purposes of this study, all 18 items of the Parent-Initiated scale were taken verbatim from the original survey. As indicated by the original authors, lower scores indicate an action is shown less often and thus represents a lower level of parent involvement.

The Teacher-Initiated scale consisted of 12 items which asked the student “Would it be ok if a teacher asked you to...” request his/her parent to be involved in a particular way. In the original survey design, respondents were asked to select either “OK with me” or “NOT OK with me” as responses. However, given that the purpose of this study was to measure amount of parent involvement (and not simply willingness to support parent involvement, as intended by the original authors), the Teacher-Initiated scale was adapted to be consistent with the items on the Parent Initiated scale (thereby measuring amount).

That is, items that were originally worded to ask “*Would it be ok if your teacher asked you to...*” were reworded to ask “*How often does your teacher ask you to...*”. Although the

stimulus question was altered from “*would it be ok...*” to “*how often does...*”, all specific details of the involvement activity (e.g., “read something you wrote to your parent”, “invite my parent to come to my class”) were unchanged from the original survey.

As per the original survey design for the Parent-Initiated scale, the same 5-point response scale of “never”, “a few times”, “monthly”, “weekly”, and “daily” was applied to the adapted Teacher-Initiated scale. Although there was some initial concern about the appropriateness of this 5-point scale for the items of the Teacher-Initiated scale, the items were informally reviewed (through discussion about the appropriateness of this scale to apply to each item) and were judged by the researchers to be reasonably suitable for the majority of items.

The adaptations of rewording the questions and changing the response scale were undertaken with care to maximize the integrity of the scale by staying consistent with the original survey design for the Parent-Initiatives scale. These adaptations were deemed necessary to produce a cohesive survey that addresses the different types of parent involvement consistently and comprehensively. All adaptations were undertaken with the permission and consultation of the original authors.

Consistent with the Parent-Initiated scale and as indicated by the original authors, lower scores on the Teacher Initiated scale indicate an action is shown less often and thus represents a lower amount of parent involvement.

*Satisfaction Scale.* In addition to measuring the amount of parent involvement, this study was also designed to measure satisfaction in relation to that perceived amount of parent involvement. As such, a Satisfaction Scale was created specifically for use in this study.

The Satisfaction Scale was designed to act in tandem with the Parent-Initiated and Teacher-Initiated scales. To do this, participants were asked to complete the statement “I would like my parent (teacher) to do this...” (using one of five responses) in relation to each item of the HSFP-S. That is, for each Parent-Initiated or Teacher-Initiated scale item asking “how often does your parent/teacher...” do/request a certain involvement activity, participants were asked to rate how satisfied they were with the amount of that activity by selecting one of five responses: “a lot less”, “somewhat less”, “the same amount”, “somewhat more”, and “a lot more”. Lower scores indicate that participants would like their parents/teachers to do less of a particular action.

Given the interrelated nature of the Satisfaction Scale to the HSFP-S (i.e., that it was measuring level of satisfaction related to the amount of parent involvement measured by each item of the HSFP-S), the Satisfaction Scale was integrated into the HSFP-S so that each item asking “how often does my parent/teacher...” do an action was immediately followed by the corresponding item of the Satisfaction Scale which asked “I wish my parent/teacher would do this...”. This integration of items was considered necessary for timely and logical completion of the survey.

Since the Satisfaction Scale was designed specifically for use in this study, information about its psychometrics is not available. However, examination of research about the quality and applicability of commonly used satisfaction measures in the field of customer service supports the measurement of satisfaction in this way (Wirtz & Lee, 2003).

For a copy of the integrated HSFP-S and Satisfaction Scales used in this study, see Appendix C.

*Student Information Form.* Demographic information about the participants and their families was also collected. The Student Information Form provides descriptive information about the sample being surveyed and allows exploration of possible associations between parent involvement and the various demographic variables that characterize the participants. In the review of literature related to parent involvement, it was determined that typical participant characteristics of interest are gender, age, grade, ethnicity, income, and level of school achievement. Other relevant demographic variables considered were family status (e.g., two-parent or single parent) and geographical distance between home and school. Based on this information, a Student Information Form was developed for use in this study (see Appendix D).

#### *Procedure*

*Pilot Study.* A small pilot study was conducted to get feedback about the presentation of the survey packet, the clarity of the instructions, and the length of time to complete the survey. After receiving oral parent consent, survey packets were distributed to six secondary students enrolled in grades 10, 11, or 12 for completion in a quiet setting free from distraction, either at their homes or at the home of the researcher. The pilot participants were asked to complete not only the survey packet, but also a series of questions about the survey including the length of time to complete the questionnaire, the ease of completing the questionnaire, and the content of the questions on the Student Information Form (Appendix D). Based on feedback received, revisions were made to simplify and clarify the wording of three survey items. No other changes were recommended. For a copy of the Pilot Feedback Questionnaire, see Appendix E.

*Parent Consent Process.* Two to three weeks prior to data collection, teachers were asked to distribute information packages to the grade 10, 11 and 12 students in each of the participating classes. Each package contained a letter of recruitment (printed on University of British Columbia letterhead and signed by the study's investigators) explaining the purpose and procedure of the study and study procedures. The letter included a detachable form which parents were asked to sign and return to the school indicating consent for their adolescent children to participate (Appendix A). In all cases, only those students who provided signed consent forms from their parents were invited to participate.

*Data Collection Protocol.* Two to four weeks after the distribution of parent consent letters, the researcher and trained student investigators visited the participating classrooms to conduct data collection. Student investigators collected the consent forms from the teacher and/or students. Those students who did not provide parent consent were asked to relocate to another part of the classroom and engage in alternate work, as set by the teacher. The remaining students were invited to participate in the study.

Next the researcher explained the purpose and procedure of the study and described the level of commitment that was required as a participant. Each student was then given a letter of informed consent (which repeated in writing what the investigator had previously explained) and asked to provide his/her signature and indication of assent/dissent to participate in the study (see Appendix F). Data collection protocol stipulated that those students not assenting to participate would be asked to join the regular classroom activity taking place with the other (non-participating) students. However, this protocol was not used, as all students who had signed consent forms from their parents also assented to participate.

When all assent forms were collected, the survey packets were distributed and the directions read aloud to the class. Participants were given sufficient time to complete the survey, which was approximately 10-12 minutes for most students. As participants completed the survey, they were asked to turn it over on their desks or raise their hands for assistance. During this time, the researchers circulated throughout the room and collected completed surveys. As part of this gathering process, the researchers requested that participants review the entire survey to ensure that all items had been answered to check for missing items.

Once all participants had completed the survey and had double checked for completion, the entire class was thanked for taking part. When applicable, students who had expressed an interest in participating but who did not bring signed parent consent forms were reminded to return the new consent forms in time for the follow-up visit to their classroom. Before exiting the classroom, the teacher and entire class were addressed to say thank you and to remind everyone that there would be a school wide draw for a gift certificate (redeemable at a major electronics store, through online shopping or by visiting the nearby city) to show appreciation for their willingness to host the research.

*Parent Consent Process, Phase Two.* During classroom visits for data collection, many students indicated interest in participating but were unable to because they had failed to return signed parent consent forms. In an effort to include all willing participants and to increase the participant sample, an additional phase of the Parent Consent process was implemented. During this additional phase, the researcher and a trained student investigator addressed students using the same protocol and script that had been originally provided to classroom teachers (Appendix B). When needed, additional copies of the parent consent



letters were provided to students and a follow-up date for classroom data collection was scheduled at the convenience of the classroom teacher. These follow-up visits were conducted in accordance with the original data collection protocol (as described above). As per the original protocol, only those students who provided signed parent consent were invited to participate. All students without consent, or who had participated during the previous data collection day, were asked to relocate to another part of the room or take our alternate work as set by the classroom teacher.

*Protocol for Concluding the Data Collection Phase.* Once all data collection was complete, the researcher in charge of the data collection phase returned to each school to debrief the principal about the conclusion of the data collection. As a token of appreciation for participating in the study, each school was also given a gift certificate to be awarded to a student in a random draw. These random draws were carried out as part of the debrief meeting.

### *Data Analyses*

Prior to beginning the data analyses, several issues and concerns had to be addressed regarding the appropriateness of the intended statistical analyses with this particular data set.

Of primary concern was sample size. A review of the statistical literature on factor analysis indicates that there are varied, and often conflicting, rules prescribing what constitutes an adequate sample size for such analyses (Baggaley, 1983; Osborne & Costello, 2004; Stevens, 1996). Rules range from: the concrete stipulation of a ratio of items to participants (with 3 participants/item being a fair sample, 5 or more participants/item being a good sample); to the seemingly arbitrary rule of assuming  $n \geq 51$  plus the number of items is sufficient; to the liberal rule that any  $n > 50$  is sufficient; and finally to the much more

conservative rule of having a minimum of 250-300 participants, regardless of the number of items on the survey. Unfortunately, this body of literature has yet to provide empirical evidence justifying each of the rules or explaining why one rule is more appropriate than any other (Stevens, 1996). Without this consensus from the field, it was determined that for the purposes of this study adequacy of sample size would be judged by the most frequently referenced rule: the participants to variables ratio.

With a sample size of  $n=87$ , the participants to variables ratio is 2.9:1 (87:30). This can, at best, be considered fair. Given the considerable degree of caution that would accompany results based on this sample size, the possibility of soliciting additional participants was reviewed. However, the additional time and efforts associated to identifying and recruiting more participants was considered sufficiently prohibitive given the late timing in the academic year (further data collection would have to be postponed until the next academic year) and the fact that a new district (with a new ethical review), would have to recruited since the participating district had exhausted its sample of willing participants. Thus, analyses were continued on the assumption that additional recruitment would have to occur if statistical results could not be reliably obtained from the existing sample.

Another issue of secondary importance regarding the data set was the appropriateness of all the survey items for use with this sample. In particular, item 10 from the Parent-Initiated scale queried "How often does your parent pick up my report at school?". During data collection, it was brought to attention of the researchers that district procedure surrounding report cards involved having all reports mailed to parents directly. Due to the fact that this question obviously did not apply to the sample being surveyed, this question was removed from the data set for the purposes of all analyses. Thus, the following

discussion of hypotheses and analyses is based on all items from the Parent Initiated and Teacher Initiated scale, excluding item ten.

*Research Question One.* Does the Home, School, and Family Partnership, Student survey (Epstein, Connors, & Salinas, 1993; HSFP-S), in its adapted form, demonstrate construct validity as a reliable and valid measure of parent involvement activities? Do these activities fit within a framework of at-home and at-school parent involvement?

The development of the HSFP-S was based on a clearly delineated and widely recognized model of parent involvement. Since its development, the HSFP surveys have been accepted for use as measures of parent involvement (Amaral, 2003; Deslandes & Cloutier, 2002; Epstein & Connors, 1995). Reliabilities for these scales are reported to be between .56 to .84 (Epstein, Connors, & Salinas, 1993). The Teacher-Initiated scale was also used in another study with a reported reliability of .83 (Deslandes & Cloutier, 2002). Based on these findings, it was expected that HSFP-S would be a reliable measure of parent involvement.

However, despite its wide use and the demonstration of adequate reliabilities (Deslandes & Cloutier, 2002; Epstein, Connors, & Salinas, 1993) it was recognized that there is question about the psychometric properties of the HSFP to validly measure parent involvement (Amaral & Ford, 2005) and that further work is required to demonstrate such support. Given the framework from which it was developed, as well as the extent of its use in the field, it was expected that the HSFP-S item responses would demonstrate clear statistical support for its use as a measure of parent involvement.

Further, based on Epstein's proposed organization of the typology model into categories of at-home versus at-school parent involvement (Epstein, 1992), as well as the

research supporting this same dichotomous framework (Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Childs, 2001), it was also expected that the HSFP-S would demonstrate clear support for two factors of at-home and at-school parent involvement.

To test this expectation, all items on the HSFP-S were analyzed using a two-step approach. First, an inter-item correlation matrix was computed to determine the conceptual appropriateness of combining the Parent-Initiated and Teacher-Initiated scales into one cohesive measure of parent involvement. Then, exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine the underlying factor structure that defined the items within the measure.

Given the established theoretical foundation that defines the hypothesis (and subsequent research questions), a confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) could arguably be considered the most appropriate approach to explore the factor structure. However, given that the HSFP-S does not have sufficient documentation of its psychometric properties (Amaral & Ford, 2005), a more liberal exploratory factor analyses (EFA) approach was used to determine what factor structure would “best” describe the items. As per recommended “best practice” guidelines, factors were extracted using principal axis factoring with non-orthogonal (direct oblimin) rotation (Costello & Osborne, 2005). The decision of retaining factors was made based on a combination of interpreting Eigenvalues (i.e., only items with values  $>1.0$  would be considered for retention) and Scree plots (i.e., retaining the number of factors which are identified before the plot line becomes horizontal). Within each factor, only items with loadings above .30 were retained.

Factors were labeled based on the researchers’ interpretation of item content with respect to Epstein’s Typology Model of parent involvement (i.e., the six types of parent

involvement), or where necessary, other common features of the items within the factor (such as whether the activities take place at-home or at-school).

*Research Question Two.* Are there significant differences between secondary students' reported amounts of parent involvement? Do these differences vary as a function of student demographic variables, such as gender, grade, school achievement, ethnicity, family status, or family income?

Existing research suggests that parent involvement changes in nature as student progress through school (Deslandes & Cloutier, 2002; Eccles & Harold, 1996; Epstein & Connors, 1995; Izzo, et al. 1999). Notably, it suggests that secondary schools provide less opportunity for parents to be involved and that secondary students have developmentally different needs. Both serve to reduce amount of parent involvement because they make traditional school-based parent involvement unnecessary or inappropriate. Based on these findings, it was hypothesized that secondary students would report significantly different amounts of parent involvement, depending upon the nature of the type of activity being queried. In particular, it was expected that participants would report higher amounts of at-home types of parent involvement activities compared to that of at-school types of parent involvement activities.

To answer this question, composite scores were computed by averaging each participant's responses for all items within the identified factors. Paired sample t-tests were then conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the identified factors.

A series of analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to determine if these amounts varied as a function of the demographic variables. In preparation for these analyses,

however, it was necessary to recode two of the demographic variables being examined: school achievement and family status.

To query student achievement, the Student Information Form (Appendix D) asked the student to indicate his/her previous grade in each of math and English. Participant responses for this question ranged from giving exact scores (such as 82% and 78%) to categorical letter grades (such as B+ and A-). In order to translate these responses to a consistent and interpretable scale necessary for ANOVA computation, all responses were converted into a categorical label of one, two, or three as defined by a letter-grade conversion scale set by the school district.

For the family status variable, the Student Information Form asked participants "who do you live with most or all of the time?". Participants could respond by selecting one of seven options: (1) my biological parents, (2) only one of my biological parents: mom, (3) only one of my biological parents: dad, (4) my biological mom and my stepdad, (5) my biological dad and my step-mom, (6) with a family member other than my parents, or (7) I live in a situation different from any of the ones listed. In the interest of ensuring adequate representation in each cell, as well as having meaningful and interpretable groups, these data were recoded into one of three groups: (1) both biological parents, (2) blended family (either biological mother and stepfather *or* biological father and stepmother), or (3) single parent (either biological mother or biological father).

The demographic variable family income was also considered for possible recoding. However, given that over half of the participants reported "I don't know" in response to the question about family income ( $n=46$ , 54.1% of the sample), it was not felt to be an accurate representation of the sample. As such, it was excluded from the analyses. Likewise, the

variable ethnicity was excluded from further analyses on the basis that the majority of the sample reported being Caucasian ( $n=75$ , 86.2% of the sample).

The remaining variables, gender (two levels; male/female) and grade (three levels; ten/11/12) were not recoded or manipulated in any way.

*Research Question Three.* Do secondary students report feeling satisfied with the amounts of parent involvement being shown?

Given the developmental nature of adolescence as a time of transition (from dependent child to independent adult), it was expected that secondary students' levels of satisfaction would depend upon the type of parent involvement (e.g., whether it was an at-home type of activity versus an at-school type of activity) and the amount of the parent involvement being reported.

To answer this question, composite satisfaction scores were computed for each factor identified within the HSFP-S. These composite scores were calculated by averaging participant responses for all items within each of the identified factors. Correlation analyses was then conducted to determine if there were significant relations between the amount of parent involvement and the level of satisfaction for each factor. Interpretation of composite scores describes the relation of satisfaction to amount of parent involvement.

*Research Question Four.* Are there significant differences in secondary students' levels of satisfaction with reported amounts of parent involvement? Do these differences vary as a function of student demographic variables, such as gender, grade, school achievement, ethnicity, family status, or family income?

Based on the previous findings of Deslandes and Cloutier (2002), it was hypothesized that secondary students would show different levels of satisfaction depending upon the type

of parent involvement. In particular, it was expected that participants would report higher levels of satisfaction for those activities which take place at-home versus at-school.

As described in research question two, composite scores were computed by averaging each participant's responses for all items within the identified factors. Paired sample t-tests were used to determine if there was a significant difference between the reported levels of satisfaction for each of the identified factors.

Also described, a series of analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to determine if these amounts varied as a function of the demographic variables, using the same above noted process of recoding school achievement (three level) and family status (three levels) variables while maintaining gender (two levels) and grade (three levels). As indicated, family income and ethnicity were excluded because responses were not representative and lacked variability.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### Results

#### *Participants*

There were a total of 87 students who participated in the study. The sample was comprised of 39.1% males and 60.9% females. A detailed breakdown of demographics is presented below:

Table 1

#### *Participant Demographic Data*

Student Characteristics	N	Percentage
Gender		
Male	34	39.1%
Female	53	60.9%
Grade		
10	43	49.4%
11	34	39.1%
12	10	11.5%
Age		
15	23	26.4%
16	37	42.5%
17	23	26.4%
18	4	4.6%

## School Achievement

A (between 86-100%)	38	43.7%
B (between 73-85%)	40	50.0%
C (between 60-72%)	9	10.3%

## Family Income

Less than \$34,999	8	9.4%
\$35,000-74,999	13	15.3%
More than \$75,000	18	21.2%
Unknown by participant	46	54.1%

## Race/Ethnicity

Caucasian	75	86.2%
First Nations	8	9.2%
Other	4	4.4%

## Family Status

Biological, two parent	45	51.7%
Single parent, biological mother	16	18.4%
Single parent, biological father	3	3.4%
Blended, biological mother & step-father	12	13.8%
Blended, biological father & step-mother	3	3.4%
Other	7	8.0%

### Geographical Distance from School

Within walking distance (0.5 km)	22	25.3%
5-15 minute driving distance (5-10 km)	51	58.6%
Greater than 15 minute drive (>10km)	13	14.9%

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### *Representativeness of the Sample*

To determine the appropriateness of this sample to act as a representation of this region, the student characteristics were compared to general population and school district demographics, where applicable. Based on the consistencies in the data collections, comparison could be made between the sample and the general population using data collected by Census Canada 2001 data in the demographic areas of: gender, age, race/ethnicity, family status, and family income. Additional comparisons were also made between sample demographics and school district demographics based on grade and race/ethnicity for First Nations students. For a comparison of between sample demographics and the general community, see Table 2.

The findings of the poll conducted for Census Canada (2001) indicates that the present sample slightly underrepresented males (i.e., 39.1% of the sample was male compared to 49.8% of the community was male) and slightly over-represented females (with 60.9% of the current sample being female relative to the 50.2% of the community). For purposes of analyses, this was considered a dichotomous variable.

Age-based comparisons indicated that youth aged 15 and 17 were appropriately sampled relative to the community but 16 and 18 year olds were not. Specifically, 16 year-olds were overrepresented (with 42.5% of the sample being 16 years old compared to 25.1%

of the community) while 18 year-olds were underrepresented (with 4.6% of the sample being 18 years-old compared to 22.3% of the community).

Table 2

*Comparison of Sample Demographics to Community Demographics*

Student Characteristics	Sample		Community	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	34	39.1%	705	49.8%
Female	53	60.9%	710	50.2%
<b>Age</b>				
15	23	26.4%	380	26.9%
16	37	42.5%	355	25.1%
17	23	26.4%	365	25.8%
18	4	4.6%	315	22.3%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>				
First Nations	8	9.2%	1215	5%
Visible Minority	4	4.4%	725	3%
<b>Family Status</b>				
Two parent	60	69.8%	2301	68.4%
Single parent	19	22.1%	1060	31.5%

Comparisons based on race/ethnicity indicated that visible minorities were adequately represented (i.e., representing 4.4% of the sample relative to 3.0% of the community) and First Nations students, in particular, were over-represented (i.e.,

representing 9.2% of the sample relative to 5.0% of the community). This overrepresentation of First Nations students may be a reflection of the developing efforts to increase parent involvement among First Nations parents that are being reported by the district (Amaral, 2003). Unfortunately, the data collection method used does not allow for comparison of representative demographics for Caucasian participants in the present sample. This was because the Census Canada asked about status of being Canadian-born versus not Canadian born while the present study was designed to ask ethnic background, regardless of country of birth. Given that a student of visible minority could be Canadian born and that a Caucasian student could be born outside of Canada (and vice versa in both cases), these were not felt to be comparable groups. Given that this sample represented more than 86% Caucasian participants, analyses based on race/ethnicity were not conducted.

Participant distribution within the demographic variable of family status was such that two-parent families are adequately represented (reflecting 69.8% of the sample compared to 68.4% of the community) while single parent families were slightly underrepresented (reflecting 22.1% of the sample compared to 31.5% of the community).

One final area of demographic comparison was family income. Mean annual family income was reported to be between \$100,000 and 130,000 and median family income was reported to be between \$55,000 and 74,999. This is significantly higher than the mean and median annual incomes reported by Census Canada 2001 ( $X_{\text{mean}} = \$48,887$  and  $X_{\text{med}} = \$39,887$ ). This indicates that family income was not an accurate representation of the sample. It was also noted that over half of the participants reported "I don't know" in response to the question about family income ( $n=46$ , 54.1% of the sample). Thus, responses

about family income were not felt to be an accurate representation of the sample and further analyses were not conducted.

The following table provides additional information about the comparison of the present sample to the school district demographics:

Table 3

*Comparison of Sample Demographics to School District Demographics*

Student Characteristics	Sample		School District	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Grade				
10	43	49.4%	357	31.4%
11	34	39.1%	381	33.5%
12	10	11.5%	399	35.1%
Race/Ethnicity				
First Nations	8	9.2%	94	8.2%
Visible Minority	4	4.4%	N/A	

Grade based comparisons indicate that while grade 11 students were the most appropriately represented, grade 10 students were over-represented (representing 49.4% of the sample compared to 31.4% of the district) and grade 12 students were underrepresented (representing only 11.5% of the sample compared to 35.1% of the district). These results are consistent with the comparisons of the sample to the general community and further support the idea that the 16 and 18 year-old students were not appropriately represented by the current sample (with 16 year-olds being over represented and 18 year-olds being underrepresented).

*Research Question One*

Does the Home, School, and Family Partnership, Student survey (Epstein, Conners, & Salinas, 1993; HSFP-S), in its adapted form, demonstrate construct validity as a reliable and valid measure of parent involvement activities? Do these activities fit within the framework of at-home and at-school parent involvement?

*Validity of the HSFP-S as a Unitary Measure of Parent Involvement.* As previously indicated, the HSFP-S as adapted for use in this study was composed of two scales from the original survey. For the purposes of this study, those scales are called the Parent-Initiated Parent Involvement scale and the Teacher-Initiated Parent Involvement scale (so called to reflect the content of the items).

Prior to conducting the exploratory factor analysis, correlational analysis was done to determine the appropriateness of combining the Parent-Initiated and Teacher-Initiated scales. The results of this analysis indicated that while some items were highly inter-correlated, there were not strong correlations between all items. Examination of the correlation matrix showed clear indication of two separate sets of items and that these sets were consistent with the two scales used to make up the HSFP-S (see Appendix G). This lack of inter-item correlation between items on the two scales indicated that the merger of the two scales to act as a unitary measure of parent involvement was unsuccessful.

This suggests that the two scales were conceptually too different to be considered a unitary measure of parent involvement. Hence, a decision was made to proceed with two factor analyses: one for each of the Parent-Initiated and Teacher-Initiated Parent Involvement scales. This decision was further supported by the concern about sample size relative to the

number of variables, as the decision to examine each scale separately significantly improved the participant to variables ratio.

*Validity of the Parent-Initiated Parent Involvement Scale.* Given the differentiation of the HSFP-S into two subscales, the participants-to-items ratio was re-calculated to reflect the change to the ratio. The participants:items ratio for the Parent-Initiated scale of the HSFP-S was 5.1:1 (87:17) which is considered a good sample size (Gorsuch, 1983; Hatcher, 1994; Osborne & Costello, 2004). This discussion is based on 17 of the 18 items of the Parent-Initiated Parent Involvement scale (item 10 was removed because it was deemed inappropriate given the district protocol surrounding report card distribution).

Factors were extracted by principal axis factoring and oblimin rotation techniques. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .62 and the Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ( $p=.00$ ). This indicates that factor analysis is an appropriate approach for this data.

The initial results extracted six factors with Eigenvalues greater than one (4.07, 2.04, 1.74, 1.32, 1.12, and 1.07, respectively; total variance accounted for 66.8%), however, interpretation of the Scree Plot suggested that the data were best described by the first two factors. As such, the factor analysis was re-run with the provision of constraining it to two factors. This model accounted for a total variance of 35.91%.

Factor One consisted of: items seven (how often does a parent take a trip or go to a special event with me?), nine (how often does my parent talk with my teachers on the phone?), 11 (how often does my parent have a parent-teacher conference with one of my teachers?), 12 (how often does my parent talk with all my teachers?), 15 (How often does my parent go to a meeting at school?), 16 (how often does my parent come to my school as a



volunteer?), and 17 (how often does my parent talk with the parent of my friend or classmate?).

Items 13 (how often does my parent talk with my school counselor about my future?) and 14 (how often does my parent attend my school activities? e.g., sports, music, drama, etc.) also loaded onto this factor but were dropped because their loadings were below 0.3. For a complete list of item loadings, see Table 5.

Given the content of these items as reflecting some form of communication between a parent (i.e., the home) and the school, this factor was named *Communication: Home-School*. It had a moderate reliability ( $\alpha=0.75$ ). Mean response for the Communication: Home-School factor was “a few times” ( $M=2.09$ ,  $SD=.72$ ), with  $n=87$ .

Factor Two consisted of items one (how often does my parent ask me about school?), two (how often does my parent ask if I did my homework?), three (how often does my parent help me with my homework?), four (how often does my parent give me praise and encouragement about school?), five (how often does my parent ask me about my grades?), eight (how often does a parent help me plan my time for homework, chores, and other responsibilities), and 18 (how often does my parent tell me how important school is for my future). For a complete list of item loadings, see Table 5.

Item 6 (how often does a parent talk about a TV show with me?) was dropped from this factor for having a loading less than .30.

Given the content of these items as reflecting some communication between the parent and the child, this factor was named *Communication: Parent-Child*. This factor also had a low to moderate reliability ( $\alpha=0.73$ ). Mean response for the Communication: Parent-Child factor was “once” ( $M=1.09$ ,  $SD=.59$ ) with  $n=87$ .

Table 5

*Item loadings for Parent-Initiated Scale (Oblimin rotation)*

Item: How often does my parent...	Factor 1	Factor 2
9. Talk to my teachers on the phone?	.67	.19
11. Have a parent-teacher with <u>one</u> of my conference?	.66	.08
12. Talk with <u>all</u> my teachers?	.66	.06
16. Come to my school as a volunteer?	.53	-.07
15. Go to a meeting at school? (e.g., Parent Advisory Council)	.51	-.11
7. Take a trip or go to a special event with me?	.35	-.21
17. Talk with the parent of my friend or classmate?	.31	-.10
14. Attend my school activities? (e.g., sports, music, drama, etc.)	.29	-.10
13. Talk with my school counselor about my future?	.22	.00
2. Ask if I did my homework?	.04	-.66
1. Ask me about school?	.13	-.60
3. Help me with my homework?	-.13	-.60
4. Praise & encourage me about school?	-.06	-.59
8. Help me plan my time for homework, chores, and...?	.06	-.48
5. Ask about my grades?	.16	-.48
18. Tell me how important school is?	-.05	-.44
6. Talk about a TV show with me?	.15	-.29

*Validity of the Teacher-Initiated Parent Involvement Scale.* The Teacher-Initiated consisted of 12 items. This reflected a good participants-to-items ratio (7.25:1; 87:12).

The initial results extracted six factors with Eigenvalues greater than one (2.96, 1.66, 1.15, and 1.06, respectively; total variance accounted for 56.87%). However, when this information was interpreted in consideration of the Scree Plot (which showed two factors), it was decided that the data were best described by the first two factors. As such, the factor analysis was re-run with the provision of constraining it to two factors, which accounted for a total variance of 38.45%.

Factor One consisted of items 21 (how often does my teacher have me ask my parent about his/her youth?), 24 (how often does my teacher tell me to talk to my parent about current events?), 26 (how often does my teacher ask me to interview my parent?), 27 (how often does my teacher ask me to invite my parent to visit my class?), and 28 (how often does my teacher ask me to invite my parent on a class trip?). For a complete list of item loadings, see Table 6.

The content of these items reflected requests for information (such as asking about parents' experiences or knowledge) and help (such as making a classroom visit or accompanying a school trip). As such, this factor was labeled *Requests for Information and Support At School*. It had a low reliability ( $\alpha=.61$ ) and the mean response was "once" ( $M=.75$ ,  $SD=.48$ ), with  $n=87$ .

Factor Two consisted of items 19 (how often does my teacher have me to ask my parent listen to me read something I wrote?), 20 (how often does my teacher get me to ask my parent for ideas?), 22 (how often does my teacher tell me to ask my parent for help with homework?), 23 (how often does my teacher have me show my parent my work?), 25 (how often does my teacher tell me to ask my parent about a TV show?), and 29 (how often does my teacher ask me to work with my parent to improve my grades?). For a complete list of item loadings, see Table 6.

The content of these items again reflected a request for information (such as asking for ideas or about a particular TV show) and also interactive home support (such as asking for help with homework or working with a parent to improve grades). This factor was labeled *Requests for Information and Support At Home*. It had a low reliability ( $\alpha=.66$ ) and the mean response was "never" ( $M=.41$ ,  $SD=.43$ ), with  $n=87$ .

For the Teacher Initiated Scale, all items had factor loadings greater than .30 and were within one of the two factors.

Table 6

*Item loadings for Teacher-Initiated Scale (Oblimin rotation)*

Item: How often does my teacher...	Factor 1	Factor 2
28. Ask me to invite my parent on a class trip?	.62	-.06
21. Have me ask my parent about his/her youth?	.50	.01
30. Ask me to bring home notes from school?	.43	-.16
24. Tell me to talk to my parent about current events?	.40	-.18
26. Ask me to interview my parent?	.40	.08
27. Ask me to invite my parent to visit my class?	.32	.11
22. Tell to ask my parent for help with homework?	-.05	-.62
29. Ask me to work with my parent to improve my grades?	.02	-.60
20. Get me to ask my parent for ideas?	.30	-.48
19. Get me to ask my parent listen to me read something I wrote?	-.19	-.43
25. Tell me to ask my parent about a TV show?	.31	-.41
23. Have me show my parent my work?	.27	-.36

*Summary.* The HSFP-S, in its adapted form, did demonstrate moderate psychometric support as a valid measure of parent involvement with a two factor model best representing each of the Parent Initiated and Teacher Initiated Parent Involvement scales. Based on the content of the items, the two factors of the Parent Initiated scale were labeled

*Communication: Home-School* and *Communication: Parent-Child*. Reliability for each

factor was moderate ( $\alpha=.72$  and  $.73$ , respectively). The two factors of the Teacher Initiated

scale were labeled *Requests for Information and Support at School* and *Requests for*

*Information and Support at Home*. Reliability for these factors was low ( $\alpha=.61$  and  $.66$ ,

respectively). Although the content within these factors does reflect elements of at-home and at-school activities, the nature of the items within each factor is such that the actions are not

exclusively based at home or at-school. As such, the factors were labeled to reflect the type of activities rather than the location of where the activity takes place.

### *Research Question Two*

Are there significant differences between secondary students' reported amounts of parent involvement? Do these differences vary as a function of student demographic variables, such as gender, grade, school achievement, or family status?

Based on the findings that each of the Parent Initiated and the Teacher Initiated scales are best represented by two factor models, the following analyses was adjusted to reflect the two factors within each of the *Parent-Initiated* and *Teacher-Initiated Parent Involvement* scales. A series of paired sample t-tests were conducted to determine if there were significant differences between the amounts of parent involvement reported for each of the four factors of parent involvement. To explore all possibilities, six paired combinations were identified and subjected to t-test analyses:

1. *Communication: Home-School* versus *Communication: Parent-Child*.
2. *Communication: Home-School* versus *Requests for Information and Support at School*.
3. *Communication: Home-School* versus *Requests for Information and Support at Home*.
4. *Requests for Information and Support at School* versus *Requests for Information and Support at Home*.
5. *Communication: Parent-Child* versus *Requests for Information and Support at School*.

6. *Communication: Parent-Child versus Requests for Information and Support at Home.*

Table 7 shows the results.

Table 7

*Significant Differences Between Types of Parent Involvement*

Factor Pair	<i>X(SD)</i>	<i>t (86)</i>	<i>p</i>
Pair 1		12.12	.00
<i>Communication: Home-School versus</i>	2.10(.72)		
<i>Communication: Parent-Child.</i>	1.09(.59)		
Pair 2		17.35	.00
<i>Communication: Home-School versus</i>	2.09(.72)		
<i>Requests for Information and Support at School.</i>	.75(.48)		
Pair 3		21.17	.00
<i>Communication: Home-School versus</i>	2.09(.72)		
<i>Requests for Information and Support at Home.</i>	.41(.43)		
Pair 4		5.91	.00
<i>Requests for Information and Support at School versus Requests for</i>	.75(.48)		
<i>Information and Support at Home.</i>	.41(.43)		
Pair 5		4.63	.00
<i>Communication: Parent-Child versus</i>	1.09(.59)		
<i>Requests for Information and Support at School.</i>	.75(.48)		
Pair 6		10.17	.00
<i>Communication: Parent-Child versus</i>	1.09(.59)		
<i>Requests for Information and Support at Home.</i>	.41(.43)		

These results indicate that there were significant differences between the amounts of parent involvement reported for each factor. Specifically, there was significantly more *Communication: Home-School* ( $M=2.10$ , “a few times”) than either of *Communication: Parent-Child* ( $M=1.09$ , “once”), *Requests for Information and Support at School* ( $M=.75$ , “once”), and *Requests for Information and Support at Home* ( $M=.41$ , “never”). There was also significantly more *Requests for Information and Support at School* than *Requests for Information and Support at Home* (although when numerical means were rounded to the nearest nominal label, both means= “never”) and significantly more *Communication: Parent-Child* (nominal mean= “once”) than either of *Requests for Information and Support at School* (nominal mean also= “once”) or *Requests for Information and Support at Home* (nominal mean= “never”).

*Amount of parent involvement as a function of demographics characteristics.* A series of analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted to determine the effect of the demographic variables on the reported amounts of parent involvement for each of the four factors (*Communication: Home-School*, *Communication: Parent-Child*, *Requests for Information and Support at School*, and *Requests for Information and Support at Home*). The demographic variables considered were Gender, Grade, School Achievement, and Family Status. Tables 8, 9, 10, and 11 show the results for each factor.

These results indicate that there was a significant effect of family status with *Communication: Parent-Child* and of grade with *Requests for Information and Support at Home*. Amounts of parent involvement did not vary as a function of any other demographic variables.

Table 8

*Amount of Parent Involvement (Communication: Home-School) as a Function of Demographic Characteristics*

Demographic Characteristic	<i>df</i>	F	<i>p</i>
Gender	1, 86	.09	.77
Grade	2, 86	.27	.76
School Achievement	2, 86	.31	.73
Family Status	2, 78	2.00	.14

Table 9

*Amount of Parent Involvement (Communication: Parent-Child) as a Function of Demographic Characteristics*

Demographic Characteristic	<i>df</i>	F	<i>p</i>
Gender	1, 86	.83	.37
Grade	2, 86	1.53	.22
School Achievement	2, 86	.54	.58
Family Status	2, 78	5.11**	.01

\*\* $p < .01$

Post hoc testing was conducted using the Bonferroni method to determine the nature of the effect of family status on amount of reported parent involvement for the factor *Communication: Parent-Child*. This indicated that, of the three levels of family status (biological two-parent, blended, or single parent), amount of parent involvement reported for the factor *Communication: Parent-Child* was significantly lower for blended families ( $M = .80$ ,  $SD = .47$ ) than for single parent families ( $M = 1.42$ ,  $SD = .63$ ). Mean reported



Table 10

*Amount of Parent Involvement (Requests for Information and Support at School)  
as a Function of Demographic Characteristics*

Demographic Characteristic	<i>df</i>	F	<i>p</i>
Gender	1, 86	2.84	.10
Grade	2, 86	1.06	.35
School Achievement	2, 86	.85	.43
Family Status	2, 78	.23	.79

amount of this type of parent involvement for participants from biological families ( $M=1.14$ ,  $SD=.58$ ) was not significantly different from that of either blended families or single parents families. It is important to note that despite the statistical significance of these findings, the nominal labels associated with these mean amounts (when rounded to the nearest whole number) are the same (all mean scores round to 1.0, which has the nominal label of "once").

Post hoc testing to determine the nature of the effect of grade on the amount of reported parent involvement for the factor *Requests for Information and Support at Home* was also conducted using the Bonferroni method. This indicated that amount of parent involvement reported was significantly higher for participants in grade ten ( $M=.57$ ,  $SD=.45$ ) than in grades 11 ( $M=.27$ ,  $SD=.36$ ) or 12 ( $M=.17$ ,  $SD=.25$ ). Mean amount of reported parent involvement for this factor did not differ between grades 11 and 12. The nominal labels associated with these mean amounts (when rounded to the nearest whole number) are "once" (grade ten) compared to "never" (grades 11 and 12).

Table 11

*Amount of Parent Involvement (Requests for Information and Support at Home)  
as a Function of Demographic Characteristics*

Demographic Characteristic	<i>df</i>	F	<i>p</i>
Gender	1, 86	.04	.84
Grade	2, 86	7.48**	.00
School Achievement	2, 86	1.32	.27
Family Status	2, 78	.81	.45

\*\* $p < .01$

*Summary.* Paired sample t-tests indicated there were statistically significant differences between the reported amounts of parent involvement for all possible comparisons. Mean amounts of parent involvement ranged from “never” to “a few times”. Post hoc analyses showed that there was a significant relation between family status and amount of *Communication: Parent-Child* and between grade and *Requests for Information and Support at Home*. In particular, examination of means scores indicated that participants from blended families have lower amounts of this type of parent involvement than did participants from single parent families while participants in grade 10 reported higher amounts of *Requests for Information and Support at Home* than those in grades 11 or 12.

### *Research Question Three*

Do secondary students report an overall feeling of satisfaction with the amount of parent involvement being shown?

Given the findings of question one, analyses for this question was carried out to examine the relation between satisfaction and the amount of parent involvement as measured within each factor of the Parent Initiated and Teacher Initiated Parent Involvement scales.

*Amount of Parent-Initiated Parent Involvement and level of satisfaction.* Amounts of parent involvement for each factor within the *Parent-Initiated Parent Involvement* scale (i.e., *Communication: Home-School*, *Communication: Parent-Child*) was calculated by averaging the responses for all items within each factor. Likewise, level of satisfaction was calculated by averaging participant's scores on all items within the corresponding satisfaction scales.

Results indicated there was a significant negative correlation between amount of parent involvement and level of satisfaction with that amount for each of the factor subscales (i.e., *Communication: Home-School* and *Communication: Parent-Child*) within the *Parent-Initiated Parent Involvement* scale. Correlation co-efficients are presented in Table 12.

*Amount of Teacher-Initiated Parent Involvement and level of satisfaction.* As with the *Parent-Initiated* scale, amounts of parent involvement were calculated for each factor within the *Teacher-Initiated Parent Involvement* (i.e., *Requests for Information and Support at School* and *Requests for Information and Support at School*). Levels of satisfaction were similarly computed by determining average scores for the satisfaction items that corresponded to each of the identified factors.

Table 12

*Correlations Between Parent-Initiated Factor Scores and Corresponding Satisfaction Scales (n = 87)*

Satisfaction Scale	Communication:	Communication
Parent Initiated PI Scale	Home-School	Parent-Child
Communication: Home-School	-.26*	-
Communication: Parent-Child	-	-.34**

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

Results indicate that there were no significant correlations between overall amount of *Teacher Initiated Parent Involvement* and participant level of satisfaction with that amount parent involvement for either of the two factors. This suggests there was no relation between amount of Requests for Information and Support at School and level of satisfaction for that amount nor was there for amount of Requests for Information and Support at Home and level of satisfaction for that amount. For a summary of these results, see Table 13.

Table 13

*Correlations Between Teacher-Initiated Parent Involvement Factor Scores and Corresponding Satisfaction Scales (n = 87)*

Satisfaction Scale	Requests for Info & Support at School	Requests for Info & Support at Home
Teacher-Initiated PI Scale		
Requests for Info and Support at School	.10	-
Requests for Info and Support at Home	-	-.08

*Summary.* Both factors of the Parent Initiated scale, *Communication: Home-School* and *Communication: Parent-Child* were significantly correlated to the corresponding levels of satisfaction. The negative direction of the correlation indicates that higher amounts of parent involvement were associated with lower levels of satisfaction. Comparatively, neither factor of the Teacher-Initiated scale (i.e., *Requests for Information and Support at School* or *Requests for Information and Support at Home*), were significantly correlated. This indicated that there was no relation between amount of these types of parent involvement and the levels of satisfaction reported for those amounts.

#### *Research Question Four*

Are there significant differences in secondary students' levels of satisfaction with reported amounts of parent involvement? Do these differences vary as a function of student demographic variables, such as gender, grade, school achievement, or family status?

Given the nature of this question, only those subscales which demonstrated a significant relation between the amount of parent involvement and the corresponding satisfaction scale can be reliably considered within this analyses.

Thus (based on the previously stated findings), only the satisfaction subscales for *Communication: Home-School* and *Communication: Parent-Child* will be included in this analyses. The factors *Requests for Information and Support at School* and *Requests for Information and Support at Home* are excluded on the basis that the amount of parent involvement reported for each factor did not correlate the corresponding satisfaction scales.

A t-test analyses indicated that level of satisfaction for amount of parent involvement for the factor *Communication: Home-School* did not significantly differ from the level of satisfaction for amount of parent involvement for the factor *Communication: Parent-Child*,  $t(86)=-1.34, p=.18$ . Mean levels of satisfaction related to these amounts of parent involvement were both within the range of "a few times" relative to their mean amount of parent involvement which were "a few times" and "once" for *Communication: Home-School* and *Communication: Parent-Child*, respectively.

Given the lack of a significant difference between the levels of satisfaction, all further analyses were discontinued.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Discussion

The purpose of the present research was to investigate secondary students' perceptions of parent involvement in education. Specifically, this research was intended to measure amounts and types of parent involvement as perceived by secondary students and to compare those amounts to reported levels of satisfaction. In doing so, it informs the field of parent involvement at the secondary level from by presenting empirical evidence about how we conceptualize parent involvement and by enhancing the ability to translate these concepts into practice by identifying the types of parent involvement activities that are appreciated by secondary students.

What follows is a discussion on the findings of this study as a contribution to this field. In doing so, the strengths and weaknesses of this design implementation are discussed with particular relevance to how this study has informed some plausible and important directions for future research and development of this field.

#### *Interpretation of Research Findings*

Although the intended purpose of this study was to investigate the nature of parent involvement from the secondary student's perspective, it was recognized that valid and reliable results could only be assured if the measure under examination was able to demonstrate adequate psychometric properties. That said, the interpretation of the results of this study are two-fold: to provide insight into the validity of Epstein's *Typology Model of Parent Involvement* and to discuss the usefulness of the HSFP-S to meaningfully measure parent involvement.

### *Validity of the HSFP-S*

The results of this study indicate that the HSFP-S is a valid measure of parent involvement. It demonstrated moderate validity and low to moderate reliability for the types of parent involvement it measured. These are particularly notable findings given that the measure has been largely untested.

However, it is even more meaningful that these results did not show that the HSFP-S measured parent involvement as a general construct. Instead, the items administered clustered into four identifiable factors: *Communication: Home-School*, *Communication: Parent-Child*, *Requests for Information and Support at School*, and *Requests for Information and Support at School*. This suggests that although the HSFP-S can be used to measure these identified constructs, the results obtained are limited in their applicability and generalizability to understanding parent involvement as a whole construct.

It is also worthwhile to note that these factors do not easily transfer onto the Epstein's Typology model, which identifies six types of parent involvement and was purported to be the basis upon which this measure was developed. Of Epstein's six types of parent involvement, the *Communication* types of activities were most heavily represented. While there are items depicting *Parenting*, *Volunteering*, and *Learning at Home* types of activities, the responses to these items did not lend enough psychometric support to act as stand alone factors. Instead, these items loaded within factors that were clearly dominated by communication types of activities. This further suggests that the Parent Initiated and Teacher Initiated scales used for this study were able to validly measure parent involvement, but did so with a limited scope and breadth relative to the many types of activities that are considered

to be a part of parent involvement. This limited scope may reflect limitations of the measure, limitations of the theory, or quite possibly some combination of both.

These results are more encouraging in that it supports making a dichotomous distinction of parent involvement as at-home versus at-school activities. Although these results do not show conclusive support for this conceptual approach, the content of the items within each factor do suggest that the primary location of the activity plays a role in defining the how parent involvement can be best explained and understood. This was particularly apparent in the Parent Initiated scale where the factor model represented two communication-type factors: communication between home and school and communication between parent and child. Although the Teacher Initiated scale did not demonstrate this as clearly (i.e., there were items representing a general requests for information which loaded onto each factor) or as reliably (i.e., the reliabilities for each factor was low), there was still evidence within each factor that activities which occur primarily at home are conceptually different from activities which occur at school. This is encouraging, albeit rudimentary, support for the growing body of evidence and theorizing that parent involvement can be appropriately conceptualized into the two dimensions of at-home and at-school parent involvement (Amaral, 2003; Epstein, 1995; Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Childs, 2000).

These findings also provide insight into the argument of how and why parent involvement appears to change over time. For example, the two most commonly cited reasons to explain the decline in parent involvement throughout secondary school are that secondary school coursework does not lend itself to homework support (when required skill level required exceeds the skill levels of the parents) and that it is logistically difficult to coordinate parent-teacher conferences when the student has multiple teachers (Eccles & Harold,



1993; Hickman et al., 1995). However, these results suggest support for the notion that at-home types of activities are equally deserving of attention. Given that research shows parent involvement is most readily identified as being those activities which are primarily based at school, it is not surprising that parent involvement (as it is typically measured) is seen as decreasing as children progress through school (Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Dodd & Konzal, 2000; Dornbusch & Glasgow, 1996; Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Eccles & Harold, 1996; Epstein, 1986, Izzo et al., 1999).

#### *Comparing Amounts of Parent Involvement*

The findings of the present study indicate that secondary students do indeed see their parents as being involved in significant ways. Although the amounts of parent involvement being reported are still qualitatively low (the overall mean amounts being “once” to “a few times” over the past school year), it is still evidence that parents are indeed initiating an interest in their children’s lives in very specific and concrete ways *beyond* the elementary school level. Comparatively, secondary students do not see their teachers soliciting as much parent involvement as is initiated by parents (with overall means being “never” and “once” for each of the Teacher Initiated factors). This is consistent with previous studies, which have found that parents are less involved in school-based activities (Amaral, 2003; Epstein & Connors, 1995) and further indicates that parents may be less involved in school-based activities because they are given fewer opportunities and less encouragement from the school. This notion is supported by Eccles and Harold (1996), who purport that school factors and teacher-initiation of parent involvement significantly impact parent involvement.

The results of these findings also point to the need for parent involvement research to focus more on measuring the discrete types of activities that make up parent involvement

rather than measuring parent involvement as a unitary construct (which may not be meaningful given the different types of activities and the ranges of frequency for how often these activities may occur). Although the present study showed statistical significance between amounts that were qualitatively similar (i.e., means of “never” was different from “once” and “once” from “a few times”), this nonetheless suggests that different types of parent involvement can vary dramatically in terms of the amount being shown.

#### *The Role of Demographic Variables*

The results of this study did show significant relations between level of parent involvement and some of the demographic variables measured, namely family status and grade.

In particular, it was demonstrated that parents from blended families initiated less parent-child communication than did single parents. While this would not typically be expected given the existing research which suggests that two parent families are more involved than single parent families, it may be reflective of possible increased efforts made by the single parent to compensate for the other parent being absent from the home. Alternatively, it may also be reflective of the additional pressures that sometimes exist in blended family households, which mean less time is spent on parent involvement in education (and perhaps more time on adjusting family dynamics). This may hold especially true if it is a newly blended family or if the child is going through significant emotional adjustments common throughout adolescence (Claxton-Oldfield & Kavanagh, 1999).

The other significant relation found was between teacher-initiated requests for interaction between the child and parent through support at home (such as asking questions of the parent or getting help with homework) were reported to be higher for students in

grades ten over that of grades 11 or 12. This is consistent with previously cited trends that parent involvement is higher during younger grades (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Eccles & Harold, 1996). It also further supports the idea that parent involvement may decrease because there are less opportunities (particularly if there are less opportunities solicited by the teacher; Epstein, 1995).

It must be acknowledged the non-significant relations between parent involvement and gender and school achievement are not consistent with previous research findings. Given that this is inconsistent with a rather large body of existing research which indicates a relation between parent involvement and many student and family demographic variables, including age, gender, academic progress, ethnicity (Baker & Stevenson, 1986; Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Eccles & Harold, 1996; Leitch & Tangri, 1988; Pena, 2000), these results should be interpreted with caution.

It may be that this inconsistency is indicative of the developmental characteristics of this age group such that the effects of parent involvement are less mediated by gender or school achievement as students progress through school. However, it also suggests the possibility that the inconsistency is a result of the relatively small sample sizes within many of the demographic subgroups being examined or possibly with the way the questions were asked within the student information form. As indicated previously, it also suggests concern for the limited range of responses reported for the amounts of parent involvement. It is possible that the restricted range of responses did not create enough variability to identify significant relations between amount of parent involvement and these important demographic variables. These possibilities are more fully discussed under the section addressing the limitations of the current study.

### *Parent Involvement & Satisfaction*

Amount of parent involvement was significantly, and negatively, correlated with the level of satisfaction for both factors of the Parent Initiated scale. This indicates that higher amounts of communication between home and school (mean response= “a few times”) or between parents and children (mean response= “once”) was associated with an adequate level of satisfaction (mean responses= “the same amount” for both factors). The negative direction of that relation suggests that as amounts of parent involvement increased, level of satisfaction decreased. This supports the current speculation in the field that parents are less involved at the secondary level because secondary students do not want the involvement (Deslandes & Cloutier, 2001; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Epstein & Connors, 1995). However, further research is needed to determine why secondary students do not want additional involvement.

### *Methodological Critique*

There is often as much to be learned from the process of conducting a piece of research as there is about the outcomes of the research itself. The present study is no exception, and as such, there are particular strengths and weaknesses that must be acknowledged to enhance the further development of ideas within the field of parent involvement and inform appropriate future directions for the field.

### *Limitations of the Current Research*

The primary limitation of this study was the sample size, which could (at best) be considered “good” for the nature of the statistical analyses performed. Although there are no clear definitive guidelines for determining appropriate sample size for factor analysis, the most commonly cited rule (and thus the rule used to judge the sample for the present study) was the participants to items ratio rule (i.e., a ratio of number of participants relative to

number of items within the subscale being examined). Using this rule, the sample size of  $N=87$  was “fair” for the overall 87 participants to 30 survey items (ratio=2.9:1) but improved to “good” when it was recognized that the 30 items of the HSPF-S should be more appropriately broken down into the two scales of Parent Initiated Parent Involvement (ratio=5.1:1) and Teacher-Initiated Parent Involvement (ratio=7.25:1). There are several reasons for the small sample size, each of which further implicate the sample size as being a limitation of the research findings.

The initial research design protocol was approved for passive consent on behalf of the parents. This meant that students would be given letters of consent to be brought home to parents and unless the form was returned *denying* consent for the student to participate, the student would be invited to participate. However, this proposal was declined at the district level and an additional 165 students (who were otherwise eligible to participate) were excluded for neglecting to return their parent consent letters. This restricted the size of the sample and also limited it to those students who were organized and responsible enough to return their forms, or perhaps to those students whose parents asked if there was any mail for them. This may likely have biased the results by delimiting the sample of participants to those who were more organized, mature, or who had an actively involved parent.

The sample was subject to further biases from the participant recruitment process. While district and school level consents had been granted (through the district superintendent and each school principal), the actual number of potential students invited to participate was severely limited by the number of teachers who volunteered to host the research in their classes. The inability to gain access at the classroom level limited the sample to only 268 possible students, of which 87 returned signed consent forms and were available on the day

of data collection. This may have resulted in a biased sample, as only those teachers most interested in parent involvement (and thus more likely to initiate efforts to include parents) would have volunteered.

In addition to the size of the sample being a limitation of this study, there was also some concern about the skewed distribution of participants within the key demographic groups. In particular, there was an under-representation of male participants in both grades ten (only 25% being male) and 12 (only 30% being male), as well as an overall under-representation of participants from grade 12 (only 11% were in grade 12). This may have further biased the results, particularly moderating the finding of a non-significant relation between gender and parent involvement.

Finally, the design of the HSFP-S also created room for possible limitations in variability of the responses. The nominal response scale for the original survey was “never”, “once”, “a few times”, “weekly”, and “daily”. Prior to the implementation, the appropriateness of this scale was considered troublesome in that it questionably represented what was felt to be a reasonable scale of frequency for many of the activities described. For example, it was thought to be unlikely that any parent would attend a school based meetings or that any teacher would ask a student to ask about when his/her parent was a teenager on a daily, or even weekly, basis. However, in the interest of maintaining the integrity of the original scale, the response scale was not changed. As suspected, however, there was limited variability in the responses, such that mean scores never reached above “a few times”. For example, the individual response showed that for many items, responses of “weekly” or “never” were not selected at all in the entire sample. This restricted range and limited

variability in responses may have reduced the likelihood of identifying possible significant relations between variables.

### *Strengths of the Current Research*

There are several strengths of this study that deserve attention, both conceptually and methodologically. Perhaps the most significant strength of this study is the psychometric credence that now informs the use of the HSFP-S as a measure of Parent-Initiated and Teacher-Initiated parent involvement. The design and implementation of the exploratory factor analyses provides evidence that these scales are reasonably valid and showed moderate to low reliability for measuring the respective types parent involvement..

This evidence of psychometric properties for the HSFP-S also supports the validity and reliability of the subsequent data analyses conducted. As discussed, determining the psychometric properties of the HSFP-S was seen as a necessary, but tertiary, purpose to reliably explore the nature of parent involvement at the secondary school level. Although the initial hypothesis that the items on the HSFP-S would fall into two comparable categories of at-home versus at-school parent involvement was not supported, there was still significant evidence to show that parents are involved in their secondary students' lives. This is even despite the finding that comparatively, parents initiate involvement more often than is encouraged by their children's teachers. The results of this study show that parent involvement at this level cannot be considered a unitary construct, as is often the case with traditional parent involvement research.

Another strength of the present study is the relatively innovative contribution of focusing on the secondary students as important stakeholders in their educational experiences. Although more research needs to be done to fully explore secondary students

perceptions (Deslandes & Cloutier, 2002; Epstein & Connors, 1995) and more appropriately measure levels of satisfaction, this study does successfully provide secondary students a voice thereby give credence to their opinions. This is further supported by the fact that the response rate for return of parent consent forms was 39.2%, which is reasonably high for survey responses in this district (Amaral, 2003), and perhaps could be considered especially high for a sample of secondary school students (Dey, 1997). Qualitative evidence from the data collection indicated that many students verbally indicated an appreciation for the purpose of the research (i.e., to get their opinions) and many who had not returned consent forms were disappointed that they were not able to participate.

#### *Directions for Future Research*

A primary purpose in the development of this study was to shift the focus of parent involvement research from the much researched elementary school student and onto the rarely explored secondary school student. In doing so, it was intended to also demonstrate the significant importance of considering the importance of the secondary student as a major stakeholder in his/her educational experience. While, in an immediate sense, this study has successfully accomplished these goals, the ultimate success lies in the application of this knowledge to inform the further development of this field.

The lack of consistency between these empirical findings and the fact that Epstein's Typology of Parent Involvement is so widely accepted as a means to conceptualize and theorize about parent involvement point to a need for more rigorous statistical investigation of the proposed constructs. This indicates that parent involvement at the secondary level is not a unitary concept, but there are clear distinctions between the factors represented and these clear factors are based on who initiates the behaviour and, to a lesser extent, where the



behaviour takes place (as has been previously suggested; Epstein 1995; Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Childs, 2000).

While some of these findings may be explained as a function of the measure being used and items within that measure, it does raise the question of how parent involvement should be appropriately conceptualized at the secondary school level. In particular, it supports the idea that the traditional notion of parent involvement (as represented by amount of at-school involvement) is not an adequate way to characterize parent involvement at the secondary school level. It is, in fact, only a small piece of the parent involvement puzzle for students at the secondary level. Further research needs to explore the other possible types of activities that represent involvement but are unidentified within current models of parent involvement.

Further research is required to continue to explore parent involvement at the secondary school level, from the multiple perspectives of the student, the parent, and the school (Catsambis, 1998; Chavkin & Williams, 1990; Deslandes & Cloutier, 2002; Dodd & Konzal, 1996; Epstein, 1995). No longer should the work in this field focus on any one perspective as if it is possible to identify the interactions that occur or the effects of those interactions. As this study shows, the hypotheses and conclusions drawn when one perspective (e.g., parent involvement declines as students progress through school) is considered in isolation can easily be disproved when another perspective is taken into account (e.g., parent involvement does not necessarily decline but changes so that measuring parent involvement as a unitary construct is no longer appropriate).

It is also important that in the exploration of any and all perspectives, the measures used need to be subjected to more rigorous psychometric analyses to determine the validity

and appropriateness of the conclusions being drawn (Stevens, 1996). This psychometric work should happen in tandem with the ongoing evolution of existing parent involvement theories and models, as well as be applied to inform the development of new models (if warranted by the evidence presented). The conclusions being drawn from this work could have been dramatically different had the HSFP-S not been subjected to this kind of psychometric scrutiny.

Another ultimate direction for the present research, and indeed the field of parent involvement research as a whole, would be to use this information as a starting point from which to develop relevant and applicable action plans for encouraging and promoting parent involvement at the school level. Although local political policy stipulates that parent involvement must be fostered and encouraged at the school level (Government of British Columbia, 2002), there is limited description of how parent involvement can be conceptually and operationally defined beyond the existence and support of such at-school parent involvement activities as Parent Advisory Councils. In particular, Eccles and Harold (1996) have pointed to the fact that parent involvement, as much as it is mediated by student and family demographic variables, also varies as a function of school factors, such as the school's solicitation and support of parental involvement and teachers' initiatives to encourage parents to become involved. The results of this research further highlight this point and draw attention the niche of identifying ways that parent involvement can be more appropriately encouraged by teachers and the school at the secondary level.

As a more general trend, continued research in this area should focus on translating current and future findings about the nature of parent involvement into operational

descriptions of what parent involvement might look like at the secondary school level, and from the multiple perspectives of students, parents, and schools.

### *Summary*

Although the ability to generalize the results of this study are limited by issues of size and representativeness of the participating sample, that does not detract from the importance of this study in forging a necessary psychometric foundation from which to further explore parent involvement at the secondary level. Analyses of the psychometric properties of the HSFP-S suggest that it is indeed a measure which requires further exploration of the construct upon which it was based. While the present results did not show the expected demonstration of a two-factor model of at-home versus at-school parent involvement, it did clearly show that parent involvement is not a unitary construct at the secondary level: there is a clear distinction between the different types of parent involvement.

Based on the findings of this study, it would appear that there are fewer requests and opportunities for parents to become involved directly with schoolwork (as initiated by teachers) but that parents still maintain involvement through less direct activities such as communicating, both with the school and with their children. While these results suggest that secondary students do not want this amount of involvement to increase, there is a demonstrated evidence to support the notion that parent involvement is associated to beneficial outcomes for students of all ages (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Simon, 2001; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000; 2001).

That being the case, the present results provide a useful framework for which parents can become informed about how to go about increasing their involvement in through the various activities described. Schools, as well, can use this information to inform teachers

about ways to increase initiatives for including parents in their students' learning activities and to help develop strategies for less involved parents to become more involved.

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## APPENDIX A

## THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Faculty of Education  
 Dept of Educational & Counselling  
 Psychology & Special Education  
 2125 Main Mall  
 Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z4

## Adolescents' Perspectives of Parent Involvement

## Consent Form – Parent Version

**Principal Investigator:** Laurie Ford, PhD, Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology & Special Education,

**Co-Investigators:** Paula Kavanagh, BEd, Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology & Special Education,

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Please read the following form carefully. Please sign one copy and return in the enclosed stamped envelope or to the school with your student. Keep the other for your own records.

This form is a request for your child to take part in the study that we are doing. This project is a part of the master's degree in School Psychology for Paula Kavanagh.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this study is to help us learn more about how teenager's feel about having their parents involved in their schooling. We will ask questions about how often they see their parent(s) being involved, ways the see their parent being involved and whether they would like their parents to be more or less involved in these ways. The things we will learn will help you to know how to best help your teenager do well in high school.

**Taking Part in This Study Means:**

1. If you agree to have your teenager take part in our study, he or she will complete a survey about how you help them with school and how happy they are with your help.
2. The survey will take about 20-30 minutes and will happen during a regular classroom period. They will not miss out on any important classroom lessons. The researchers will work with the school to make sure that they do not lose much teaching time.





## Adolescents' Perspectives of Parent Involvement

## Consent Form

**Please check one of the following and return it to school with your child:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I agree to have my teenager take part in this project

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I do not wish to have my teenager take place in the project.  
If NO, just return this form- *you do NOT need to sign below.*

IF **YES** we need the information below:

Your signature (please sign):

Your name (please print your name):

Date:

Your Teenager's Name:

Your Teenager's Age:

Your Teenager's Grade:

When you sign this it means that you have received a copy of this consent form (Pages 1 & 2) for your own records.

If you would like a copy of the project summary, please write your mailing address below.

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Thank you for your help! ☺

## APPENDIX B

## Teachers' Script for Distribution of Parent Consent Letters

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MEMO

To: Classroom Teachers

Re: Research on Parent Involvement

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Dear Teacher:

Thank you so much for participating in our study. This research is investigating adolescents' perceptions of parent involvement. There are two steps to this research:

- 1.) Obtaining Parent Consent
- 2.) Visiting your classroom and administering the surveys

The first step, obtaining parent consent is where we need your help. Attached to this memo are letters explaining the purpose of this study and asking parents to allow their children to participate. What we need is for you to distribute these letters to all the students in each of your participating classes. Students must have these forms signed and back to the school before we arrive to distribute the survey. If not, those students will not be able to participate. The date we are visiting your classroom is May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2004. Please have as many forms as possible back by this date.

To help make this easier for you, we have included a brief script that you can read to students introducing the study and explaining the purpose for this letter. Please read it to your students before you distribute the letters.

Thank you and we look forward to seeing you!

## Adolescents &amp; Parent Involvement Research Team

Script for Parent Involvement Research

---

**TO BE READ TO STUDENTS BEFORE DISTRIBUTING LETTERS OF PARENT CONSENT**

On <insert day/date> we will be having some special visitors to our class. They are researchers from UBC who are looking at your thoughts and feelings about having your parents involved in your schooling. This will be your chance to tell your parents and your teachers about when they should help and when they should stay out of your way. You get to say what you want. In order to be allowed to participate, you have to bring home this letter to your parent and get it signed before class on <day>. If you don't bring back the letter, you have to do your regular class work while the visitors are here. If you do bring back the signed letter, you will get to participate and all participating classrooms get to take part in a draw for a gift certificate. You can find out more about the gift certificate when the visitors get here on <day>.

## APPENDIX C

**High School & Family Partnerships****~Student Survey~**

Dear Student:

Finally, someone is asking you how to help make school easier! This survey is all about how your parents and teachers can help you to do well in school. It's important for us to learn about what you want your parents and teachers to do. That way we can help you get the help you want, in the ways that you want it!

This is NOT a test! So, of course, there are no right or wrong answers to any of these questions. We really just want to know what YOU think.

Please do not write your name anywhere on this booklet. We want your answers to be completely confidential. Neither your teachers nor your parents will know the answers you gave. When we're done, all the students' answers will all be put together and a summary will be given to you and your school.

We are counting on you to give us ideas that will help you!

Thanks for your help.

**If you want to ask a question about anything on this survey, just put up your hand and someone will come to help you out!**

Please take your time and read each question. Then pick the answer that you feel best shows what you think or how you feel.

For all of these questions, the word “parent” means the adult who lives with you and has the most contact with you about school. Please answer the questions with this adult in mind.

<b>How often does my parent ask me about school?</b>	<b>never</b>	<b>once</b>	<b>a few times</b>	<b>weekly</b>	<b>daily</b>
<i>I wish my parent would do this...</i>	<i>a lot less</i>	<i>a little less</i>	<i>the same amount</i>	<i>a little more</i>	<i>a lot more</i>
<b>How often does my parent ask if I did my homework?</b>	<b>never</b>	<b>once</b>	<b>few times</b>	<b>weekly</b>	<b>daily</b>
<i>I wish my parent would do this...</i>	<i>a lot less</i>	<i>a little less</i>	<i>the same amount</i>	<i>a little more</i>	<i>a lot more</i>
<b>How often does my parent help me with my homework?</b>	<b>never</b>	<b>once</b>	<b>a few times</b>	<b>weekly</b>	<b>daily</b>
<i>I wish my parent would do this...</i>	<i>a lot less</i>	<i>a little less</i>	<i>the same amount</i>	<i>a little more</i>	<i>a lot more</i>
<b>How often does my parent give me praise and encouragement about school?</b>	<b>never</b>	<b>once</b>	<b>a few times</b>	<b>weekly</b>	<b>daily</b>
<i>I wish my parent would do this...</i>	<i>a lot less</i>	<i>a little less</i>	<i>the same amount</i>	<i>a little more</i>	<i>a lot more</i>
<b>How often does my parent ask me about my grades?</b>	<b>never</b>	<b>once</b>	<b>a few times</b>	<b>weekly</b>	<b>daily</b>
<i>I wish my parent would do this...</i>	<i>a lot less</i>	<i>a little less</i>	<i>the same amount</i>	<i>a little more</i>	<i>a lot more</i>

**How often does a parent talk about a TV show with me?**

**never      once      a few times      weekly      daily**

*I wish my parent would do this...*

*a lot less      a little less      the same amount      a little more      a lot more*

**How often does a parent take a trip or go to a special event with me?**

**never      once      a few times      weekly      daily**

*I wish my parent would do this...*

*a lot less      a little less      the same amount      a little more      a lot more*

**How often does a parent help me plan my time for homework, chores, and other responsibilities?**

**never      once      a few times      weekly      daily**

*I wish my parent would do this...*

*a lot less      a little less      the same amount      a little more      a lot more*

**How often does my parent talk with my teachers on the phone?**

**never      once      a few times      weekly      daily**

*I wish my parent would do this...*

*a lot less      a little less      the same amount      a little more      a lot more*

**How often does my parent pick up my report card at school?**

**never      once      a few times      weekly      daily**

*I wish my parent would do this...*

*a lot less      a little less      the same amount      a little more      a lot more*

**How often does my parent have a parent-teacher conference with one of my teachers?**

**never      once      a few times      weekly      daily**

*I wish my parent would do this...*

*a lot less      a little less      the same amount      a little more      a lot more*

**How often does my parent talk with all my teachers?**

**never      once      a few times      weekly      daily**

*I wish my parent would do this...*

*a lot less      a little less      the same amount      a little more      a lot more*

**How often does my parent talk with my school counselor about my future?**

**never      once      a few times      weekly      daily**

*I wish my parent would do this...*

*a lot less      a little less      the same amount      a little more      a lot more*

**How often does my parent attend my school activities? (e.g., sports, music, drama, etc.)**

**never      once      a few times      weekly      daily**

*I wish my parent would do this...*

*a lot less      a little less      the same amount      a little more      a lot more*

**How often does my parent go to a meeting at school? (e.g., Parent Advisory Committee, School Planning Council)**

**never      once      a few times      weekly      daily**

*I wish my parent would do this...*

*a lot less      a little less      the same amount      a little more      a lot more*

**How often does my parent come to my school as a volunteer?**

**never      once      a few times      weekly      daily**

*I wish my parent would do this...*

*a lot less      a little less      the same amount      a little more      a lot more*

**How often does my parent talk with the parent of my friend or classmate?**

**never      once      a few times      weekly      daily**

*I wish my parent would do this...*

*a lot less      a little less      the same amount      a little more      a lot more*

**How often does my parent tell me how important school is for my future?**

**never      once      a few times      weekly      daily**

*I wish my parent would do this...*

*a lot less      a little less      the same amount      a little more      a lot more*

**How often does a teacher have me to ask my parent listen to me read something I wrote?**

**never      once      a few times      weekly      daily**

*I wish my teacher would do this...*

*a lot less      a little less      the same amount      a little more      a lot more*

**How often does my teacher get me to ask my parent for ideas about a story or project?**

**never      once      a few times      weekly      daily**

*I wish my teacher would do this...*

*a lot less      a little less      the same amount      a little more      a lot more*



<b>How often does my teacher tell me to ask my parent about when he/she was a teenager?</b>	<b>never</b>	<b>once</b>	<b>a few times</b>	<b>weekly</b>	<b>Daily</b>
<i>I wish my teacher would do this...</i>	<i>a lot less</i>	<i>a little less</i>	<i>the same amount</i>	<i>a little more</i>	<i>a lot more</i>
<b>How often does my teacher tell me to ask my parent for help studying or practicing for a test?</b>	<b>never</b>	<b>once</b>	<b>a few times</b>	<b>weekly</b>	<b>Daily</b>
<i>I wish my teacher would do this...</i>	<i>a lot less</i>	<i>a little less</i>	<i>the same amount</i>	<i>a little more</i>	<i>a lot more</i>
<b>How often does my teacher have me show my parent something I learned or did well?</b>	<b>never</b>	<b>once</b>	<b>a few times</b>	<b>weekly</b>	<b>Daily</b>
<i>I wish my teacher would do this...</i>	<i>a lot less</i>	<i>a little less</i>	<i>the same amount</i>	<i>a little more</i>	<i>a lot more</i>
<b>How often does my teacher ask me to talk with my parent about current events?</b>	<b>never</b>	<b>once</b>	<b>a few times</b>	<b>weekly</b>	<b>Daily</b>
<i>I wish my parent would do this...</i>	<i>a lot less</i>	<i>a little less</i>	<i>the same amount</i>	<i>a little more</i>	<i>a lot more</i>
<b>How often does a teacher tell me to ask my parent about a TV show?</b>	<b>never</b>	<b>once</b>	<b>a few times</b>	<b>weekly</b>	<b>Daily</b>
<i>I wish my teacher would do this...</i>	<i>a lot less</i>	<i>a little less</i>	<i>the same amount</i>	<i>a little more</i>	<i>a lot more</i>

**How often does my teacher ask me to interview my parent? (e.g., for information or about a personal opinion)**

**never      once      a few times      weekly      daily**

*I wish my teacher would do this...*

*a lot less      a little less      the same amount      a little more      a lot more*

**How often does my teacher ask me to invite my parent to visit my class?**

**never      once      a few times      weekly      daily**

*I wish my teacher would do this...*

*a lot less      a little less      the same amount      a little more      a lot more*

**How often does my teacher ask me to invite my parent to come on a class trip?**

**never      once      a few times      weekly      daily**

*I wish my teacher would do this...*

*a lot less      a little less      the same amount      a little more      a lot more*

**How often does my teacher ask me to work with my parent to improve or keep up my grades?**

**never      once      a few times      weekly      daily**

*I wish my teacher would do this...*

*a lot less      a little less      the same amount      a little more      a lot more*

**How often does my teacher ask me to bring home notes, notices, or a newsletter from school?**

**never      once      a few times      weekly      daily**

*I wish my teacher would do this...*

*a lot less      a little less      the same amount      a little more      a lot more*

## APPENDIX D

**Student Information**

Please provide the following information by placing a checkmark in the appropriate circle. Do not write your name on this paper. Give only the information asked. All answers will remain confidential.

1. Are you: ☐ male ☐ female

2. What grade are you in?

☐ 10

☐ 11

☐ 12

3. How old are you?

☐ 14

☐ 15

☐ 16

☐ 17

☐ 18

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

4. How well do you do in school?

My last grade in English was: \_\_\_\_\_%

My last grade in Math was: \_\_\_\_\_%.

5. What is your ethnic background?

☐ Aboriginal/First Nation

☐ African

☐ Asian

☐ Arabic

☐ Caucasian

☐ Latin American

☐ South Asian

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Who do you live with **most or all** of the time?

- ☐ My biological parents, who are married and/or living together.
- ☐ Only one of my biological parents, most of the time.  
Circle one: **MOM** or **DAD**
- ☐ My biological mom and my "step-dad" (a man married to or living with my mom)
- ☐ My biological dad and my "step-mom" (a woman married to or living with my dad)
- ☐ With a family member other than my parents. Who? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I live in a situation different from any of the ones listed.  
Describe it: \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. How much money do your parents earn in a year:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> less than \$14 999.  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$55 000 - \$74 999.    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 000 - \$24 999. | <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 000 - \$99 999.    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 000 - \$34 999. | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 000 - \$129 999.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 000 - \$54 999. | <input type="checkbox"/> greater than \$130 000. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know.        |  |

## 8. How far do you live from the school?

- ☐ within walking distance (0.5 km)
- ☐ 5-15 minute driving distance (5-10 km)
- ☐ greater than 15 minute drive (>10 km)

## 9. Is there anything else you would like us to know about your thoughts on having your parents involved with your high school learning?

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**Thanks for all your help!!!**

## APPENDIX E

## Adolescent's Perceptions of Parent Involvement

## Pilot Phase- Survey Feedback Form

Dear Student,

Thank you for completing this survey. The survey is part of a study which asks about how often you see your parents being involved in your education as well as whether you would like your parent to be more or less involved in these ways. Your feedback will help us to make sure our survey is clear and useful. Please take a moment to read the questions below, then turn the page and complete the Home School & Family Partnerships survey.

I started this survey at: (record exact time) \_\_\_\_\_

I finished this survey at: (record exact time) \_\_\_\_\_

1. Were any of the survey questions unclear?      Yes      No  
Which ones? (write the item numbers) \_\_\_\_\_

2. What changes would you recommend? (e.g., change wording, remove items, add items, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What did you like most about this survey?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What did you like least about this survey?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

After you have completed the survey, **please use the pen/pencil/highlighter provided** to highlight any typos, mistakes, or formatting errors that you found, as well as any items or wording that you didn't understand.

## APPENDIX F

## THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



**Faculty of Education**  
**Dept of Educational & Counselling**  
**Psychology & Special Education**  
 2125 Main Mall  
 Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z4

## Secondary Students' Perspectives of Parent Involvement

## Assent Form – Student Version

**Principal Investigator:** Laurie Ford, PhD, Department of Educational & Counselling  
 Psychology & Special Education,

**Co-Investigators:** Paula Kavanagh, BEd, Department of Educational & Counselling  
 Psychology & Special Education,

Dear Student,

Please read the following form carefully. Please sign one copy and return it to your teacher or the visiting researcher. Keep the other for your own records.

This form is asking you to take part in the study that we are doing. This project is a part of the master's degree in School Psychology for Paula Kavanagh.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this study is to help us learn more about how teenager's feel about having their parents involved in their schooling. We will ask questions about how often you see your parent(s) being involved, ways you see your parent(s) being involved and whether you would like your parent(s) to be more or less involved in these ways. The things we will learn will help parents and teachers to know how to best help you do well in high school.

**Taking Part in This Study Means:**

1. If you agree to take part in our study, you will complete a survey about how your parents(s) help you with school and how happy you are with their help.
2. The survey will take about 20-30 minutes and will happen during a regular classroom period. You will not miss out on any important classroom lessons.

3. The surveys are completed confidentially. Neither you nor your parents will be identified.
4. Students who do not take part in the study will do their typical classroom work.
5. Taking part is voluntary and will not affect any services that you or your parent(s) get at school. You have the right to stop participating at any time and to not take part in the study if you do not want to answer any of the questions.
6. You will receive general information about the results of our project if you would like them. If you do want a copy please check the box and a summary will be sent to your teacher.
7. The information you give us is confidential. **No individual information will be reported and no parent or child will be identified by name** in any reports about the study. The only people who will see to the information you give us are the people working on this project.
8. By taking part in this project, you may help parents know how to best help their teenagers do well in school.
9. Students who return this consent form (whether or not you or the student consent to participate in this research) will have a chance to win a coupon for a music cd or tape. You will be able to win even if you chose not to have him/her take part in this research.
10. If at any time you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research participant, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at the University of British Columbia at

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this project you may call Dr. Laurie Ford at  
or Paula Kavanagh at

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Laurie Ford, PhD  
Principal Investigator

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Paula Kavanagh  
Co-Investigator

## Adolescents' Perspectives of Parent Involvement

## Assent Form

**Please check one of the following:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I agree to take part in this project

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I do not wish to take part in the project.  
(if no, just return this form, you do not need to sign below)

If **YES** we need the information below:

Your name (please print clearly):

\_\_\_\_\_

Your Age:

\_\_\_\_\_

Your Grade:

\_\_\_\_\_

Your signature (please sign here):

\_\_\_\_\_

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

When you sign this it means that you have received a copy of this consent form (Pages 1 & 2) for your own records.

If you would like a copy of the project summary, please check here:

☐ Yes, I would like to know the results of this study.

**Thank you for your help! 😊**



## APPENDIX G

Table A4

*Matrix of Intercorrelations Between HSFP-S Items (Items 1-30, omitting item 10)*

ITEM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	11
1	--									
2	.50**	--								
3	.47**	.31**	--							
4	.40**	.27*	.41**	--						
5	.20*	.51**	.11	.32**	--					
6	.17	.23*	.11	.20*	.28**	--				
7	.24*	.23*	.13	.16	.18*	.09	--			
8	.28**	.36**	.40**	.19*	.31**	.33**	.27**	--		
9	.11	.03	-.11	-.00	.29**	.11	.18*	.24*	--	
11	.23*	.20*	.06	-.01	.15	.19*	.17	.21*	.51**	--
12	.21*	.26**	.12	.11	.13	.12	.23*	-.04	.43**	.59**
13	.00	.14	-.04	-.02	.11	.02	.10	.05	.31**	.08
14	.17	.01	.07	.23*	.08	.00	.31**	.04	.06	.04
15	.32**	.06	.17	.18*	.18	.05	.25**	.12	.29**	.32**
16	.17	.13	.06	.11	.23**	.31**	.17	.12	.22*	.26**
17	.21*	.04	.08	.09	.05	.23*	.41**	.05	.15	.00
18	.19*	.33**	.11	.27**	.45**	.13	.04	.17	-.04	.02
19	-.21*	-.02	-.03	-.13	.08	.01	.01	.15	.24*	.15
20	.11	.19*	.26**	.11	.24*	.10	.08	.25*	.20*	.21*
21	-.04	.20*	-.09	.11	.23**	.06	.09	-.02	-.06	-.12
22	.08	-.40	.15	.06	.07	.16	.13	.14	.25**	.16
23	-.02	.19*	.05	.15	.13	.06	.13	.04	.07	.05
24	.16	.32**	.08	.04	.20*	.26**	.06	.28	-.00	-.08
25	.00	.10	-.08	.03	.10	.13	.20*	.00	.16	.04
26	.12	.08	.11	.18	.12	.27**	-.17	-.00	-.03	.00
27	.09	.21*	-.05	.01	.25**	.01	.01	.11	-.02	-.09
28	.18	.11	-.02	.01	.04	.06	.13	.09	.05	.07
29	.14	.17	.17	.14	.18	.13	.03	.23*	.26**	.28**
30	.11	.18	.13	.30**	.29**	.34**	.22*	.29**	.13	-.00

\* p&lt;.05

\*\* p&lt;.01

Table A4, continued

*Matrix of Intercorrelations Between HSFP-S Items (Items 1-30, omitting item 10)*

ITEM	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
11										
12	--									
13	.22*	--								
14	.07	-.06	--							
15	.22*	.04	.34**	--						
16	.34**	.07	.37**	.45**	--					
17	.06	.16	.32**	.27**	.27**	--				
18	.03	.31**	-.03	.12	.12	.00	--			
19	.01	.04	.05	-.10	.10	-.11	.03	--		
20	.10	.02	.03	.14	.03	.01	.18	.16	--	
21	-.19*	.03	.20*	-.01	-.03	-.03	.03	-.05	.20*	--
22	.12	.09	.11	.09	.11	.05	.01	.17	.32**	.07
23	.19*	.15	.12	.09	.27**	.01	.17	.14	.35**	.15
24	-.14	-.08	.03	.09	.16	.04	-.04	.01	.24*	.27**
25	.00	.31**	.01	.11	.16	.35**	.13	.20*	.37**	.16
26	-.02	-.06	.35**	.13	.35**	-.05	-.03	-.03	.03	.29**
27	.05	.12	.03	-.04	-.03	-.04	.23*	-.08	.08	.06
28	.07	.29**	.28**	.28**	.30**	.21*	.20*	-.12	.30**	.27**
29	.16	.02	-.01	.20*	.16	-.11	.15	.27**	.36**	.08
30	.07	.02	.23*	.19*	.20*	.30**	-.03	.01	.26**	.27**

\*  $p < .05$ \*\*  $p < .01$

Table A4, continued

*Matrix of Intercorrelations Between HSFP-S Items (Items 1-30, omitting item 10)*

ITEM	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
11									
12									
13									
14									
15									
16									
17									
18									
19									
20									
21									
22	--								
23	.19*	--							
24	.05	.26**	--						
25	.24**	.40**	.24**	--					
26	.01	.02	.21*	.11	--				
27	-.10	.07	.00	.00	.07	--			
28	.09	.24*	.22*	.31**	.21*	.38**	--		
29	.44**	.14	.19*	.23*	.03	.11	.16	--	
30	.16	.14	.30**	.22*	.22*	.12	.24**	.09	--

\* p&lt;.05

\*\* p&lt;.01