

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter discusses literature related to high school students' perceptions of parental involvement and how it affects their high school success. Studies were reviewed to give different perspectives of parental involvement from parents, teachers, and administrators to show how students' perceptions are a needed component in the development of a parental involvement plan. The researcher analyzed previous research related to students' perceptions of parental involvement and how the previous research may or may not agree with the findings in the current study. The strategies used to locate relevant research are explained. Factors that affect parents' involvement in their children's education are also examined, as well as what is currently understood about high school students' perceptions of parental involvement.

This chapter also presents a discussion of NCLB and its effects on parental involvement in the school system (Epstein, 2005, 2007; Loveless et al., 2008; Rogers, 2006). The relationship of parental involvement to students' education and its impact on student achievement are described. Studies correlating parental involvement and ethnicity and parental involvement and economic factors are explained (Bianchi & Lancianese, 2005; Epstein, 2005; Rogers, 2006). Ethnicity and economic factors may contribute to parental involvement, and were explored in the current study (Berliner, 2006; Epstein, 2005; Patall et al., 2008; Payne, 2005; Rebell & Wolf, 2008; Rogers, 2006; Xitao & Michael, 2001). Current research on students' perspectives of parental involvement is described (Faber, 2008; Lowman & Elliott, 2010; Trusty & Lampe, 1997; Whitfield, 2006). Keywords used to obtain resources included student perspective of parental involvement at the high school level, high school parental involvement and the student perspective, high school student perspective + parental involvement, high school students' perception of parental involvement (Hayes, 2011). The results of this study indicate what factors do or do not play a role in parental involvement at the high school level, according to students.

2.1 Studies Related to Problem

By reviewing current research about parental involvement and its effects on student achievement, the focus of the current study was determined. It is widely understood that parental involvement is mandated by NCLB (U.S. Department of Education, 2004b). The concentration of existing research was on elementary students and data obtained from test scores, parents' perceptions of how their children interpret parental involvement, and the viewpoints of teachers and administrators surrounding parental involvement and its effects on student success in school. Three studies were found that were similar in nature to the current study and were used as guides for conducting the interviews with the high school student participants in this study to obtain, first-hand, how the students described parental involvement and its effects on their high school success.

NCLB mandates parental involvement in the school, at all levels of education (U.S. Department of Education, 2004a). Designing parental involvement plans at the high school level is difficult for administrators when they do not understand all of the reasons parents are hesitant to become involved in their children's schooling (LloydSmith, 2008, Stanik, 2007). Two of the reasons given by parents as to why they are not involved in their children's schools include lack of financial resources or transportation to the school. Would providing transportation when parents are not at work encourage more parents to become involved in their children's schooling? What other options exist for parents to be involved in their children's education besides being on the school campus? Research has focused on parents' perceptions of parental involvement and factors that affect this involvement in both positive and negative ways, but little research exists that discussed high school students' perceptions of parental involvement (Catsambis, 2002; Lloyd-Smith, 2008; Tan & Goldberg, 2008).

Two research studies have shown that at the high school level, parent involvement is just as important to the student as it was during the elementary

and middle school levels (Lloyd-Smith, 2008; Tan & Goldberg, 2008). Some parents have stated they do not feel the need to be as involved in their children's schooling at the high school level, as children should be at an age where they can be responsible for their own academic success (Lloyd-Smith, 2008; Whitfield, 2006). Students at this age are also striving to obtain independence, giving parents the impression they should not be as involved in their schooling as much as they were in earlier years (Lloyd-Smith, 2008; Tan & Goldberg, 2008). The question that guided this study was how high school students perceive parental involvement in the school. Is it important to high school students that their parents be involved in their schooling? Do high school students perceive parental involvement in the school to be beneficial or detrimental to their school success? In what ways do high school students want their parents to be involved in their school and activities related to school?

2.1.1 Deficiencies in Previous Studies

Two studies conducted in the past 5 years focused directly on students' perspectives of parental involvement (Faber, 2008; Whitfield, 2006). Both studies involved five students and the use of interviews and surveys that contained questions about how the students' parents were involved in their school activities. Faber (2008) studied parental involvement in extracurricular activities such as attendance at sporting events in which the child was participating but not parental involvement at home or at meetings within the school facility. This represents only a small number of students who have been studied, and parental involvement has been studied in only limited ways, as opposed to the six types of parental involvement outlined by Epstein (2005). More studies, following their formats, are necessary to develop a greater understanding of students' perceptions of the importance of parental involvement and its relationship to their success in school.

Other researchers, such as Tan and Goldberg (2008), mentioned parents' feelings toward involvement in their children's schools at the high school level, but were done with elementary school children and their parents. Tan and Goldberg looked at many facets of parental involvement but recorded data based on parents' perceptions of how their children thought about parental involvement. The children's perceptions were not recorded in the first person. It will be more meaningful to record students' perceptions in their own words and experiences rather than what their parents perceive to be their perceptions.

Curry (2007) studied students' perspectives of parental involvement as related to test results in Georgia. The current researcher hoped to expand on the students' perceptions to include how this affected their success in general in school, not just on state tests. The current study was also conducted in a different state, which when compared to Curry, explains whether the results can be transferable to other regions of the nation.

Many of the studies that dealt with parental involvement focused on a specific ethnic background and socioeconomic status. Carranza, You, Chhuon, and Hudley (2009) studied student perceptions of parental involvement with Mexican American students. Results from the current study needed to be compared to the findings of Carranza et al. to determine whether the perceptions of Mexican American adolescents paralleled the perceptions of other students from different ethnic groups about parental involvement. A comparison of the students' experiences from various ethnic backgrounds enhances the body of knowledge related to parental involvement at the high school level. Cultural influences did not appear to affect the students' perceptions of parental involvement in school-related activities in the current study. Whitfield (2006) commented on the lack of ethnic diversity in her study. This factor was a consideration when selecting participants in the current study. Greater ethnic

diversity will determine how readily the results may be generalized to other ethnic populations in the United States.

Perry, Liu, and Pabian (2010) conducted a study of 285 high school students ranging from seventh grade through twelfth grade with a variety of ethnic backgrounds from one public high school and one private parochial school in an urban area of the Midwest United States. Data in this study were collected through having the students complete a series of questionnaires. One of the four questions answered by this study was how parental involvement affected the students' career preparation. The study found that parental involvement played a role in keeping students engaged in their schooling, but the effect of parental involvement was not as influential as the teacher's involvement in the students' career preparation. The study also noted that middle school age students were more motivated to succeed in school than their high school counterparts. The current study raised the question, what are high school students' perceptions of parental involvement and how does this affect their success in school?

Oyserman et al. (2007) focused on African American and Latino students from low-income backgrounds. This was a psychology-based study focusing on how parental influence encouraged the students to self-moderate the behaviors that helped or prevented them from becoming successful in school, such as early pregnancies, drugs, and gang involvement. The question answered in the study was whether intervention programs that helped the students self-moderate could compensate for a lack of parental involvement in the school. The results were positive for the use of intervention programs. The study also examined the effect of parental involvement and found a positive correlation between parental involvement and student success in school but did not answer the question why this occurs. Again, the need to explore students' perceptions of parental involvement and how it affects their success in school becomes apparent.

Hayes (2011) conducted a similar study using African American students from various socioeconomic backgrounds. He believed it was important to look at various socioeconomic backgrounds as previous studies only focused on low socioeconomic status and the findings were generalized to all students of African American heritage, specifically noting Oyserman et al. (2007). The findings of this study are important because they noted that parental involvement is not significantly impacted by socioeconomic background as reported by other studies (Catsambis, 2002; Rogers, 2006). The parents reported teacher support and school receptiveness as having a greater impact on parental involvement than socioeconomic background. Hayes also stated that the results from his study were not general to other populations due to the convenience population used for the study and called for further research to be conducted with students and teachers to obtain their perceptions of parental involvement to compare with the perceptions of parents.

The deficiencies noted in previous studies included the small populations used for the studies, which prevented the results from being generalized to the larger population of high school students or to other geographic areas of the nation. Only two studies focused specifically on using students' voices and this was through using surveys and questionnaires. The current study involved interviewing students and looking for themes to emerge related to parental involvement and its effect on their success in school. Quantitative studies using data will not provide the meaning of school success and parental involvement as perceived by the students. School success may not be defined in the same way by high school students as academic success, so it is important to understand their interpretations of these concepts. Questionnaires and surveys contain too much researcher bias in forming the questions. By using questionnaires and surveys, researchers can determine ways in which students want their parents to be involved in their schooling but not why this is important to the students. This

study questioned what types of parental involvement were important to the students interviewed.

2.1.2 Contributions to Current Research

The shortcomings in the current literature included their primary focus on elementary and middle school students (Catsambis, 2002; Tan & Goldberg, 2008). Specific ethnic backgrounds have also been used rather than sampling all ethnic backgrounds (Carranza et al., 2009; Hayes, 2011; Oyserman et al., 2007). Previous studies also used the voices of the parents, teachers, and administrators (Lloyd-Smith, 2008; Tan & Goldberg, 2008). The question becomes, how do students, specifically at the high school level, perceive parental involvement and will the findings of these previous studies parallel the findings of the current study or will there be significant differences? The current study adds to the body of knowledge began by Faber (2008) and Whitfield (2006) who conducted studies using the voice of high school students. The researcher compared the results of the current study with those of Faber and Whitfield to describe similarities and differences. This study is important to help the school system form a parental involvement plan that fits the needs of the students who will benefit from the plan.

2.1.3 Strategies Used to Obtain Literature

EBSCO, ERIC, Google Advanced Search, and ProQuest databases were used to obtain articles related to the research topic. Keywords used to search included: NCLB and economic status, No Child Left Behind and economic status, NCLB and parental involvement, No Child Left Behind and parental involvement, No Child Left Behind and parent participation, student perspective of parental involvement at the high school level, high school parental involvement and the student perspective, high school student perspective + parental involvement, and high school students' perception of parental involvement.

2.2 No Child Left Behind and Socioeconomics

According to Epstein (2005, 2007), Loveless et al. (2008), Rogers (2006), and Stanik (2007), NCLB has impacted schools across the nation by stating that every school must have a plan in place to promote parental involvement. The guidelines by which school systems should achieve parental involvement are very general and non-specific (Crosnoe, 2009; Epstein, 2005; Morris, 2009).

Superintendents and principals have often questioned what type of parental involvement would meet the mandates of NCLB (Lloyd-Smith, 2008; Morris, 2009). This study aimed to determine whether students at the secondary level want their parents to be involved in their education and in what ways, as well as how parental involvement affects their success in school.

From a very young age, children begin to identify themselves according to economic status, an identity that continues into adulthood (Bianchi & Lancianese, 2005). Children who come from a higher socioeconomic background often believe they are smarter than other children, so they make greater efforts in their schoolwork (Bianchi & Lancianese, 2005). Children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds often develop the concept that they cannot be successful in school and therefore do not strive for academic success (Rogers, 2006). The internalized self-identity reflects in a student's work habits and attitudes toward school (Bianchi & Lancianese, 2005). Students who believe they have high socioeconomic status perform better than students who believe they have low socioeconomic status (Bianchi & Lancianese, 2005). The study by Bianchi and Lancianese (2005) also showed that Hispanic and African American students have a lower level of difference between high socioeconomic status and low socioeconomic status, indicating that race is a factor in academic achievement. Rogers (2006) indicated that parents of African American descent are accustomed to their children scoring low on achievement tests, so this has become the norm, and their expectations for their children are

lower than those of parents of other ethnic backgrounds. Bianchi and Lancianese, as well as Rogers, stated that NCLB does not incorporate the influences of societal norms on students' achievement and this needs to be the focus of future research.

2.2.1 High Economic Status Community

Berliner (2006) conducted a study that examined student scores based on five levels of income and found the wealthier students had the highest scores. Tan and Goldberg (2008) studied 91 families and found the higher income students to have a higher enjoyment of school leading to higher academic achievement. The inception of NCLB forced schools to focus on low achieving students, so the high achievers make less gains in academic achievement due to a lack of attention from teachers and a lack of resources directed to meet their needs (Loveless et al., 2008). On the other hand, schools in high-income communities have greater access to resources, making the task of reaching high standards easier for the school population (Borkowski & Sneed, 2006).

2.2.2 Middle-Class Status Community

Wells and Crain (1999) in their book, *Stepping Over the Color Line: African-American Students in White Suburban Schools*, found that minority students who moved to middle-class neighborhoods had a higher success rate than their counterparts who were living in lower class neighborhoods. Berliner (2006) hypothesized that middle-class students were monitored closely by parents, leading to higher school achievement. This indicates that student achievement can be influenced as much by the community in which the student lives as by the mandates of NCLB (Berliner, 2006). Borkowski and Sneed (2006) referred to the lack of achievement being less genetic and more about environmental influences on the child, which is also an indication that parents and community play an important role in academic success.

2.2.3 Low Economic Status Community

According to Berliner (2006) and Rogers (2006), poverty has a powerful effect on student success in school. Even though schools and educators attempt to influence children, community influences are often greater (Berliner, 2006). The United States ranks as one of the richest countries in the world, yet it has one of the highest childhood poverty rates (Berliner, 2006).

Berliner (2006) found, in his research of student assessment scores disaggregated by income levels, that students from the poorest families had the lowest assessment scores. Comparing achievement rates between high-income and low-income families, Rebell and Wolf (2008) found similar results. They concluded that NCLB focused on closing the achievement gap, yet there were no provisions made regarding funding and resources to complete the task (Rebell & Wolf, 2008; Stanik, 2007). The study also indicated that lower income students have less accessibility to community resources to promote early learning such as daycares, health facilities, proper nutrition, family support, and cultural experiences (Rebell & Wolf, 2008). Borkowski and Sneed (2006) highlighted that even if resources are available to students of lower income, less than half of all students who are eligible for the services take advantage of the opportunities. Some of this is due to the parents' lack of knowledge of the resources, and some to the inability of parents to provide transportation or encouragement for their children to attend support programs (Borkowski & Sneed, 2006).

2.3 Principals' Attitudes toward Parental Involvement

A study conducted by Lloyd-Smith (2008) centered on principals' attitudes about parental involvement in South Dakota. According to the results, principals understood the necessity of parental involvement at the secondary level but had difficulty determining beneficial ways to include parents

(Lloyd-Smith, 2008). The principals stated that the responsibility for parental involvement should fall on the teachers because there needs to be communication between the teachers and parents (Lloyd-Smith, 2008). Parents who perceive that their children do not want them involved will not become involved and principals understand this is an issue with parental involvement (Lloyd-Smith, 2008). This study also left out the perceptions of high school students regarding the need for parental involvement or the effect parental involvement has on their success in school.

2.4 Parental Involvement Related to Student Success

Yan and Lin (2005) described parental involvement as *social capital*, and explained that people benefit from interactions with other people and this interaction is especially important for adolescents as they are in a stage of developing independence and self-awareness and need adult guidance to be successful. Adolescence involves group membership and building relationships and resources to perform important developmental tasks (Yan & Lin, 2005). Yan and Lin classified parental involvement into three categories: “family obligation, parent information network, and family norm” (p. 16). *Family obligation* refers to the family’s participation in school functions and activities (Yan & Lin, 2005). *Parent information network* involves communication between parents and schools, among parents, and between parents and students (Yan & Lin, 2005). *Family norm* refers to the family dynamics from which each student learns values and customs (Yan & Lin, 2005).

NCLB requires schools to communicate with parents and encourages parental involvement, but it does not state a specific plan for schools to accomplish this requirement (Crosnoe, 2009; Epstein, 2005; Lloyd-Smith, 2008; Morris, 2009; Stanik, 2007). Previously mentioned studies have shown that parental involvement is influenced by ethnic and economic background and the needs of

the parents (Berliner, 2006; Borkowski & Sneed, 2006; Epstein, 2005; Oyserman et al., 2007; Rebell & Wolf, 2008; Rogers, 2006). The findings of a study conducted by Epstein (2005) concluded that parents with higher educational backgrounds were more likely to be involved and stay involved with their children's schools. Programs specifically developed to train parents in the skills needed to work with their children and maintain communication with their children's schools showed gains in student achievement scores across economic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds (Epstein, 2005, 2007; Rogers, 2006; Walker et al., 2010).

Perry et al. (2010) and Walker et al. (2010) determined that children of parents who communicate that education is important are academically more successful than their peers. Even if parents are not equipped to help with homework, they can provide emotional support to their children and promote a positive attitude toward school-related efforts (Walker et al., 2010).

Catsambis (2002) concurred with Walker et al. (2010) that parental influences impact students' schooling regardless of ethnic or economic background. Catsambis stated that parental supervision lessens at the high school level, but communication regarding school matters and volunteering in the school setting increases. She noted discrepancies among research regarding parent and teacher communications, sometimes having positive effects and other times having negative effects, depending on the reason for the communication (Catsambis, 2002). Negative effects occur when the communication focused on poor academic achievement or behavior (Catsambis, 2002; Yan & Lin, 2005). Her final findings indicated that high school students have greater academic success when parents serve as a guide to help them make decisions about careers and postsecondary education and ask about classes and teachers, rather than supervising homework and activities at home (Catsambis, 2002).

Patall et al. (2008) reported that parental involvement with homework produced higher achievement for students in some cases. The studies that Patall et al. examined showed an increase in student achievement at the elementary and high school level but not at the middle school level. There were also discrepancies in the studies based on characteristics of the students and community influences (Patall et al., 2008). Parent involvement in homework may promote student self-discipline and higher student achievement (Patall et al., 2008). Setting rules as to when and where homework was to be completed led to positive results for student achievement in each of the studies (Patall et al., 2008).

Bembenutty (2011) also stated that homework increases student achievement and parent involvement, especially at the high school level. Homework develops time management skills, delayed gratification, and self-regulatory skills (Bembenutty, 2011). Edwards (2010) determined that parental involvement, regardless of whether at home or at school, increased student achievement. It is important during the high school years when students are attempting to develop their independence for parents to continue their involvement with homework and school activities to promote higher academic achievement for their children (Edwards, 2010).

Barwegen, Falciani, Putnam, Reamer, and Stair (2004) found several sources that verified home schooled students, especially at the high school level, scored significantly higher on standardized tests than their public schooled counterparts. One of the reasons given for the students' success was parental involvement in their schooling (Barwegen et al., 2004). They further stated that there was no difference between home schooled students and public high school students whose parents were perceived as highly involved in the school by the student (Barwegen et al., 2004). Edwards (2010) pointed out that even though students perceived their parents to be actively involved in their education, there was no evidence that parental involvement increased test scores.

Tan and Goldberg (2008) determined that having at least one parent who was highly involved in the child's schooling was more beneficial to student achievement than having two parents with low involvement in the child's schooling. Mothers who worked generally were not as involved in their children's schooling and as children became older the involvement of mothers tended to decrease (Tan & Goldberg, 2008). Fathers' involvement was beneficial to the students' success when it was in the form of communication regarding the children's experiences during the school day, but tended to have negative effects on academic success when fathers were directly involved in the school setting (Tan & Goldberg, 2008). It is important to note that the study conducted by Tan and Goldberg focused only on elementary age children. It would be beneficial to conduct the same study at the high school level to determine whether differences or similarities exist between the two age levels.

Lee, Kushner, and Cho (2007) pointed out that the effects on the child may vary in single parent homes depending on whether the single parent is a mother or father and suggested that further research focus on each gender of single parent rather than grouping them as "single parent" homes. Their research noted that female students with actively involved fathers had higher academic achievement than other categories of single parent homes—males with single mothers, males with single fathers, or females with single mothers (Lee et al., 2007). The current study did not identify differences in the students' perceptions based on mother or father single parent homes or two parent family homes.

2.4.1 Ethnic Background of Community

Lack of proper housing, health care, and secure employment in low-income communities affects student achievement and inhibits parental involvement in the schools (Rogers, 2006). Rogers (2006) and Oyserman et al. (2007) asserted that those living in low-income communities consist mostly of Latino and African American families. It is not that the parents do not want to be involved

in their children's education, it is that they do not know how to become involved and must focus on providing for their children financially (Rogers, 2006). Yan and Lin (2005) stated that for African American students, parental involvement was not an influential factor in academic achievement.

Mexican American high school students achieve higher academically when they perceive high expectations from their parents regarding schoolwork, homework, and grades (Carranza et al., 2009; Yan & Lin, 2005). This fact was more evident with female students than males (Carranza et al., 2009). Carranza et al. (2009) stated that immigrant parents might not feel as equipped to help their children with homework or become directly involved in school activities. Yan and Lin (2005) agreed with the theorization stated by Carranza et al. and suggested that programs needed to be designed to help these parents become more involved.

Student expectations vary depending on ethnic background only because a higher percentage of minority parents are also of low socioeconomic status (Lowman & Elliott, 2010; Oyserman et al., 2007). Neither of these factors, ethnic background or economic status, are as influential to student success as parents' expectations of the student to achieve (Lowman & Elliott, 2010; Yan & Lin, 2005). Understanding this factor will help the school system develop a parental involvement plan that focuses on teaching parents skills to encourage and help their children at home as well as in the school facility.

2.4.2 Economic Status of Community

When parents do not have a high economic status, it is more difficult for them to be involved with their children's homework because they need to work (Patall et al., 2008). Lowman and Elliott (2010) stated that parents of lower socioeconomic status tend to have lower expectations of their children's educational achievement, leading to lower academic expectations by the student.

Leadership from the community and school need to work with the parents to find ways for them to become involved in their children's education (Epstein, 2005). Epstein (2005) and Rogers (2006) worked with parents and communities to develop plans to encourage parents to become actively involved in their children's school and education. Both studies indicated an increase in student achievement (Epstein, 2005; Rogers, 2006).

2.4.3 Students' Perceptions

Parental involvement takes many forms in the academic life of students (Catsambis, 2002). Some students consider their parents to be involved in their schooling if a parent asks about classes or knows the teachers' names (Whitfield, 2006). Others consider their parents helping with or asking about homework to be parental involvement (Patall et al., 2008). Most high school students want their parents at their extracurricular activities (Faber, 2008). For some students, having parents express their expectations of academic success is considered parental involvement (Constantino, 2002). Constantino (2002) also discovered that parental involvement through communication could have positive and negative effects on a student's academic achievement or enjoyment of school depending on how the parent approached the subject. If parents questioned and accepted the answers given by the student regarding his or her school activities or gave praise for accomplishments, the motivation of the student was higher (Constantino, 2002). If the parent was judgmental in communication about school with the student, this lowered the student's motivation (Constantino, 2002).

Faber (2008) studied high school students' perceptions of parental involvement in extracurricular activities. Faber defined extracurricular activities as events that the parents attended and supported. Students responded that even if their parents were not involved, they perceived a benefit of parental involvement as higher academic achievement as well as a closer bond with their parents (Faber, 2008). Students stated that if their parents were encouraging,

they would be more involved with extracurricular activities and benefit from the social and responsibility promoting aspects of being involved in activities and maintaining their schoolwork (Faber, 2008). Lowman and Elliott (2010) found in their study that students who were involved in extracurricular activities had greater success in academic pursuits, concurring with the findings of Faber.

Whitfield (2006) interviewed five high school students of varying backgrounds and found that all of the students wanted their parents to be involved in their schooling; however, each noted different ways and to different degrees. Other influences on the students' education were revealed, such as friends, use of cell phones, after-school jobs, and the community (Whitfield, 2006). According to Whitfield, students wanted their parents to know the courses they were enrolled in and the teacher's name who taught each course. The students also wanted their parents to ask them about their schoolwork as well as be involved to some degree in voluntary activities within the school (Barwegen et al., 2004; Whitfield, 2006). Barwegen et al. (2004) stated that students' achievement varied depending on how parents communicated their school involvement to the students. Parents may call the school during the day but not discuss the phone call with the student, leaving the student to perceive that the parent is involved in his or her schooling to a lesser degree than is actually true (Barwegen et al., 2004).

Curry (2007) conducted a study correlating students' perceptions of parental involvement with success on the Georgia testing system. What Curry discovered did not coincide with previous research. When comparing student responses with success on course exit tests, there was no correlation between the students' perceptions of parental involvement and their success on the tests (Curry, 2007; Edwards, 2010). Curry noted that those students who perceived their parents as being involved in their education in some way did not score as well as students who said their parents were not involved in their schooling.

Edwards (2010) found that students who did not perceive their parents as involved in their schooling did not have lower test scores than students who perceived positive parent involvement. The current study did not measure student achievement, but rather sought an answer to the question, "What is your perception of parental involvement and how does it affect your school success?"

2.5 Summary

NCLB has mandated that all schools implement a plan for parental involvement, but has not specified the guidelines for the plan (Epstein, 2005, 2007; Loveless et al., 2008; Rogers, 2006; Stanik, 2007). Parental involvement is often influenced by socioeconomic factors that are beyond the control of the school (Berliner, 2006; Rebell & Wolf, 2008; Rogers, 2006; Stanik, 2007). Research has been done regarding parents' perceptions of parental involvement as well as administration's perceptions of parental involvement (Lloyd-Smith, 2008; Morris, 2009; Rogers, 2006).

Little research exists surrounding high school students' perceptions of parental involvement (Faber, 2008; Whitfield, 2006). The research that has been done has found that high school students want their parents to be involved, but they realize there are factors that could limit the amount of involvement parents are able to accomplish (Whitfield, 2006). Parents who take the time to communicate with the school should communicate this to their children so that the children know of their involvement, because this may affect students' achievement (Barwegen et al., 2004). Tan and Goldberg (2008) raised the question of which parent students perceive as being more involved in their education (i.e., mother, father, or both), and whether the involvement is beneficial. Crosnoe (2009) also asked the question of whether all parental involvement was positive.

Lowman and Elliott (2010) found that student expectations varied with ethnic background only because a higher percentage of minority parents were also low socioeconomic status. They concluded that neither of these factors was as influential to student success as was parents' expectations of their children's achievement (Lowman & Elliott, 2010; Yan & Lin, 2005). Lee et al. (2007) noted differences between females with fathers in single parent homes as compared to other categories of single parents, stating that females with single fathers had higher academic achievement. Perry et al. (2010) reported in their study examining influences on career preparation that the majority of the students stated they were more influenced by their mothers than their fathers and had better communication with their mothers about career options, which encouraged their school engagement. The current study asked how parents or guardians communicated their educational expectations to their children and whether this affected the way the children performed academically in school. The study also explored any differences between student perceptions based on family structure.

Yan and Lin (2005) concluded that programs focusing on parental involvement should look at training parents to communicate with their children and express high academic expectations. They found these two factors to be more influential on the academic achievement of twelfth grade students than actual involvement within the school environment (Yan & Lin, 2005). They suggested further research to study the parental network and the benefits it provides to students (Yan & Lin, 2005).

