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Maria Chavez

*California State University, Monterey Bay*

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Ready, Set, Involved: The Power of Parents

Maria Chavez

California State University Monterey Bay

### Abstract

Parental involvement can be highly beneficial to students' educational success. However, involvement is an issue for English Language Learning (ELL) students, as well as for their parents. Many of these parents want to be involved, but there are many factors that get in the way. School faculty need to be more proactive on informing parents about resources available to them and other ways they can become more involved in their child's education. The purpose of this research is to understand what schools are doing today to involve parents and how they are reaching out to them. After interviewing teachers and parents at Seashore Middle School, three action options emerged as ways to help increase parental involvement. Based on these results action was taken to inform school administration on ways to more effectively reach out to parents.

### Ready, Set, Involved: The Power of Parents

Being the oldest, a first generation student has always been hard, but it was especially hard in elementary school when I transitioned from Spanish class to an English only class in third grade. Going from a bilingual class to an English only class was not only difficult for me but for my parents too. They were affected by the change as well, they could no longer provide the same parental support that I once received.

While I did receive support from my parents during this time it was not the same support that my classmates received. My parents do not speak English which made it hard when it came down to communicating with my teachers. It was always an issue because my teachers at the time did not speak Spanish. I was always caught in the middle trying to translate for both of them which was not easy since I, too, was only beginning to learn the language. Then it came down to homework, it was bad enough that my parents could not communicate with the teacher but they could no longer assist me with homework. All of the homework was in English which created a language barrier, not to mention that both of my parents did not go to high school. It was hard for them to try and help when I needed them. I remember that my parents bought an English to Spanish dictionary to try and help me but even then it was troublesome. This continued on for the next 4 years. I managed to fend for myself and received good grades throughout the years. Now if only the teachers or the school would have done something to help out, then maybe I would have been able to receive adequate support from my parents. This is the reason why I decided to focus on parental involvement because every child deserves to be supported by their parents so that they can achieve their best potential.

Throughout elementary school, I remember not once seeing my parents attend back to school night or open house. This was mostly due to them not wanting to go because they were not going to be able to communicate efficiently. My parents tried their best to stay involved after all they still wanted me to succeed and do well in school. They not once missed a parent teacher conference, they attempted to communicate with whatever broken English they knew. Sometimes it was my responsibility to translate for them, both teacher and parents. The same pattern continued for the years to come and eventually my sister did the same whenever her teachers did not speak Spanish.

Even to this day, even though my parents only have one child left in the k-12 education, they still do not have the right tools to assist my brother to the fullest. All of the responsibility of helping him with homework or attending school meetings fall back on my sister and I. It is hard to see that my brother will not approach my parents when he needs help with homework. Why you may ask yourself? Well it is the same reasons as before, my parents do not know the language in which the homework is assigned. Why do they not attend school meetings? Because the majority of the time they will be held in English, again the language barrier. While my parents did in fact try their best to be involved in anyway they could it was not enough. Similar to my parents, there are other parents out there right now going through the same issues that they did, and it is up to us as future teachers to help them out in anyway we can.

### **Literature Synthesis**

There are many English Language Learner students in school who do not receive the support that they need from their parents. Parents cannot effectively assist their children with

homework or be involved in their schooling. It is important that parents are involved in their child's school because if they do not it affects them negatively.

### **What is the Problem?**

The issue at hand is that parents are not involved enough in their English Language Learner child's education. Parents need to be involved more. For the purposes of this paper parental involvement will be defined as parents assisting in their child's homework, communicating effectively with the child's school and attending school functions. Henderson and Berla (as cited in Cruz, 2016) found that parental involvement is a strong factor in student achievement. Smith, Stern, and Shatrova (2008) wrote "parent involvement, regardless of ethnicity is crucial for students' academic achievement" (as cited in Ortiz, 2018, p. 6). It is important for parents to be involved in their child's education because it benefits the child's achievement.

According to the Glossary of Education of Reform (2013) English Language Learners (ELL) are described as "students who are unable to communicate fluently or learn effectively in English, who often come from non-English-speaking homes..." (para. 1). This usually causes an issue with parents being able to assist their child in school, whether it may be with homework or keeping the lines of communication open with their child's teacher. Ascher (1988) writes that parents whose first language is not English creates barriers for schools who are trying to get them to be involved.

### **Why is it a Problem?**

Not having enough parental involvement in the child's education is a problem because it hinders students from fully succeeding in their learning abilities. When students receive support

from their families working with their schools together to motivate them, then the student is more successful (Caplan, 2001). In Illinois at Diamond Lake School District 76, there has been an increase in academic success in their ELL students (Prosize, 2008) which is contributed to an increase in parental involvement. In addition, due to the lack of parental involvement, parents are not aware of what is going in their child's school life. If involved then the child's school attendance increases. Arias and Morillo-Campbell (2008) states that "Research supports the importance of parental involvement for improved student achievement, better school attendance, and reduced dropout rates regardless of socioeconomic background or ethnicity" (p. 1).

Not having appropriate or enough resources aimed for English Language Learners parents to be more involved in their child's education causes an issue. Caplan (2001) explains that "parents may be "hard to reach" because they are non-English speaking or economically disadvantaged, and these factors create language or cultural barriers between the parent and the school" (p. 6). In fact, reported in the National Opinion Research Center survey of 1997 "parents believe that schools see them as important partners but need to learn ways to involve them more effectively" (as cited in Caplan, 2001, p. 6). Niehaus and Adelson (2014) found "that ELL parents were more involved in their children's education when schools offered more support and outreach services to ELL students and families" (p. 834). It is important that there a lines of communication opened between the school and the parents. According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory children's development are influenced by his/hers environment (Psychology notes, 2013). It would make sense for the parents to be involved, "Bronfenbrenner's [theory] predicts that high levels of parent involvement in schools should lead to successful child outcomes" (Kocayörük, 2016, p. 2).

**What has been done?**

While the lack of parental involvement continues there has been something done about it already. For example, with the passing of the Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015 (NASSP, 2018) it gives schools the funding they needs to provide parents with engagement in education programs. Section Title IV, Part E grants districts the support to implement family engagement programs. Research conducted by Henderson in 1981, showed that parental involvement programs see positive results (as cited in Dwyer & Hecht, 1992). There have been programs created to help develop children's learning and literacy development at home (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008). These programs have shown that parents who participated were more engaged in their children's learning. In the state of California, a community-based program was created to help parents become more involved. In fact, "Initial studies conducted after the program's inception reported its effectiveness in promoting parent participation in the schools" (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008, p. 14). This kind of program promotes communication with parents and school administration.

There have been other strategies suggested for teachers to part take in to have parents become more involved. Panferov (2010) writes "Schools might also encourage ELL parents to volunteer in classes or at school events" (p. 111). In addition figure 1, shows suggested ways in which ELL families can become engaged in the student's education. It suggest that the classroom is welcoming, and to find the best way to communicate with parents as well as providing opportunities for parents to communicate back.

Figure 1

Ways in which parents can be engaged in their children's school.



# 9 WAYS TO EFFECTIVELY ENGAGE ELL FAMILIES



## CREATE A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

Kickstart conversations with ELL families by providing a bilingual translator who helps encourage participation.



## INTEGRATE CULTURE IN CLASSROOMS & AT SCHOOL

Create a welcoming cultural environment by putting up pictures and artwork that accurately represent ELL families. This helps them feel more respected and connected!



## INCLUDE ELL FAMILIES WITH NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Provide a bilingual coordinator who can help walk families through the process of signing up/logging in when new technologies are introduced.



## MANAGE CHANGING CONTACT DATA

Make sure you have a way to communicate with parents in real-time. Plus, check delivery statistics regularly to keep family contacts up-to-date & ensure 100% reach.



## FIND THE BEST WAYS TO COMMUNICATE WITH ELL PARENTS

Communicate with parents in the way they prefer and languages they can read and write in. Note: We see that text & app notifications work best!



## PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS TO COMMUNICATE BACK

Open up two-way conversations to allow parents give you feedback. Having a channel of communication is critical to serving ELL families.



## FORM TECHNOLOGY FOCUS GROUPS

Walk ELL families through technologies used at school to help them feel more comfortable guiding their children at home.



## SEEK VOLUNTEERING AND PARTICIPATION

Encourage ELL parents to take a leadership role. Allow for flexible volunteer opportunities outside of working hours, like weekend and take home projects.



## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Work with your PTA to reach out to the local community. You never know how they'll be able to help.

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Download the full eBook at: <http://blog.parentsquare.com/blog/9-ways-to-effectively-engage-ell-families>

*Note:* Source: Parent Square

## Conclusion

In conclusion, there is a large benefit from parental involvement. It is crucial that parents become more involved in their child's education in order for the child to fully succeed in school. Schools need to start working on programs to include parents and provide resources for them, especially for Bilingual parents. With proper support, parents can help their child and provide the support that they need at home. Durand (2011) states "Increased contact and communication with schools and teachers can increase parents' knowledge and understanding of the content and expectations of the school curriculum, which can shape parental support for children's learning at home" (p. 481-482). As future teachers we need to learn how to encourage more parental involvement for ELL students.

## **Method**

Becoming involved in a child's education can be fairly difficult for some, especially if there is a language barrier between the parent and school faculty. Many students do not have the parental involvement they need, therefore, the researchers wanted to gain a better understanding of how exactly a parent can support their child in different ways. Based on an analysis of the data and the relevant research literature, the researcher will use what they have learned to formulate an action that responds to the focus issue in a way that inspires, informs, or involves a particular audience.

## **Context**

This research took place at Seashore Middle School<sup>1</sup>. This school is located in Monterey County, California. Seashore Middle is home to 750 students in grades 6th, 7th, and 8th. The majority of the school population is Hispanic or Latino. The Hispanic/Latino students make up 75% of the population (Ed-Data, 2018). The population of English Language Learners (ELL) is 35% and of those ELLs, 33% speak Spanish. Seashore Middle School's instructional approach is project based learning (pbl). The school uses "subject matter to engage students in critical thinking about issues and questions relevant to student lives" ("Seashore" Middle School, n.d.). Teachers assist students by helping those working in teams to solve problems, manage projects, and utilize verbal and written communications skills daily ("Seashore" Middle School, n.d.).

## **Participants and Participant Selection**

For this research, three parents and one teacher from Seashore Middle school were given

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<sup>1</sup> Pseudonyms have been used for the names of people, places, and organizations.

surveys to fill out at home. The surveys were both provided in Spanish and English and were handed out to the participants depending on their language preference.

**MD.** A white, middle school teacher. She has taught at Seashore Middle School for the past four years. She currently is an English teacher, and teaches English Language Learners (ELLs).

**MT.** A Hispanic, female parent, with one child attending Seashore Middle School. She only speaks Spanish and her child is an ELL student.

**JW.** A Thai, female parent of two students who are in kindergarten and 8th grade. She answered questions regarding her 8th grader.

**CB.** A Hispanic, female parent, with a child attending Seashore Middle School. She only speaks Spanish. Her child is an ELL student.

### **Researcher**

Maria Chavez:

- Parental involvement is meaningful to me because I was a student who lacked sufficient parental involvement growing up and going to school. While I was successful in school, if my parents had been more involved then I would have not struggled as much as I did. I would have been able to be even more successful.
- I have experienced the lack of parental involvement first hand. I have also been a witness of it when completing my service learning in local elementary school. I could see the students that did not receive full support from their parents were the ones who were falling behind. Meanwhile the students who had their parents help were thriving in school. Situations like these drive me to make sure that parents

are able to be involved to help their children succeed, and to find a solution to make it possible for them to be involved.

- My own experience makes me bias already because I want to make sure that parental involvement is possible for every child. I am extremely driven to do what it takes to have a child's parents be involved.

### **Semi-Structured Interview and Survey Questions**

See Appendix A for the parent survey. See Appendix B for the teacher survey.

### **Procedure**

Participants were given surveys to fill out on their own time. Surveys were provided in both Spanish and English. Surveys were handed out to students to give to their parents and were turned in to the teacher once completed. Students were given a brief explanation about the research project and the importance of the survey. Students were asked to bring home the survey and explain to their parents or guardians what the purpose of the survey was. The teacher suggested multiple students to take the surveys home to their parents/guardians and other students were either picked at random or volunteer. Teachers were given separate surveys that were to be completed online and turned in through email. All surveys were completed by parents and teachers on their own time.

### **Data Analysis**

Transcribed interviews were coded and analyzed for emergent themes.

**Results**

For this Capstone Project, a teacher and parents were surveyed to see what they think could be done to improve parental involvement for English Language Learners. This is important because parental involvement is crucial to students’ success. Based on an analysis of the data and the relevant research literature three themes emerged (see Table 1). Evidence-based decision making required evaluating each potential Action Option by the following criteria: time to implement, effectiveness, and cost. Based on the evaluation of each Action Option, an action will be recommended and justified.

Table 1

*Evaluation of Action Options*

	Time to Implement	Cost	Effectiveness
Electronic Applications	Low	Low	Moderate
Family Night Workshop	Moderate	Moderate	High
Learning Language Program	High	Moderate	Moderate

**Evaluation of the Action Options**

As shown in Table 1, three actions emerged after research had been conducted to improve parental involvement. The options are:

- Introduce the use of electronic applications;

- Offer family night workshops;
- Provide programs for language learning.

These options will be evaluated by three criteria: time to implement, cost and effectiveness. It is important to take time into consideration because both parents and teachers are busy throughout the day. Time is also important due to the amount of planning and preparation that can go into the following actions. Cost is also an important criterion to evaluate because schools do have a limited budget and for the action to follow through, it must fit under the school's budget. Last but not least is the effectiveness of the action. For this study, the goal was to increase parental involvement for English Language Learners and it is important to evaluate the effectiveness that each action has upon this.

### **Electronic Applications**

Electronic applications was the first idea that I came up with. According to Epstein's six types of parental involvement communication is one of the keys to successful partnership (Salinas & Epstein, 2004). Epstein and Salinas (2004) believe that it is important to create effective communications from school to home and home to school about school programs and student progress. An online application allows for parents and teachers to use an electric device such as a phone or computer to communicate with one another. This can increase the amount of parental involvement, especially for those parents who are working and/or lack transportation to the school. Electronic applications give parents opportunities to monitor how their child is doing at school and has the power to make parents feel like they are a part of the loop and be up to date about their child's education. When asked about what the best way to contact the individual or

family, JW, a Thai, female parent of an 8th grade student at Seashore Middle School, she responded with “phone call” (personal communication, November 2018). Although JW responded with phone call, the application can also be downloaded on mobile devices to be able to be accessed quickly. Applications make communication faster and easier without having to wait for the best time to make a phone call or to send a note home with the student. The teacher or parent can send messages to one another during any time of the day.

When evaluating the three criteria, it was noticed that the time to implement was very low since it is quick and easy to check the application. The time is also low to implement due to many free applications already out there. An example of an application of this sort is ClassDojo. ClassDojo is a “free application that can be accessed through computers and mobile devices” (Robacker, Rivera & Warren, 2016, p. 40). These type of applications are not only limited to parents and teachers, students can also access the applications. Since there are applications that are free, i.e. ClassDojo, the cost for this action is low. The effectiveness of this action is ranked as low because not every single parent may have access to an electronic device to access said applications. The effectiveness is also ranked low because there may be some parents who will not understand how to use the application. Although there are issues with electronic applications, it also has the ability to increase parental involvement and communication if all parties are on board.

### **Family Night Workshops**

Family night workshops are a great way to bring in more parents to inform them about what their child is learning according to their grade level. When asked if the individual felt

education should only take place at school or also outside of school, MD, a white, middle school teacher at Seashore Middle School, responded with saying that she believes education should take place in both school and outside of school (personal communication, November 2018).

Family night workshops help parents understand how to support learning at home. When asked what were some ways parents could support learning outside of school, MD responded with “read with the child...help with homework” (personal communication, November 2018). It is important to incorporate workshops into schools to help parents who lack the proper education to be able to assist their child in learning at home. Panferov (2010) suggests that schools should educate parents about ways that they can assist their child, which ties into the idea of providing parents with workshops where they can gain strategies to support the child’s need. These workshops can be academic or non-academic. These type of workshops allow for parents to understand how they can better assist their child with their homework and be able to ask teachers and other parents about questions they may have. It is a way to fill in parents about what is going on in the school community and about other resources that are available to them.

When evaluating family night workshops by the three criteria, it was concluded that the time needed to implement these workshops is a moderate amount. These workshops require quite some time to plan and prepare in order to have successful outcomes. The cost of the workshops is moderate. Schools are able to use resources that are already available to them such as the school classrooms and teachers, but it must be taken into consideration that the teachers will need to be paid. The effectiveness of this approach is ranked as high because of the variety of information that will be included in them. By having a variation of workshops parents can be



encouraged to become a part of the school community and be supportive in their child's education.

### **Learning Language Program.**

Parents who do not speak English are not able to assist their child with homework and may also have difficulties understanding activities that are happening in the classroom or the school. JW, a Thai, female parent of an 8th grade student at Seashore Middle, wrote "that need to happen in Seashore Middle School" (personal communication, November 2018) when asked if Seashore Middle School provided support resources for families such as English as Second Language programs. Offering resources for parents to learn English is crucial when developing a relationship where the teacher and parents can communicate and better help the students. It would be beneficial to offer classes where Spanish speakers could attend classes to learn English and English speakers could attend classes to learn Spanish. JW also mentioned that it was easy to talk to the teachers (personal communication, November 2018). Both of these classes can increase both parents' and teachers' confidence to speak in a different language and increase communication.

In terms of time, learning a new language can requires quite some time. Learning a new language, whether it is Spanish or English, does not happen overnight. It takes a high amount of time to learn a new language and to attend classes. The cost of these classes is moderate because the school may already have resources available for teachers and parents to learn a new language. The impact of these classes is also moderate. Learning a new language is very difficult and parents and teachers may not feel like they are benefitting from the classes. With this in

mind the effectiveness of this is considered moderate. It will be quite some time before there is a high amount of effectiveness coming from this action option since it would be a long time before the parents or teacher can become fluent enough to assist the students.

## **Conclusion**

This section will justify the action recommended to improve parental involvement for ELLs. It will also discuss some of the concession, limitations, and possible negative outcomes of said recommendation.

**Recommendation.** After the evaluations of the three options mentioned before, the recommended option to improve parental involvement for ELLs is to have the school provide family night workshops. It would be helpful to have parents attend workshops to gain information on how to help their children be successful.

**Concessions.** The options of electronic applications and language learning, are also good options because they allow the parents to be more involved. The electronic application is easy to use for both parents and teachers. The application allows for parents to communicate with the teacher and stay informed on their child's education. Learning a new language is an excellent idea but it is too time consuming. It provides the parent and the teacher with the ability to be bilingual which at this time in age is crucial to be successful in the real world. By providing both parents and teachers an opportunity to learn each other's language there is a greater chance of having better communication.

**Limitations.** Providing family nights may have some limitations. One issue that with these events is that not all teachers may be willing to participate in attending and planning these

nights due to the lack of time they have on their hands. With the high amount of work that teachers are already given, planning and being able to attend these events may be out of their reach. If parents do not see their children's teachers at these workshops, parents will begin to think that teachers are not as invested in helping their students succeed as much as their parents are. Another limitation to creating these events is that some parents may lack transportation. If parents are not able to attend these events due to the lack of transportation, there will not be an increase in parental involvement. An additional limitation for family nights is that not all of the parents will be able to attend due to the time that they family workshops are being offered.

**Potential negative outcomes.** Family night workshops may come with some negative outcomes. The parents that cannot make it out to the workshops due to work schedules or other circumstances may feel left out. There is the chance that some parents may become too involved. They may begin to question the teachers teaching methods to the point where it becomes distracting or inappropriate. Both teachers and parents work round the clock Monday through Friday, so there might be a chance that by the time the night workshops come around both would be too exhausted. Hence neither of them would benefit from the workshops being offered. While these examples may be worst case scenarios, family night workshops would still be a great action option.

**Conclusion.** Despite the limitations and potential negative outcomes, I feel strongly about implementing family nights at Seashore Middle School to increase parental involvement for English Language Learning students. Many of these students are already facing many obstacles with having to learn a new language and to not have the support from their parents can make this harder for them. It is important for students to be able to feel that their parents and

teachers care about their education and their success. By providing more opportunities for parents to come to the school it can increase the parent's willingness to become more involved.

### **Action Documentation and Reflection**

The focus issue for this research action project is to increasing parent involvement in English Language Learner students. There was a total of four individuals surveyed, three of them were parents of students attending Seashore Middle and one was a teacher. After conducting the surveys and transcribing them, three options emerged to increase parent involvement at Seashore Middle School. The options are:

- Introduce the use of electronic applications;
- Offer family night workshops; and
- Provide programs for language learning.

For this capstone project, I suggested that the school implements family night workshops. The other two options were good options as well but I decided to go with family night workshops because other studies showed that schools who had implemented them saw an increase in parental involvement. This option gives the parents a chance to be more involved than the other two. Family night workshops actually require the parents to physically be present which is more than what the other two do.

In order to put this action into play, I wrote a letter stating my findings from the research conducted at Seashore Middle School. A copy of the letter can be found in Appendix C. I emailed the letter over to MD, the teacher I worked with at Seashore Middle. I had originally planned to go in person to hand her the letter and thanking her but do to time constraints it was

not possible.

I have yet to hear back from MD. She is a very busy teacher so I would not be surprised if it takes a while before she gets back to me. If I had known how busy this teacher was then I would have approached her earlier in the semester. Timing was a major issue when conducting the research. I had a hard time contacting MD and making sure that she would complete the survey. This made the process extremely long and did not give me the sufficient amount of time to actually implement the workshops. My next step is to follow up with MD and see if I can help assist in implementing the workshops.

### **Critical Reflection**

From working on this project, I learned that I am very passionate when it comes to parental involvement. After endless hours of reading scholarly articles on parental involvement it made me realize the important role that parents play in the students success. I was able to read actual studies that proved how much students could benefit from a parent that was devoted to being involved in their child's school needs. It was an eye opener to speak to teachers and learn that a lot of parents are not involved as much as they should. After learning this it only made me more determined to find a solution to this issue.

While I did not have the time and chance to implement workshops I truly do hope that it is something that the school can implement for the sake of the students. It is important that more parents become involved so that they can help the students achieve greatness. If the teachers and parents are willing to put some time and effort then I believe that these types of workshops will benefit them all.

My time at California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB) in the Liberal Studies

department has impacted my professional development through Major Learning Outcome (MLO) one, two and four. In regards to MLO one Developing Educator, I have noticed that my personal development has grown regarding critical thinking skills and writing abilities. All the classes that I have taken, especially LS 400: Senior Capstone, have pushed me to expand my knowledge in regards to education. In classes that require service learning I have had the opportunity to see what it is like to be a public educator in the classroom . I can attest to what it is like to be in a classroom teaching.

MLO two, Diversity and Multicultural Scholar, has also allowed me to expand my professional development because I used my personal identity and experiences to research parent involvement in English Language Learners. I want to see what was keeping parents like my own from being able to successfully be involved in their child's education. This type of thinking and being able to understand diverse and multicultural students is important in the educational profession, so I am grateful that I was able to do do. Lastly, MLO four, Social Justice Collaborator, it the third MLO that has in fact helped me develop professionally. This MLO caught me from surprise since I did not have the opportunity to take LS 380: Teaching for Social Change, I thought I had missed out on this learning experience. However, after careful consideration I noticed that this project helped me develop in this aspect. I wanted to make sure that ELL students and parents had the same resources and access as the rest of the students. By me striving for parents to be involved, I have asked for social justice.

As my time at CSUMB has come to an end, I wonder what lies ahead of me. In order for me to obtain my goal of becoming an elementary school teacher I must continue my education and pursue my teaching credential. I will be starting the credential program in January 2019 at

CSUMB, and eventually apply for the Masters of Arts Education program as well. While continuing my education, I want to continue advocating for parental involvement for all type of students. This will prepare me for when I become a teacher and will need to encourage parents to be involved in their child's education. I still have a lot more to learn and I am excited to continue learning.

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**Appendix A: Parents Survey**

1. Please provide the following information about your children:

Number of children attending school: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade level of my children: \_\_\_\_\_

Language spoken at home: \_\_\_\_\_

2. In the last year, did the school sponsor teacher/parent meetings to help parents understand and work with children?

Yes                       No                       Do not know

3. In the last year, approximately how many meetings/workshops did the school provide for parents on parenting skills(e.g. discipline, child development, etc.)?

1                                       2-3  
 4-5                                       6 or more  
 Do not know

4. In the last year, how many meetings/workshops did you or your family attend?

1                                       2-3  
 4-5                                       6 or more

5. If you did attend parent meetings, overall, were they well prepared and interesting?

Yes always                       Usually                       Never

6. If you did attend parent meetings, overall, did they provide you with useful information?

Yes always                       Usually                       Never

7. Are parent meetings provided in different languages? Are interpreters used?

I do not need interpreters  
 No, workshops are only in English  
 Yes, workshops are in different languages  
 Yes, interpreters are available  
 I do not know

8. If you did not attend many parent meetings, please specify why(check all that apply):

I was not provided with enough information or notice  
 Workshops were not held at convenient times  
 No child care was available  
 Workshop information provided is difficult for parents to understand  
 I am not interested in workshop topics

9. If you attended parent meetings/workshops, respond to the following:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The workshops helped me better understand my child's needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have used the techniques offered in the workshops	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe that my child has improved his/her skills and/or behaviors as a result of using the techniques suggested in the workshops	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. How much of the following information has the school provided to you or your family:

	A lot	Some	Very little	None
Child development and parenting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How to support learning at home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discipline techniques	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. When you visit your child's school...

	Yes	Somewhat	No
Is the reception staff friendly and helpful?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are the teachers easy to talk to?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is the principal easy to talk to?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Are written communications from school, such as report cards and newsletters available in a language you understand?

- Yes No

14. Clearly written?

- Yes No

15. The best way to communicate with you and /or family is:(check your 2 preferred methods)

- School memos/Newsletters Counselor  
Children's teachers Parent representative(your own culture)  
Phone call

16.How many parent-teacher conferences did you attend last year?

- None 1 2 or more

17. How often do you communicate with teachers about your child's performance?

- Often A little Never

18.Did you receive sufficient information about:

	Yes	Somewhat	No
English as a second language programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Special education programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gifted & talented programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bilingual education programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Title I programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Report cards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standardized testing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. Check the following

	Yes	Somewhat	No
Are report cards easy to read?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are standardized tests fully explained to you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. Does the school provide translators, when needed, for:

	Yes	No	None needed
Parent conferences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Private individual meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When requested by parent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21. Volunteering

	Yes	No
Were you asked about your interests, talents, and availability for volunteering at school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In the last year, did you volunteer at school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. If you did volunteer, please indicate for what type of activity and the frequency:

	Nver	1 time	2-3 times	4 or more
Helping on trips or at parties	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assisting in the classroom (tutoring, grading papers, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leading club or other activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. If you have not volunteered at school, please indicate why:

- Have never been asked
- I don't know how
- Conflict with work schedule
- Other
- I don't feel comfortable
- Not interested
- Have other children to care for

24. Learning at home:

	Often	Sometimes	Very little	Never
Do teachers suggest homework activities for you and your child?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you listen to your child read or read aloud to your child?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. Is the information related to home learning activities provided in different languages?

- No, information only in English.
- Yes, information is in different languages
- Information in different languages is not needed in our home.

26. Does the school have an active parent-teacher organization (PTA, PTO)?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

27. If yes, how many parent-teacher organization meeting have you attended?

- 1
- 2 or more
- Never

28. Are parents involved in planning and evaluating school programs?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

29. If yes, have you participated on any school councils or committees?

- Yes
- No

30. Does the school actively seek ideas from parents on school-related issues (e.g. improving student achievement, developing programs, improving communication)?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

31. If yes, have you given your ideas or advice on school-related issues?

- Yes
- No, I have not offered my ideas or advice on school-related issues

32. Which of these statements best reflect your opinion and/or level of participation?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel my opinion is taken in consideration when it comes to school policy decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I actively participate in PTA meetings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I actively participate in PTA meetings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School staff considers my opinion when it comes to decisions concerning my child.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe Latino parents are very involved in decision making at the school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

33. Would you like to participate more in school decisions? (Please check all that apply)

- Yes, I would like to participate more but I don't feel encouraged by the school.
- Yes, I would like to participate more but I do not know how to get involved.
- Yes, I would like to participate more but I do not have time.
- Yes, I would like to participate more but communicating in English is difficult for me.
- Yes, I would like to participate more but I do not understand the issues very well.
- Yes, I would like to participate more but I do not feel comfortable.
- No, I am not interested in participating in school decision making.
- No, I would rather become involved in other school activities.

34. Does the school provide any of the following support programs for families of diverse educational and linguistic backgrounds?

	Yes	No	Do not know
English as a second language programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Computer training programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



35. In which of these support programs have you participated?

	Yes	No
English as a second language programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Computer training programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

36. What kind of support programs would you like the school to offer to you and your family?  
examples: (Family literacy, G.E.D. programs, English, Computer training, etc.)

37. What is your opinion about the following statements? Please indicate.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The school provides information about community organizations that support my child's learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The school participates in community events organized by diverse ethnic groups.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School personnel assists parents and communities to become more involved in the schools.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

38. What best describes your education level:

- Elementary school
- Community College degree
- Other
- High school
- College degree

39. What best describes your household?

- Two parents or guardians, both working outside the home
- Two parents or guardians, one working outside the home
- Two parents or guardians, none working outside the home
- One parent or guardian, working outside the home
- One parent or guardian, not working outside the home
- Other

40. Do any other relatives (or other persons) live in your home? Please specify.

**Appendix B: Teacher Survey**

11/27/2018

Teacher Feedback Survey

**Teacher Feedback Survey**1. **Email address \***

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**Please provide the following information about your students**2. **Number of students in your class**

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3. **Grade level of students**

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4. **Do you have English Language Learners in your classroom?***Mark only one oval.* Yes No5. **If yes, please specify how many**

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6. **If asked what an English Language Learner is, you feel you can explain it without any help***Mark only one oval.* Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree7. **You feel prepared to successfully assist an English Language Learner***Mark only one oval.* Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

11/27/2018

Teacher Feedback Survey

8. **Last year, did you sponsor teacher/parent meetings to help parents understand and work with children?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

9. **Approximately how many meetings/workshops did you provide for parents on parenting skills (e.g. discipline, child development, etc.) last year?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- 1
- 2-3
- 4-5
- 6 or more
- I do not know

10. **How many parents attended these meetings/workshops?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- All
- Most
- Some
- A few
- None

11. **Approximately how many of these parents were bilingual?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- All
- Most
- Some
- A few
- None

12. **How many of these parents had students who were/are English Language Learners?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- All
- Most
- Some
- A few
- None

11/27/2018

Teacher Feedback Survey

13. **The parents who attended meetings/workshops were interested or concerned with their child's education**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

14. **Are parent meetings/workshops provided in different languages? Are interpreters used?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- I do not need interpreters
- No, workshops are only in English
- Yes, workshops are in different languages
- Yes, interpreters are available
- I do not know

15. **Does your school provide workshops for bilingual parents?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

16. **How useful do you find talking to the parents about their child?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Extremely useful
- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not so useful
- Not at all useful

17. **If you participated in parent meetings, what information did you provide to the bilingual parents or parents of English Language Learners?**

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11/27/2018

Teacher Feedback Survey

18. Does your school provide workshops for bilingual parents to help them with information about how to provide support for their child?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

19. How does your school provide information or notice bilingual parents about the workshops available to them?

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20. Are parents informed about multiple ways they can become more involved with their child's education?

Mark only one oval.

- Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

21. If workshops are provided, what type of information is given to parents?

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22. Parents use the techniques provided for them in workshops

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

11/27/2018

Teacher Feedback Survey

23. **Approximately how many bilingual parents attend these workshops?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- All
- Most
- Some
- A few
- None
- I do not know

24. **Does your school provide workshops to help parents with English Language Learning students understand how to provide more support for their child?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

25. **What type of information is given to parents with English Language Learning students?**

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26. **Do you provide parents with information about how to support learning at home?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

27. **Do you feel education should only take place at school or should also be used outside of school?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Only in school
- Only at home
- Both
- I do not know

11/27/2018

Teacher Feedback Survey

28. What are some ways parents can support learning outside of school?

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29. What do you feel is the best way to contact parents?

Mark only one oval.

- Phone call
- Email
- Take home notice paper
- Text
- I do not know

30. How often do bilingual parents address concern about their child's education?

Mark only one oval.

- Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

31. How often do parents address concern about their English Language Learning student's performance?

Mark only one oval.

- Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

32. What are some ways you feel a parent can become more involved in their child's education? (e.g. volunteering, PTO, etc.)

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11/27/2018

Teacher Feedback Survey

33. **Do you feel volunteering is the only way a parent can be involved in their child's education?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

34. **How do you define parental involvement?**

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35. **How many parents volunteered for your classroom?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- All
- Most
- Some
- A few
- None
- I do not know

36. **If there were parent volunteers, how many of them were bilingual parents?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- All
- Most
- Some
- A few
- None
- I do not know

37. **If volunteers, please indicate what type of activity and frequency**

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	Never	1 time	2-3 times	4 or more
Helping on trips or at parties	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sharing food, stories and customs from their culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assisting in the classroom (tutoring, grading papers, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leading club or other activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



11/27/2018

Teacher Feedback Survey

38. **Is information related to home learning activities provided in different languages?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- No, only in English
- Yes, information is in different languages
- Information in different languages is not needed for the parents of my students
- I do not know

39. **Does your school have an active parent-teacher organization?(PTO, PTA)**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

40. **Do you inform parents on how to become involved in planning and evaluating school programs?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

41. **Does you or your school actively seek ideas from parents on school-related issues (e.g. improving student achievement, developing programs, improving communication)?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

42. **Does your school provide any of the following support programs for families of diverse educational and linguistic backgrounds?**

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	Yes	No	I do not know
G.E.D. programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English as a second language programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Computer training programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

43. **What are some of your suggestions for how bilingual parents can become more involved?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11/27/2018

Teacher Feedback Survey

44. **What kind of support do you think parents need to be providing if their student is an English Language Learner?**

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Send me a copy of my responses.

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**Appendix C: Letter to Seashore Middle School**

December 17, 2018

Dear Seashore Middle School Administrator,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this project. Parental involvement has been identified as a contributor to increased educational success in students. The issue at hand is that parents are not involved enough in their English Language Learner child's education. It is important that English Language Learning students succeed just as well as other students. When schools and families work together to motivate and provide support to students, there are more opportunities for success. It is crucial that parents become more involved in their child's education in order to fully succeed in school.

After reviewing responses from multiple parents, I found that some were unaware of the programs your school provides and also do not know how to support learning at home. This is one problem that can easily be prevented and your school's staff can play a vital role in creating a solution. I suggest that in order to increase parental involvement for English Language Learners is for Seashore Middle to offer family night workshops that will allow the school's staff to better communicate with parents as well as to inform them about ways they can support learning outside of school.

The workshop that I suggest is called Family Night workshops. These workshops are a great way to bring in more parents to inform them about what their child is learning according to their grade level. Parents or guardians can come to the school for these workshops to participate in learning fun ways to help their children with school subjects such as reading or math. Having a night for parents to simply come in to the school and become familiar with the teachers is a good start. These workshops can be open to any questions that parents may have regarding their child's education. Providing these types of workshops is a great way to get parents to become involved. As well as promoting better relationships and open lines of communications between teachers and parents.

The goal of this project is for parents to be informed about their child's education, to become involved, and to feel included. Parents will be able to support their children in their academics which will in turn create successful students.

Once again, thank you for your support throughout this research-action project and I hope you consider increasing parental involvement by offering family night workshops.

Best,  
Maria Chavez