

# New Community Parent-School Involvement



**KAREN T. TAYLOR**  
**EDUCATIONAL STUDIES SENIOR RESEARCH**  
**DECEMBER 12, 2014**

# Introduction



- Sheff / Changing educational landscape
- Local education reform and achievement goals
- Growing body of research on the impact of parent involvement on school success.
- Specifically an interest in low-income parents and parents of color.

# Research Questions



- How do New Community parents perceive their role in their children's schooling?
- What forms of involvement do they feel are most important?
- What factors motivate them to be involved in their children's schooling and what are their impediments to school involvement?

# Literature Review



- Working class parents have fewer resources and less confidence which negatively impact levels of school involvement. (Lareau 2000, Yoder & Lopez 2013)
- Marginalization and the impractical/impossible. Being left out is worse than being without. (Yoder & Lopez, 2013)
- Parent involvement is heavily influenced by role construction, invitations, self efficacy, and school responsiveness. (Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green, Wilkins, and Closson, 2005)

# Thesis



- New Community parents perceive their role in their child(ren)'s schooling to be the most direct path to social mobility.
- NC parents expressed that the most important forms of involvement in schooling are choice, chores, and cheerleading.
- Opportunities for and attitudes about parent involvement vary according to the school setting.
  - Schools of Choice
  - Neighborhood Schools

# Context



- Hartford north end public housing residents
  - Family of 4 between \$25,700 and \$63,900
  - Renters and owners
  - Application and efficacy
  - 5 mile radius of low-performing district schools

# Methods



- Snowball sampled and solicited door to door
  - Parents of currently enrolled elementary school aged children (K-5)
- 4 Individual interviews with NC parents
- 1 Group interview with 7 NC parents
- Recorded, transcribed, and analyzed.

# Education the Escalator



**New Community parents perceive their role in their children's schooling to be the only way up and out.**

“I want [him] to have a better life than I have. If he is gonna live good, especially as a black man, he's gotta do good in school.” - BM1

“It's very important to show your kids that you are invested in them at such a young age, because it starts with school and expands to the extra stuff. It gives them the extra confidence to get involved with other positive things and to not stray.” - BF5

# Choice, Chores, and Cheerleading



## **Most important forms of parent school involvement:**

- **Getting their children in a “good” school**

“Went through that long ass application process. Followed up, the whole nine to get her in that school. I can’t always make it to events and all that, but I know that she’s gonna do good cause the teachers care there.” – LM2

- **Keeping them on task with academic work**

“I spend the most time on homework and extra fact fluency work. I communicate most with the teacher about what they’re working on in the class, what’s expected, so I can reinforce it at home.” - BLF10

- **Providing overall academic support and encouragement**

# Location, Location, Location



Schools' opportunities for and attitudes about parent involvement vary.

## **Choice:**

“It’s like they don’t even need me there.” - LF4

“I had to beg to chaperone her field trip, because there were so many other parents that wanted to. The teacher said she would put me on the wait list for next.” – BF9

## **Community:**

“His teacher loves when I come to volunteer in the classroom. She calls on the parents to do all kinds of stuff.” – BF5

# Research Questions



- How do New Community parents perceive their role in their children's schooling?
- What forms of involvement do they feel are most important?
- What factors motivate them to be involved in their children's schooling and what are their impediments to school involvement?

# Conclusion



- On the road to the good life.
- Choice, chores, and cheerleading are most important.
- Invitations are contingent upon location.

# Recommendations



- More research around the subject of school involvement for low income parents that is considerate of the nuances of this group along with the changing educational environment.
- An examination of the school community impact on levels of parent involvement. The good of 1 v. the good of all.

# THANK YOU!



**Rachel Leventhal-Weiner for guidance.**

**Stephen Valocchi for class consciousness.**

**#blacklivesmatter movement for restored faith.**

**Ed Studies for making me a loud mouth citizen.**

# Appendix: Questions



- Who makes educational decisions for your child?
- What school do your children attend?
- How did you decide on that school?
- How would you describe your relationship with your child's school?
- What do you feel are your most important forms of involvement in schooling?
- Can you give me an example/story of when you were happy/unhappy with involvement in your child's school?
- Tell me about the ways in which you are involved in your child's schooling?
- How often do you participate in those forms of involvement?
- How do you think your level of school involvement impacts your child's schooling?

# Informant Demographics



	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Race/ Ethnicity</b>	<b>Number of Children (K-5)</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>Choice</b>
1	Male	Black	1		X
2	Male	Latino	3		X
3	Male	Black	2	X	
4	Female	Latina	2		X
5	Female	Black	1	X	
6	Female	Black	3		X
7	Female	Latina	4		X
8	Female	Black	2		X
9	Female	Black	2		X
10	Female	Black/Latina	3	X	
11	Female	Latina	1	X	

# Epstein's 6 Types of Involvement



- **PARENTING:** Child-rearing skills, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions that support children as students at each age and grade level.
- **COMMUNICATING:** Communicate with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications.
- **VOLUNTEERING:** Improve recruitment, training, work, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school or in other locations to support students and school programs.
- **LEARNING AT HOME:** Involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum-linked activities and decisions.
- **DECISION MAKING:** Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through PTA/PTO, school councils, committees, and other parent organizations.
- **COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY:** Coordinate resources and services *for* families, students, and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups, and provide services *to* the community.

# Sources



- Yoder & Lopez, 2013, *Parent's Perceptions of Involvement in Children's Education: Findings from a Qualitative Study of Public Housing Residents*
- Epstein, et. al. 2009. *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action, Third Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.
- Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., Walker, J. M. T., Sandler, H. M., Whetsel, D., Green, C. L., Wilkins, A. S., & Closson, K. E. (2005). "Why do parents become involved? Research findings and implications." *Elementary School Journal*, 106(2); 105-130

# HUD Income Guidelines



## FY 2014 Income Limits Summary

Median Income  <b>Explanation</b>	FY 2014 Income Limit Category	Persons in Family					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
\$85,700	Very Low (50%) Income Limits (\$) <b>Explanation</b>	30,000	34,300	38,600	<b>42,850</b>	46,300	49,750
	Extremely Low (30%) Income Limits (\$)* <b>Explanation</b>	18,000	20,600	23,150	<b>25,700</b>	27,910	31,950
	Low (80%) Income Limits (\$) <b>Explanation</b>	44,750	51,150	57,550	<b>63,900</b>	69,050	74,150