

WHAT STUDENT INFORMATION DO TEACHERS FIND VALUABLE
ENOUGH TO CHANGE THEIR PRACTICES?

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ABSTRACT

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This Teacher Survey study follows-up my school district's Parent Interview conducted by teachers on children's interests, parents' hopes and fears for their children, how the school can communicate with parents, and areas the school can improve. The intent of the district's Parent Interview was to improve teacher awareness of student and family needs, influence the teachers to scaffold their curriculum to support student needs and become more motivated to be involved with long-term initiatives that could improve student and family support within the district. However, the Parent Interview did not ask teachers about their views of what, if any, Parent Interview information they found helpful and what changes in their teaching and professional practices the Parent Interview prompted. To further examine these questions, a survey was distributed to all teachers in the small rural district, asking about their perceptions and experiences with the Parent Interview and how/if it influenced their teaching practices. The results from this study showed the teachers perceived an increase in positive relationships with families, allowing for a better understanding of the students' needs. Communication with families increased while teachers learned from the parents about the social-emotional needs of

students and gained insight into their students' family dynamics. Teachers also stated their desires to be involved in long-term, district led initiatives to support the growth of their students and their families.

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INTRODUCTION

Communicating and coordinating efforts between families and schools to support children and their learning is complex and underappreciated. Children spend seven to ten hours daily on their school campus, yet teachers and school staff can be unaware of the challenges and triumphs the student faces when they are at home. At home, the “How was your day?” “Oh, fine.” conversation doesn’t give families the insight into the expectations, struggles and successes their children encounter at school. While both families and the school want to see children succeed in school and in life, many times the paths that children must traverse can be very different at home compared to in school. My motivation as a school principal is to find a way to connect families and the school, working together to create a clearer picture of how to better support children as they learn to navigate social, emotional and educational lessons.

The ideas and questions in this study were created based on my desire to bridge the gap between families’ hopes and dreams for their children and my teachers’ and my desire to provide our students the best schooling possible. As a principal on an elementary 4-8th grade campus I often see a disconnect in communication between the teachers and the families of the student’s in their classroom. While I know teachers work hard to teach the ever-changing and ever-expanding curriculum, support the social-emotional needs of their students, participate in ongoing professional development and complete daily educational duties, I see that many times the missing link is the relational communication with families. Understanding what the family has or is currently facing,

how to encourage parents while they struggle to support the academic needs of their student, or simply understanding how to direct families to outside assistance is not a conversation that happens often between parents and educators. With the constant demands of the day-to-day, it is difficult to find the luxury of time to try to build these relationships on the fly.

This action research follows up my school district's Parent Interview to learn more about student and family needs so as to influence teachers to scaffold their teaching to better support student needs. To learn more about what information teachers found valuable and why from the Parent Interview, and how teachers used or were planning to use this information to modify their teaching, a teacher Survey was designed and administered. My study dives deeper into the what/if any value the teacher gained from these interviews, how/if they scaffolded and supported their students' education based on the learned information from parents, resources they desire to provide additional student supports and if there is a motivation to become involved with developing initiatives that provide supports for students and families within the district, based on their experiences with the Parent Interviews.

The Parent Interview is based on a medical approach used in most hospitals, called "rounding for outcomes." Rounding for outcomes is the process where doctors visit patients on a consistent basis to ask a specific, yet simple set of check-in questions. This practice helps medical professionals to understand the needs of their patient while also building relationships and making patients feel heard and cared for. Through the idea of rounding for outcomes, my district created a Parent Interview to learn parents'

perspective to strengthen the relationship between the family and educator. More in-depth information about their students should support teachers' awareness of how to better support their students and strengthen communication with parents.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

For decades, educators have viewed parental involvement as being both a troublesome issue and a possible solution to improving student success in the classroom (Minke, Sheridan, Moorman Kim, Ryoo, & Koziol, 2014). The roles of both parents and educators are vital to the success of students' education, but this relationship isn't always constructed or cultivated in a way to provide benefits that meet student needs. Understanding parental and teacher perceptions, communicating about a student's experiences, strengths and weaknesses, as well as the families' educational goals can help to build parental involvement within their student's education.

Parent involvement hinges on the relationship that is built between the family, student and the school. It is this family-school relationship that encourages and fosters parental involvement in a child's education. The family-school relationship is defined as a child-centered connection that is held between the family members within the child's home and the educators that are supporting the child's growth within the school (Clarke, Sheridan & Woods, 2009). With an open and positive family-school relationship present, a collaborative relationship forms that involves both the family and educators actively participating in student growth (Clarke et al., 2009).

This literature review will consider the definition and models of parental involvement. It will then examine how parental involvement can influence student

achievement and social development. Finally, this review will examine the barriers and benefits of parental involvement, and how the use of rounding for outcomes may prove useful in the educational field through Parent Interviews.

Family-School Relationships

Epstein (2019) suggests that when educators view children simply as students, they most likely see the family as separate from the school. In these defined roles, parenting is left to the family and educating the student is a job left to be filled by the school. However, if students are viewed as children, then the emphasis is placed on creating a partnership where families and educators work together to develop the children's social, educational and developmental needs (Epstein, 2019). Creating a partnership with shared interests, responsibilities and communication will generate an educational environment where students learn from all areas of their life.

In family-school relationships, the quality of the interactions has shown to have a more positive relationship on academic and behavioral outcomes of children in comparison to the simple number of interactions between family and school (Kohl, Lengua, & McMahon, 2000; Patrikakou & Weissert, 1999). When the parent and teacher believe they are working towards the same goal and have open and honest communication, the child's progress is benefited. Interactions between families and teachers structured in this positive manner lead to beneficial results for all. Conversely, when negative interactions are created between families and the school, the benefits to students are greatly declined (Kohl et al., 2000). Potentially negative or challenging situations regarding children must be presented in positive and constructive ways in order

to provide all partners with the opportunity to communicate and problem-solve. This opportunity is generally not often present when families and teachers operate in isolation or in opposition to one another (Clarke et al., 2009).

The idea that a healthy family-school relationship is vital to supporting the learning and growth of a child is based on three core principles. First, there is a shared belief that a positive relationship between families and schools are important, second there is a commitment between both parties to establish and grow the relationship throughout the child's educational journey, and finally, there is continuity and consistency across systems and settings to promote the child's adaptation (Clarke et al., 2009). Over time these principles are developed through trust, sensitivity and equality to all partners in the family-school relationship.

Families and schools both have a stake in the development and growth of students. Working with trust, sensitivity and equity, both parties can work on purposeful activities that emphasize uniting families and their school. This can be done through a focus on developing two-way communication, showing respect for one another's beliefs, working on resolving conflicts and creating shared experiences where the student, family members and school learn more about one another (Clarke et al., 2009).

A framework for increasing a family-school partnership also includes the works from Epstein (2019) which centers on parenting supports, effective communication, encouraging and supporting volunteers to support student growth, bridging student learning at home, including parents and community members in decision making and collaborating with the community to identify needed resources. Building strong, positive

schools where the family is connected not only builds a positive environment, but allows for the school to remain a place of academic achievement and social learning (Sheldon, 2019). The family-school partnership is vital to creating a positive environment where both parent and teacher feel equity in supporting the student throughout school. Parental involvement helps create and build the family-school connection, while also in supporting the academic achievement of students.

Parental Involvement

According to a model by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2007) parents are motivated to be involved in their child's education by three main factors. The first is parents' motivational beliefs in regards to involvement, such as parental role constructions and self-efficacy for helping their child succeed. The second motivator is the perceived invitation for involvement, whether this is from the student, teacher or school. Finally, their own personal experiences and the perceptions of how they should be involved, based on skills, knowledge, or prior experiences within the educational system. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2007) define parental role construction as the beliefs held by parents on what their role is in their child's education; self-efficacy is defined as the confidence that parents have in regards to their competence in engaging in their child's education. Positive views on role construction and self-efficacy lead parents to be motivated in their child's education and find opportunities to work with the teacher and school. When teachers observe parental motivation and active engagement from the

parents, the teacher's perception of parental interest increases and the invitation for future involvement in the child's education rises (Minke et al., 2014).

Parental Involvement and Student Achievement

Federal and state initiatives strongly encourage the increase of parental involvement, through programs such as Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the state's Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), which both support the inclusion of families as part of the design team for school goals. The ESSA even stresses the importance of including families to assist in the development and management of Title 1 dollars within the school's budget (ESSA, 2015). While these laws are supportive of parental involvement, there is continual debate about whether or not parental involvement truly has an impact on academic achievement. According to Park, Stone and Holloway (2017), parental involvement may be beneficial to the school in various ways. Besides simply focusing on the improvement of academic achievement, parental involvement can influence the supplemental support of teacher instruction, increasing school resources through community engagement, and create a safe school environment that allows for learning to continue. Parental involvement can build social capital within a school to help cultivate the school group identity, increase shared interests and strengthen the desires to work toward a common educational goal (Portes, 2000). With this social capital a parental resource is being designed to support the greater school community without directly focusing on academic achievement.

Brenner, Boyle and Sadler (2016) determined that when examining the relationships between parental involvement, proximal student achievement (GPA) and educational performance, there was a correlation between higher levels of school-based parental involvement and increased educational expectations leading to higher GPAs and greater educational attainment. Even more specifically, school-based parental involvement improved academics for disadvantaged youth, while parental expectations on higher education seemed to improve the academic success of advantaged students (Brenner, Boyle & Sadler, 2016). Building the social capital of a school through parental involvement showed an increase in academic achievement within this study (Brenner, Boyle & Sadler, 2016). In a similar study (Affuso, Bacchini & Miranda, 2017), parental involvement in middle school was not shown to directly influence improvement in academics, however it was positively associated with self-determined motivation and academic self-efficacy. Upon analysis the following two years, the self-determined motivation and self-efficacy was still apparent and directly impacting the improved academic achievement of the students (Affuso, Bacchini & Miranda, 2017).

Positive indications of school-wide achievement seemed apparent where the learning environment was positive and parental involvement was evident. The building of social capital within the school that focuses on parental involvement through community engagement, supporting teachers through the academics and creating a safe learning environment have a greater opportunity for students to meet national/state standards in math and reading achievement. In addition, the benefits of parental involvement and the social capital created seem to have a greater effect for all students,

even students whose parents are not involved can still gain from the overall level of parental involvement (Park et al., 2017).

Influences of Parents' Experiences in Education

Parental experiences and educational attainment have also been shown to impact a student's educational achievement. Parental aspirations for students' educational achievement has been directly correlated to their own educational success (Spera, Wentzel & Matto, 2008). When parents have high levels of educational success, it has been shown to reflect increased aspirations for their children to obtain higher levels of education. Additionally, the parents' experiences in college has most likely provided them with resources and skills to assist their children in navigating higher education pathways (Spera, Wentzel & Matto, 2008). However, parents who were classified as struggling learners established poor self-efficacy with low motivation for achievement in their academics. Parents who had negative educational experiences, filled with frustration, failure and low motivation for academics developed a negative concept of school and did not encourage their children to persevere in school (Wilson & Michaels, 2006). These examples of strong and weak self-efficacy in parents suggest that their behaviors and attitudes towards education can influence a child's motivation and academic self-efficacy, which can highly impact academic achievement (Affuso et al., 2017).

Perceptions of Parental Involvement

The perception of parental involvement typically looks at the behaviors and attitudes of the parent in regards to the support given to both home settings and within the school. Measuring parental involvement characteristically includes looking at the quality and frequency of communication with teachers and participation in school functions, activities and educational support (El Nokali, Bachman & Votruba-Drzal, 2010). Parental involvement can also illustrate the values and attitudes parents hold in regards to education and the aspirations they have for their children's academic achievement (Catsambis, 2001). While these parental values and attitudes may not directly influence the academic outcome of a student, it can contribute to the academic achievement indirectly through encouraging the child's motivation and perseverance during challenging academic and educational experiences (El Nokali et al., 2010). El Nokali et al. (2010) found that "significant associations were detected repeatedly among parent involvement, social skills, and behavior problems" (p. 1002). Increases in parental involvement over time was associated with increases in children's social skills along with a decrease in problem behaviors. These findings may reflect a rising consistency in social expectations within the school environment. When the parents take part in their child's education, they may be more likely to communicate with teachers about behaviors in the classroom and social adjustments over time. This will allow parents to have a greater understanding of possible social difficulties their child is facing and allow

positive reinforcement and supports both the home and school settings (El Nokali et al., 2010).

In an additional study, when asked “Why and how are low-income parents involved in their children’s education?” Mapp (2002) found that parents’ response reflected a belief that parental involvement greatly influenced their child’s educational experience. Parents that became involved in the school through volunteering and being a part of the school environment noticed that their children’s behavior and feelings about school began to change for the positive, due to their parent’s direct involvement. This positive reaction from the students then motivated the parents to continue their involvement and encouraged others to also become a part of the school culture. The parents who were interviewed also emphasized, through their language when describing the school, that there was a relationship and trust that was built through the culture of the school and the parents (Mapp, 2002). Exploring how parental involvement can influence students’ academic aspirations, social skills and possibly even behaviors it is important to understand the barriers the families and the school must overcome to increase parental involvement.

Barriers to Parental Involvement

Parental perceptions of the barriers of their child’s education can play a fundamental role in the success of their student. A study by Griffin and Galassi (2010) of middle school students and their families in the rural South, show many of the barriers faced by families. One of the first barriers families face is parent and family barriers, or

home life struggles that prevent students from being academically successful. This barrier can be due to single-parent families, homelessness, or a lack of discipline and family support. A lack of resources, or understanding what resources are available can greatly impact families that are struggling due to this barrier. A second barrier found by Griffin and Galassi (2010) relates to the teacher and instructional concerns. When there is a lack of differentiation in the classroom to meet the needs of students this creates a barrier to student's accessing their education. Also included in this barrier would be poor relationships between student and teacher due to a lingering "reputation" of a child from previous teachers or a second sibling that doesn't mimic his brother or sisters learning styles. Parent and teacher interactions can bring another barrier into education (Griffin & Galassi, 2010). When families don't have communication about academic or behavior concerns until it becomes a major issue there is distrust that begins to build between teacher and parents. Parents can easily become frustrated with the lack of communication and assume that it is the teacher's fault because they, as the parents, weren't aware of any problems their child had. Students themselves can also be the barrier to their education. When students won't speak up when questions arise, become distracted by social acceptance, or place little emphasis on their academic growth it creates a barrier that needs to be addressed in order for them to realize success in the classroom. Finally, families recognized the barriers between the educational system and the resources needed for success. Parents noted that a lack of mentoring, inadequate transportation, a decline in professional trained teachers, high-stakes testing, and the

proper resources for students to find success create barriers that affect all students (Griffin & Galassi, 2010).

Economic barriers

As mentioned above in the study by Griffin and Galassi (2010) there are many barriers that families face when supporting students in their education. Many of these barriers are even greater for students with low-income families, who are struggling with a lack of materials (e.g. transportation, childcare), a lack of time due to working more than one job, or a feeling of inadequacy and being unprepared to talk with school administration and teachers in regards to student struggles (Reece, Staudt & Ogle, 2013). In addition to these barriers, families are usually forced to deal with the barriers created by teacher perceptions regarding parental participation and their impact on their children's education. Bakker, Denessen and Brus-Laeven (2007) conducted a study with 60 teachers and 218 parents, spanning 1st-6th grade, and discovered that when asking parents and teachers about their parental participation there were low scores for teacher judgements of the influence of parents on the school, while parents had higher ratings for both their influence and involvement in educational activities at home (Bakker, Denessen & Brus-Laeven, 2007). Teacher perceptions of parental involvement, in regards to educational activities at home, seemed to be deduced from the actions that were visible to the teachers, such as participation in school activities or parent-teacher contact. Additionally, teachers judged that parents with a higher level of education also had a higher level of involvement in their child's education, over parents with lower levels of education. This becomes even more significant when analyzing the parents' findings, as

the parents with both high and low levels of education did not report different levels of involvement in their children's education (Bakker et al, 2007).

Cultural barriers

While there are many cultures in the United States, the focus of this research is on Latino families and the cultural barriers that can impede families in the educational system. The findings by Ceballo, Maurizi, Suarez and Aretakis (2014) support the idea that parental involvement needs to be reorganized by looking at the complete array of activities that parents utilize to support their child's education, not just participation in school activities and homework help. In a study that looked at 223 Latino students in the 9th grade, they analyzed six key factors for supporting student success: Gift/Sacrifice, Future Discussions, Effort, Guilt/Sacrifice, School Involvement and Home Involvement (Ceballo, Maurizi, Suarez & Aretakis, 2014). The study showed that for Latino students, Gift/Sacrifice and Future Discussions were a high motivation for academic success due to desire that is motivated by their parents' hard work and sacrifice, along with their continual communication about the value of education. Unlike most traditional parental involvement, this understanding of ethnic minority families begs schools to re-evaluate the definition of parental support (Ceballo et al., 2014). Parental presence at school events additionally provide a source of academic inspiration for students in Latino families. During interviews with the 9th graders in the study, Ceballo, et al. (2014) found that the value of student success in school means that they are contributing to the success of their family and returning the gift of sacrifice. These two factors,

Gift/Sacrifice and Future Discussion, proved to be the greatest influencer for Latino students in this study (Ceballo et al., 2014).

Turney and Kao (2009) found that minority immigrants believed there to be a greater number of barriers when it comes to becoming involved with their children's school, as compared with native-born families. Time in the United States and proficiency in English proved to be the top barriers faced by immigrant families faced (Turney & Kao, 2009). For students that are new to the education of the United States, these barriers can greatly affect their academic and social-emotional growth. Domestic hardships such as language, employment, lack of resources, and the changes in cultural expectations need to be taken into consideration when supporting students with cultural differences and/or immigration status, especially in the age of Every Child Succeeds Act (Turney & Kao, 2009).

Overcoming barriers

While the barriers for parental involvement can vary from school to school, a study of 11 schools in the UK indicated that while barriers are still apparent, the lack of support by external government agencies to support parents and families have created a need for schools to take broader roles in developing programs that meet the needs of families, and thus increase parental involvement within the school (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). In order for students to gain the most from education, many schools have focused on several key factors to support students and their families (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). First, schools acknowledge that school is significantly influenced by what happens outside of the school day. Schools have begun to meet parents where the needs are,

providing traditional involvement activities (sports, carnivals, etc.), active involvement with homework (reading response, project support), as well as acknowledging parental needs such as parenting classes. These outreach programs are being developed within the schools, and through community partners and digital technology, they are brought to families in need. In a changing world, technology has also increased the need for communication with families. Parents are demanding more knowledge and communication in regards to their child's education, tools such as texting, online grading, email and websites are expanding, and meeting the needs of families and schools in supporting student growth and well-being (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). A fourth factor that has become vital to the success of a student is the social-emotional support, and assurance of the welfare and safety of each child. This vital factor can only be addressed with increased communication between the school, families and community partners. Ongoing teacher professional development regarding social-emotional wellness is also important for meeting student needs (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). Finally, integrating new demands into the school standards and creating a "whole school" approach has become necessary for the success of students. Creating a plan where parental involvement is co-created with families and the school is fundamental to the effectiveness of the school and its impact on students (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). Even though this study takes place in the UK, the US and Humboldt County have many of the same demands placed on families and the school continues to increase their role in meeting the needs of families and overcoming possible barriers that parents and students face.

In regards to numerous barriers that low-income families may have to overcome, there are also many resources and strengths that they have, and when schools support them through community outreach these barriers can be knocked down (Reece, Staudt & Ogle, 2013). Reece, Staudt and Ogle analyzed a parent organization called the Neighboring Project, an organization that works to encourage parental involvement in low-income, urban areas, they found that it supported the strengths of the families and built stronger relationships between the families, community and school. When interviewing participants about the benefits of belonging to the Neighboring Project, families stated that they became involved in the school, participated in activities that they weren't aware existed before, gained self-confidence and the skills necessary to initiate conversations with their student's teachers, learned how to support their students with school work and the resources needed to help them succeed, began encouraging their students about the importance of school and furthering their education, and, finally, learned ways to build connections and communicate amongst one another while identifying resources available in the neighborhood (Reece et al., 2013).

Overcoming the barriers that families and parents face in regards to becoming involved in their child's education can lead to many benefits. For parents their participation is based on many factors, such as knowledge, self-confidence, language skills, and motivation to be involved (Larocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011). Understanding the needs and concerns of parents is the first step to creating a relationship with parents that will encourage their involvement and increase the possible benefits that the students can experience (Larocque, Kleiman & Darling, 2011).

Benefits to Parental Involvement

Since parent involvement provides a positive influence to academic success, it can also lead to many other benefits for parents, the school and, most importantly, the students' education. Semke and Sheridan (2012) looked at eighteen studies from 1995-2005 that focused on family-school partnerships and parental involvement in rural areas within the United States. Coding the articles, they found a significance between parental participation and cooperation with the school, and the benefits these provide to students' academic outcomes. The analysis showed the connections between parents and the school working together in a shared responsibility to promote the academic success of students (Semke & Sheridan, 2012).

When parents believe that their child's success in school is a factor that they have control over, they tend to feel that their involvement is of greater value (Georgiou & Tourva, 2007). However, when the parents believe that their child's success in school is based on an external factor, such as the child's ability, their effort, family demographics and teacher skills, the parents don't believe that their efforts and involvement can help their children succeed in school (Georgiou & Tourva, 2007). In review, when parents believe they have the power to make a difference in their child's education they are motivated to become involved, while those that believe other factors determine their child's success chose to not become involved.

A meta-analysis of parenting and school success by Rosenzweig (2001) found that there were seven parenting practices that, when combined, had the greatest positive

association with student achievement. The parenting practices, in order of impact, were (1) educational aspirations and expectations, (2) engagement, (3) authoritative parenting style, (4) autonomy support, (5) emotional support and warmth, (6) providing resources and learning experiences, and (7) very specific types of participation at school (Rosenzweig, 2001).

Considering the first two parenting practices that impact student achievement, high aspirations and expectations by parents and parent engagement proved to impact student achievement (Rosenzweig, 2001). Parents that held high aspirations for their students to attend college and also expect A's and B's, showed a positive correlation with student achievement. Additionally, parental engagement within the school was positively correlated to higher achieving students. Parental engagement consisted of monitoring academic progress, knowing where the child goes before and after school, awareness of the student's friends, showing that school is important, and being interested in academic and social aspects of school (Rosenzweig, 2001).

Using Rounding for Outcomes

Rounding is an approach used in most hospitals, and met with great success for both the patients and the hospital staff. Rounding is the process where doctors visit patients on a consistent basis to ask a set of specific, yet simple check-in questions. "How is your pain being managed? Do you have everything you need? Are there any new concerns? Is there anything I can do to make you more comfortable while I'm here?" This practice assists the medical staff in understanding patient needs while also building a

relationship and making the patient feel heard and cared about. Cox (2017) wrote that this idea of rounding can be used in education in a very similar way. Teachers can build a relationship with parents by asking a set of specific questions to understand how they can best support the family, meet the needs of the student and determine what assistance might be needed in order to create a positive relationship and help the student grow academically, socially and behaviorally (Cox, 2017).

While the practice of doing rounds has been in the medical field for quite some time, it was Quint Studer that developed the philosophy and practice of Rounding for Outcomes (Studer, 2007) and has brought it into the business world and just recently the education field. The Studer Group, founded by Quint Studer, has three basic premises that guide its work: they believe that people want to have a purpose, do worthwhile work, and make a difference in peoples' lives (Studer, 2007). One of the key elements for these premises is to use Rounding for Outcomes to promote a positive environment through structured questions and recognition techniques. Rounding for Outcomes is a process that focuses on systematically engaging in a dialogue through a standard set of questions, then acting on the information that was attained through the conversation. The questions are designed to establish a positive working environment for the organization and to improve the effectiveness of the leader by creating a productive relationship between the two parties, where individuals interviewed feel heard and supported (Studer, 2007). The Studer Group's approach is to create an environment where there is a strong, positive relationship, through the use of Rounding for Outcomes. The idea is that if all individuals within the organization are asked the same questions about what is going

well, what concerns they have and who should be recognized for their hard work, the relationship between the leadership and those interviewed should be strengthened and improve the social climate of the organization (Studer, 2007).

Conclusion

This literature review investigated research on parental involvement, and how the family-school relationship and parental involvement can influence student achievement and social development. There was also an examination of the barriers and benefits that accompany parental involvement, and a brief look at the possibility of using Rounding for Outcomes within education.

The family-school relationship was defined as a child-centered connection that is held between the family members with the child's home and the educators that are supporting the child's growth within the school (Clarke et al., 2009). Much of the literature supported the ideas that if the parent and teacher believe they are working towards the same goals with open and honest communication the benefits are great for the child's academic, social and behavioral growth (Kohl et al., 2000). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2007) found that parental self-efficacy, a perceived invitation for involvement from the school, and their own experiences within the educational system were the main factors for parents becoming involved with their child's education. While the literature had varying opinions on the direct benefit of parental involvement and academic success, much of the literature suggested that parental involvement increased student self-efficacy, determination, and could indirectly support academic and social

achievement (Brenner et al., 2016; Affuso et al., 2017; El Nokali et al., 2010; Mapp, 2002).

The barriers that families face regarding parental involvement, such as home struggles, a lack of resources, poor parent and teacher relationships, and even students' personal issues can be hard to overcome (Griffin & Galassi, 2010). In addition, there can be economic and cultural barriers that prevent families from becoming involved with their child's education. In order to overcome these barriers, schools have begun to work with communities and parents to meet them where their needs are (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). Semke and Sheridan (2012) found that when parents and schools cooperate and create a shared responsibility in promoting family involvement there is a correlation to academic, social and behavioral success.

Finally, the literature review looked at the idea of Rounding for Outcomes and how this successful practice has worked in hospitals and businesses, and has recently moved into the education field. Using Rounding for Outcomes to ask specific questions to families, could help to build a positive relationship with families and give insight on how to support student growth (Cox, 2017). However, there isn't enough information on how Rounding for Outcomes can directly influence teacher perceptions or behavior, give an understanding of family needs, or lead to support for student success.

This study focuses on teacher perception of my district's Rounding for Outcomes Initiative (called Parent Interviews in this study) to determine if it will improve teacher awareness of student and family needs, influence teachers to scaffold their curriculum to

support student needs, and if teachers become motivated to become involved with long-term initiatives that could improve students and family supports with the district.

METHODS

The district-designed Parent Interview focused on understanding the parents' perspective on their children's education. This study builds on the district's work through the use of a Teacher Survey to dive deeper into whether improving teacher awareness of student and family needs is associated with changes in teachers' perceptions of their students, to their teaching practices, and self-reported motivation to participate in long-term initiatives that could improve student and family supports within the district. The findings from this study will inform the school district about where to focus future initiatives to better support the district's students and families.

Participants

The participants in this study are made-up of teachers from the South Bay Union School District, with grades ranging from Transitional Kindergarten to Eighth Grade. There were 25 teachers within the district and all of them participated in the survey, as they were given time by the district to participate and they all agreed to the survey's importance for the district. The participants were made of 1 transitional kindergarten teacher, 3 kindergarten teachers, 3 first grade teachers, 3 second grade teachers, 2 third grade teachers, 2 fourth grade teachers, 2 fifth grade teachers, 2 sixth grade teachers, 2 seventh/eighth grade teachers, 2 special day class teachers, 2 special education teachers and 1 independent studies teacher. The teachers ranged from first year teachers to

teachers in their last year before retirement, so teacher experience was greatly varied.

Within the make-up of teachers, there were 3 male and 22 female participants.

District Parent Interview-Rounding for Outcomes

For this study, a survey based on feedback regarding the Parent Interviews was created and given to the teachers. The survey was evaluated for face validity by two faculty experts within the field of education, as well as the superintendent of the district. This survey was based on the initial Parent Interviews conducted in the fall of the 2019-20 school year. During this Parent Interview, teachers met with their students' parents for individual interviews regarding their perspective of their child's education. This allowed teachers and parents the opportunity to create a relationship based on the strengths, weaknesses, concerns and interests of the student. While the survey conducted for this study will be the main focus of this study, the Parent Interview information also provides a secondary source of information for the study.

My Teacher Survey

The district-sponsored voluntary Teacher Survey was administered at the end of a district staff in-service. Since this survey was conducted following an online professional development, teachers were given the option of completing the online anonymous Teacher Survey in the privacy of their home.

Data

In this data collection it is important to note that I am the principal of the 4th-8th grade campus and know these teachers, students, and parents very well. I am conducting this study to gain information that will assist the district in their quest for continual improvement for students and their families, and hopefully bridge the family-to-school gap through communication. In reviewing the data from the surveys, a thematic analysis was used to code and gain insight into the thoughts and responses from the participants. The 10 question survey included six questions that totaled numbers and percent and four questions that asked for open-ended answers. Questions were examined to see which themes/issues were most prominent based on the percentages of teachers who highlighted these themes/issues in their survey responses. The data was analyzed to explore whether the Parent Interviews improved teacher awareness of student and family needs, how/if teachers scaffolded their curriculum support to meet student needs based on the information gathered in the interviews, and if teachers were motivated to become involved with long-term initiatives that could improve student and family supports based on the learned information.

RESULTS

Introduction-Background

This chapter presents the Teacher Survey results distributed to 25 teachers at South Bay Union School District. The Teacher Survey is a follow-up to the South Bay Union School District Parent Interview.

South Bay Union School District Parent Interview

South Bay Union School District is a small, three school district, that consists of Pine Hill School, which is a TK through 3rd grade campus; and South Bay School that houses a 4th through 6th grade campus, as well as South Bay Charter School that consists of 7th and 8th grade, as well as an independent study K-8th grade class. There is a total of 481 students within the district, comprised of 69% qualifying for free/reduced lunch, 12% being English Language Learners, 17% designated as McKinney-Vento, 2% of students identified as foster youth, and a total of 33% of the students within the district have been identified as needing supports for social-emotional, behavioral or academic needs. I am the principal at the South Bay Campus, serving my third year as an administrator, after moving from teaching 5th grade at South Bay for seven years.

The superintendent had been adapting the Rounding for Outcomes protocol to tailor a Parent Interview for the district. For the fall of the 2019-20 school year we decided, as an administrative team, to move our end-of-trimester parent conferences to the third week of school to conduct a Parent Interview based on the Rounding for

Outcomes protocol. My study follows-up the Parent Interview conducted by teachers. The survey focused on identifying what information about students and their families teachers found valuable enough to change their teaching practices and their willingness to participate in creating long-term supports for students and families within the district. I don't believe that my relationship with the participants altered their survey answers in any way. It is my belief that the positive rapport that I share with staff, along with hearing positive teacher feedback regarding their desire to continue with Parent Interviews led to the high completion rate of the Teacher Survey.

The district's Parent Interviews were conducted during the third week of the 2019-2020 school year. Parents were emailed the 10 questions (Table 1) prior to the Parent Interview and then 30 minute in-person interviews were scheduled with the teacher. The teacher explained that the teacher & district wanted to hear their thoughts about their students, notes would be taken and a copy mailed to each family after the interview. The Parent Interviews were kept casual and focused on allowing the parents/guardians to be the main speakers, while the teachers listened, repeated what they heard and took notes on the exchange of information. Following the interviews, teachers were given time to input the information into a Google form so that the district could analyze the information to best determine how to support both the students and families when creating long-term programs for the district. The following table shows the questions that were asked during the Parent Interview.

Table 1: Parent Interview Questions

Parent Interview Questions
1. Tell me a little bit about your child.
2. Strengths: What are some things your child is passionate about?
3. Hopes/Dreams: Next June, what do you hope your child says about his/her experience in school this year? What's the story you hope he/she will tell?
4. What might be some concerns/fears about your child this year?
5. Parent Experience: What was your experience like at this grade? How do you reflect on your schooling experience?
6. Routines: Tell me what a typical before school and after school day looks like for _____.
7. Communication: How and when would you like me to be in touch with you this year? What might be some things you'll hope I'll communicate with you?
8. One improvement for SBUSD: If we could make one change to improve Pine Hill & South Bay, what would that change be?
9. Who has been especially helpful and what did he/she do?
10. What might be something I missed, but you want me to know about your child?

My Teacher Survey

My follow-up Teacher Survey to the Parent Interviews was administered in April, 2020. The online Teacher Survey consisted of 10 questions (Table 2) that asked teachers to reflect back on the Parent Interviews. The voluntary Teacher Survey was presented to teachers at the conclusion of an online professional development session (due to Covid-19) in the privacy of their homes. Twenty-five surveys were emailed out and all of the teachers completed their survey, leading to a 100 percent response rate for this study.

Table 2: Teacher Survey- Teachers Reflecting on the Parent Interview

Teacher Survey Reflecting on Parent Interview
1. Do you feel that the Parent Interviews were a valuable way to listen/learn about your students and their families?
2. Please describe in detail why you felt this was/was not valuable?
3. Which of the following interview questions gave you feedback that you could use immediately to support the students in your classroom? (Parent Interview questions were listed)
4. How did you use the information you gained in the Parent Interview to support students in the classroom?
5. What additional supports would you like to help meet the needs of the student in your classroom? (7 choices listed)
6. Which interview questions gave you information on problems/concerns that you believe could be supported through long-term district wide goals? (Parent Interview questions were listed)
7. Reflecting back on the Parent Interviews do you recall any specific problems/concerns that you would like to see the district make a long-term goal?
8. Please mark if you would be interested in working on a team to support long-term goals in the following areas. (7 choices listed)
9. Do you feel that the Parent Interview experience affected your willingness to take a role in the area you chose above?
10. After completing the Parent Interviews, were there questions that weren't asked, that you wish you had the answers to? What were the questions?

Data & Analysis

Teachers' views on Parent Interview usefulness & most useful information

This study focused on exploring the perceptions of teachers following the completion of Parent Interviews utilizing a rounding model. Specifically, I looked at (1) how teachers perceived the value of Parent Interviews to increase their awareness of the needs of students and their families; (2) if these Parent Interviews will influence teachers

to scaffold their curriculum to support student needs; and (3) if teachers become motivated to become involved in long-term initiatives to improve student and family supports within the district.

Improving teacher awareness of student and family needs

The first question in the survey directly asked teachers to rate the value of their experience with the Parent Interviews, based on a Likert Scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being no value and 5 being highly valuable (see Figure 1). Out of the 25 teachers that participated in this study 84% perceived their experience as valuable, with 56% of the teachers stating that it was highly valuable and 28% stating that it was valuable. It is important to note that all three teachers who gave a neutral rating commented disliking the data entry that followed the teacher interviews, but then stated that the “interviews themselves were valuable,” and “a nice way to get to know families.” The one teacher that stated the Parent Interviews were slightly valuable has a class that loops for several years and had no new students during this academic year.

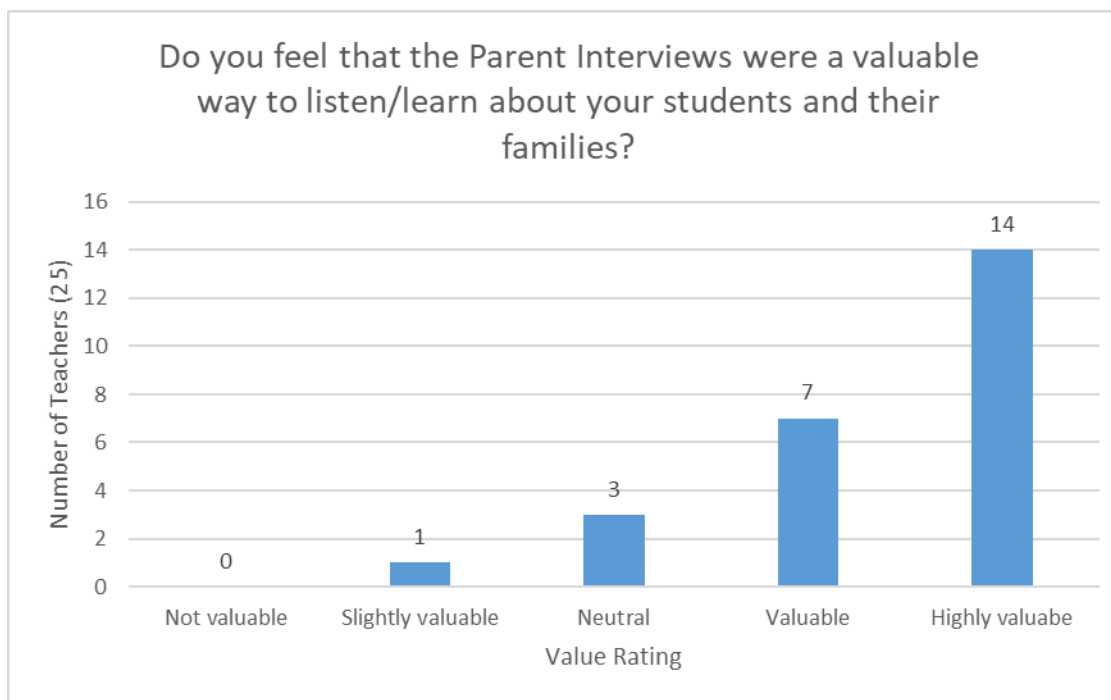


Figure 1: Perceived Value of Parent Interviews

Building welcoming relationships

The 21 teachers that found value in the survey expressed how the survey helped them learn about their students and their families while creating the opportunity to build relationships with the parents. Teachers commented that it “allowed me to make a deeper connection with the family,” “interviews were helpful in establishing a positive, initial relationship with the families,” and “positive to meet the parents at the beginning of the year to connect.” The teachers’ responses support the idea that the Parent Interview process was helpful in building relationships with the families within the first three weeks of school.

Building a relationship between parents and teachers through the district Parent Interview creates a shared experience that both parties can build upon. The teacher’s

perception of the student can shift to that of the whole-child, learning about their background, overall strengths and weaknesses. Through the interview process the teachers can learn about the family background, daily routines and those who have helped this student in the past. The emphasis moves to creating a partnership between the parent and teacher to understand and support the social, developmental and academic needs of the child.

Additionally, the relationship that began in this Parent Interview gave teachers the information necessary to build on their relationships with the students. Teachers commented, “[we] used the information to build relationships with my students,” became “better connected with students,” and the “information helps to understand the student better and connect with them.” Learning about the strengths that students brought into the classroom allowed teachers to “plan lessons that were meaningful to the students,” further strengthening the relationships they had with students.

Connecting & collaborating with parents

“Hearing the parent perspective” on their children and “giving the parents the opportunity to share about their child” allowed teachers to listen to the parents and initiate a welcoming and collaborative relationship. Listening to parents’ views and learning about parents’ dreams and fears for their children provided teachers with important information about the parents’ values along with an opportunity to continue these communications throughout the remainder of the year. The Parent Interview offered teachers the opportunity to collaborate with parents to “set goals with the family” and “know what supports children are receiving and resources that the teacher needs to

provide.” The introduction of this collaboration and communication is also highlighted in the study by Kohl et. al. (2000) that when the parent and teacher believe they are working towards the same goal and have open and honest communication, the child’s progress is benefited. Interactions between families and teachers structured in this positive manner lead to beneficial results for all (Kohl et.al., 2000). The opportunity for teachers to communicate with parents and begin a connection based on the joint desire to see the child have a successful year, helped teachers build an early and stronger relationship with families.

Instead of having parents and teachers wait until the end of the first trimester to meet and discuss concerns and successes as displayed through the student’s school work and classroom experience, the roles were switched and the teacher was able to hear from the parent their concerns about their child and what they see as their strengths. Teachers were able to gather feedback from the parents that could immediately support the children in their classroom.

Overwhelmingly over 88% of teachers stated that asking parents about the concerns and fears for their child gave them relative and useful information to support the children in their classroom (see Figure 2). Learning the “Concerns/fears parents have, often provide us with the information we need to address problems before they start.” A teacher also stated that this question gave them “Insight into kids struggles, it helps me to see sides in kids I might not be aware of.” Teachers were able to “categorize concerns for the whole class,” as well as “set goals with families for their child.” Learning the

strengths and passions that the parents saw in their children also gave teachers useful data that could be used in the classroom, as stated by 68% of teachers.

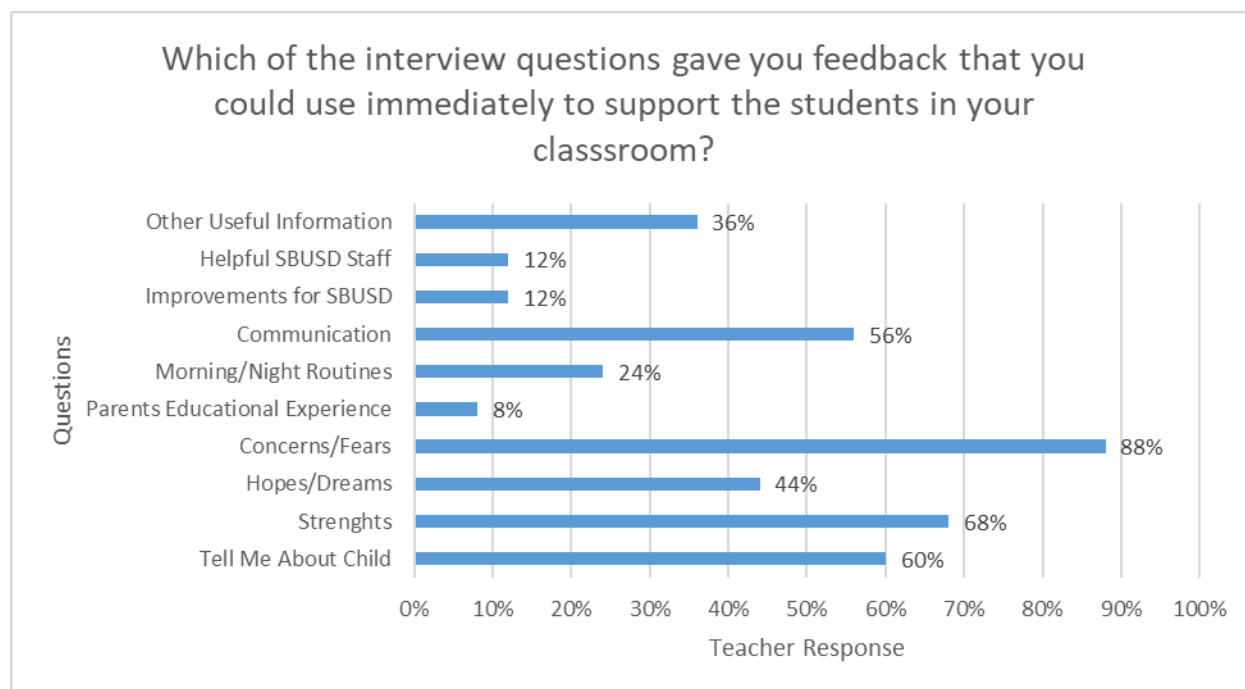


Figure 2: Useful Information to Support Students

Asking parents about how they would like to communicate allowed teachers to continue their dialogue regarding the parent’s concerns and “continue to communicate with families to fill them in on issues and celebrations.” Fifty-six percent of teachers found that learning about when and how parents would like to hear from them gave them important information that they could use to continue and deepen their relationship with the family. Following the Parent Interview, teachers knew what was important to communicate with parents, as well as how the parents would like to receive communication. This supports the idea that in family-school relationships, the quality of the interactions has shown to have a more positive relationship on academic and

behavioral outcomes of children in comparison to the simple number of interactions (Kohl, Lengua, & McMahon, 2000; Patrikakou & Weissbert, 1999).

Influencing teachers to scaffold their curriculum to meet student needs

Looking at the data from the survey the words “math, reading, or writing” are never mentioned, nor is the word curriculum. The Parent Interview didn’t focus on the academics of school, but on the parent’s interpersonal relationships with their children, explaining their family life and routines, describing the weaknesses and strengths that their children have and asking how the teacher and school can communicate, improve and be helpful to their child. Needless to say, this study didn’t find any scaffolding to the academic curriculum (although there is plenty found in the classroom) but instead found how teachers were influenced to meet the social-emotional needs of their students.

Asking about the social-emotional needs of students was not a question that was directly asked in the Parent Interview. However, the combination of asking about concerns/fears, hopes/dreams, and simply tell me more about your child gave teachers lots of insight into the needs of both students and their families. The combination of these questions not only gave teachers valuable information about the children in their classrooms, but built a bridge between what usually separates teacher and parent, a genuine connection about the overall success of the child. The welcoming opportunity for parents to share about their students led to open communication that teachers were able to use in supporting the children in their classroom, both academically and socially.

Understanding student background/family life

The data from the survey showed that the majority of teachers, over sixty percent, learned the most valuable information when asking parents about fears, strengths and to simply tell them about the child. Teachers were quoted in the survey as saying they “understand where kids were coming from/knowing their struggles,” have “insight into the child’s background,” and “knew more about what a kid’s struggles were.” Twelve of the twenty-five (48% of) teachers commented about the value in learning about the child’s family life, background information and family routines. Having even a general understanding of the student’s family dynamic can help teachers to understand the “why” when a student is struggling in class. Teachers shared that the value in the Parent Interview was learning “about family routines, that can help with student behaviors in the mornings,” and becoming “aware of family dynamics and how to tailor this information to help support the kids.” Being the administrator onsite, I can say that I witnessed first-hand how teachers use their knowledge of a student’s background to fulfill a need allowing the student to focus on their academics. Using information learned from these Parent Interviews I have seen teachers offer late breakfast or clean clothes, pause lessons for restorative circles, allow students to take recovery and reduce student workload to lighten anxiety.

The desire for teachers to scaffold activities and expectations in their classroom to better meet the social-emotional needs of their students can be seen through question #5 in the survey. The survey asked what additional supports they would like in order to meet the needs of their students, and the teacher’s top two choices focused on

professional development in social-emotional supports and managing behaviors (see Figure 3). In this survey question teachers were asked to mark their top three choices, sixteen participants marked their top three choices, while one participant marked four choices, six participants only marked two choices and two participants marked one choice.

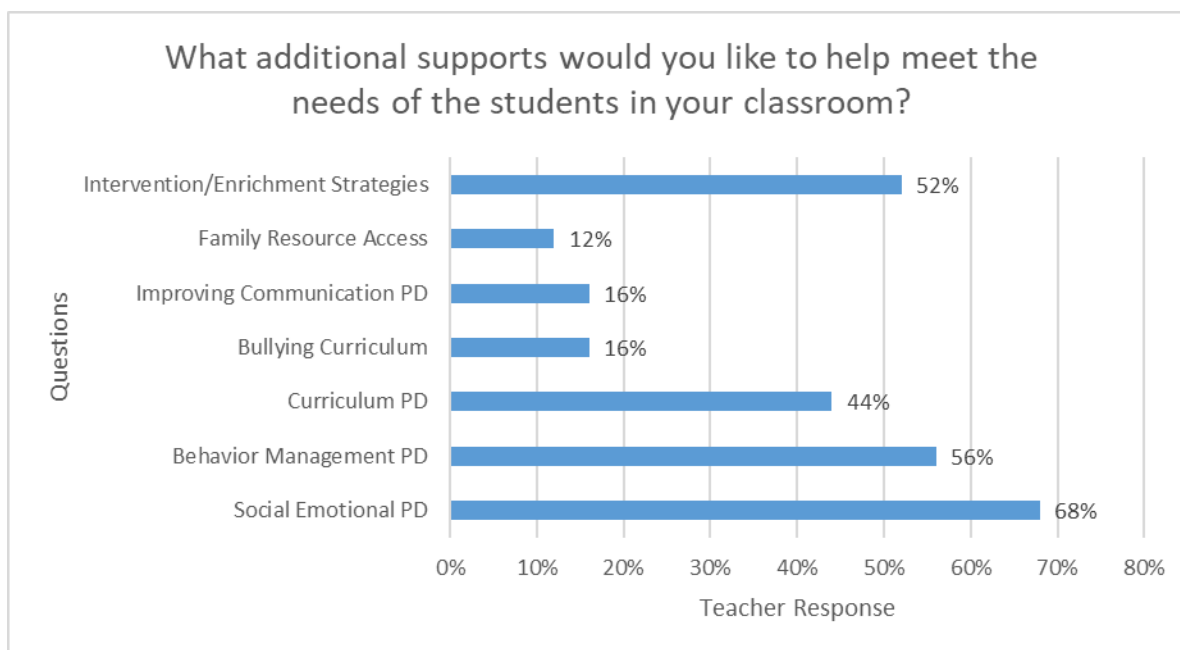


Figure 3: Understanding the Needs & Desires of Teacher Development

Teacher's desire for professional development in the area of social-emotional shows that they are looking to improve their skills in an area that has a high need. Reflecting back on the needs of the students in the district, there are over thirty-three percent of students that have been recommended for social-emotional, behavioral and/or academic support. Professional development regarding behavior management was requested by 56% of the teachers and intervention and enrichment strategy request was

52%. These three requests by teachers fall directly in-line with the needs of many students within their classrooms. Adding the communication and relationships that teachers have built with parents the understanding of student needs has become even greater.

Becoming involved with long-term initiatives to support students & families

When asked which Parent Interview question gave the teachers information about problems or concerns that could be supported through long-term district wide goals there was an overwhelming choice for most teachers (see Figure 4). Seventy-two percent of the teachers stated that learning about the concerns and fears that the parents had regarding their child led to the greatest need that the district could focus on. Sixty percent of teachers then stated that the district could focus on the suggestions for improving South Bay Union School District when moving forward on long-term goals. Additional answers were much lower in percentage, hitting 36% or lower. The information from this survey question is important, as it shows what the parents valued, how the teachers categorized the importance and their desire for the district to then place value on these areas when building on student and family supports.

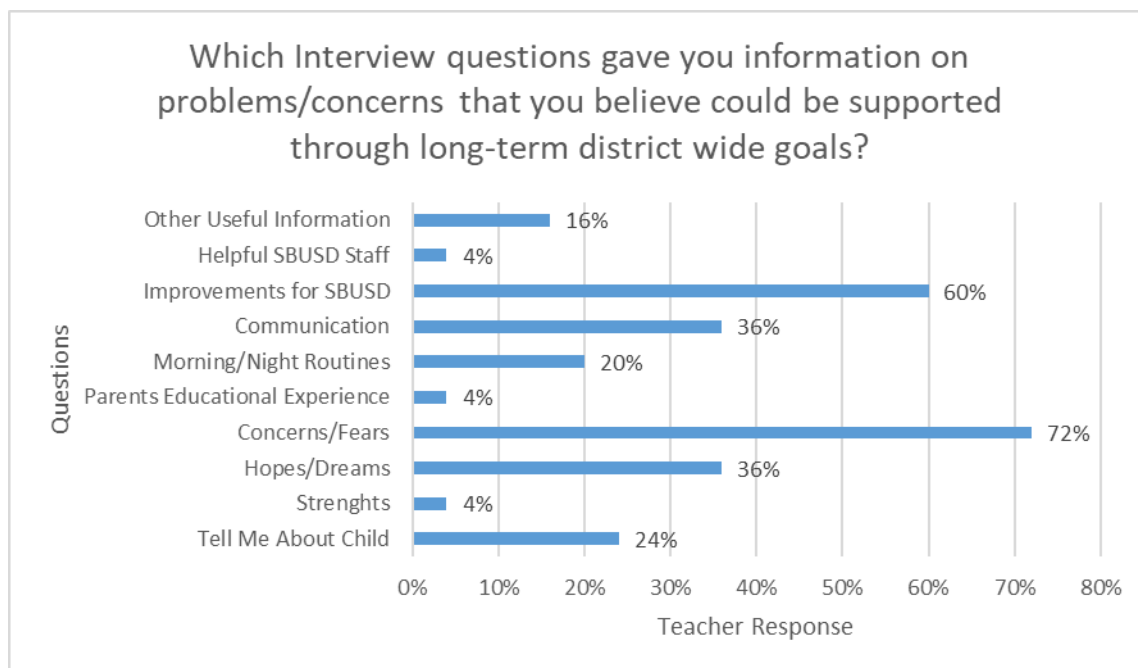


Figure 4: Feedback on Goal-Setting for the District

The final portion of the survey asked teachers about their interest in becoming involved in a team that could support students, families, and teachers through identified long-term goals (see Figure 5). Teachers were asked to choose any areas that they would be willing to collaborative work on with other team members. The majority of teachers (fifteen) chose one area that they would like to participate in. Four teachers marked 2 areas of interest, four teachers marked 3 areas and one teacher marked 4, while another marked 5 areas of interest. The variety of teacher interest was more varied for this question, with the largest interest, 36% focused on teachers working with families to establish routines at home. Thirty-two percent showed interest in both joining a team to create professional development for curriculum and training for core academic interventions.

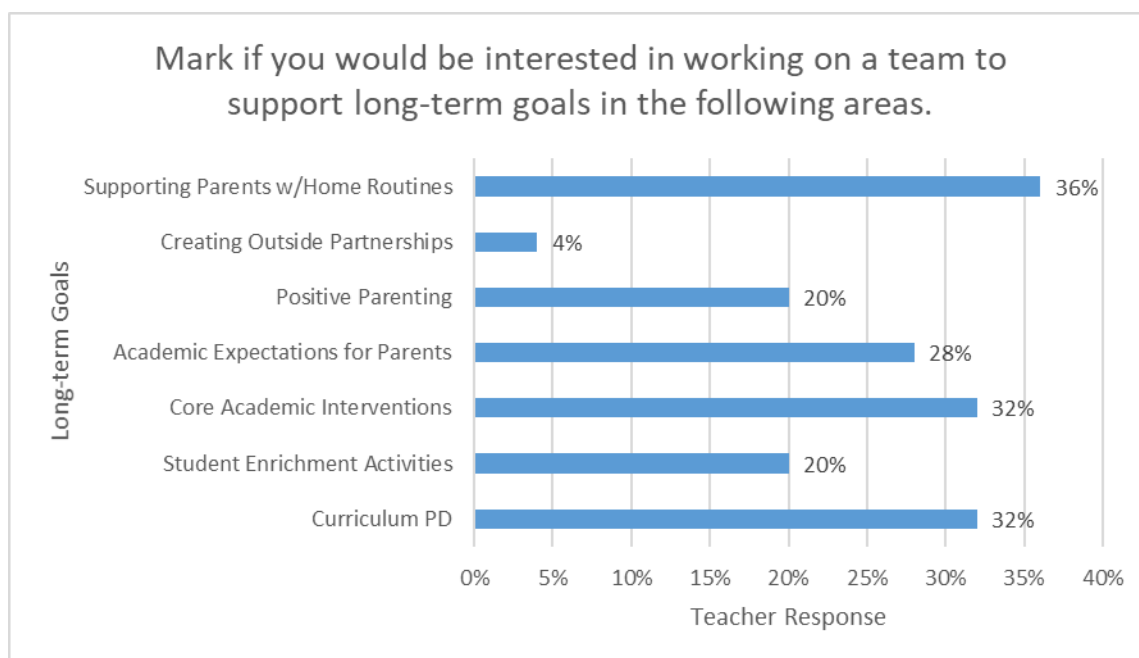


Figure 5: Teacher Interest Regarding Long-Term Goals

Looking at the choice made by 36% of teachers, to support parents with home routines and expectations, it seems that this could stem from hearing about the struggles parents have with their children at home. In reviewing the Parent Interview data, the top two concerns/fears that parents had was worrying about their child falling behind (twenty percent of parents) and concerns over behaviors and emotions (sixteen percent of parents). Teachers had responded throughout the survey about “meaningful interactions with parents,” and that the survey “drove my level of engagement with families.” This survey shows that teachers want to work on continuing the connection between families and the school to provide support that will have parents and teachers focused on similar expectations for the child at home and in school.

In my research I wanted to find out if the Parent Interview motivated teachers to become involved with the district’s long-term student and family support teams. The final questions of the teacher survey asked about if this Parent Interview experience impacted their willingness to take on a role within these teams, and overwhelmingly it seemed that the answer was no (see Figure 6). Using a Likert Scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being ‘No’ and 5 being ‘Yes’, 40% of teachers marked 1 (No), 8% marked 2 (little influence) and 32% marked 3 (neutral). This calculates to 80% of the teachers stating that the Parent Interviews did not influence their motivation to become involved on a team.

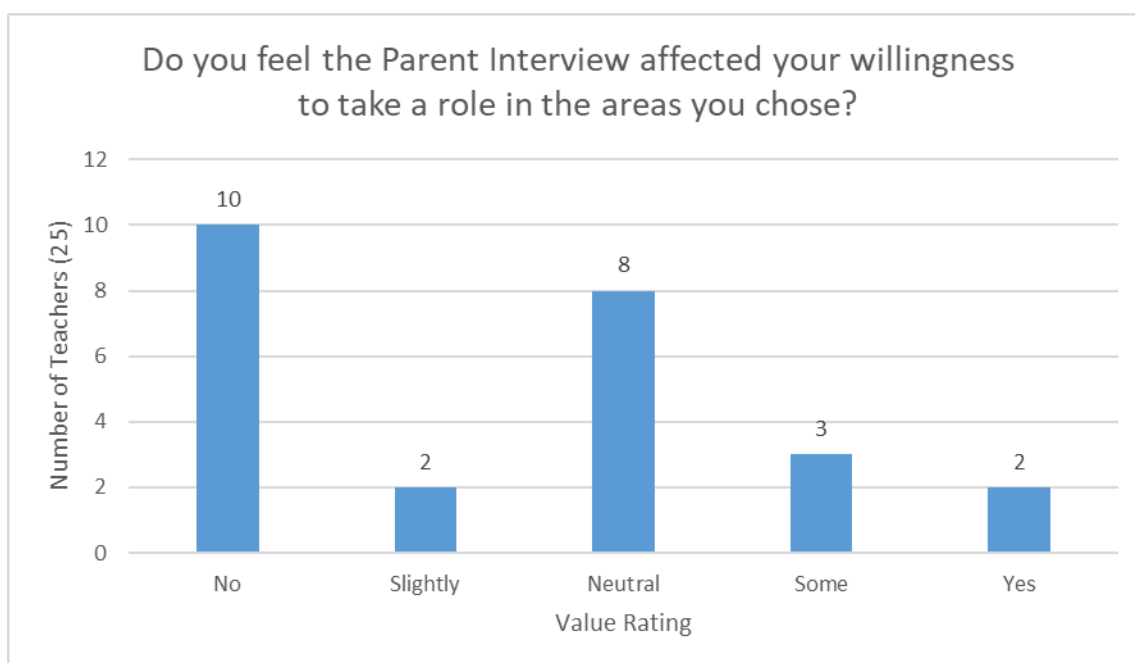


Figure 6: Teacher Influence

Figure 6 highlights that teachers’ motivation to participate in professional development existed prior to the Parent Interview, many of them would like to be a part of more than one team. Based on the teachers giving the Parent Interview high marks on

its value and their positive comments, I would conclude that they gained useful information to assist students within the classroom. Therefore, I believe the teachers felt hopeful about how they could assist students within the classroom, and desired to continue that support through the district supported teams.

DISCUSSION

The ideas and questions in this study were developed based on my desire to understand if the district-led Parent Interview influenced teachers to reflect on what they knew about their students and change their teaching practices to better meet the students' needs. I also wanted to understand more about teachers' perspective on how or if the Parent Interview opened communication with parents, allowing teachers to learn more about how to support the students.

Overall Takeaways

Building relationships between teachers, parents and students

This was the first year that my district has conducted the Parent Interviews, moving the traditional end-of-the-trimester parent/teacher conference to within the first three weeks of school and completely flipping the idea of who was the expert. This was not a chance for teachers to tell the parents the successes and concerns about their child, but instead parents were presented with the opportunity to describe their child to the teacher. While it might have caught some parents off-guard to have the scene flipped, the feedback that I received from parents was that it was a welcomed opportunity to have their voices heard. One parent stated to me that he was initially intimidated to hear that his son's teacher had a Masters in Education, but when she began asking him how to best support his son, he felt he was the one that held the answers. It changed how he saw his son's teacher, and the fact that she wanted to hear from him made all the difference.

The significance that the teachers received from the Parent Interview was very obvious when over 80% of them stated that it added value or high value for them as teachers. The most commented response from teachers focused on the ability to connect with parents and learn about the views of their children. Parents openly discussed the concerns that they had for their children's academics and worries over meeting their social-emotional needs. There was information shared about the passions of their children and what they love to do outside of school. Finally, teachers were able to learn about what the child's home life looks like, the morning struggles, and evening routines. All of this information has value to a teacher that is looking to plan lessons that engage students, help them to scaffold a new concept, and know what expectations they can have for the children in their classroom.

The Parent Interview also opened up a line of communication between parents and teachers that often isn't there, that of discussing social-emotional needs. While teachers are very good at 'figuring kids out' over time, the ability to have a parent tell you about the concerns they have for their children, the needs their child encounters, who has been helpful in the past and changes they would like to see in the school, make supporting a child less of a puzzle to be solved. Understanding the views of a parent regarding the social-emotional needs of their child allows teachers to continue communicating throughout the year in order to align the parent and teacher expectations and work on meeting the child's needs together.

The information that teachers gathered throughout the week of Parent Interviews gave them insight to build upon their relationships with students and "helped guide my

interactions with students.” Having the ability to ask how a new baby brother is at home, tell a student good luck on their soccer game this weekend, or simply give them a hug and say “how are you doing today?” when you know life at home is hard, is the difference-maker. Supporting students in the classroom isn’t just about teaching them math, reading and writing, but showing that you care about them and are prepared to support them when there are challenges they have to face. As one teacher commented, “I was able to be more empathetic and had more patience.”

Takeaways for My District

Value in the Parent Interview

This idea of building relationships also corresponds to the goals of Rounding for Outcomes and the basis for the Parent Interview. In reflecting on the Rounding health-care research, Cox (2017) wrote that Rounding can be used in education in a very similar way. The Parent Interview opens the door for teachers to build relationships with parents by asking a set of specific questions to understand how they can best support the family, meet the needs of the student and determine what assistance might be needed in order to create a positive relationship and help the student grow academically, socially and behaviorally (Cox, 2017). This event places parents in the role of an expert-partner to limit potential parental wariness to participate in school functions stemming from personal negative experiences parents may have had as students.

Shifting from trimester-end Parent/Teacher Conferences to a Parent Interview, based on the Rounding for Outcomes model was a huge shift for my district to make. As

an administrative team we saw the potential value that could be gained and after observing the Parent Interview take place, and analyzing the Teacher Survey I believe the value was even greater than we hoped. Through this process relationships began to develop, the needs of students and their families became clearer, teachers' voices were heard in regard to future professional development and a path for long-term goals was created for the district.

Listening to teachers' voice

This study explored the Teacher Survey to capture their perceptions and to hear their voice on the value and usefulness of the Parent Interview. The district can use this feedback from the teachers to understand how they perceive the relationships with both their students and their families. Throughout the Teacher Survey there are comments that teachers "learned the parent/grandparents views of their children," that it was "helpful to learn the best ways to communicate with families," and most importantly that they "knew more about their students than in previous years." As an administrator this is music to my ears. I want teachers to work on building relationships with parents early in the year so that when academic or behavioral issues arise a positive line of communication has already been established. Having teachers see the value in the Parent Interview, and learning that they support this shift is vital to future success of the Parent Interview and the development of student and family supports.

In addition to the overall value teachers see in the Parent Interview, teachers seem to have a greater understanding and a clearer picture regarding the needs of their students, following the Parent Interview. Through the Parent Interview teachers acknowledged the

parents as the experts on their child, listening to their perspective on the strengths and weaknesses of their children, what or who has been helpful in the past regarding education and to learn if there are any changes that we need to make as a district to better support students. These are questions that we typically don't ask parents about, especially not in the beginning of the school year. For my district, I see that this has given the teachers and the parents a platform to begin collaborating in a way that can benefit children and help us to develop support that will meet their needs.

Professional development within a district helps to define where they have placed their goals for the school and the direction a school is heading, in academics, social-emotional learning, and influencing behaviors. I am proud to say that through this Teacher Survey our district has given teachers a voice in helping to plan and establish the professional development goals within our district. Asking teachers what they need to support students and their individual desires to become involved with professional development planning, gave the district vital information that will allow them to meet the needs and call upon teachers to help lead the charge. It is a transfer of power from administration directly to the teachers, while still ensuring our focus of meeting the needs of the students and families within our district.

My Takeaways and Next Steps

Continuation of the Parent Interview

Throughout the process of the Parent Interview and my study revolving around the Teacher Survey I have been overwhelmingly convinced of the magnitude that the

shift to Parent Interviews has brought to my district. I have witnessed the confidence that parents have when engaging with the school, seen an increase in the awareness of student needs by the teachers, and been a part of listening to the voices of teachers (who listened to the parents) in creating the goals for our school district. This summer I have been meeting daily with my administrative team and part of our work is to build upon our 2019-20 Parent Interviews, asking many of the same questions, but also focusing on hearing from parents about their concerns with social distancing and how to better improve our remote learning. Because of the fact that we started our Parent Interview last year, we have given ourselves the perfect platform to adjust to the needs that families have in the time of a global pandemic. I imagine that concerns over missing in-class academics, seeing challenging behaviors at home and an increase of social-emotional needs will be frequent topics during the Parent Interview. As a district we can listen to our parents and work to support the ever evolving needs of our students.

In the 2020-21 school year I want to focus on hearing feedback from the parents in my district. Although this thesis will be complete, I want to continue building upon the work I started. Through this thesis I focused on hearing the perspective and voice of my teachers, next year I want to hear the perspective and voice of my parents. I plan on contacting parents following the Parent Interview to hear their perspective on the process, to learn what they believe was a value to them and what they feel might be missing. I will continue my communication with parents throughout the year to hear how the relationship with their children's teachers is progressing and if they feel there is a partnership with the teacher, based on the goals and needs of their child. It is my goal as

an educator and administrator to see an increase in the self-efficacy the parents feel as their children grow-up in my district.

In conclusion, I feel that I have answered many questions that I initially had regarding my study. The value that teachers gained through the Parent Interview was seen through their connections with parents and their greater understanding about the background and needs of the children in their classrooms. Teachers showed that they understood the social-emotional needs of their students and worked to meet those needs through classroom lessons, connecting students with counselors and asking the district for additional training that could help them meet student needs. Through the Teacher Survey teachers chose multiple committees and initiatives that they would like to help participate on and develop within the district. And although many teachers stated that the Parent Interview did not motivate them to become involved with district initiatives, it is my belief that they feel more hopeful about how they can help the student and their families. In my conversations with teachers following the Parent Interview teachers stated that the opportunity to talk with families gave them greater insight to the needs of families and a better understanding of how they could support both the students and the parents. This wasn't a part of my study, but through my experiences and relationships with my teachers this is the reason I see them finding value and wanting to become a part of the solution.

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