

**Improving Parental Involvement of ELL Families**

by

Micaela Honsinger

August 1, 2022

A capstone project submitted to the Department of Education and Human Development of  
The College at Brockport, State University of New York in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for MS. Ed. in TESOL

**Table of Contents**

Abstract.....	3
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	4
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	7
Chapter 3: Description of the Product and Tools.....	23
Chapter 4: Conclusion.....	32
References.....	39
Appendices.....	46
Appendix A: Google Slides Presentation.....	46
Appendix B: Open House Information Letter.....	47
Appendix C: Big Buddy Program Information Letter.....	48
Appendix D: Signage for Open House.....	49
Appendix E: Who to Contact Sheet.....	51
Appendix F: Letter Writing Sheet for Absences.....	53
Appendix G: Letter Writing Sheet for Being Late.....	54
Appendix H: Communication Survey on Google Forms.....	55
Appendix I: Final Thoughts Parent Worksheet.....	59

### **Abstract**

Parents of English Language Learners (ELLs) attending public schools in the United States, including at Clinton Central School District, face barriers that limit their parental involvement (PI). Research has identified five main barriers resulting in this limited PI which includes differing views and expectations of PI within culturally diverse families, language barriers, family anxieties, family lifestyles, and a lack of adequate teacher preparation. The literature shows these barriers can be improved upon when parents are educated directly, communication is improved, and the school to adopts practices that supports culturally and linguistically diverse families. To address these problems, a parent-teacher open house is proposed for the Clinton Central School District, where families will be invited into the school for one night of programming. The goal of the open house is to inform families of the school's policies and practices, improve the communication between parents and teachers, help families feel comfortable in the school building, and encourage parents and teachers to learn from one another. Recommendations for further research and improvement include expanding the open house to occur monthly with new topics, hosting professional development sessions to improve teacher effectiveness, and researching alternative transportation and different program location options for families.

*Keywords:* English Language Learners, parental involvement, language barriers, intercultural communication, parent-teacher open house

## Chapter 1: Introduction

PI plays an important role in a child's educational experience. Within the context of the United States, PI refers to communicating with the child's teacher, supporting students' academics at home, attending school events, understanding the school-day practices and policies, and volunteering at school (Curtis et al., 2021). PI positively impacts children's academic achievement (Park & Holloway, 2017); improves students' behaviors in school and encourages students to place a value on their education (Hill & Taylor, 2004); build student confidence and motivation (Veas et al., 2019), and influences a child's relationships with peers (Garbacz et al., 2018).

However, ELL parental involvement is greatly limited (Anicama et al., 2018). The most obvious challenge resides in the language barrier that often exists between the school and families (Shim, 2018). Not all schools have access to quality interpretation or translation services which decreases potential for communication (Wassell et al., 2017). Additionally, some families may have low literacy levels in their first language (L1); that is, they will not understand translated documents (Shiffman, 2019). Even if teachers or school personnel speak a student's home language, dialectal differences may cause communication difficulties as well (Wood et al., 2018). Incongruence between the home culture and school culture, specifically in terms of the teacher's role in their child's education, is another contributing factor to limited PI (Shim, 2018). Some parents may choose to save face rather than speak out with concerns or express their opinions when speaking to teachers. Parents may not know how to navigate the American schooling system, their roles as advocates, or the opportunities that exist for their child (Shim, 2018). Since many general education teachers, new and old, lack the adequate preparation in working with ELLs and their families (Villegas et al., 2018), these barriers may be overlooked.

I work at a small suburban school in central New York where, in the 2020-21 school year, 3% of the student body were classified as ELLs (New York State Education Department, 2021). I have witnessed limited PI firsthand among the ELL families. One common barrier is related to communication; many families work during the day and contacting them by phone is difficult. Some applications such as Parents Square and e-mail help allow us to communicate; however, this is often insufficient for the deep communication that is needed. As a result, students act as cultural and linguistic brokers as they relay messages and information between their parents and teachers (Baker & Wright, 2021). This too is imperfect as some ideas are lost as a result of not being direct communication (Shiffman, 2019). I have also heard of parents who avoid entering the school building, which is also problematic for PI.

Strong PI of ELL parents also supports learning for the entire school building. Allowing parents and students to share their deep funds of knowledge, linguistic and cultural, promotes the learning of other languages and cultures outside of the dominant English language and American culture (Linares, 2021). Intercultural communication is not a curricular focus in elementary levels despite the growing number of ELLs in American classrooms (Meng, 2020). Thus, increased PI supports increased opportunities for intercultural communication to take place.

In order to address the barriers limiting PI of ELL families, I propose a parent-teacher open house as described in Chapter 3. At the open house, the English as a New Language (ENL) teachers in the district will share information to ELLs' parents regarding general school procedures and expectations, define PI in American schools, and engage in dialog to build relationships. Districts must offer opportunities for PI to allow families of ELLs to become involved in their child's education and use their home languages to increase learning opportunities for students. Indeed, the "incorporation of the home language contributes to the

collaborative creation of power” (Baker & Wright, 2021, p. 425). Teachers and schools who collaborate with ELL parents shows that their languages and identities are valued. Next, I will review the literature on the specific barriers that ELL families face which limits their PI.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This Chapter outlines both learning theories and reviews the literature on PI in ESOL education. As described in Chapter 1, PI is linked to higher learning outcomes, both for the individual student and for the school as a whole. However, there are a variety of factors that currently limit PI of ELL families which must be explored and addressed. In this Chapter, I will first explain the sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and the humanistic educational theory (Maslow, 1954, as cited in Encyclopedia Britannica, 2021; Rogers, 1959, as cited in DeRobertis, 2006). While the sociocultural theory argues the social interaction plays a role in children's learning, the humanistic approach focuses on the needs of humans such as love and belonging, and how these needs impact an individual's motivation and development. Next, I will discuss the following themes emerged from the literature: varying views and expectations of parental involvement, language barriers, family anxieties, family lifestyles, and a lack of teacher preparation.

### **Sociocultural and Humanistic Theories of Learning**

Both the sociocultural and humanistic perspectives can explain the importance of PI in an ELL students' educational experience. The sociocultural perspective of learning (Vygotsky, 1978) highlights interaction and social situations to promote a co-construction of knowledge, and the humanistic approach defines motivation and learning in regard to a hierarchy of needs. That is, these theories relate to one another, and to the greater theme of PI as it helps to put language learning into a context based on the learning environments as well as the emotional needs of ELLs.

### **Sociocultural Learning Theory**

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory describes learning as a social activity that requires the interaction of people. In this sense, student learning takes place mainly through socialization with others while the teacher's role is to act as a facilitator. The socialization factor for ELLs, both at school and at home, is especially important as students are constructing meaning in more than one language (Baker & Wright, 2021). Knowledge that may be constructed during the school day between ELLs and their English speaking classmates can be built upon at home with the knowledge they have in their L2; this is known as the common underlying proficiency model (Cummins, 1981). Sociocultural learning is thus supported by PI as students learn from, and with, their families by using their L1 as a part of the learning process rather than as a separate entity.

Furthermore, immigrant families have large funds of knowledge, or unique sets of skills and knowledge about the world, to share, not only with their children, but with the school body as a whole (Baker & Wright, 2021). Examples of these funds of knowledge include, but are not limited to, "multilingual competence, mathematic knowledge or art skills, derived from their lived experiences and activities at work or in the community" (Esteban-Guitart et al., 2019, p. 2). Therefore, the social nature of learning, as outlined by Vygotsky (1978), can be viewed as a symbiotic relationship; both ELLs and non-ELLs have information to share about one another's experiences to co-construct knowledge and support meaning making cross-culturally.

The sociocultural theory of learning also aligns with a culturally responsive and sustaining educational framework (NYSED.gov, n.d.). Diverse students and families have sociocultural knowledge that "relates to the cultural and linguistic knowledge students bring to the classroom as well as their resources to interrogate and disrupt inequalities" which therefore allows, "tools of inquiry to interrogate and disrupt dominant and deficit discourses as well as

construct new, more affirming, and humanizing ways of teaching and learning” (Wetzel et al., 2019). When ELL parents are not involved, or their involvement is limited, their diverse stories, perspectives, and voices are reduced and, in some cases, silenced.

### **Humanistic Learning Theory**

The humanistic learning theory focuses on the students as people first; it prioritizes student learning to “[enhance] their own capacities for life in the family and community” (Woodhouse, 2020). Psychologist Abraham Maslow proposed the idea of the hierarchy of needs, “ranging from basic physiological requirements to love, esteem, and, finally, self-actualization” (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2021). Notably, the level of love and belonging and esteem is particularly relevant in the discussion regarding PI in ESOL education. To start with love and belonging, ENL students come from diverse families whose identities may or may not align with the dominant culture within the United States; affirming students’ identities is crucial to their success in school and their sense of belonging to their school community (Wood et al., 2018). As ELLs acquire new language, whether it be their first or subsequent language, they are also developing their identity as people (Baker & Wright, 2021). Anti-immigrant sentiments (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2019) and language as a problem viewpoints (Baker & Wright, 2021) are hurtful for students and can reduce their feelings of love and belonging in the school. Such attitudes and views also can influence their self-image and cause a rejection of their L1 and home culture, severely damaging their self-esteem needs as well (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2019).

Involving parents into their child’s education builds upon them since of love and belonging and self-esteem needs. According to Baker and Wright (2021), “The success of language learning may be affected by the wealth or restriction of opportunities for identity development in new networks (e.g., acceptance, rejection)” (p. 137). The ability of the school to

encourage and provide opportunities for PI for all families sends a message to students about the value of their languages and cultures. Recognizing and using materials in families' home languages shows that the school cares about its students' language diversity and sees them for who they are; therefore, students' and family's senses of belonging to the school community can be improved (Alexander et al., 2017).

The consequences of not acknowledging and respect students' language and culture are detrimental to a student learning (Shi & Watkinson, 2019). Therefore, an acknowledgement, celebration, and use of families' home languages and culture in the school building is one way to build love and belongingness and self-esteem for ELLs and their families.

### **Barriers Limiting Parental Involvement**

The barriers limiting ELL parents from more parental involvement are based on a variety of factors that impact an ELL's family. The barriers include 1) varying views and expectations of parental involvement across cultures; 2) language barriers; 3) family anxieties; 4) family lifestyles; and 5) a lack of teacher preparation. All of these barriers contribute to limited PI and will present themselves in varying amounts depending on each family and school building.

### **Views and Expectations of Parental Involvement**

#### ***Role of the Parent – Defined***

Different cultures have different experiences and definitions of what PI should look like during their child's educational experience. Within the United States, PI is a highly involved practice where parents are expected to be active in their child's education, both at home and in the classroom. This practice includes but is not limited to helping students with homework, reading with children, placing students into extracurricular activities, volunteering to help at

school events, becoming a member of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), and advocating for their children by contacting the teacher or school administrators (Curtis et al., 2021).

However, various research has shown that there are discrepancies between how teachers define effective PI and how ELL parents define it. For instance, Antony-Newman (2019) stated that immigrants coming from the Global South viewed parental involvement as an act that takes place in the home, rather than in the school itself. Kim et al.'s (2018) findings coincided with this remark as 70% of the 77 Korean parents in their survey considered PI to be mainly performed at home while only 5% of participants noted PI in the school building itself. Similarly, Wong et al. (2018) informed that, in a survey of 507 children and their parents, there was more home-based PI from Chinese families in Hong Kong than PI in the school. Furthermore, Anastasiou and Papagianni's (2020) survey of 150 respondents (parents, teachers, and administrators included) that Greek parents prioritized PI most when it involved decision making and responding to school related issues. Lastly, Smith et al. (2008) interviewed 15 Latino parents' living in a non-metropolitan area and their perspectives on PI; it was discovered that helping with homework and teaching children to be respectful were the main responsibilities of the parents in the survey. Thus, diverse families have different definitions and expectations regarding their role in their child's education.

### ***Role of the Teacher – Defined***

Another area that misaligned between ELL families and teachers were how they viewed the role of the teacher. In the United States, the role of the teacher was to lead, but they are considered to work alongside parents in educating their children rather than the ultimate authority figure. However, this is not a shared viewpoint across cultures. In their interview of 15 Latino parents, Smith et al. (2008) expressed that many Latino families view teachers as

authority figures that should not be questioned. Wong et al. (2018) found similar results in their questionnaires given to 507 Korean families from a primary school in Hong Kong; they revealed that many Korean families expected their teachers to be the main factor that influences their child's education which reduced their levels of involvement. Prutiskikh and Merkulova (2022) found similar viewpoints within their research of Chinese educational systems where the teacher is often seen as "a person of the highest esteem..." (p. 3). Housel (2020) also stated that some countries consider PI as an interference of learning and it "should be left exclusively in the hands of trained experts" (p. 187). Although these studies do not represent all cultural groups, nor does it mean that every member of one of the aforementioned groups holds these views, it does demonstrate that the role of the teacher, and thus the level of PI, varies greatly.

### ***Cultural Orientations***

The educational system of the United States also can be defined by its individualistic cultural orientation where praise is given to self-motivated and independent work, where the individual success is prioritized (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2019). These characteristics are seen as being typical, and desired, in schools within the United States. Families who come from collective cultures, prioritizing the group and dependence on one another, might feel isolated from the learning environment, especially within the context of PI (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2019). Therefore, the roles and responsibilities of the families, as well as the cultural orientations of each family, vary greatly. In fact, cultural orientations can explain why PI among ELL families is limited or perceived to be so.

These different views and expectations on how, and the extent of, parent and teacher involvement, as well as varying cultural orientations, have many implications. For one, when PI is defined as taking place in the home, teachers sometimes do not see how involved parents are,

or the types of learning activities they are engaging in. Despite the fact that a family might have high aspirations for their child's education, as discovered from Guzmán et al.'s (2021) interview and survey of 22 parents in Los Angeles, and are often involved at home such as through homework support and reading with children (Smith et al., 2008), teachers do not see their presence in schools. This can result in the harsh false assumption that parents are disinterested in being involved, when in fact the teacher is failing to see the PI that is taking place (Alexander et al., 2017). As a result, teachers miss out on opportunities to build off of the learning opportunities and engagement that students might be experiencing at home.

### **Language Barriers**

One of the most widespread challenges is the language barrier that exists between typically monolingual schools and linguistically diverse families. In an interview-style qualitative analysis of 22 teachers in the United States, the most common language used to communicate with students and parents was reported to be English (Wood et al., 2018); documents like "letters, school calendars, lunch menus or newsletters" that are sent home in English are not helpful to all ELL parents as they cannot understand the important information being communicated (Smith et al., 2008). According to Inoa's (2017) interview of 21 Latino parents, if homework assignments are in English and not translated to the home language, parents are not able to help their children with these assignments. Events at school, like Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO) and School Board meetings, are typically conducted in English since it is the dominant language in American public schools and translation services are not always provided (Aguayo & Dorner, 2017). Blair and Haneda (2021) also state that there is a "power imbalance" that exists between schools and home, which is echoed by Fairbairn and Jones-Vo (2019) who state that English is the "language of power in the United States" (p. 34).

Thus, the language of instruction in many public schools within the United States speak English and do not always prioritize minority languages.

Some schools turn to interpretation and translation services to account for this language barrier; unfortunately, this is an imperfect solution. For one, not all schools have access to translation and interpretation services, especially in rural districts; Shiffman's (2019) interview of 37 parents across rural, suburban, and urban districts and discovered that quality translation services were not a guarantee. If there are no translation services available, schools may use bilingual teachers out of necessity (Wood et al., 2018). Using bilingual teachers as translators and interpreters is also an imperfect solution because the translation may not be of high quality; a lack of formal training as well as dialectal differences between families and bilingual school personnel might result in weakened communication (Wood et al., 2018). Thus, both "written communication from the school, either in English or in a difficult-to-understand Spanish translation" is a challenge (Smith et al., 2008, p. 11).

Another translation option includes online services or internet applications (Aguayo & Domer, 2017; Shiffman, 2019). Again, applications such as Google Translate may yield poor or inaccurate translations. Some schools even use family members (Wood et al., 2018) or the students themselves (Smith et al., 2008). Using students as translators is highly problematic as it puts the student in a difficult position, especially when the content is regarding their behavior or grades; the student might take a few liberties in order to save face (Smith et al., 2008). Although using children as language brokers is a practice seen in schools (Baker & Wright, 2021), it can lead to pressure and stress on the child and create negative family dynamics as it places parents in an "inferior position" to their children (Baker & Wright, 2021). Not to mention, some students do not have the language needed to provide quality interpretation (Baker & Wright, 2021). Even

in cases where interpretation services are provided in meetings with teachers, families have expressed a frustration that there is not sufficient time for parents to express all that they wish, which decreases PI (Shiffman, 2019).

Providing quality translations and interpreters is crucial for families, not only to receive accurate and useful information, but also because translation extends beyond the literal words on the page. Interpreters also “[draw] on language and cultural knowledge, awareness of parent and educator perspectives, and their relationships—particularly with parents—to engender trust” (Shiffman, 2019, p. 28). Therefore, providing language assistance, such as translation or interpretation, helps families to feel more comfortable, welcome, and a part of the learning experience.

The language barrier also encompasses a family’s L1 literacy. Families who have low literacy in their L1 might not understand what is being sent home, even if it is in their home language (Shiffman, 2019). Additionally, some schools may direct parents to use the school website to access information; even if the website is translatable, not all families are knowledgeable in how to use technology and navigate school websites (Shiffman, 2019) or are limited in their access computers, WIFI, or internet access (Sayer & Braun, 2020). Thus, even if documents are translated for families, there is no guarantee that they will understand the contents within.

### **Anxiety**

Parents who do not belong to the majority culture or language of the school may experience anxiety at the thought of immersing themselves into the dominant school culture. Inoa (2017) presented results from a parent survey of 21 middle-income Latino parents in which many expressed having a “negative experience” when “interacting with other parents” (p. 331).

The analysis of Alexander et al.'s (2017) survey sent to 343 Latino students revealed that they believed their parents lack of involvement was the result of feeling unwelcome when going into the school. A school principal in Shiffman's (2019) study observed "that immigrant parents were 'very reluctant [to ask questions] if they're around other parents whose first language is English'" (p. 23). Although the parents' perspectives were not included, nor is there evidence to prove whether these judgements were real or perceived, the observations suggest that some immigrant families experience hesitation in becoming involved when they are surrounded by native English speaking parents.

One potential reason for this anxiety could stem from the fact that immigrant parents do not belong to the dominant ethnic, racial, or linguistic majority of the school. For one, families, like in Smith et al.'s (2008) study, might be fearful of "attitude and behavior from contact with American popular culture" (p. 11). This can be compounded when they don't speak the language of the school, or don't believe they speak it well (Yol, 2019). Additionally, immigrant families may not have other parents that belong to their cultural group, making them feel alone (Yuen, 2019). Without a community of support at school events, PTA meetings, or in the community in general, families may feel apprehensive to participate (Yuen, 2019). In fact, Alameda-Lawson and Lawson (2018) stated in their longitudinal study of 15,600 first grade parents that PI increased when parents knew other parents or families at an event, demonstrating the importance of having a support system for immigrant families. It is also important to note that high-SES families were more likely to participate in public-good activities and to form social networks with other parents than low-SES families (Park & Holloway, 2017). Thus, limited PI of ELL families can be attributed in part to a lack of strong support systems.

Lastly, some parents may be reluctant to become involved, particularly in advocacy, out of a fear of repercussions. Moon and Jung (2018) explain that parents consider their self-image, how their actions impact how teachers view them, and the impact that speaking out can have on their children. Six ELL parents involved in Shim's (2018) study expressed that even if they were to speak out and advocate for the children, the teachers "do whatever they want to do anyway" so the risk is not worth the reward (p. 5).

### **Lifestyle Conflicts**

Immigrant family lifestyles also can prevent more active PI from taking place. To start, transportation, or the cost thereof, to the school may not be possible for some families (Posey-Maddox & Haley-Lock, 2020). Other problems include not having a license to drive (Alexander et al., 2017) or the fear of being stopped by an officer while on the road, especially for families with undetermined immigrant status' (Alexander et al., 2017). Even if parents do have transportation, it is not guaranteed that they will have childcare for children while they are attending events at the school (Housel, 2020; Posey-Maddox & Haley-Lock, 2020). Furthermore, some family members may work more than one job with busy schedules, resulting in limited time to spend on other commitments (Inoa, 2017).

Immigrant families also may not understand the culture or practices that are common and expected within the context of American schools (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2019). Known as acculturation, families must understand the school policies, expectations, and culture within schools in the United States in order to successfully support their children (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2019). Unlike parents who were raised attending these schools and understanding the school policies as well as parental involvement expectations, immigrant families are at a disadvantage in knowing the functions, opportunities, and expectations of the school (Inoa, 2017). When parents

do not have experience or knowledge of how schooling, specifically in the United States, functions, then their ability to act accordingly may be limited. In fact, Alameda-Lawson and Lawson (2018) discovered a correlation during their longitudinal study of 15,600 parents that an increased knowledge of the school increased parents' involvement. In other words, the more that a parent understands about the school, the more equipped and likely they are to become involved. A lack of acculturation unfortunately positions families in a "deficit mode", unfairly depicting their involvement (Baker & Wright, 2021, p. 344).

### **Lack of Teacher Preparation**

Within the context of the United States, teacher preparation in the field of ESOL is lacking (Wood et al., 2018). The skills that are required of ENL teachers extends beyond teaching methodology; ELLs require advocacy and connection building among family, which often occurs in "the more personal arena of students' lives outside of school" (Harrison & McIllwain, 2019, p. 9). Additionally, cultural competencies trainings help educators understand their own positionalities, identity markers, and lived experiences and how they can impact their teaching practices (Kendall & Puttick, 2020). However, Wood et al. (2018) argue that multicultural awareness is still lacking, especially within rural districts. Traditional teacher preparation programs that do not "combine research and services" will not gain the knowledge base necessary to know about interacting with ELLs and their families (Li & Peters, 2020). In fact, Okhremtchouk and Sellu (2019) even noted that among the 444 Arizona educators in their survey, many revealed that they lacked knowledge of the ELL population, how languages are acquired, assessment, and had an overall low self-competency. One teacher in Posey-Maddox and Haley-Lock's (2020) study even admitted to learning about their family's cultures through

news stories rather than interactions and relationships with the families themselves. This is problematic as it perpetuates stereotypes and does not focus on authentic communication.

Mainstream teachers who are unprepared to work with and assist ELLs decrease their ELLs learning opportunities (Villegas, 2018). For instance, Ströbel et al. (2020) revealed that students' L1 knowledge has a positive correlation to L2 learning in areas such as writing; teachers who do not understand this value may embody a “language as a problem” orientation, restricting the use of their L1 in the classroom when using it has incredible advantages for learning English (Baker & Wright, 2021).

Strong teacher preparation is required for establishing a culturally responsive curriculum in schools (Baker & Wright, 2021). Posey-Maddox and Haley-Lock (2020) explained that when teachers did not have strong understanding or relationship with their students or their families, PI was lower than families who did. When the curriculum does not reflect the diversity of its students, there might be resistance and dissatisfaction with the learning opportunities; thus, the curriculum can in turn impact PI (Antony-Newman, 2019). The analysis of Anastasiou and Papagianni's (2020) survey of 150 respondents revealed that parents felt discouraged to become involved when they noticed the lack of teacher preparation. All of these factors contribute to missed opportunities for parent engagement and culturally responsive teaching.

Teachers who are not prepared or trained in ENL might develop stereotypes about students and their families, which leads to decreased PI (Moon & Jung, 2018). Shim stressed that some teachers, whether consciously or subconsciously, think that “if the parents don't speak English, they are not intelligent” (Shim, 2018, p. 5). Furthermore, some school personnel might stereotype families based on positive characteristics; Moon and Jung (2018) commented that the stereotypical Korean image of being respectful and polite, although often seen as being positive

attributes, were harmful to Korean parents. Not having the proper teaching preparation leads to misunderstandings and stereotyping that wrongly informs their practice.

### **Benefits of PI**

PI in the context of childhood and adolescent education is highly advantageous to student achievement—both ELL and non-ELL students included. Not only are there academic benefits to having parental involvement, but there are also social and emotional benefits as well, as I discuss below.

#### **Academic Benefits**

There is research to suggest that there is a strong association between parental involvement and academic achievement. For one, in Park and Holloway's (2017) study, they found that among their 17,385 student sample, when parents were involved in their child's education, reading and math scores improved across the entire school body. Likewise, Veas et al. (2019) found that PI supported students' metacognition skills, especially through homework assistance. Aside from academic achievement, PI also can improve student behaviors in school (Hill & Taylor, 2004). When parents and teachers are consistent in their expectations and standards, students have a clearer understanding of their role in the learning environment (Hill & Taylor, 2004). This consistency "will entail managing a set of strategies that enable students to assume responsibility for and control over their own learning process" (Veas et al., 2019, p. 405). In other words, when the schools and the parents have expectations that are aligned, students are clear on how they should act and their responsibilities as students to find success.

Similarly, Veas et al. (2019) assert that among 1,398 high school students, parent expectations of their child were "the highest predictive power on academic achievement" which is a powerful tool in building student confidence and motivation (p. 404). On an interpersonal

level, Garbacz et al. (2018) noted that PI, specifically in the middle school setting, influences a child's relationships with their peers (Garbacz et al., 2018). To Garbacz et al. (2018), "composite educational involvement remained a significant predictor of seventh- and eighth-grade positive peer affiliation suggesting an important and unique contribution of educational involvement for positive peer affiliations" (p. 649). Thus, PI extends beyond just academic achievement; it also impacts a child's behavior and peer relationships.

### **Conclusion**

Using this research as support, it is clear that PI is highly beneficial to students; however, currently ELL families face many barriers that limit PI. For one, cultural orientations and definitions of PI vary across ELL families, causing intercultural miscommunication. Secondly, the use of English as the dominant language in schools, coupled with a lack of quality translation and interpretation services, reduces parents' abilities and opportunities for effective communication and participation. Additionally, anxiety can play a role as families feel ostracized, isolated, and fearful of others when trying to become involved in a school building that is ethnically, racially, or linguistically different from them. Also, lifestyle conflicts such as lack of transportation, childcare, or understanding of how a school functions is also a barrier. The teachers themselves also are not always prepared to interact with, and support, diverse families. The research shows that strong PI supports improved academic achievement, peer relationships, confidence, and behavior, but at its current state, ELLs are not able to make the most of these benefits.

Using this research as evidence, an ELL parent- teacher open house at the beginning of the year is required. The goal of this open house is to improve the parents' understanding of the school's policies, communication between the teachers and parents, improve the comfort level

among parents and teachers, and learn from one another in order to eliminate some of the PI barriers that currently exist. The open house would be a mixture of informing parents on the school policies, practices, and expectations, having parents and teachers engage in dialog, touring the school building, and fostering relationships can help to reach these goals. This open house not only will allow parents and teachers to learn from one another, but it will also open the lines of communication for future PI.

### **Chapter 3: Description of the Product and Tools**

Research in Chapter 2 has revealed the barriers that limit PI within ELL families, including cultural miscommunication in defining PI, language barriers, anxiety, family lifestyle, and a lack of teacher preparation (e.g., Alexander et al., 2017; Anastasiou & Papagianni, 2020; Antony-Newman, 2019; Baker & Wright, 2021; Guzmán et al., 2021; Inoa, 2017; Kim et al., 2018; Moon & Jung, 2018; Okhremtchouk & Sellu, 2019; Shiffman, 2019; Smith et al., 2008; Wood et al., 2018). Actions must be taken on the side of the school to address these barriers in order to improve ELL family PI throughout the school year. Thus, I propose a parent-teacher open house where families are invited to the school for one night at the start of the school year. The goal of this parent-teacher open house is to improve ELL parents' understanding of the school and their policies, definitions of PI, and the relationships between families and teachers. The open house would be open to all ELL families in the Clinton Central School District, ranging in grades from Kindergarten to grade twelve.

#### **Agenda of Events**

The first annual parent-teacher open house will take place at Clinton High School during the first week of school on September 9<sup>th</sup>. Having the open house at the start of school is important; the earlier that parents are provided school-related information, the more opportunities they will have throughout the school year to implement what they have learned. The open house will take place in the high school library from 6-8 o'clock. The library has been selected as the location for a number of reasons; it is big enough to host the amount of families that will attend; it is conveniently located near the front entrance of the school for easy access; and it has projectors and computers which are needed. It will be two hours long as the slideshow takes about an hour to complete but interpretation time (Shiffman, 2019) and the time needed for

the school building tour also must be accounted for. The open house will be one session; since transportation and work conflicts are common in ELL families, having one session is more convenient than having it spread across various days (Posey-Maddox & Haley-Lock, 2020).

During the open house, the district's three ENL teachers—myself, Denise Toia-Kramer, and Nicole Roberts—will be the presenters. The presenters will be using Google Slides (see Appendix A) to deliver information as well as documents and other materials (see Appendices B, C, D, E, F, G, H, & I). There are essentially four parts to the open house. The first part will consist of the ENL teachers speaking to parents about the school policies and practices. The second part will outline PI within the context of the United States. The third section is designed to spark dialog between families and teachers about PI, and the fourth section includes a short tour of the school building. The intended outcomes of this open house are that parents better understand the policies and practices of the district, can define PI within the United States public schooling system, and engage in dialog with their children's ENL teachers to foster a trusting relationship.

### **Providing Supports**

The first and most important consideration for this open house is that there are quality and qualified interpreters and translations of materials for parents. The district will utilize Compass Interpreters for their services, ensuring that all languages are represented. All families will be sent an information letter (see Appendix B) translated into their home language which will outline what the open house is, the location, when it will take place, and other important information.

Interpretation and translation services are essential for ELL families for a number of reasons. For one, if parents are provided the information in the dominant language of the school,

in this case English, then the information will be lost on the parents. Furthermore, interpretation is especially valuable for families who do not have literacy skills in their L1; interpreters can provide verbal descriptions to support families' understanding of the handouts (Shiffman, 2019). Not only does interpretation support understanding, it also is connected with an improved sense of belongingness to the school as their identities, both linguistic and cultural, are acknowledged and celebrated (Alexander et al., 2017; Wood et al., 2018).

Another common barrier found in the research was that a lack of childcare prevented families from attending school sanctioned events (Housel, 2020; Posey-Maddox & Haley-Lock, 2020). Thus, prior to the open house, prospective and inducted Honor Society members will be recruited to participate in a Big Buddy Program (Appendix C) while the open house is taking place. Younger children will be paired with a high school student and they will spend time completing learning activities together. Such activities include reading books, doing math, writing, and drawing. Thus, if families do not have childcare for the evening, they can still attend the event.

Another barrier to more active PI includes family anxieties when interacting with the dominant culture and native English speaking families (Alexander et al., 2017; Inoa, 2017). Since this open house is only available to ELL families, it is a great opportunity for relationship building. In order to build this sense of community, former ELL students' families will also be invited for additional support (Alameda-Lawson & Lawson, 2018). Furthermore, in order to help families feel welcome and their linguistic diversity acknowledged, signage will be placed around the school with various languages represented to show parents where to go (Appendix D).

### **Policies and Practices**

The first part of the open house will include a presentation on the policies and practices typically found within the school district. Understanding the rules and expectations that exist improves PI as it helps parents be better equipped to support their child (Alameda-Lawson & Lawson, 2018). Thus, the ENL teachers leading the meeting will first outline information of the school day including the hours, school calendar, typical schedules, attendance policies, grading policies, contact information, ESOL program details, and the extracurricular activities that are available to students (see Appendix A). The learning target for this section of the open house is that parents can explain typical school policies and how these policies influence their children's education. The ENL teachers will explain these policies as interpreters work with families to express the information included. Clarifying these expectations is important as many immigrant families may not be aware that they exist due to limited acculturation or not having attended schools themselves (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2019; Inoa, 2017). Hill and Taylor (2004) also explain that when parents understand the school's expectations and standards, it allows consistency between expectations in the home and school day. Additionally, understanding school policies allows for families to have more agency in how they support their child when they know what is required and what the success criteria are.

One important element of understand the policies and practices includes providing families with materials so they can effectively follow these policies accordingly. While learning about the attendance policy, for example, parents will be provided with a "Who to Contact" sheet (see Appendix E) that lists all of the necessary school personnel and either their phone numbers or e-mail addresses. One barrier that was noted from Aguayo and Dorner (2017) was that the dominant language in American school is English. Therefore, families will be given a fill-in-the-blank letter writing sheet for absences (see Appendix F) and for tardiness (see Appendix G).

Parents can use these sheets when they write a note to their child's teacher or if they call into the school.

### **Parental Involvement Expectations**

The second part of the open house will include an overview and explanation of how PI is defined within the public schooling system in the United States. Intercultural misunderstandings, in terms of the extent and types of involvement, can limit PI (Kim et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2008; Wong et al., 2018). First outlining how PI is defined in the United States can improve understandings of how families can become involved. During the open house, the ENL teachers will explain that in the United States, teachers highly value parents who communicate regularly with their child's teacher or teachers (see Appendix A). This can help to overturn the misconception that becoming involved is an act of disrespect (Housel, 2020).

Secondly, parents will be shown examples of at home parental involvement as well as school based PI (see Appendix A). Outlining the different types of PI that exist has two functions. For one, it can open families' minds to how they can become involved in ways that they might not have considered (Alexander et al., 2017). However, equally as important, it recognizes the great work that families already might be doing. The research has shown that many ELL families already engage in PI at home (Guzmán et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2008; Antony-Newman, 2019; Wong et al., 2018) and acknowledging this hard work can help to eliminate a "deficit mode" way of thinking (Baker & Wright, 2021, p. 344).

Furthermore, during this time, teachers will highlight practical ways that families can become involved, even if they do not have strong literacy skills or there is a language barrier. Teachers will describe how families have rich "funds of knowledge" to share with their children and that utilizing the home language does support English growth as well as allows for students

to utilizing knowledge in both their L1 and L2 (Baker & Wright, 2021; Cummins, 1981). By highlighting parents' strengths and viewing their linguistic diversity as an asset, families can become empowered in supporting their child's educational growth, and the "language as a problem" misconception can be overturned (Baker & Wright, 2021, p. 394).

Within this session, ENL teachers will also have parents set up Parent Square, an online communication platform between schools and home (Appendix A). This application is used in the district and is essential for families to know how to use. One of the identified barriers to more active PI was communication as many school documents, announcements, and conversations with classroom teachers is only available in English (Aguayo & Dorner, 2017; Inoa, 2017; Smith et al., 2008; Wood et al., 2018). This application is useful as it has translation options so both the teacher and the families can translate messages into various languages. Therefore, power imbalances can be reduced as both the schools and the parents can use their language of choice and be understood by one another (Blair & Haneda, 2021). Since difficulty navigating (Shiffman, 2019) and access to technology (Sayer & Braun, 2020) were identifiable barriers, setting up this application will be completed at the open house (Shiffman, 2019). The teachers will walk parents through, step by step, on how to use the application, and will practice sending a message so they feel comfortable with how it works.

The last part of the parent communication section of the open house will include a communication survey on Google Forms that parents will complete (see Appendix H). Throughout the research, it was noted that differences in families' lifestyles made communication difficult such as through work conflicts (Inoa, 2017) and technology barriers (Shiffman, 2019). If a teacher is interested in getting in contact with a family for future activities such as parent-teacher conferences, home visits, book fairs, inviting parents as guest speakers, or

even a simple phone call home, it is crucial that their availability and preferred methods of communication are noted. Google Forms will be used along with its page translation function. Since internet applications do not always provide clear translations (Aguayo & Domer, 2017; Shiffman, 2019) and families may not have the literacy levels required to complete the task (Shiffman, 2019), interpreters and the ENL teachers will be present to support families as needed.

### **Parent-Teaching Dialog**

The third section of the open house includes an interactive activity between the families and teachers. The session will start with a “What Would You Do?” activity where families are presented a scenario and they have to discuss what they would do in that situation (see Appendix A). The purpose of this section is two-fold. For one, it reviews the materials that were presented earlier in the session to check for comprehension. Depending on the families’ answers, it can provide the teachers with opportunities to address misunderstandings and reiterate key policies and practices.

The second purpose is that it encourages open dialog between parents and teachers. Kendall and Puttick (2020) explained that in order to improve teachers’ practices, they must reflect on their own lived experiences, identity markers, and positionalities. Thus, as parents and teachers express what they would do in the scenarios, it can open a teacher’s mind to ways of thinking that they had not previously considered such as an element of their home life, culture, or challenge they are experiencing. Shiffman (2019) also expresses that this expansion of perspectives helps to “engender trust” from families (p. 28). Also, from the perspective of the parents, this dialog might help to ease their anxieties, particularly related to sharing their opinions (Moon & Jung, 2018). The goal of this session is to help parents understand that

teachers want to work with the families to create solutions (Shim, 2018) and that teachers are not strict authority figures but rather people open to parental input, suggestions, and engagement (Smith et al., 2018).

### **Tour of the School**

The last component of the open house includes a tour of the school building. As Fairbairn and Jones-Vo (2019) and Inoa (2017) explained, immigrant families may not understand elements of the school building stemming from differences between schooling in their home country and the United States or a lack of experience in school themselves. Parts of the school building that are considered normal for American families—such as the cafeteria, nurses office, gymnasium, classrooms, library, and playground—may not be understood or known by ELL families. The more that families learn about the school day, the more they become involved, which is why it is crucial that they are given a tour of the school to be made aware of the opportunities that exist (Alameda-Lawson & Lawson, 2018).

Having a mental picture of what the school looks like can also support families as their children talk about school when they get home; it provides them a context and better understanding as they engage in conversations with their children. In addition, as Shiffman (2019) and Inoa (2017) explain, ELL families are sometimes intimidated or having anxiety in being in the school building when native English speaking parents are present. Thus, opportunities to explore what the school has to offer during other parent events, such as PTA or school board meetings, might not be taken advantage of. This ELL parent-teacher open house is the perfect opportunity for ELL families to explore the building with the security and comfort of other ELL families.

### **Closing Activity**

The goal of the open house is that parents will have a stronger understanding of the policies and practices of the school district, definitions and examples of parental involvement within the context of the United States and engage in meaningful dialog with the ENL teachers to build strong relationships. In order to assess parents' understanding of the information provided, they will be given a short worksheet (see Appendix I) where they will write down two pieces of information that they learned and one lingering question that they have. Again, families will be supported with the help of interpreters to ensure that their ideas are communicated effectively. When parents are finished, they will be invited to share pieces of information that they have learned or ask their question.

Overall, improved PI is linked not only to higher learning outcomes for students but also their behaviors in school (Hill & Taylor, 2004), self-confidence (Veas et al., 2019), and their peer relationships and affiliations (Garbacz et al., 2018). By welcoming ELL families to the school for an open house, they are made aware of crucial information such as policies, practices, expectations, resources available, and support services that can be utilized throughout the school year. Aside from gaining knowledge, families are also gaining a support system, both from other ELL families and teachers, to rely on for future PI endeavors. This combination—improved knowledge of the school and fostering relationships with others—is a solution to reduce the previous barriers limiting PI among ELL families.

## **Chapter 4: Conclusion**

The purpose of this research was to identify and address the barriers that exist that limit PI from ELL families. When a parent is involved in their child's educational experience, whether it be at home or in the school building, higher academic achievement can be seen through improved test scores (Park & Holloway, 2017), student behaviors in relation to their confidence and motivation (Veas et al., 2019), peer relationships (Garbacz et al., 2018), and even student behavior (Parks & Holloway, 2017). When PI is limited, the academic and social-emotional advantages are also subsequently reduced. Thus, research was conducted to determine the factors limiting PI. The questions that led this research included the following: (1) How do schools support linguistically and culturally diverse families?, (2) What are physical barriers limiting involvement?, (3) What are the social-emotional barriers limiting involvement?, (4) Are teachers, ESOL and non-ESOL, prepared to teach linguistically and culturally diverse students?, and (5) How can districts better support parents of ELLs to increase their involvement?

### **Summary of the Reviewed Literature**

Many conclusions were drawn from the research. For example, in the current state, schools may have practices in place to support linguistically and culturally diverse families, but these practices are not always effective. For instance, a school might recognize the importance of having interpreters, but do not provide them at all school sanctioned events. Or, schools might encourage ELL parents to participate but their lack of intercultural communication styles causes this message to be lost. Another conclusion is that there are five main barriers limiting PI in ELL families. These barriers include the varying views and expectations of PI across cultures (Alexander et al., 2017; Anastasiou & Papagianni, 2020; Antony-Newman, 2019; Curtis et al., 2021; Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2019; Guzmán et al., 2021; Housel, 2020; Kim et al., 2018;

Prutiskikh & Merkulova, 2022; Smith et al., 2008; Wong et al., 2018), language barriers (Aguayo & Dorner, 2017; Baker & Wright, 2021; Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2019; Inoa, 2017; Sayer & Braun, 2020; Shiffman, 2019; Smith et al., 2008; Wood et al., 2018), family anxieties (Alameda-Lawson & Lawson, 2018; Alexander et al., 2017; Inoa, 2017; Moon & Jung, 2018; Park & Holloway, 2017; Shiffman, 2019; Shim, 2018; Smith et al., 2008; Yol, 2019; Yuen, 2019), lifestyle conflicts (Alameda-Lawson & Lawson, 2018; Alexander et al., 2017; Baker & Wright, 2021, Housel, 2020; Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2019; Inoa, 2017; Posey-Maddox & Haley-Lock, 2020), and a lack of teacher preparation (Anastasiou & Papagianni, 2020; Antony-Newman, 2019; Baker & Wright, 2021; Kendall & Puttick, 2020; Harrison & McIlwain, 2019; Li & Peters, 2020; Moon & Jung, 2018; Okhremtchouk & Sellu 2019; Posey-Maddox & Haley-Lock, 2020; Shim, 2018; Ströbel et al., 2020; Villegas, 2018; Wood et al., 2018).

In addition to the physical barriers, like a lack of transportation, families also experience social-emotional challenges which limit their PI. Examples of these challenges include family anxieties when interacting with English speaking parents or school personnel, varying cultural orientations among parents and faculty, saving face, and stereotyping. Some of these challenges derive from being a minority in an English and American dominant school, although others can be explained by a lack of cultural competency trainings for teachers. Furthermore, many general education teachers, and even ESOL teachers, are not prepared to teach linguistically and culturally diverse students. Teacher preparation programs are not adequately preparing educators for the role they must play to effectively reach and support ELL families. This lack of preparation has serious implications as it decreases their effectiveness in creating a culturally responsive educational framework, communicating with families, and providing linguistic

supports to students. Additionally, without proper training, stereotyping might occur, which has severe implications on the student and families.

Overall, this project concludes that solving this problem requires a multidimensional approach. For one, parents must be educated directly in order to support their learning and understanding of the school day, especially if they do not have their own prior knowledge of the American schooling system. Secondly, communication must be improved between families and parents. This can be achieved through interpretation and translation services, intercultural communication trainings, and finding communication methods that work well for the families. Lastly, schools must adopt cultural and linguistic supports to better welcome and support ELL families, especially as they may feel intimidated by the dominant culture of the school.

Thus, a parent-teacher open house is recommended with the goal of bringing together both teachers and ELL parents in a night of learning and dialog. The goal of the open house is to improve parents' knowledge of the school policies, overcome intercultural miscommunication by defining PI within the context of the United States, develop relationships between ELL families and their teachers, and allow them to tour the school in a low-anxiety setting. This open house will help to resolve the problem of limited PI because it addresses the identified barriers by focusing on expanding knowledge, improving communication, and building relationships.

### **Implications for Learning**

A parent-teacher open house directly benefits student learning. Various forms of PI options exist, such as in school and at home involvement. Whether parents are helping students with homework, setting up a workspace for children to do schoolwork, or simply engaging in conversations with their children about their academics, they are directly and indirectly communicating to their child that they value education. Also, when families are informed and

involved, it gives their child a support system. Children can speak to their parents about struggles they are experiencing, use their advice as guidance, and can celebrate successes with them. With this level of trust and communication, students have support from their families to overcome challenges.

### **Implications for Teaching**

The parent-teacher open house is beneficial for teachers—ENL, bilingual, non-ENL and non-bilingual teachers—for a variety of reasons. During the dialog portion of the session, teachers hear directly from family members, expanding their understanding of who they are as people, what their strengths are, what they need support with, their positionalities, and their lived experiences. Teachers may learn something new from families, whether it be about family interests, language, or culture, that they did not consider before. Perhaps they learn that the child shares a room with other siblings and does not have a quiet place to do homework or they don't have internet access at home. Teachers can gain valuable information from these conversations, whether it be growing their compassion for a student, taking action steps to support them, or even advocating for their needs. It is equally as important that teachers learn about the funds of knowledge of each family during this time. Families have great knowledge to share with their children and with other members of the class or school. Learning about these funds of knowledge allows teachers and opportunity to involve parents into the school day and incorporate their knowledge into the classroom.

### **Implications for Parents**

The most direct implication from this parent-teacher open house is that parents will expand their understanding of the school day and its practices and policies. From learning about the school schedule, attendance and grading policies, who to contact, extracurricular activities,

various forms of PI, and touring the school, they are gaining information to support their child. Not only does the information presented support parent understanding, it also introduces them to new opportunities that exist within the school that they might not have known existed. Furthermore, this program is a low-anxiety opportunity for parents to come into school. Without the pressure of being surrounded by English speaking parents, ELL families can feel safe and supported, which gets their foot in the door for future engagement opportunities. At the open house, parents also have opportunities to engage with other ELL families to build their networks of support.

As families meet and interact with the ENL teachers, they are also building relationships with their child's classroom teacher. Since ENL teachers are typically the liaison between families and the school, fostering a relationship with parents is crucial. Throughout the use of interpretation and translation, families and teachers can understand and express themselves clearly. Aside from communication benefits, acknowledging and using their home languages also can make them feel supported and celebrated.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Although the parent-teacher open house is a program that will improve opportunities for PI of ELL families, it is only the beginning. There are many topics that are relevant to PI, although not all topics are addressed during this open house. Thus, one way to improve its effectiveness is to expand this open house to a monthly program. Potential future topics can include how to help a child read, how to use the home language to support English growth, family funds of knowledge, how to best communicate with teachers, English lessons, navigating the school website, and understanding the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). This would also be a great opportunity for ELLs' content or

general education teachers to attend, either as guests or guest speakers, to make more connections with ELL families throughout the school year.

One area of the research that was not deeply addressed in the parent-teacher open house was the lack of teacher preparation for working with ELLs. Therefore, it can also be suggested that the ENL teachers host a series of professional development sessions within the district in order to address these shortcomings and improve teaching practices. Potential topics include cultural competencies trainings, scaffolding and differentiation for ELLs, teaching strategies, using the home language in the classroom, creating a culturally responsive curriculum, and addressing the myths associated with learning English as a new language. The last area that needs more research includes the topic of transportation. As the research identified, some families face challenges in attending the event due to transportation difficulties. More research needs to be conducted with the current transportation options in the area including public transportation and school-funded transportation through the use of buses. Another option to be explored also includes having the open house at a more accessible location such as a community center or a library.

### **Final Thoughts**

PI in a child's education is crucial to their academic success. There are many barriers that exist in schools today that limit the PI of ELL families. Barriers such as views and expectations of parental involvement, language barriers, family anxieties, family lifestyle, and a lack of teacher preparation are seen across schools' districts. Creating a parent program to inform families about the district's policies and practices, define PI within the United States, and build relationships between themselves and teachers, more effective PI can take place. Improved PI

can support higher learning outcomes and ELL student growth at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

### References

- Aguayo, D., & Dorner, L. M. (2017). Assessing Spanish-speaking immigrant parents' perceptions of climate at a New Language Immersion School: A critical analysis using 'Thinking with Theory.' *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 25, 1-28.  
<https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.25.2862>
- Alameda-Lawson, T., & Lawson, M. A. (2018). A latent class analysis of parent involvement subpopulations. *Social Work Research*, 42(2), 118–130.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/swr/svy008>
- Alexander, J.D., Cox, R. B., Behnke, A., & Larzelere, R. E. (2017). Is all parental “noninvolvement” equal?: Barriers to involvement and their relationship to Latino academic achievement. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 39(2), 169–179.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986317700837>
- Anastasiou, S., & Papagianni, A. (2020). Parents', teachers' and principals' views on parental involvement in secondary education schools in Greece. *Education Sciences*, 10(3), 1-12.  
<https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10030069>
- Anicama, C., Zhou, Q., & Ly, J. (2018). Parent involvement in school and Chinese American children's academic skills. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 111(5), 574–583.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2017.1323718>
- Antony-Newman, M. (2019). Parental involvement of immigrant parents: A meta-synthesis. *Educational Review (Birmingham)*, 71(3), 362–381.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2017.1423278>
- Baker, C., & Wright, W.E. (2021). *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Multilingual Matters.

Blair, A., & Haneda, M. (2021). Toward collaborative partnerships: Lessons from parents and teachers of emergent bi/multilingual students. *Theory into Practice, 60*(1), 18–27.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2020.1827896>

Cummins, J. (1981). *The role of primary language development in promoting educational success for language minority students*. In California State Department of Education Office of Bilingual Education (ed.), *Schooling and language minority students: A theoretical framework* (pp. 3-49). Evaluation, Dissemination and Assessment Center, California State University.

Curtis, K., Anicama, C., & Zhou, Q. (2021). Longitudinal relations among school context, school-based parent involvement, and academic achievement of Chinese American children in immigrant families. *Journal of School Psychology, 88*, 1-17.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2021.07.002>

DeRobertis, E.M. (2006). Deriving a humanistic theory of child development from the works of Carl R Rogers and Karen Horney. *The Humanistic Psychologist, 34*(2), 177-199.

[https://doi-org.brockport.idm.oclc.org/10.1207/s15473333thp3402\\_5](https://doi-org.brockport.idm.oclc.org/10.1207/s15473333thp3402_5)

Encyclopedia Britannica (2021). *Abraham Maslow*. In Britannica Academic. Retrieved June 19, 2022, from [https://academic-eb-](https://academic-eb-com.brockport.idm.oclc.org/levels/collegiate/article/Abraham-Maslow/51264)

[com.brockport.idm.oclc.org/levels/collegiate/article/Abraham-Maslow/51264](https://academic-eb-com.brockport.idm.oclc.org/levels/collegiate/article/Abraham-Maslow/51264)

Esteban-Guitart, M., Lalueza, J.L, Zhang-Yu, C., & Llopart, M. (2019). Sustaining students' cultures and identities: A qualitative study based on the funds of knowledge and identity approaches. *Sustainability, 11*(12), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11123400>

Fairbairn, S., & Jones-Vo, S. (2019). *Differentiating instruction and assessment for English language learners: A guide for K-12 teachers* (2nd ed.). Caslon.

- Garbacz, S. A., Zerr, A. A., Dishion, T. J., Seeley, J. R., & Stormshak, E. (2018). Parent educational involvement in middle school: Longitudinal influences on student outcomes. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, *38*(5), 629–660.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431616687670>
- Guzmán, B., Kouyoumdjian, C., Medrano, J. A., & Bernal, I. (2021). Community cultural wealth and immigrant Latino parents. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, *20*(1), 78–92.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2018.1541801>
- Harrison, & McIlwain, M. J. (2019). ESOL teachers' experiences in their role as advocate: Making the case for transitive advocacy. *TESOL Journal*, *11*(1).  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.464>
- Hill, N. E., & Taylor, L.C. (2004). Parental school involvement and children's academic achievement: Pragmatics and issues. *Current Directions in Psychological Science: A Journal of the American Psychological Society*, *13*(4), 161–164.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0963-7214.2004.00298.x>
- Housel, D. A. (2020). Supporting the engagement and participation of multicultural, multilingual immigrant families in public education in the United States: Some practical strategies. *The School Community Journal*, *30*(2), 185–209.
- Inoa, R. (2017). Parental involvement among middle-income Latino parents living in a middle-class community. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, *39*(3), 316–335.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986317714200>
- Kendall, A., & Puttick, M.-R. (2020). Reading ourselves against the grain: starting points for parental engagement with newly arrived families. *Practice*, *2*(1), 33–49.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/25783858.2020.1732633>

- Kim, Y.A., An, S., Kim, H. C. L., & Kim, J. (2018). Meaning of parental involvement among Korean immigrant parents: A mixed-methods approach. *The Journal of Educational Research, 111*(2), 127–138. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2016.1220355>
- Li, N., & Peters, A. W. (2020). Preparing K-12 teachers for ELLs: Improving teachers' L2 knowledge and strategies through innovative professional development. *Urban Education, 55*(10), 1489–1506. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916656902>
- Linares, R.E. (2021). “Para que los demás se diviertan un poco”: Negotiating social interactions in a culturally and linguistically diverse classroom. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education, 1*–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2021.1986398>
- Meng, C. (2020). Effect of classroom language diversity on head start ELL and non-ELL children's social-emotional development. *Applied Developmental Science, 24*(3), 230–241. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2018.1461015>
- Moon, S., & Jung, J. (2018). Complicated narratives of “Korean-ness”: Towards strategic provisionality in parental involvement. *Race, Ethnicity and Education, 21*(5), 643–660. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2017.1294567>
- New York State Education Department (2021). Clinton CSD enrollment (2020-21). <https://data.nysed.gov/enrollment.php?year=2021&instid=800000041438>
- NYSED.gov. (n.d.). *Culturally responsive-sustaining education framework*. <http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/crs/culturally-responsive-sustaining-education-framework.pdf>
- Okhremtchouk, I.S., & Sellu, G. S. (2019). Teacher readiness to work with English language learners: Arizona Context. *The Teacher Educator, 54*(2), 125–144. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08878730.2018.1533058>

- Park, S., & Holloway, S. D. (2017). The effects of school-based parental involvement on academic achievement at the child and elementary school level: A longitudinal study. *The Journal of Educational Research, 110*(1), 1–16.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2015.1016600>
- Posey-Maddox, L., & Haley-Lock, A. (2020). One size does not fit all: Understanding parent engagement in the contexts of work, family, and public schooling. *Urban Education, 55*(5), 671–698. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916660348>
- Prutskikh, T., & Merkulova, E. (2022). The Influence of the “Face” tradition on the Chinese Education system. *SHS Web of Conferences, 134*, 1-4.  
<https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/202213400152>
- Sayer, P., & Braun, D. (2020). The disparate impact of COVID-19 remote learning on English learners in the United States. *TESOL Journal, 11*(3), 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.546>
- Shi, Q., & Watkinson, J. (2019). English language learners and school belonging: Implications for school counselor practice. *Professional School Counseling, 22*(1b), 1–9.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759X19834442>
- Shiffman, C.D. (2019). Learning to communicate across language and culture: Demographic change, schools, and parents in adult ESL classes. *The School Community Journal, 29*(1), 9–38.
- Shim, J.M. (2018). Involving the parents of English language learners in a rural area: Focus on the dynamics of teacher-parent interactions. *The Rural Educator, 34*(3), 18–26.  
<https://doi.org/10.35608/ruraled.v34i3.396>

- Smith, J., Stern, K., & Shatrova, Z. (2008). Factors inhibiting Hispanic parents' school involvement. *The Rural Educator, 29*(2), 8–13.  
<https://doi.org/10.35608/ruraled.v29i2.468>
- Ströbel, M., Kerz, E., & Wiechmann, D. (2020). The relationship between first and second language writing: Investigating the effects of first language complexity on second language complexity in advanced stages of learning. *Language Learning, 70*(3), 732–767. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12394>
- Veas, A., Castejón, J.L., Miñano, P., & Gilar-Corbí, R. (2019). Relationship between parent involvement and academic achievement through metacognitive strategies: A multiple multilevel mediation analysis. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 89*(2), 393–411. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12245>
- Villegas, A.M. (2018). Introduction to “preparation and development of mainstream teachers for today’s linguistically diverse classrooms.” *The Educational Forum, 82*(2), 131–137.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2018.1420848>
- Villegas, A.M., Saiz de La Mora, K., Martin, A. D., & Mills, T. (2018). Preparing future mainstream teachers to teach English language learners: A review of the empirical literature. *The Educational Forum, 82*(2), 138–155.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2018.1420850>
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- Wassell, B.A., Hawrylak, M. F., & Scantlebury, K. (2017). Barriers, resources, frustrations, and empathy: Teachers’ expectations for family involvement for Latino/a ELL students in

- urban STEM classrooms. *Urban Education*, 52(10), 1233–1254.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085915602539>
- Wetzel, M.M., Vlach, S.K., Svrcek, N.S., Steintiz, E., Omogun, L., Salmerón, C., Batista-Morales, N., Taylor, L.A., Villarreal, D., Dávila, D., & Maloch, B. (2019). Preparing teachers with sociocultural knowledge in literacy: A literature review. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 51(2), 138-157. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1086296X19833575>
- Wong, R. S. M., Ho, F. K. W., Wong, W. H. S., Tung, K. T. S., Chow, C. B., Rao, N., Chan, K. L., & Ip, P. (2018). Parental involvement in primary school education: Its relationship with children's academic performance and psychosocial competence through engaging children with school. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 27(5), 1544–1555.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-017-1011-2>
- Wood, C., Wofford, M. C., & Hassinger, A. (2018). Acknowledging challenges and embracing innovative instructional practices in response to cultural and linguistic diversity. *SAGE Open*, 8(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018771110>
- Woodhouse, H. (2020). Russell and Chomsky as advocates of humanistic education. *Philosophy Inquiry in Education*, 27(2), 135-152. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1074043ar>
- Wright, W.E. (2015). *Foundations for teaching English Language Learners: Research, theory, policy, and practice* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Caslon.
- Yol, Ö. (2019). Schools should better integrate immigrant parents. *NYS TESOL Idiom*, 49(1), 17–21.
- Yuen, L.H. (2019). New immigrant parents' experiences in a parent education programme. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 27(1), 20–33.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2017.1390445>

**Appendix A:**

**Google Slides Presentation**

**Appendix B:****Open House Information Letter**

# ELL Parent-Teacher Open House

**What:** Join us to learn about important information about the school policies, ways to become involved as parents, tour the school, and to meet your child's teachers. Interpreters will be provided!

**Who:** All parents of English Language Learners are welcome. Childcare will also be available.

**When:** September 9th, 2022 from 6pm to 8pm.

**Where:** The Clinton High School Library. Park in the front of the building and look for the posters to guide you!



If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Denise Toia-Kramer or Micaela Honsinger. We look forward to seeing you on September 9th!

*Photo credits given to Google Maps*

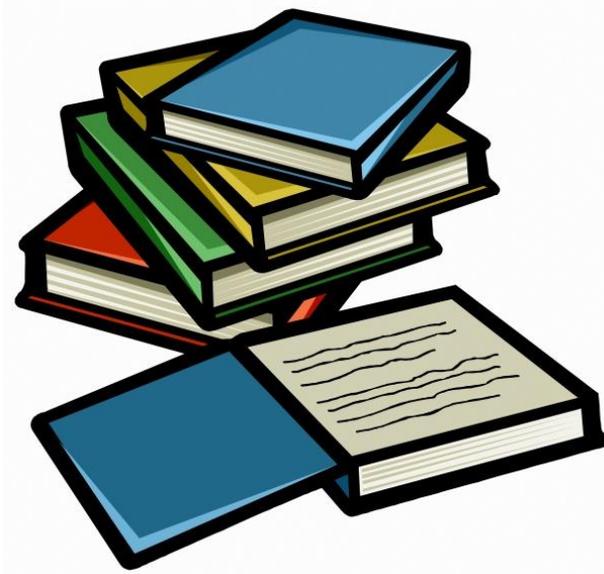
**Appendix C:****Big Buddy Program Letter**

# Big Buddy Program

*Are you a student who needs community volunteer hours?*

*Do you enjoy working with kids?*

*Do you aspire to be a teacher in the future?*



If you answered yes to any of these questions, please join us for our first annual Big Buddy Program on September 9th from 6pm to 8pm in the High School Library. You will work with the children (ages 6-12) of English Language Learner (ELL) families while parents attend an Open House event. You will spend the time reading books, doing math, speaking English and coloring with the children.

If you are interested, please email Miss Honsinger ([mhonsinger@ccs.edu](mailto:mhonsinger@ccs.edu)) or Mrs. Toia-Kramer ([dtoiakramer@ccs.edu](mailto:dtoiakramer@ccs.edu)).

**Appendix D:**  
**Signage for Open House**

Por aquí por favor  
Сюда, пожалуйста  
Par ici s'il vous plait  
이쪽으로 오십시오  
This way, please



Por aquí por favor  
Сюда, пожалуйста  
Par ici s'il vous plait  
이쪽으로 오십시오  
This way, please



**Appendix E:****Who To Contact Sheet**

<b>High school</b>	
<b>Absence/Tardy</b> If your child is sick or has a doctor's appointment, call the office to let them know when and why.	Mrs. Karen Litz- 315-557-2232
<b>School Nurse</b>	Mrs. Cynthia Smiegal - 315-557-2238 Mrs. Jennifer Mitchell - 315-557-2238
<b>Counseling Office</b>	Mrs. Jackie Snizek, Counselor - 315-557-2235 Mrs. Kelly Zegarelli, Counselor - 315-557-2235
<b>Homework Questions</b>	Denise Toia-Kramer - dtoiakramer@ccs.edu Nicole Roberts - nroberts@ccs.edu Micaela Honsinger - mhonsinger@ccs.edu
<b>General Questions</b> If you are not sure who to contact, you can always reach out to the ENL teacher and they will be able to help.	Denise Toia-Kramer - dtoiakramer@ccs.edu Nicole Roberts - nroberts@ccs.edu Micaela Honsinger - mhonsinger@ccs.edu

<b>Middle School</b>	
<b>Absence/Tardy</b> If your child is sick or has a doctor's appointment, call the office to let them know when and why.	Mary Heintz - 315-557-2255
<b>School Nurse</b>	Elizabeth Hobaica - 315-557-2258
<b>Social Worker</b>	Rachel Brenon - 315-557-2226
<b>Homework Question</b>	Denise Toia-Kramer - dtoiakramer@ccs.edu Nicole Roberts - nroberts@ccs.edu Micaela Honsinger - mhonsinger@ccs.edu

<p><b>General Questions</b> If you are not sure who to contact, you can always reach out to the ENL teacher and they will be able to help.</p>	<p>Denise Toia-Kramer - <a href="mailto:dtoiakramer@ccs.edu">dtoiakramer@ccs.edu</a> Nicole Roberts - <a href="mailto:nroberts@ccs.edu">nroberts@ccs.edu</a> Micaela Honsinger - <a href="mailto:mhonsinger@ccs.edu">mhonsinger@ccs.edu</a></p>
--	---

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Elementary School</b></p>	
<p><b>Absence/Tardy</b> If your child is sick or has a doctor's appointment, call the office to let them know when and why.</p>	<p>Main office - 315 - 557 - 2260</p>
<p><b>School Nurse</b></p>	<p>Mrs. Cynthia Smiegal - 315-557-2238 Mrs. Jennifer Mitchell - 315-557-2238</p>
<p><b>Counseling Office</b></p>	<p>Danielle Tesak - 315- 557-2249</p>
<p><b>Homework Question</b></p>	<p>Denise Toia-Kramer - <a href="mailto:dtoiakramer@ccs.edu">dtoiakramer@ccs.edu</a> Nicole Roberts - <a href="mailto:nroberts@ccs.edu">nroberts@ccs.edu</a> Micaela Honsinger - <a href="mailto:mhonsinger@ccs.edu">mhonsinger@ccs.edu</a></p>
<p><b>General Questions</b> If you are not sure who to contact, you can always reach out to the ENL teacher and they will be able to help.</p>	<p>Denise Toia-Kramer - <a href="mailto:dtoiakramer@ccs.edu">dtoiakramer@ccs.edu</a> Nicole Roberts - <a href="mailto:nroberts@ccs.edu">nroberts@ccs.edu</a> Micaela Honsinger - <a href="mailto:mhonsinger@ccs.edu">mhonsinger@ccs.edu</a></p>

**Appendix F:**  
**Letter Writing Sheet for Absences**

Hello \_\_\_\_\_,  
*Name of your child's teacher*

My child, \_\_\_\_\_, will be absent from school  
*Name of your child*

on \_\_\_\_\_ because of  
*Date that they will be absent*

\_\_\_\_\_. Thank you and have a great  
*Reason (doctor's appointment, sick, etc.*

day!

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_

*Your name*

**Appendix G:**

**Letter Writing Sheet for Being Late**

My child, \_\_\_\_\_, will be leave today at  
*Name of your child*

\_\_\_\_\_ because of  
*Time*

\_\_\_\_\_. They \_\_\_\_\_ return  
*Reason (doctor's appointment, sick, etc.)*      *will / will not*

afterwards. Thank you and have a great day!

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Your name*

**Appendix H:**  
**Communication Survey on Google Forms**

## Parent Survey

---

The respondent's email (**null**) was recorded on submission of this form.

\* Required

1. Email \*

---

2. Last name \*

---

3. First name \*

---

4. What are the names of your children? \*

---

---

---

---

---

5. What language is preferred for school-related communication? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Spanish
- Russian
- English
- French
- Korean
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Are there any obstacles (childcare, transportation, etc.) that discourage you from participating in your child's education? Select all that apply. \*

*Check all that apply.*

- Childcare
- Lack of transportation
- Work conflicts
- Uncomfortable in school
- Lack of interpretation
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

7. How do you prefer to communicate with your child's ENL teacher? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Phone call *Skip to question 12*
- Parents Square
- E-mail *Skip to question 11*
- Text *Skip to question 12*
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Do you internet access at home? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

9. Does your child have access to a computer at home? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

10. What is the best time of day to reach you? \*

\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail

11. What is your e-mail address? \*

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number

12. What is your phone number? \*

\_\_\_\_\_

Questions

13. Write one question or concern that you currently have. \*

---

---

---

---

---

---

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms

