

An Exploratory Analysis of Mexican-American Parental

Involvement Perspectives on Home, School,
and Community Collaboration

Publication No. _____

Lisa Kay Hall-Irby

The University of Texas Pan American, 2002

Supervisor: Maricela Oliva

Abstract

When schools consider their relationship with families as a partnership wherein the home and school contribute to children's educational and social development, the results are increased levels of parental involvement. This exploratory analysis involves a study of Mexican-American parents and their perspectives on how they perceive themselves in the home, school, and community collaboration process. This study seeks to explore the traditional parental involvement model and uses existing theory that challenges the traditional model to create a new re-conceptualized model of parental involvement. Using qualitative case study methodology parental involvement data were gathered by using five focus groups and a series of three in-depth interview sessions conducted with seven parents. Additional data on parental involvement were obtained

via observations, photographs, archival data, and other documents. The significance of this study directly relates to the shifting demographic structure within the United States and in particular along the United States-Mexico border. The findings from this study reveal that Mexican-American parental involvement perceptions are similar and differ in some ways from the school's traditional model of parental involvement. In the school sphere parents assume leadership roles through the Core Team within the school; in the home sphere the parents advocate on the children's behalf between the home, school, and community. These parents also help their children to develop and utilize their own human, social, and cultural capital in these spheres and when negotiating between the spheres; and in the community sphere these parents have successfully demonstrated their ability to build bridges, break barriers, and cross borders between the spheres. The parents and leadership at this school have developed relationships that have helped them to move toward what Martinez (1994) refers to as Interdependent Borders.